
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT: PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES

By Patricia Kyle, PhD, University of Idaho; &
Larry Rogien, PhD, Boise State University



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGISTS

Classroom management requires an orchestration of effective teaching, proactive preventive strategies, practical corrective strategies, and positive supportive techniques. This approach helps teachers motivate students through active involvement in their own learning *and* discipline processes with the goals of acquiring learning, self-management, and a repertoire of responsible behaviors. When these components are integrated in your classroom, effective teaching, management, and discipline complement each other to facilitate learning. This handout deals with *preventive strategies* in comprehensive classroom management.

Preventive Component

Long-term prevention strategies are the glue that holds the classroom management plan together. Planning and designing the class ahead of time to eliminate problems is an essential step to long-term success. Focusing on implementing management strategies in the first week of school comes next. Active involvement of the students in the process is critical. Continually maintaining and re-evaluating the management approach is also needed. When the appropriate PACE is set in the classroom, problems are prevented through having proactive options, accountability options, choices for students, and environment options.

Preventing problems before they occur is important to a comprehensive approach. As important as corrective strategies for the moment of misbehavior are, they are short-term solutions only. Without prevention strategies we are caught in an endless cycle of short-term solutions for the immediate situation. Establishing classroom rules, procedures, and accountability are the initial steps toward establishing the PACE in the classroom. The prevention component is essential to having long-lasting results.

The prevention component will not completely eliminate classroom problems, but it will surely make a difference in how many day-to-day discipline problems come up where we need to rely on our corrective interventions for the moment of misbehavior. Setting the PACE focuses on the main aspects of prevention.

Proactive options. Plan, organize, and design the class at the beginning, so that you are being proactive and not reactive. Planning and preparing reaps many benefits. You manage your lessons so that things run smoothly with little down time. You clarify expectations of all with the students.

Accountability options. Plan, organize, and design how you will hold students accountable for their learning tasks. How will you structure things so that students can be successful in your class? What standards (how well something has to be done) will you set for their work? The challenge is to manage student work so you and the students can keep track of it. Decide what to do about missed work. Plan techniques to have all students responding simultaneously at times. This will assist you in checking if they all understand the learning.

Choices. Involve students in appropriate curriculum decisions so they feel ownership of what they are learning. Provide them with structured choices as to how they do their assignments, which assignments they may choose from a list of potential assignments, or a combination of the two. Student choice also applies to setting the environment.

Environment options. Create a classroom climate conducive to learning. It needs to be predetermined, taught to the students, and jointly constructed, adopted, and maintained. Establishing the environment includes:

- Rules/code of conduct
- Procedures

- Arranging the room
- Working the room

When you put all four together—proactive options, accountability options, choices, and environment options—to set the PACE in your classroom, you have a well-developed prevention component. You avoid many problems before they even develop. You need to use less of the corrective intervention strategies for the moment of misbehavior.

Proactive Options

Planning and preparing to prevent problems. This means:

- Have materials ready.
- Develop procedures to pass out materials.
- Develop routines to deal with non-instructional tasks, such as attendance, lunch count, or book money.
- Develop procedures to deal with interruptions.

Preventive lesson management. It is important to:

- Develop “withitness,” an atmosphere in which the students feel that you are on top of the situation in the classroom. Teachers who are “withit” are aware of what is going on and deal with situations in a timely manner.
- Manage your lessons well, so you are keeping things moving smoothly from one part of a lesson to the next

Clarify expectations with the students. Clarifying expectations *with* the students rather than *to* the students creates a situation where you and your students are working together.

Accountability Options

Structure for student success. Design your accountability procedures with bringing about student success in learning as the main goal.

Manage student work. How will you:

- Set standards to guide students in succeeding
- Post assignments
- Collect and hand back student work
- Keep track of completed assignments
- Help students keep track of their own work in progress
- Hold students accountable for missing work
- Inform students who have been absent about assignments

- Give feedback to the students
- Help students self-manage

Simultaneous response modes. These options involve all students giving responses to questions at the same time in order to continually check their understanding of concepts and to keep them focused on the lesson:

- Choral responses, where all of the students answer in unison
- Individual whiteboards, where the students write down their answer and hold it up for you to visually see
- Whole class signals such as thumbs up and thumbs down or other appropriate gestures

Choices

Student involvement in curriculum choices. Having students involved in appropriate curriculum choices is a great way to get students actively engaged in the learning process. For example, “appropriate” can be choosing the order in a list of topics in social studies or choosing which activities students will like to do in the process of meeting standards.

Structured choices in assignments. Giving students choices in how they do their assignments is another critical strategy for preventing classroom problems. When students have a choice of two or three ways in which they can do their assignments, they are much less apt to choose not to do their assignments.

Environment Options

Conducive classroom climate. Options are:

- Pre-planned
- Constructed jointly between teacher and students, adopted and taught

Rules or code of conduct that establish a learning environment. Guidelines include:

- Three to eight rules
- Focus on the positive
- Understandable, reasonable, and attainable
- Posted in classroom
- Student involvement
- Consistency with school rules
- Support of effective learning principles

Procedures. Effective managers have procedures for the following:

- Entering and leaving the room

- Beginning and ending the day or period
- Getting students' attention
- Student interaction
- Using areas of the room: drinking fountain, pencil sharpener, supply shelves, and centers
- Bathroom use
- Working individually and together
- Obtaining help
- What to do when finished
- Taking care of the room: class responsibilities
- Interruptions
- Missing materials
- Using areas of the school

Arranging the room. There are six things to keep in mind:

- Visibility
- Accountability
- Communicability
- Understandability
- Usability
- Movability

Working the room. Move around interacting with students and monitor what they are doing. The more you use proximity in this way, the more on top of the situation you will be, and the more "withitness" you will have.

Resources

Kyle, P., and Rogien, L. (2004). *Opportunities and options in classroom management*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0205324134.

Websites

Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation Research Project—
www.coe.ufl.edu/CRPM/CRPMhome.html

Safe and Responsive Schools Project—
www.indiana.edu/~safeschl

TeachNet—www.teachnet.com (see *Discipline Strategies*)

Material in this handout is adapted from Kyle, P., & Rogien, L. (2004). Opportunities and options in classroom management. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, and included with permission of the publisher.

Patricia Kyle, PhD, is on the faculty of the University of Idaho at Boise. Larry Rogien, PhD, is on the faculty of Boise State University in Boise, ID.

© 2004 National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814—(301) 657-0270.



The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) offers a wide variety of free or low cost online resources to parents, teachers, and others working with children and youth through the NASP website www.nasponline.org

and the NASP Center for Children & Families website www.naspcenter.org. Or use the direct links below to access information that can help you improve outcomes for the children and youth in your care.

About School Psychology—Downloadable brochures, FAQs, and facts about training, practice, and career choices for the profession.
www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/spsych.html

Crisis Resources—Handouts, fact sheets, and links regarding crisis prevention/intervention, coping with trauma, suicide prevention, and school safety.
www.nasponline.org/crisisresources

Culturally Competent Practice—Materials and resources promoting culturally competent assessment and intervention, minority recruitment, and issues related to cultural diversity and tolerance.
www.nasponline.org/culturalcompetence

En Español—Parent handouts and materials translated into Spanish. www.naspcenter.org/espanol/

IDEA Information—Information, resources, and advocacy tools regarding IDEA policy and practical implementation.
www.nasponline.org/advocacy/IDEAinformation.html

Information for Educators—Handouts, articles, and other resources on a variety of topics.
www.naspcenter.org/teachers/teachers.html

Information for Parents—Handouts and other resources a variety of topics.
www.naspcenter.org/parents/parents.html

Links to State Associations—Easy access to state association websites.
www.nasponline.org/information/links_state_orgs.html

NASP Books & Publications Store—Review tables of contents and chapters of NASP bestsellers.
www.nasponline.org/bestsellers
Order online. www.nasponline.org/store

Position Papers—Official NASP policy positions on key issues.
www.nasponline.org/information/position_paper.html

Success in School/Skills for Life—Parent handouts that can be posted on your school's website.
www.naspcenter.org/resourcekit