Models and Tools of Classroom Management

What Is a Classroom Management Model?

Effective classroom management is a multifaceted system that must address the multitude of factors that impact student behavior. When building a classroom management plan that comprehensively addresses this complex issue, one can easily become overwhelmed by the magnitude of this undertaking. Fortunately, education researchers have been able to study and evaluate a tremendous number of teachers and classrooms to identify distinct approaches to classroom management. These approaches, or models, are foundations onto which teachers can build a classroom management plan. Starting with this foundation, each teacher should then begin to build a toolbox of effective strategies and teacher behaviors to create a comprehensive and effectual classroom management plan.

Types of Models

The diversity of classroom management models has only grown in conjunction with the diversity of students they attempt to manage. What works for one set of students may be an utter disaster for a different set, even one of a similar age and intellectual ability. While a high number of strategic models exist, we'll review some of the more popular ones.

In the book *Education Psychology for Learning and Teaching* (Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2006), the authors discuss three classroom management models based on the premise that teachers can diversify their skill set in order to best meet the needs of different groups of students. Let's take a quick look at these models:

Noninterventionist

This approach postulates that a student's potential for success is predetermined. A noninterventionist teacher will aid a student in meeting his potential by enhancing personal growth, building a strong, positive relationship, and assisting a student with developing problem-solving abilities that ultimately can be executed independent of a teacher's direction.

Interventionist

This approach suggests that student development is a product of environmental conditions brought on by intervention in a student's daily surroundings. This approach can typically be seen in a positive reinforcement classroom, one in which rules are established and communicated and students are either rewarded or given consequences based on their adherence to these rules.

Interactivist

This approach asks that each teacher attempt to understand the behavior of their students and to help students understand their actions and consequences. By getting students to understand the rules of the classroom environment, they are given the onus of managing themselves.

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline

This model, created by H. Jerome Freiberg (1996), provides a framework for creating student-teacher partnerships in the classroom through the incorporation of five themes—prevention, caring, cooperation, organization, and community.

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Step 1: Prevention

In this step, students and teachers work together at the beginning of the year to create classroom rules, laying the foundation for high standards of behavior. The idea is to prevent behavioral issues by addressing them before they have a chance to begin.

Step 2: Caring

Most people will go out of their way for someone who cares about them, and students are no exception. When students feel a teacher truly cares about them, they are encouraged to do and

to be their very best. Note that Module 4 of this course further discusses strategies to build caring relationships with students.

Step 3: Cooperation

According to Freiberg (1996), "Helping, sharing, participating, planning, and working together—these are the heart of a cooperative classroom" (p. 32). Providing students with ownership of classroom tasks and procedures allows them to feel responsibility for what happens in their classroom.

Step 4: Organization

Classroom organization is an opportunity to provide students with ownership of the classroom. This can be accomplished by allowing them to take on classroom organizational tasks, such as passing out papers or helping with attendance.

Step 5: Community

Involving parents and other community members can be challenging, but creative and flexible schools can accomplish this. Schools can have parents give talks comparing school rules to workplace rules or bring in community leaders as speakers.
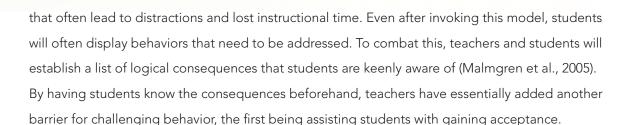
Logical Consequences

This model is articulated from the work of Rudolf Dreikurs, who theorized that consistent student behavior is the direct consequence of not having certain needs met. Dreikurs worked under the assumption that all students, in one way or another, desire to be socially recognized and accepted by both their peers and authority figures (teachers, parents, older siblings, etc.). When this need is not met, students will typically act out in a variety of ways, including

- Attention-seeking behaviors;
- Engaging teachers and/or students in a power struggle;
- Focusing on peer issues regarding fairness; and
- Disengaging from others and instructional time (Malmgren, Trezek, & Paul, 2005).

Educators that adopt this model strive to assist students in gaining recognition and acceptance from their peers. By doing this, they hope to combat the aforementioned behavioral issues

that often lead to distractions and lost instructional time. Even after invoking this model, students will often display behaviors that need to be addressed. To combat this, teachers and students will establish a list of logical consequences that students are keenly aware of (Malmgren et al., 2005). By having students know the consequences beforehand, teachers have essentially added another barrier for challenging behavior, the first being assisting students with gaining acceptance.

Beyond Discipline

This model of classroom management, which stems from Alfie Kohn, seeks to break the mold of traditional classroom management approaches by challenging the relevance of rules and tasks. According to this model, teachers manage their classrooms by providing students with relevant rules, learning tasks, and opportunities to make choices. According to Kohn in "Punished by Rewards? A Conversation with Alfie Kohn" (Brandt, 1995), programs that emphasize consequences or rewards manipulate students. If teachers focus on content, community, and choice (Kohn's three Cs of motivation), classroom management is not an issue. Kohn explains the three Cs:

> "The first C is *content*. Far less interesting to me than whether a student has learned what he was supposed to is the question, 'Has the child been given something to do *worth* learning?' If you ask me what to do about a kid being 'off task'—one of our favorite buzzwords—my first response is going to be, 'What's the task?' If you're giving them garbage to do, yes, you may have to bribe them to do it. If the kids have to endlessly fill in the blanks on dittos, you're not going to get rid of rewards or threats anytime soon."

> "The second C is *community*: not only cooperative learning but helping kids feel part of a safe environment in which they feel free to ask for help, in which they come to care about one another as opposed to having to be manipulated to share or not be mean."

> "The third C is *choice*: making sure that kids are asked to think about what they're doing and how and with whom and why. You know, kids learn to make good choices not by following directions but by making choices" (Brandt, 1995, p. 16).

Assertive Discipline

Developed by Lee Canter and Marlene Canter, the Assertive Discipline model is characterized by positive reinforcement of desirable behaviors and negative consequences for undesirable behaviors. When effectively and consistently applied, students begin to associate desired behaviors with reward, increasing the frequency of these behaviors. Conversely, students will learn to associate undesirable behaviors with negative consequences, decreasing the frequency of these behaviors.

Teachers who successfully use this model create an appropriate system of rewards and consequences, which is then effectively communicated to students and consistently applied.

In addition, the Assertive Discipline model operates under these rules and characteristics:

- Teachers have basic rights as educators: the right to maintain an optimal setting for learning, the right to expect appropriate behavior, and the right to expect help from both parents and administrators.
- Students have basic rights as learners: the right to a teacher who helps them limit self-destructive and inappropriate behavior, the right to appropriate support from teachers when rules are followed, and the right to choose how they behave when given advance knowledge of the consequences (Allen, 1996).

Common Elements

While these models have very different components, the teacher-student relationship is a critical thread running through all of them. Building caring, supportive relationships with the students is critical to the success of whichever model a teacher chooses. Every decision a teacher makes impacts and reflects his relationship with students. Every rule shows how much students are respected and valued. Every lesson shows how much student learning matters. Choosing a classroom management model is just the beginning. It is a foundation upon which the teacher will add rules, procedures, and strategies to create a comprehensive classroom management plan that facilitates and supports student learning.

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