



8 Tips for Better Classroom Management

How do the best teachers manage their classrooms for effective learning? Here are eight tips that work at every level:

- 1 Learn and use students' names.** Students need to know that their teachers know who they are. Learning and using students' names shows respect and makes human connections. Also let students know how to address you.
- 2 Set high expectations.** Include students in the process of setting high expectations so that they know what to do and how to perform responsibly. Students who become "invested" in the process will perform better than those who are simply told what is expected.
- 3 Model respectful language and action.** Say, "Please take your seats now," rather than, "Sit down!" Showing students how to use polite language demonstrates respect for students, and you can expect respect from them in return. Likewise, when you pass out books or papers, hand them to students rather than simply dropping materials on their desks.
- 4 Confront bad behavior.** Don't ignore it. Calmly take the misbehaving student aside, state the bad behavior, and tell the student how to behave correctly. Avoid embarrassing students in front of their peers as doing so can build resentment and increase, rather than extinguish, bad behavior.
- 5 Establish freedom within organization.** Structure classroom activities so that students can make learning choices. Students need to be able to go about learning in ways best suited to their individual needs. Set reasonable limits, but allow students to network on task, consult resources, and otherwise engage in activities that will enhance their learning.
- 6 Use differentiated instruction.** Plan lessons that incorporate ways for students to learn according to their strengths, whether they are visual-auditory, linguistic-logical, or tactile-kinesthetic learners. There is no "one best way" to learn. Engaging multiple styles (or "intelligences") will ensure that no student is left out. Rigid assignments and unmet learning needs lead students to disengage or act out.
- 7 Make the learning space visually inviting.** Use models of excellence, such as posters about famous writers, scientists, or other leading figures. Display student work. Make visible connections with high expectations, and validate student performance by putting students' efforts on public display.
- 8 Use positive humor.** Learning is serious business, but a sense of humor can go a long way toward making learning easier by decreasing tension. Avoid sarcasm or making anyone the brunt of a joke. Keep the humor positive. Learning can and should be fun. — *Donovan R. Walling*

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