

# Classroom Management

by

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background:

Throughout centuries, classroom management has been an issue in all classrooms. The first few minutes, days and weeks are in fact, crucial in setting the tone for an effective classroom. This historical fact is out in practical experience and grounded into scientific evidence. There are many strategies to choose from when thinking about how to manage your own classroom. Some may work for you, and some may not. It is crucial as a teacher to find what is best for you and your students. According to Jones, Jones, & Vermette, 2013, there is no "quick fix" or set of techniques that will instantly prevent or solve all classroom issues that arise. We recognize that classroom management is largely based on teacher decision making, relationship building, and teacher expectations. No matter how knowledgeable of a teacher you are, it does not mean that you can manage pupils and conduct lessons without disruptions throughout the day. Research shows that teachers struggle with classroom management issues largely in the first couple of years in the profession (Polat, Kaya, & Akdag, 2013). Classroom management can be problematic even for experienced teachers due to rapid cultural changes. It has been indicated that teachers tend to leave the profession in the first three years due to discipline problems. There are certain situations or lessons that get out of control due to students in the classroom misbehaving. At the end of each day, the teacher should reflect on their own teaching first before looking at student behaviors for the reasons of successful or failed lessons. Such questions a professional teacher should ask: Was the lesson carefully planned so that the students knew the objective and their learning goal? Did the lesson flow naturally from the opening to the closure? If not, where was the breakdown? This could be a cause of the students getting off track. Was your lesson engaging? It is extremely important to keep the children

interested in what is being taught and to play an active role in the lesson. Give praise to the students whenever they participate, whether the answer is right or wrong. This also helps keep them engaged and part of the lesson. If they feel as though they have no role in their own learning, they will become disengaged and most likely look to find another way to entertain oneself. It is this behavior that leads into disruption of the lesson and can ultimately destroy the learning process. The answers to these questions will give the teacher an idea of how to plan future lessons that can help alleviate classroom management issues during important learning time.

**Rationale:**

Working in the Rochester City School District for the last 6 years, I have come across many behavioral issues in the classroom. There are some I have been able to resolve and some that I haven't been able to resolve. There many different strategies out in the world, with research showing some positive effects and some showing negative or no effects on the student's behavior. This research will provide you with classroom strategies that teachers can incorporate into your own classrooms. This research will also discuss the positives and negatives of those classroom management strategies. Lastly, you will read on the outcomes of individual students and whole group classroom management plans.

**Research Questions:**

1. What are current classroom management strategies that have been proven to work?
2. What do different theories say about classroom management?
3. Do all classroom management strategies work on all students?
4. What are the positive and negative effects of different classroom management strategies?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction:**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, classroom management was much easier. They would go by the rule that a student should be unheard unless they were called upon. The teacher was looked at as a strict disciplinary figure that taught the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Research by Roskos & Neuman (2012) supports children were expected to follow the Golden Rule-courtesy, fairness, and good manners. If this rule was not followed, the student should expect to be hit by a hickory stick.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new research came out that showed that different classroom strategies work for different individuals. Having good classroom management, during this time, meant that the teacher had “withitness,” overlapping, effective transitioning, and challenging lessons. Through extensive research, it was found that classroom management rated number 1 in terms of impact on student achievement (reading, not excepted) (Roskos & Neuman, 2012).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century introduces four new categories that every teacher needs to know and be able to execute in order to have successful management inside his/her classroom. The first is that the rules and procedures need to be set. Next, being able to supply disciplinary interventions is essential. The third category is having a firm understanding of the importance of teacher-student relationships. Lastly, a good mental set is needed in order to execute successful management.

## **Discipline Models:**

Classroom discipline is an essential element when it comes to classroom management. In education, discipline means modeling the expected behaviors for students and eliminating the unwanted behaviors, and also using reward and punishment when needed (Polat, Kaya, & Akdag, 2013). The students need to realize that they need to abide by the classroom rules every time they walk in the classroom. A lot of children's excuses for doing things are that they are allowed to do it at home. Numerous discipline models are proposed for classroom management, such as, Skinner Model of Discipline, Redl and Wattenberg Model, Canter's Assertive Discipline Model, Kounin' Group Management, Ginott Model, Dreikurs and Nelson's Social Discipline Model, Psycho-dynamic Model, Glasser's Control Theory, Berne's Social Development Model, and Thomas Gordon Model (Polat, Kaya, & Akdag, 2013).

The Skinner Model of Discipline is shaped by reinforcements. It is believed that if a student is rewarded for following the rules right off the bat, then that child will less likely be an issue in the classroom. Punishment will likely weaken the child's good behavior. This is depending on the individual child. There are children, that when you get in their face and yell at them, will continue the bad behavior or it may even cause the behavior to escalate. The reinforcement needs to begin, starting from the first day of school. Sometimes when you start the reinforcements later in the year, they may not work as well. The teacher may have "lost" the student for the year. Once introduced, it is imperative that the teacher sticks with the reinforcement on a consistent basis. Once the teacher believes that the student is beginning to constantly follow the rules, this is when the teacher should begin weaning off of the rewards or at least only provided them occasionally. These rewards fall into 4 different categories; Social, Graphic, Activity, and Tangible. Social reinforces are used by facial expressions, gestures, and

words. A simple smile can do a lot for children. A simple pat on the back or statements such as “Great Job!” and “Wow!” are different ways to reinforce positivity. Graphics are markings that show the student that he/she is doing a good job. These markings can be stickers, check marks, smiley faces, stamps, etc. Ask the students what his or her interests are and find stickers of those interests. This will really excite the child. Then, you can either put the stickers on the student’s hand, papers, or even on a behavior chart, showing that they are doing what they need to be doing. Activity reinforcements are any activity that a child can participate in at school. This may differ depending on the age of the student. Tangible reinforcements are real objects that students can earn throughout the day. These reinforcements could include food, toys, school materials, etc.

After reading “The Skinner Model of Discipline” I would say that I have mixed reviews on it. As a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, I am in favor of reinforcements at times. I do know that many of the teachers that I work with, including myself, like to give out different rewards for completing work or for following the directions in the classroom. The way that I see it though is that you don’t always want to give out rewards every time someone does something correct. You want to train the children to do what is asked just because they want to, not necessarily because they will earn a reward in the end. Give out reinforcements every now and then, and you will get an even more a surprised and excited reaction by your students.

The Redl and Wattenberg Model focuses on group dynamics, rather than individual behaviors. If you are already in the classroom, you know that managing the whole group is hard to manage. If you are not in the classroom, you will find out quickly. Generally, you will have around 20 children in your classroom, depending on what you teach and where you teach, and each child brings their own characteristics, personalities, emotions, etc. to the table. The teacher

needs not only to teach, but they need to constantly be watching and thinking about what is going on with the group. This thinking involves forming a first hunch, gathering facts, applying hidden factors, taking action, and being flexible. Group control can also be maintained by influence techniques. These techniques include supporting self-control, offering situational assistance, appraising reality, and invoking pleasure and pain. Self-control techniques are used to address the problem before it becomes worse. These techniques include eye contact, moving closer to the individual, encouragement, and planned ignoring. None of these techniques happen overnight.

After reading “The Redl and Wattenberg Model” I would say that I agree with what this model is saying. I am a teacher in the Rochester City School District and have a very diverse group of students every year. There is a mixture of ethnic groups, genders, academic levels, and personalities. As a teacher, you have to figure out how to manage everyone and meet their needs. A great way to get an idea of your group is to talk to each child’s teacher from the year before. Towards the end of the year, the teachers at my school have to fill out a card on every student stating behavior issues, gender, and academic levels. These cards are given to all of the children’s next year’s teachers. With this information, you can put these children in groups based on behavior, academic ability, or any way you would like. After this setup is complete, it is up to the teacher to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Canter’s Assertive Discipline model focuses on a direct and positive approach making teachers and student successful. Assertiveness and insistence are at the focus of Canter’s model. It is believed that teachers should insist on good behavior for all of their students. If a teacher fails, it is because they have failed to maintain the classroom discipline. Many teachers believe that if you teach in a very stern manner that it is inhumane to the students. Canter’s model also gets into the rights of the teachers and of the students in the classrooms. Teachers have the right

to establish a controlled and safe learning environment. They also have the right to expect good behavior from their students, and also receive help from administrators and parents when needed. Being assertive involves many things when being a teacher in the classroom. There is a time and place for this assertive behavior to come out. First, identify the expectations clearly. As a teacher, once you make up the expectations, you need to make sure that they are met by each and every student. If the teacher is clear with all the expectations, there is no reason why the students will not follow them. The use of a firm tone of voice is another behavior that should be used to take control of the classroom. Lastly, things like maintaining eye contact, non-verbal gestures, and following up with promises. Whether the promises are rewards or consequences, they should be followed through. There are 5 steps to this Assertive Discipline program that should be followed. The first step is to recognize and remove roadblocks. One roadblock entails the notion of the pessimistic expectation that all students behave badly. As a teacher, you should never think this. These notions should be replaced with more optimistic expectations. The second roadblock that teachers must recognize is the fact that, they themselves, can influence the student's behavior. Step 2 of the program is practice the use of response styles. Canter differentiates three styles of response that characterizes teacher's interactions with misbehaving students. The first style of response is called "The Non-Assertive Response." This style is where the teacher has given in to the students. Sometimes teachers have expectations and rules in the classroom, but then lets things slide when students go against them. This is easy to do because of everything that a teacher has to get through during the day. The second style of this program is named "The Hostile Response." This style causes a hostile environment. This is because there is a lot of sarcasm, threats, and yelling going on. Some teachers feel that these are the only ways to be in control in a classroom. Unknown to them, this style carries many bad side effects such as

hurting the students feelings, provoking disrespect from the student, and the desire to get even, to name a few. The third style is known as “The Assertive Response.” This is the type of style that should be practiced until it is natural. Teachers should continually insist that the students comply with the expectations. If they don’t, there are consequences. If they do, there will be rewards or positive benefits. The fourth style of this model is “Learning to set Limits.” Once inappropriate behavior has occurred, it must be made explicit. Consequences must be made right then and there. It is best to have the children come up with the consequences because this helps the students become more accountable for their actions. The last step of the model is “implementing a system of positive or favorable consequences.” Unlike the last step that was introduced, this step focuses more on the positives than the negatives. This step is extremely important for a more productive and happier classroom. Why would a child want to act appropriately if they are not being rewarded or recognized for it? Canter names some positive consequences that should work well in the classroom. The first is giving personal attention. Any positive personal response by a teacher is a great way to reward a child. A simple smile, short talks, greetings, compliments, or acknowledgements, are great ways of creating rapport with the student. Next suggestion is to write positive notes or make positive phone calls home to parents or guardians. There are too many times that teachers only write letters or make phone calls for when the student is doing something wrong. Also, parents are more likely to support the teachers when they receive more positive than negative responses. Special awards can be given out for doing something well in the classroom. These awards can be high achievement awards, math awards, behavior awards, or any other awards. These can be printed right off of the internet and will make the child feel extremely special and “cool.” These can be placed inside of the classrooms for the children to see, outside of the classroom for the school to see, or can be sent home to put on the refrigerator.

I do agree with Canter about being assertive to an extent. I believe that assertiveness and being stern should come out very heavy within the first few months of the school year. This lets the children know that the teacher is serious and will not accept foolishness in the classroom. Once the teacher feels as though the students realize who is in charge, then it is a good time to be a little easier on the child. The teachers themselves have to figure out how far to go with this. The teacher does not want to come across mean the whole year. They should want to get to the point of being able to joke and have fun with the children still realizing that there are rules and expectations in the classroom. I laughed at Canter's quote of "If the teacher is clear with all the expectations, there is no reason why the students will not follow them." For anyone who has been in the classroom, you will find out that this is not true in all cases.

Kounin's Group management Model (Kounin, 1977) is a great discipline model for your classroom. Jacob Kounin is a theorist that focuses on student behavior through instructional management. This model introduces what is called the "Ripple Effect." This is when one student does something, the others will follow along. As long as the students are doing what they are told to do, they will follow each other throughout the day. Once one child gets off, it is more likely for the "Ripple Effect" to happen in a negative way. Kounin believed that in order for a teacher to have an effective connection between management and teaching, there needed to be a good Lesson Movement. Lesson Movement is achieved through withitness, overlapping, momentum, smoothness, and group focus. Withitness is the ability to scan the classroom, even when you are busy doing something else. Even if you don't truly see everything going on, the kids will see the teacher looking around. Overlapping is the ability to conduct a new topic or lesson while, at the same time, preventing bad behavior. Momentum is having the ability to have a nice flow to your lesson. Sometimes things may come up, whether it's inappropriate behavior or some other

distraction, and the teacher must still go on with the lesson. Smoothness can go along with momentum. Being able to have a smooth lesson without distractions is imperative. Another part of smoothness is that the teacher is well planned for the day. It is very obvious when a teacher is not ready or planned for his or her lesson. The lesson will be very choppy and jump from topic to topic without any transitions or meaning. The last part of Lesson Movement is the group focus. Keep all of your children interested and engaged is one of the hardest things to do as a teacher. When children get bored, they tend to show it. This will sometimes result in inappropriate behavior. Coming up with strategies to get full participation by the whole class is essential. This way whenever the teacher asks a question, everyone in the room has to be thinking because they might get called on. A lot of the time, the only people that are thinking are the few students in the classroom that have their hands raised. Generally you will find that the same hands are going up after each question.

Kounin brings up some good points in his discipline model. The first point that I see a lot while I am teaching is the “Ripple Effect” that he mentions. I would assume that you would see this mostly in the elementary grades since the children are still very immature. The “Ripple Effect” is very important to stop before it happens, or else things can get very chaotic. Kounin also brings up some key words, such as Lesson Movement, Withitness, Momentum, and Smoothness. These are all very important to have as a teacher. To summarize all of these words, basically a teacher needs to be able to look around the classroom at all times, and needs to be able to conduct lessons that are well thought out and engaging. This will lead to less negative behavior in the classroom.

Haim Ginott is another classroom management theorist that came up with his own model. Ginott has the notion that there are no unacceptable children, there are only unacceptable

behaviors. Much of what Ginott believes in is the notion of saying “I” statements, instead of “You” statements. An “I” statement is a statement that does not point out or criticize an individual child. It addresses the whole group. For an example, if someone is talking in the classroom while a lesson is going on, the teacher would say “I hear talking going on while I am teaching”, instead of “Jordan, Stop Talking!” Ginott believes that teachers sometimes talk too much and do not give the students enough time to share their own ideas. He believes that it is important to include everyone in classroom conversations in order for some type of evaluation process. According to Ginott, punishment should be avoided and praise should be given. Punishment is counter-proactive because once it is over, the student feels that they have suffered the consequence and are now able to repeat it again.

Ginott’s model of classroom management focuses mainly on the “I” statement, instead of the “You” statement. This is something that I have tried hard to accomplish this year. A lot of the time I was tell the whole class that I hear talking going on, and I can see the kids who are talking most of the time will stop. This isn’t always the case though and then I feel myself reverting back to the “You” statement and calling out the individual child that is talking.

Dreikurs and Nelson’s Social Discipline Model is a model based on four principles; Humans are social beings and their basic motivation is to belong, All behavior has a purpose, Humans are decision-making organisms, and Humans only perceive reality and this perception may be mistaken or biased. Dreikurs believed more in encouragement and natural consequences rather than having the child receive a reward or punishment. Dreikurs believed that children behaved a certain way for a purpose and the teacher must understand these four purposes or goals that the child has in mind. The first goal of the child is the “Attention Getting” technique. This misbehavior can easily be conquered by the teacher in the classroom. Minimizing the

attention or planned ignoring is one technique to use. If the child is not getting the attention that he or she wants, then they will usually stop what they are doing. Distract the student by asking them a question. This may get their mind off of the negative behavior and may allow for them to focus on what is being taught in the classroom. Recognizing appropriate behavior is another technique that can be used by the classroom teacher. This is where the teacher does not give attention to the bad behavior, but focuses more on the good behavior going on in the classroom. The second and third goal of the child may be what is called “Seeking Power and Control” and “Seeking Revenge.” He put these two goals together because they are expressed to use the same technique, which is to apply a consequence or use of a time-out. The last goal that the child might be after is known as “Displaying Inadequacy.” There are many techniques for the teacher to use in the case, according to Dreikurs. One technique would be to modify instructional methods or use Differentiated Instruction. The teacher may also teach that mistakes are okay to try and build the student’s confidence. Recognizing achievement is very important as a teacher. There is nothing more important to a child than to hear that he or she did a good job.

I do agree with Dreikurs and Nelson, that all behavior has a purpose. Sometimes I feel as though that the behavior is “Attention Getting,” as mentioned in this model, and sometimes I believe it is out of frustration. Distracting the student’s negative behavior by asking them a question or even having them run an errand or pass out papers is a great technique that I use in my classroom. Most of the time this works very well! Dreikurs and Nelson mention Differentiated Instruction. This is becoming bigger and bigger every year that I have taught. It makes sense though. All of the children that sit in your classroom each and every day have different needs and abilities, so why would you teach them the same or give them the same work.

You wouldn't! You can't if you want them to succeed. So as a teacher, it is very important to differentiate teaching styles, grouping, assignments, and many other aspects throughout the day.

The Glasser's Control Theory states that a person's behavior in the classroom is inspired by what that person wants or needs at that particular time, not an outside stimulus. Glasser believes in sharing classroom meetings to deal with any issues including rules, behavior, and discipline. Glasser points out that children are social and like the support and interest of others. This can be handled by placing them in groups or what states as small teams. When children are in groups, there is a sense of belonging for them. This gives both the stronger students the opportunity to share their ideas and help the weaker students, and for the weaker students to share their thoughts which will be accepted and seen as beneficial. This stresses the idea that two heads are better than one.

Glasser's Control Theory focuses on putting your students in groups or teams when completing an assignment or answering a question that has been asked. There are pros and cons to this theory though. In order to get rid of the cons, the teacher must spend a lot of time teaching the students how to work in groups. Groups are very beneficial for many reasons. First, it allows children to learn how to work with others or in a team. Most jobs entitle you to work with someone or as a team, so it is essential that you teach the children how to do this while they are young. Second, the idea of "two heads are better than one" comes into play. Every child knows something different than another. Therefore, every child can teach another something that they didn't already know. The "cons" that I mentioned earlier would be that sometimes when you put children into groups, they love to talk about things that have nothing to do with the assignment. The other case may be that one or two children do all the work while the third sits there and copies. For how I set up my groups so that it is fair and random is by opening up the

“randomized grouping” chart on the Smart Board. You input all of your student’s names on the chart and then hit a button and it randomly groups them. You can make it for how many groups you want and for how many children in each group. Great set up so that no one is left out and they don’t argue over who is partners with who.

The Thomas Gordon Model approach focuses on the importance of developing beneficial relationships. Dr. Gordon does not approve of the traditional models that offer rewards and punishment because it does not provide intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when the students want to learn because they want to become smarter, not in order to earn rewards. Dr. Gordon would rather focus on resolving conflicts that will help build student/teacher relationships and student/peer relationships. Dr. Gordon realizes that every individual in the world has their own personalities, values, and needs. This will sometimes cause conflict between two or more students. Instead of arguing or fighting over a conflict, Dr. Gordon expresses the importance of open communication that is full of acceptance and understanding between the parties involved. Dr. Gordon created what is called a “Behavior Window” for when conflicts arise. The first step of the “Behavior Window” is to find out who owns the issue and how it can be solved. Once someone has owned it, this is where the teacher becomes engaged in active listening. This is important because this is where the teacher shows that they care about the students and their situation. They will listen to the conflict, and then report back to the student. The second step is known as the “I-Message.” This is where the teacher initiates the conversation by explaining his/her feelings to the student. The last step is known as the “No-Lose Conflict Resolution.” This is where the teacher will come up with a resolution that is in the best interest of the students in the conflict.

I like the idea of Dr. Gordon's "Behavior Window" model. This sounds like a great way to diffuse issues that arise in the classroom. Chances are it will not stop all issues, but it's a great way to start. Much of the time, I find myself punishing the child by making him/her change her color on the behavior chart or by making phone calls home. I believe that this model is nice because it wants you to have a conversation with the student so that the student knows that you care and that you are listening to what they have to say. The last part of the model is to come up with the resolution. This is great because it helps the child understand what he/she can do next time the issue may occur.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, after researching various theories about classroom management it seems to all come down to 3 different areas where the theories are alike and not alike; Consequences vs. Punishment, Intrinsic Motivation vs. Extrinsic Motivation, and Social Rewards.

It seems as though the words "punishment" and "consequences" come up in almost all of the theories. According to Responsive Classroom Newsletter, punishment is to enforce compliance with rules by using external controls or authoritarian discipline, which often leads to anger. Consequences help children develop internal understanding, self-control, and the desire to follow rules. It is a common rule by all of these theorists that "punishment" should be avoided. When a teacher provides a punishment, it usually never makes anything better or breaks the bad behavior. Consequences are believed to work for a child that is not following the rules. These would be less of yelling and embarrassing the child, and more of sitting down and talking with the child. This gives the student and teacher more of one on one time to find out what is going wrong and how it can be fixed.

The next topic that continued to come up is “Intrinsic Motivation” vs. “Extrinsic Motivation.” Intrinsic Motivation is where the student acts appropriately and follows the rules because they want to be a good student. They want to listen and learn to the best of their abilities. Extrinsic Motivation is where the student acts appropriately in order to receive some type of reward. As a teacher for the last 6 years, I am finding this to be difficult to control sometimes. Teachers always want their students to “want” to learn for the sake of becoming smarter. At certain ages, children just don’t care enough yet and will only work if they get some type of reward. These theorists believe that “Intrinsic Motivation” is the way that these children should learn. I agree with this because as the children grow older, they won’t always be receiving rewards for working. The theorists do agree on giving one type of reward, and that brings me to my next topic.

The next topic that the theorist agreed upon is the idea of “Social Rewards.” As I was reading the literature, this topic kept on coming up. Social Rewards are praises for doing a good job in the class room. Social Rewards that came up most often were eye contact, gestures, verbal praise, and smiling. These rewards will allow the child to have a good feeling about themselves and will want to continue to behave appropriately.

## **Components of Classroom Management:**

According to Wolk (2003), student-teacher relationships are the single most important component of classroom management and an essential part of creating a highly effective community of learners. Such relationships manifest themselves in every aspect of the classroom, from the curriculum to the choice of teaching methods. These relationships provide emotional security for some children, and serve as models for social interaction.

According to Englehart (2012), mental set includes two components. The first is “withitness,” which is where a teacher can see the whole classroom, no matter what he or she is doing. The teacher’s eyes are always up and watching what is going on. This way the teacher will have the ability to stop anything before it may happen or before it erupts. Here is a case of being more proactive instead of reactive, will make it much easier on the teacher. This will come with knowing the children in the classroom. To go along with having “withitness,” a teacher needs to have a healthy emotional objectivity. This is explained by not taking things too personal or holding grudges with your students.

According to Ediger, good classroom managers are well prepared and possess foresight to avoid pupil misbehavior. Thus in grouping for instruction, pupils need to move their chairs quietly and orderly from one group to the next method of arranging pupils for instruction. Some students love to make as much noise as they can, so they push their chair in as hard as they can in order to get attention. This alone can take everyone’s attention off of the task at hand. It is the teacher’s responsibility to teach each student how to complete this task effectively and efficiently. Teaching students to pick up their chairs and move them in will get rid of all the smashing and loud noise that pushing in a chair can cause. Another way around getting rid of

pushing a chair in and having it make noises, is by placing tennis balls on the bottoms of each chair leg. This way, the chair slides easily and quietly when it is time for the student to move from their desk. Peer interaction is extremely important for children to experience. They can learn a lot from each other and have fun doing it. Now if you think that you can just tell the kids to go get a partner and then let them go off and complete their assignment, then you are dreaming. It is a lot more complicated than you may think, and will take a lot of direction and time to perfect this. Letting students select their own partners can sometimes be a bad thing. As the teacher, you will know whether or not certain children can work with each other. The teacher has to decide whether or not to have heterogeneous or homogeneous groupings. Personally I enjoy using the Popsicle stick method, which provides randomized grouping. Place these Popsicle sticks inside of a box or container and pick names out of it. Simple as that! This way, it is random, and they will usually get to work with a different partner every time.

According to Jones, Jones, & Vermette, 2013, Teachers should always begin with subtle redirections, including non-verbal prompts and proximity, and gradually increase the intensity of the intervention if needed. Non-verbal cues are great way to keep the classroom nice and quiet. I remember when I was just starting out as a teacher, I would go home pulling my hair out and being without a voice because of yelling so much throughout the day. Now with non-verbal cues, I find that I don't go home feeling this way anymore. Non-verbal cues can quiet down a class, allow students to know that they are doing something wrong, or even instruct a class to do something, all without even saying one word. There are many facial movements, body postures and other non-verbal signals that are enough to correct inappropriate, off task behavior. An example would be to count down from 5 to 0 with your fingers. By the time you are at 0, the

class should be silent. Having a bell in the classroom can also be used as a great management tool. This can be used for transition periods or just to quiet down a class.

According to Heitin (2013), Co-Teaching is a method of instruction in which a general educator and special educator teacher together in one classroom. It is the idea that the general education teacher teaches the content, while the special education teacher makes sure that the content is being understood by all of the children in the classroom. The process of Co-teaching needs to start from the top, the Principal. It is the Principals job to setup on of the most important factors in the co-teaching process, which is scheduling. In the beginning of the year, the principal gathers up both teachers that will be teaching together and they all come to an agreement on the scheduling process. This process is not set in stone, and may change throughout the year. That is fine as long as both teachers are flexible and are willing to accept change.

How a co-teaching classroom is determined, is also in the hands of the administration. Much of the time, it is easy to say that the children with disabilities and the lower performing children should go into the co-teaching classroom. This can cause great chaos. For instance, in my school, I believe that this is the case for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade integrated classroom. There is nothing but behavior issues going on in this classroom day in and day out. There is not a lot of teaching and learning going on for much of the day. Even though there are two teachers in the classroom, it is too much for either of them to handle. It is recommended that an integrated classroom be made up of one-third of the special education students and the rest should be made up of a heterogeneous mixture, instead of lower academic students. Co-teaching should be a classroom of equal partnership. Research shows, and I have personally seen, too many classrooms falling into the “one teach, one assist” process. Generally, this is where the general education teacher

teaches, and the special education teacher walks around and makes sure that the children are working and that there are no behavioral issues going to arise.

According to Garrett (2012), classroom management is more than a bag of tricks. This article stresses on the fact that many new teachers and some veteran teachers rely on extrinsic-reward based systems. Many prospective teachers go into an interview and want to talk about their classroom management strategies are all about bribes. This does not impress the interviewer because that is not really what they want out of a teacher. They want a teacher that believes in the intrinsic-reward based system, which is getting the children to behave without a “bag of tricks.” Having children want to learn and want to behave because it is the rule of the classroom and the school. The ultimate question that is being asked by many prospective teachers and full time teachers is how to manage a class without these bribes. The fact that many do not know the answer to this question partly has to do with the lack of training in the educational programs that are offered. The thought that comes out of this notion is that classroom management can’t be taught. It comes through experience. This is not true. Classroom management includes 5 actions that must be mastered. According the Garrett (2012), they include: 1) organizing the physical environment; 2) creating rules and routines; 3) establishing caring relationships; 4) planning and implementing engaging instruction; and 5) addressing discipline issues. As long as teachers follow these actions, they will minimize the amount of misbehavior in the classroom.

Wickner (2013) refers to a book that is titled “From Discipline to Culturally Responsive Engagement: 45 Classroom Management Strategies” by Laura E. Pinto. The book designed around two diagrams of reflective practice. The first diagram is called the “Cycle of Classroom Management” and is referred to as a planning tool. The cycle is made up of three strategies: 1) Follow up; 2) Proactive; and 3) Immediate. Each of the strategies poses a question for the

teacher to ask themselves as apart of reflection. Follow up poses the question of “What can or will you do after the positive or negative student reaction or behavior?” Proactive poses the question of “What do you have in place ahead of time to encourage students to be motivated, engaged, and on task?” Immediate poses the question of “What do you do at the time you spot positive or negative student reaction or behavior? What Obligations do you have?” The second diagram is called the “Classroom-Management Spectrum.” There are three positions on this spectrum: 1) Discipline Focus; 2) Reward-And-Routine Focus; and 3) Engagement Focus. The “Discipline Focus” position is when the teacher relies on rules, consequences, and a control-based approach. The “Reward-And-Routine Focus” position relies on positive reinforcements instead of discipline. The “Engagement Focus” position is centered around the fact that each student will be engaged in learning activities throughout the school day, which will minimize bad behavior in the classroom. Wicker (2013) also gets into Pinto’s Classroom Management Strategies that I found interesting and will incorporate into my own classroom. “Retroactive rules” is a strategy that I believe would work well and allow the students to be more responsible for what goes on in the classroom. Students are in charge of identifying the issues that are going on and then creating rules that will address those issues. “Mental Set and Emotional Regulation” is establishing strategies that will allow for the children to stay at ease, even when a difficult circumstance comes into play. “Getting Students’ Attention” is a strategy that gets the children active and engaged. This can be done using a “Give me Five” routine where the teacher holds up there hand and says “Give me Five,” and the children do the same. Then they all count down together. They can also use clapping patterns where the teacher initiates a certain clap pattern and then the students have to clap the same pattern.

## Chapter 3: Interviews

### Interviews:

#### Interview Questions

1. What are your classroom management strategies?
2. What classroom management strategies have you tried that just don't work?
3. What are some classroom management strategies that you find work for a couple students, but not the rest of the group?
4. Why would some management strategies work for certain children one day, but not the next day?
5. Why do teachers feel that certain strategies work and other teachers don't?

#### Permission to Cite

- I spoke with Jon and he has permission to quote me – Mary Ann Bailey
- I spoke with Jon and he has permission to quote me – Gina Cordaro
- I spoke with Jon and he has permission to quote me – Sheila LaFond
- I spoke with Jon and he has permission to quote me – Kimberly Alfieri

As a part of my original research, I interviewed 4 teachers from the school that I am employed with. I asked each of the 4 teachers the same five questions: What are your classroom management strategies? What classroom management strategies have you tried that just don't work? What are some classroom management strategies that you find work for a couple students, but not the rest of the group? Why would some management strategies work for certain children one day, but not the next day? Why do teachers feel that certain strategies work and other teachers don't?

Beginning my interview, I first interviewed Mary Ann Bailey, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade Special Education teacher. When asked what her classroom management strategies are she replied with, "We follow the STARS expectations. There is a lot of problem-solving, teaching the first

graders how to cooperate with each other, respect each other, apologize to each other, and show kindness. We have family meetings. I use the words “choice” and “consequence” a lot. We have the green/yellow/red behavior cards; they change throughout the day and the students’ goal is to go home on “green”. Some children have success charts that are completed and sent home. Agendas have either green smiley faces yellow faces, or red frowny faces. There is opportunity for a lot of movement. There is a lot of adult movement and supervision. We try to maintain a calm classroom with consistent expectations and consequences, and keep our voices low. Rituals and routines are taught, practiced, and frequently reviewed. Each day is a new day, and behavior from the day before is not thrown in a child’s face. Last, parent cooperation is vital. Children cooperate more when they know their parents expect them to and that there will be parent phone calls if they don’t.”

When asked what classroom management strategies have you tried that just don’t work, she replied with, “For the younger children peer pressure does not seem to work well. They don’t seem to have the ability yet to correct someone else’s behavior. Also, reprimanding the entire class for the behavior of just a few does not seem to affect the children in a positive way. Those responsible have little regret.”

When asked what were her classroom management strategies that she finds that work for a couple students, but not the rest of the group, she replied with, “Some children simply need a calm reminder of classroom expectations, or a visual or verbal prompt or reminder. Some need to be seated near an adult at all times. Others may need to wear a weighted vest or compression vest for sensory and attention issues, and we may have to distribute “fidgets” to hold so that still others can focus more easily. It’s not so much what works and doesn’t work as much as it’s

what certain children need. In rare instances a child has to be removed to an area without an audience until he or she can show the proper behavior.”

When asked why some management strategies work for certain children one day, but not the next day, she replied, “There are many variables: is the child taking his/her medication? Is there a problem at home? Is the child tired or unwell? Has there been a change in residence? Is the child worried about something?”

When asked why teachers feel that certain strategies work and other teachers don’t, she replied with, “A lot depends on the personalities and beliefs of the teacher. Some teachers have the expectation that children should be respectful and follow the rules all the time, regardless of the specific needs of the children. Others have a better understanding of children and where they are developmentally and what their academic and emotional needs are. Not all children need FBAs/BIPs, but many need behavior modification strategies used and monitored consistently during the day and some teachers are unwilling to go to all the trouble of developing a plan and using it with fidelity. Some teachers have a calm classroom demeanor by nature, and others are more excitable, so some strategies are more difficult for certain teachers to utilize. Some teachers give up too soon on a specific strategy if it doesn’t work fast enough.”

My second interview was with Gina Cordaro, a second grade General Education teacher. When asked what her classroom management strategies are she replied with, “The beginning of the year begins with a green, yellow and red sticks and name chart. Green is on task, yellow is warning and red requires some sort of timeout. By the middle of second grade this system just doesn’t work anymore. So basically the signs become more verbal. The kids will get 1-2 warnings, then possibly a time out to think about what happened and finally a call home.”

When asked what her classroom management strategies were that she finds that work for a couple students, but not the rest of the group, she replied with, “I guess I would have to say that the green, yellow and red sticks only work for the kids who behave and the 3 to 4 kids who really need it, will misbehave no matter what the system is.”

When asked why some management strategies work for certain children one day, but not the next day, she replied, “I think that really depends on if the teachers follow through with what they say are behaviors that are not appropriate. Students will figure out a teacher very quickly based on the fact if a teacher really follows through on what he/she says.”

When asked why teachers feel that certain strategies work and other teachers don’t, she replied with, “Experience! Every year is different and it really depends on the group of kids that you get.”

My third interview was with Sheila LaFond, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade General Education teacher. When asked what her classroom management strategies are she replied with a list that mentioned, “Time out in classroom/another classroom, Golden tickets, Counting, Quietly waiting, Pointing to directive signs: eyes on me, quiet, raise your hand, stop, Ignoring, Relocate the child, Loss of privileges, Immediate consequences/action/follow through.”

When asked what classroom management strategies have you tried that just don’t work, she replied with a list that mentioned, “Yelling, Back and forth reasoning, Threatening, Heavy sarcasm.”

When asked what her classroom management strategies were that she finds that work for a couple students, but not the rest of the group, she replied with a list that mentioned, “ I Don’t know. Yelling at, just isn’t effective.”

When asked why some management strategies work for certain children one day, but not the next day, she replied with a list that mentioned, “Moody, tired, angry, hungry, overwhelmed.”

When asked why teachers feel that certain strategies work and other teachers don’t, she replied with a list that mentioned, “I think it depends on the group dynamics and the triggers that get others elevated.”

My last interview was with Kimberly Alfieri, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade General Education teacher. When asked what her classroom management strategies are she replied with, “1<sup>st</sup>- warning, 2<sup>nd</sup> – conference w/ teacher & student in hall to discuss further consequences which may be: time out of room, office, loss of privileges or parent phone call. (This varies by student, situation and past experiences with student.) 3<sup>rd</sup>- immediate removal from room to office. (This is a last resort and only occurs usually once a year at most.)

When asked what classroom management strategies have you tried that just don’t work, she replied with, “None (however, I am not fond of the stickers or charts, sticks etc... I think behavior needs to be taught to be intrinsic rather than by rewards for a behavior that SHOULD be displayed.)”

When asked what her classroom management strategies were that she finds that work for a couple students, but not the rest of the group, she replied with, “None.”

When asked why some management strategies work for certain children one day, but not the next day, she replied, “A lot depends on what they came to school with. Ie: family issues, ill, bus problems, bullying issues, etc... If a student feels safe with a teacher and a level of trust and respect exists between them, the child will respond much differently than if those things don’t

exist. Also, personalities vary among students as they do with teachers. Often there is a personality conflict between the two and therefore the student will not want to comply.”

When asked why teachers feel that certain strategies work and other teachers don't, she replied with, “Much has to do with the teacher's relationship with the students. (see previous answer) Also, we don't all have the same relationships with the students or their parents...past teachers may have built trust and relationships with the family whereas a new teacher hasn't.”

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I have found that these 4 teachers have some common ways of managing a classroom and some differences. First, I noticed that the words “yelling” and “punishment” do not come up during the interview with these teachers. When they do come up, it was said that they don't work. Another commonality was the social rewards and verbal cues that the teachers talked about. One even got into talking about intrinsic motivation. These all go along the lines of what my literature review talked about. It is great to see all of the similarities between the theories and what is actually going on in the classroom as of today. The last similarity that I noticed was for the question of “why some strategies might work one day and not the next day?” The teachers agreed that much of this depends on the day that the child is having. Whether they are tired, sick, bored, etc. depends a lot on how the child responds to some of the management strategies. The only difference that I mainly noticed was the use of the management boards that have green, yellow, and red cards. I have spoken to many teachers about this board and many don't like it. Some say it works early on in a child's education and then doesn't work as they get older. Gina Cordaro mentions that it doesn't work past the middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I, however, have been teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade now for 3 years and it works just fine for me. It may not work for all

students, but it works for most. I think it all depends on the teacher and the consistency that it is being used.



## **Chapter 4: What Is Being Used Today?**

### **Introduction:**

After completing my literature review, I have to say, I have learned a lot about what the theorists have to say about classroom management. There are many theories out there about what worked and didn't work back in the early centuries, but what about today? Do the same strategies work with today's children? I have written about what one teacher says she experienced when changing schools and having to change her classroom management strategy. I have also included some programs that my school uses that have been very useful in helping me have the classroom management that I have today.

## **Blogs:**

Struggling in the area of classroom management is something that will occur, but will get better over time. According to Palmer (2013), she has learned a lot about classroom management since her first year as a teacher. In her article, she explained a power struggle with a student of hers, which she eventually lost. She was going back and forth with him in the classroom and ended up having him removed from the classroom. What she eventually found out was why this child was acting up, and it could have been easily resolved without an argument. The problem was that the student was getting frustrated that he was not being called on, and that was his only way of getting attention. Palmer discussed how she struggled a lot in her first years of teaching because she was overwhelmed and inexperienced. She also wrote that he was reactive most of the time, instead of proactive. Palmer commented on how she had left the school that she began her career at, and that it was a lot more structured. That school had the notion that a “One-Size-Fits-All” plan, where every teacher in the building had to use the same classroom management system was best. I, myself, would not like this plan. I have a feeling that most teachers these days would not like this set plan as well. Every teacher is different and has different strategies on how they go about managing their classroom. I just don’t see how it would work for everyone. Since that school, Palmer went to another school that uses the Responsive Classroom program. This plan encourages teachers to have meetings with their children and focuses on social-emotional issues. Palmer gave the example where if a student makes fun of another student, that they would get sent to another area to take a break, and then later on they would have a meeting to discuss what happened. The student would then be asked to apologize in person or to write a letter explaining that they were sorry. Palmer explained that she had come to realize that with the one-size-fits-all approach, she was reprimanding children

and having arguments with her students without even knowing what had set them off. Now that she is having meetings with them, she understands more about what sets some of these children off. Palmer mentions that she stresses the importance of having a “growth mindset.” This means that teachers and students can grow and improve their skills through hard work and effort. She knows and she lets her students know, that there will be mistakes that everyone will make. Each and every person that makes a mistake has to learn how to fix it, and most importantly, how to prevent it from happening again.

### **PBS:**



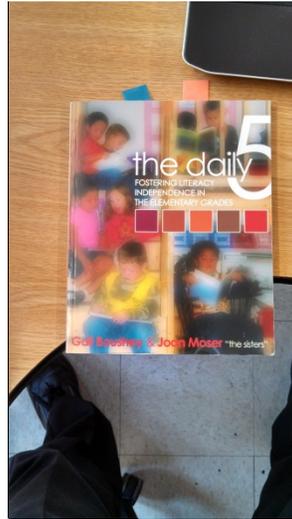
The Positive Behavior Supports model is becoming more popular as a type of intervention plan. The main goal of this model is to support a healthy and positive school/classroom environment. At the school that I teach at, we have a Positive Behavior Support model (PBS) known as “STARS.” This stands for **S**afety first, **T**ake responsibility, **A**ct as a team, **R**espect, and **S**how kindness. Each child knows this slogan and does their best to follow it. This is an intervention plan that is expected to be taught very early on in the school year. The areas that are subjected for the plan are the hallway, bathroom, cafeteria, busses, arrival, dismissal, and outside. The key to this plan is to, just like any other management plan,

stay consistent. When a teacher creates the rituals and routines, they better stick by them 100% or it can ruin the rest of their year. Students are smarter than most teachers think. If a student catches a teacher allowing something that they normally wouldn't allow, then that student will try and get away with it as well. This may cause the whole class to begin following along. Many new teachers have a tough time with consistency. They are not set and familiar with their own rules and consequences yet, so it is likely that they may not be very consistent. Plus, they are new to the curriculum and have a lot of other things on their mind. By teaching our expectations and consistently reinforcing them, we can keep more students in our classrooms, increase learning, and increase overall student success. It is the teachers' job to understand each rule for each area. It is the student's job to understand them and follow them day in and day out. The Positive Behavior Plan has been proven to work, but it will take time and practice. Some students will respond to this system right away, but some will not. Stay patient and consistent and everything will fall into place. Just like any plan, some parts of the plan may have to be changed or differentiated for certain students. This is up to the teacher, since the teacher will know his/her own students the best. Acknowledging the children who follow the STARS rules is a key feature of the system. Verbal feedback is one crucial piece of making this a successful plan. Anytime a child is displaying that he/she is a STARS student, an adult or student that sees this going on should let that student know that they were noticed. This makes that student feel good about what they just did. This in turn will usually result in the student displaying more positive gestures. There is also the acknowledge system of using gold and white tickets as a reward. The gold ticket is given out to individual students that are following the STARS expectations. If the student is caught being a STARS student, they will receive a gold ticket. Each teacher and his/her students can decide how they want to use these tickets in their classroom. For example, 5

tickets might get a student a free pass to eat lunch in the classroom or maybe a pass to eat with another teacher. 10 tickets may result in a free homework pass or a chance to pick out of the candy jar. The white ticket is different from the gold ticket because this ticket is for when the WHOLE class is displaying that they are STARS students. This might be given out if a teacher walks into a classroom and sees that the classroom is completely quiet with all of the students working hard and staying focused. This ticket might also be given if, when in the hallway, the whole class is standing in a straight line, with their hands to their side, and walking quietly to their destination. The white tickets have another feature to them. Whenever a class receives these white tickets, they will save them. At the end of each month, the class will count how many white tickets they received. If your class has the most white tickets for your grade level, your class will get to hold the STARS flag for that month. This way, the whole school can see that your students are STARS students, and this will make your class feel really good about themselves and make them want to work hard and show everyone why they earned that flag.



## Daily 5:



There is a program that my school incorporated into the reading and writing program that I find very helpful known as the “Daily 5.” This is a framework that aids in classroom management throughout the day. This program has 10 steps to teaching and learning independence. The more the students learn how to do things independently, the more work the teacher can get done, and the unlikeliness of there being distractions in the classroom. There are 5 literacy components that make up this framework; Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Work on Writing, and Word Work.

The first step to teaching and learning independence is to identify what is to be taught. As the teacher, whenever conducting a mini lesson, it is imperative to let the children know what they are going to be learning about. The next step is to set a purpose. This means that each child should know why they are learning or doing what is being taught in the classroom. This gives them a sense of urgency. Step three, is to brainstorm behaviors desired using an I-chart. It is usually never enough to just tell the children what they should be doing or what the rules are. Writing them down on an I-Chart (chart paper) and posting them on the wall, will give the

students something to refer to if they ever forget. Step four is extremely important and has the teacher model the most desirable behaviors. It is best to have the teacher and chosen students to model the behavior that should be used. Choosing the students that are likely to not follow the rules is smart to do here because it shows the class and themselves that they can do it. The next step is similar to the last step, but focuses on modeling the least desirable behaviors. This is where the teacher and students will show the class what they shouldn't be doing while they are working. Step six is to place the students around the room. This is to place the students at their seats or wherever they choose to read or write, depending on what the teacher wants them to work on at that point in time. Step seven is where the children practice their independence and begin to build their stamina. Stamina is how long the students can sit there and work without getting up, getting fidgety, getting unfocused or getting tired. Depending how old your children are, will depend on how long you want your children to last. It is important to start the building stamina for a small amount of time so that they feel accomplished. Then from that day forward, try and add more time to how long they should be sitting still for. Step eight tells the teacher to stay out of the way. Do not walk around the classroom or talk to any of the students while they are trying to build stamina. They do not need any distractions. Step nine tells the teacher to let off a quiet signal for the students to know that they are done, and to come back to the meeting spot. The final step is a group check in to report and talk about how everyone did. This is a great time to talk about the positives and negatives about what everyone in the class experienced.

The first component is known as "Read to Self." This component is having the children independently read. Giving your students the opportunity to independently read is crucial for the children to become better readers. In order for this to happen, there can't be any distractions in the classroom. This is where management and the "Daily 5" program come in to play. The first

step of this component is to read the whole time. Reading the whole time means just that. Once you begin reading, you should not stop until the teacher says that time is up. The next step is to stay in one spot. As soon as the students begin to read, they must not move. They need to be trained to not get up to get a tissue, go to the bathroom, ask a question, or anything else. They should be distracted by anything. Even as the teacher, you must leave them alone while they are reading. As the teacher, you can determine where the children can read in the classroom. You may also allow the children to give their input on where they would like to sit. Generally they will either sit at their desks, at a table, or on the floor anywhere in the classroom. The third step in this component is to read quietly. During this time, no one should be heard. The classroom should be silent. Everyone in the classroom should be able to hear a nail drop. The children should be taught to either read in their head or silently so only they themselves can hear what they are reading. The fourth step in this component is that they are working on is to get started right away. As soon as the teacher says that they need to begin reading to self, it is time to read! All of these steps will promote management and stamina they have throughout independent reading. The better stamina the children have, the less fidgety they will be throughout the day.

The next component is known as “Read to Someone.” This includes 5 different steps; Read the whole time, Stay in one spot, Work quietly, Sit EEK, and get started right away. These are great management tools for children to read to a partner. These must be gone over multiple times in order for the children to be accustomed to them. Now this is has been created as a part of a reading program and is told to use for reading stories, but this can be used anytime two or three students are working together. Reading the whole time means that once you sit down with your partner, both sets of eyes should not come off of the story, worksheet, or activity that he or she is working on. Stay in one spot means just that. Stay in one spot and do not move. Work

quietly is one of the toughest parts for the children to understand. That is why the teacher needs to teach what it means to have an inside voice or a level voice. The only person that should hear you speaking is the person sitting EEK with you. The acronym “EEK” stands for elbow to elbow, knee to knee. This is how students should be sitting while on the floor or wherever they plan on working. Getting started right away is the last step. As soon as you and your partner have found a spot to sit and stay, get started right away. This prevents them from goofing off and talking about what they did this past weekend or what show they will be watching that night.

The next component to this “Daily 5” program is called “Listen to Reading.” This component can be done in a few different ways. This may involve listening to the teacher read aloud or listening to some sort of technology. Sometimes classrooms will have a listening center. If so, there need to be steps that each student follows in order to have a well maintained and quiet work session. These steps will even work if students are watching instructional videos on a SMARTboard or any other viewing device. As a teacher, you may pick and choose from these steps that will best work for whatever it is you are working on. The first step would be to get out the materials that you will need. These should be taken out before you begin listening to a story or video. This way you are not taking anything out during the instruction, which may cause the student to miss important information. The next step is to listen to the whole story. Never just listen to half of the story or three quarters of the story. You might miss the most important part of the story. Step three may or may not have to do with what you are working on, but is still good to know about. This is where the student may listen to another story if there is time. If there is a book that the student is related that is related to what they are listening to, it is important that they follow along with the words and/ or pictures. The next few of steps you will be familiar with now, and are for the students to stay in one spot, listen quietly, and get started right away.

The final step of this component is for the children to put their materials away quickly and quietly.

The next component is working on another part of the literacy program and is known as “Work on Writing.” The student’s sense of urgency for this component is to become better writers. Again, there should not be any distractions during writing time, so these management steps will allow for the students to think properly and to put their thoughts on paper. These steps are much like “Read to Self,” but are intended for Writer’s Workshop or for any time the students have a writing assignment to complete. The first step is to write the whole time. Having distractions in the classroom while the students are writing can throw off student’s thoughts. The next step is to stay in one spot. Same as “Read to Self,” the children should be allowed to write wherever they are comfortable writing. When they get to their spot, they must work quietly. Finally, they must get started right away.

The final component of the “Daily 5” is known as “Word Work.” This component is a little more advanced and has more steps than the other components. “Word Work” focuses on managing the time when the students are working on spelling and vocabulary. Just like the other components, the teacher will make an I-Chart stating the rules. The rules of “Word Work” are the same as the other components. The general concept of all of these components is for there to be complete silence, building stamina and independence, and gaining knowledge. The materials that are used for this component are up to the teacher. Each grade level will be different for the materials that are chosen to be used.

## **Formal Assessments:**

An effective way to manage instruction revolves around flexible grouping that support learning instruction. This can be done by formal assessments given inside or outside of the classroom. It is a great idea to assess these children at the beginning of the year, starting with week one. This would be considered as a “baseline” for where they are at in the subject area that you are assessing. By giving this test at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, the teaching can see how much growth each child has had throughout the year. This can be done by progress monitoring throughout the year. My school uses the AIMSweb program in order to do this. AIMSweb is a credited and researched program that will help monitor the growth of your students Math and Reading skills. For example, if you would like to monitor your student’s fluency and comprehension skills, AIMSweb allows you to do that. For fluency, there is a measure known as R-CBM. R-CBM stands for Reading-Curriculum Measurement. R-CBM measures how fast a student can read in one minute. The program gives baseline/benchmark passages for every grade level. They are given 3 passages to read. Once the student has completed all 3 passages, the program will average them together and give them a score of the average of how many words that they can read in one minute. Each grade level has a fall benchmark, a winter benchmark, and a spring benchmark. You will take your students averaged score and compare it to where they are supposed to be for the fall benchmark, since that is when the beginning of the school year hits. After all of the benchmarks are completed, you can set up a schedule and a goal for each student. The schedule has a beginning and ending date for when the teacher is going to be progress monitoring their students. It also has when they will be progress monitoring their students. The general rule is that if a student is where they need to be then the teacher only has to progress monitor them once a month. If the student is close to grade

level, but not there yet, they will be progress monitored every two weeks. If the student is far below grade level, they will be progress monitored every week. Goals are set up by finding out what the end of the year goal is for which ever grade level that you are teaching. Throughout the progress monitoring sessions, there will be a line graph that is a nice visual tool for the students to see, that shows them how far or close they are to their end of the year goal. As for the progress monitoring details, this is done using already generated grade level passages that they students will read. For comprehension, this program uses a measure that is known as MAZE. This is a reading passaged that is also timed, but it is not on minute, it is three minutes. With these reading passages, at random times throughout the passage there will be parenthesis with 3 words in it. The student will have to select one of the words that he/she thinks fits in the sentence. This will show how well the student comprehends what he/she is reading.

## **Conclusion**

I chose to include Palmer's blog because I believe that it sends a very important message to all teachers out in the education world today. There is not a "One-Size-Fits-All" plan that works for every child. Our students are extremely diverse and have different needs. They learn differently, speak differently, and sometimes need to be managed differently than others. In my 6 years of teaching in the Rochester City School District I have found that this is absolutely the truth. It is very important to know and try out different strategies on your students to see what works best. You may have to change your management strategy every year. Classroom management can be one of the most difficult parts of being a teacher, but it is also one of the most important parts of being a teacher.

The “STARS” program has really taken off in our school within the last few years. The students really work hard to receive the white and gold tickets. All students understand what it means to be a STAR student. I believe in this school wide program and encourage all districts to give it a try! Again, does it work for ALL of the students? No. But it does work for most of the students, and that is good enough when you are talking about a school wide management program.

The “Daily 5” is a great reading and writing program that my school was only able to focus on for one year. For that one year though, the students learned a lot. They learned how to read and write quietly. They learned what different terms mean and abide by them. I still focus on teaching my children the Daily 5 rules every year for the first few weeks of school. I believe that it provides a promising structure for the day and is a tremendous classroom management tool needed to be used by all teachers.

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