



My Classroom Management Plan - Angela Jurgensen

My approach to management has become one of the most important points of my practice. I have learned that teaching is classroom management; this became very clear throughout all my experiences teaching. But how to ensure that a classroom filled with unique individuals, each with unique interests, will stop and focus on what I am trying to teach?

It is important to set the students up for success by giving them specific expectations. Without letting the students know what is needed from them from the get-go, it becomes impossible to expect good behaviour, attention and compliance. A few guidelines need to be implemented to ensure students will enjoy a learning environment free of distractions.

- *Classroom Routines*

Attendance is taken in the beginning of class. Sometimes, students will take ten to fifteen minutes to write in their journals. Breaks are encouraged, usually about midway through the lesson, where students can stretch and walk-around. If a student needs to go to the washroom or pick up a book from the locker, they can ask me, but I never let more than three students out at a time. Since class time is tight, I will remind students of what is expected before each activity starts, so there is no confusion.

Moving around within the classroom is not allowed, unless there is a group project going on or during a stretch break. Movement should be controlled and focused on work.

- *Classroom Rules*

The most important guideline to follow is having routines, but also rules that teach students how time is used during a lesson. There is my time, when I expect everyone to listen; no music devices, no cell phones, no distractions, no side conversations, and all eyes on me. There is group work time, when the students can talk to each other and work together. Then there is focused work time, when the students can listen to music on their iPod while working on a worksheet or reading from the book; this can be done in pairs or by themselves, but keeping the noise to a minimum.

To define when the use of cell-phones is appropriate, I will have a sign saying “no electronics” on one side and “music allowed” on the other side.

Cell phone use for anything besides music is generally not allowed. I am the type of person who dislikes when people are texting or doing things on their cell while talking to me, and so I do not allow this in my classroom, unless we had a specific “cell-phone” search day in which students would use their cell phones to find facts in the internet. Otherwise, I would rather not compete with electronics. The sign at the front, clearly defining when it is appropriate to use electronics, will make the rules clearer for everyone.

Food should not be allowed in some classrooms, such as science labs, arts or pottery: in the science lab, there are all kinds of chemicals and biological matter on the tables. This could contaminate food, and students should be discouraged from touching food while at the class. In arts, foods and drinks at the table can be disastrous for artwork, and it must not be allowed. In other classes, such as Spanish and English, food should be allowed as needed.

- *Classroom Set-Up*

To use time properly, I am absolutely prepared for my lesson before class starts. I write on the board or on a slide everything that will happen during class, so students know what to expect. Most materials are brought home by the students, while art materials are often kept in the art room; in case students forgot materials, I have extra materials (pens, pencils, paper, etc) on the front and dispense them as needed. If any handouts need to be dispersed, I ask one of the students to distribute these. Students will be moved around if they need to be separated to ensure learning-inductive behaviour.

- *Classroom Behaviour and Strategies*

Another guideline I focus on is appropriate behaviour. Sometimes, even good students will misbehave if allowed. To avoid this, I keep a tight grip on misbehaviour and keep the activities calm and cohesive. To stop unwanted behaviour, I use the bumps theory, as well as simply calling out their names. I use the positive aspects of the Bumps theory (such as greeting students as they come in, proximity, being respectful and polite and warm towards the students) naturally during my classes.

I will also write names on the board on a particularly bad day. I never get upset or angry; I can be stern, but my meter always goes back to zero every morning, and the students can tell that there are never any hard feelings.

If a student's behaviour becomes too distracting for the class, I may ask the student to step outside and wait for me there. If the behavior is far too disrespectful and distracting, and if it makes it harder for me to teach the class, I may instruct the student to go to the back room and work through a separate worksheet for the remainder of the class.

I also encourage good behaviour by making personal connections and remain always energetic and animated throughout class. I have developed something called "Mrs.J's Moolah" inspired by one of my professors's incentive fake money. Every time students answer something really well, or are behaving particularly nicely, they get a Moolah. In the last week of school, students can use their Moolah to buy things from a big box of fun. Ninth graders love this method of positive reinforcement.

To get student's attention during class, I use several techniques, such as saying random words, talking in a high pitch voice, clapping, counting back from three, whistling, saying "Ladies and gentlemen" and tapping the table with my knuckle.

- *Classroom Tasks*

Attendance is taken every day as soon as class starts and put on Jupiter grades. If a student comes in late, this is recorded on Jupiter grades as well. Once class is halfway over, I can finalize Jupiter grades and send it to the office.

Before leaving, students must collect all material, clean up everything and place their chairs on top of the table. Art students must place their sketchbook inside their designated drawer. All borrowed material is to be returned.

- *Conclusion*

This classroom management is by no means complete; every day I teach, I learn new things. There are so many different scenarios that could happen, and I have only scratched the surface with this paper. I find that something that worked one day may not work the next day, and something that works with one group may not work with the next, and so a teacher must be prepared to constantly adapt and roll with the punches.

I am a creative person, and would like to have students become engaged and animated during class. For me, the two words I would like to imagine when I am teaching a class are “controlled chaos”; however, for some classrooms, the “chaos” part is simply too much. So, I focus on “control.” Having control of the classroom, having a class that behaves well and listens, actually allows me to be the creative teacher I want to be. For this reason, I take classroom management very seriously.

