

Meta Matters

Tips for New Teachers

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Ten Top Tips for Classroom Survival

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Classroom management is a term used by teachers and educators to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite potentially challenging or disruptive student behaviour. The term also implies the prevention of this kind of disruptive behaviour. Many teachers find that classroom management is possibly the most difficult aspect of teaching; indeed, experiencing problems in this area causes some to leave teaching altogether. It can be even more challenging when you're a new teacher!

You are probably really well prepared for the teaching of your lessons. The lesson plan is completed, resources planned and developed and you are ready to go. However have you put as much thought and energy into classroom management as you have to the teaching and learning?

Here are some simple and easy to follow principles to help you get to grips with the classroom management so you can concentrate on leading the learning.



And then.....

Tip 8 - Ask for Help

Tip 9 - Manage your own state and be the authority

Tip 10 - Keep calm and carry on!

Tip 1:

If you don't manage the classroom – your students will!

Plan your classroom management as carefully as you plan the teaching and learning.

If you try to ignore the classroom behaviour and carry on regardless, its likely to end in tears. Yours or your students!

You gain commitment from your students within the first few seconds so pay attention from the moment they walk in the classroom. The focus of your attention in the first minute should be on them – completely. If you are just sorting out the interactive whiteboard or arranging your lesson notes, you will lose them for the rest of the lesson. Signal in your behaviour and attention from the first second that you are in charge and this is your classroom.

Tip 2
Set your 'Great Expectations'

What are the 4 things that you expect from your students? Think about the most important behaviours you want from them. These 4 behaviours should be precious to you and you should commit to them absolutely. These are the things that if the students lapse from, they will have a serious and significant conversation with you. Don't have more than four great expectations otherwise you will spend all your time enforcing these and not much time teaching.



Tip 3
Involve your students and gain agreement.

Negotiate on things that you are prepared to give ground on. Involving the students in the discussion of how we will be together gains commitment from them to make the lesson fun and comfortable for everyone. Set the principle and ask the students to contribute in how this can be achieved. For example, Principle; it's important to respect everyone's contribution. How are we going to ensure that this happens in our class? Possible suggestions could be – when one person is talking everyone listens or we have a signal that everyone respects for hush etc. Get your class involved. Ask for their input and thoughts on the classroom atmosphere. Take their suggestions and collaborate to make a plan together.



Tip 4
Record what works and build the plan

Spend 5 minutes at the end of the lesson reflecting on what worked and what didn't. Simply do more of what is working and less of what isn't working. Throw out what doesn't work and look around for an alternative. Keep and build on what is working. Don't hold it all in your head. Write things down. What's working in your room? What's not working? What *exactly* do you want students to do?

Tip 5
Think about possible consequences to lapses in your agreement and inappropriate behaviour.

Remember that if there are no negative consequences to a behaviour, it isn't a problem from your students point of view! Be very careful here. This is about consequences not punishment!

A detention of 30 minutes for arriving late is a punishment. Spending your own time to catch up on work missed is a consequence. A major mistake new teachers make is mixing up these two factors. The more your students see that the consequence is the inevitable result of their behaviour, the more commitment and agreement to the ground rules they will have. On the other hand the more they feel that they are being punished for lapses the less commitment they will have. Punishment is something that is imposed; consequences are something they bring on themselves. You must be very clear in your own mind about the difference.

Tip 6 **State your expectations clearly and often.**

Students shouldn't be surprised your expectations, so you need to be consistent and repetitive. Continually remind them when they are doing what you want them to do. Don't just cross your fingers and hope that they will carry on behaving as you wish. Tell them repeatedly that they are doing really well and this is what you want and it's great!

If you let certain behaviours slide once or twice, then be prepared for an encore. Be a velvet-covered brick. Be soft and approachable on the outside but firm and solid underneath. Ideally, your expectations will turn into an external presence that is not affected by



Tip 7 **Laugh... a Lot**



One of the best ways to manage your classroom is to laugh -a *lot*. Laugh at yourself but with your students. You'll make lots of mistakes. We know because we are still making them. No-one has it all worked out and we have never met anyone who does. Accept that and move on. Fill your classroom with laughter. Life will be easier. Promise.

Tip 8 **Ask for Help**

Accept that you need all the help you can get, we all do when we begin a new venture and learn new skills so be brave and realise that drawing on all the resources around you is the smart thing to do. Ask someone on your team, reach out to a veteran teacher on your campus or talk with your mentor. Find the person that never seems to have a problem in the classroom and ask to sit in and watch. They will be flattered and glad to help.

Tip 9 **Manage your own state and be the authority.**

The exertion of power comes from externally imposed rules. You have these in the school or college rules or regulations. However personal authority comes from within and is actually much more effective. Complying because others say you must do something is less impressive than doing something because the person in front of you absolutely believes in what they are saying and they have authority. Your students will commit to you because you have authority whereas they will only comply with the rules.



*Inspire Empower
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For more tips and help with Classroom management see our

'Its All about the Learning' Programme

For full details of our courses and resources visit our website or call to discuss your requirements

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We look forward to hearing from you soon



Tip 10
Keep calm and carry on!

Pay attention to all your small victories and build on them. Notice what doesn't work, resolve to leave it behind and move on - swiftly. Tomorrow is another day and the great thing about students is they are never the same as the day before because they are learning! Don't hold their behaviour today against them tomorrow and don't hold your behaviour today against yourself. Go home, relax, soak in a warm bath, tell those you love, you love them and recharge your batteries.

Those things your students' value – your time, attention, fairness, compassion and humour are yours to give and renewable resources after a good night's sleep.

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