

Effective Classroom Practices: Procedures & Routines

The key to successful classroom management is prevention of problems before they occur, not knowing how to deal with problems after they have begun. Clarifying specific expected behaviors for the class-

room is essential, and the same behaviors that reduce classroom disruptions are clearly associated with increased student learning (Brophy & Evertson, 1976).

Having classroom procedures...

1. Increases instruction time by preventing problem behavior. Procedures show students how to behave, and minimize the amount of non-academic time while increasing time for academic instruction.
2. Frees teachers from correcting misbehavior. When students perform routine functions smoothly, teachers can focus on catching them being good and are freed to take care of instructional tasks, review student work, and have to provide less correction.
3. Improves classroom climate. Students experience higher rates of success and satisfaction, ensuring a positive learning climate. When you take time to explain how things are to be done, you appear fair and concerned.
4. Creates shared ownership of the classroom. Involving students in management of the learning environment empowers them, helping them to feel a partnership for their success and that of others.
5. Develops self-discipline. Procedures provide students with productive work habits that lead to personal accountability and effectiveness later in life.



Discussion:

What are some reasons that this highly effective proactive approach to classroom discipline is under utilized? Do the teachers in your building have clear procedures for their classroom activities? What are some of your personal experiences with the outcomes of a well-organized classroom with carefully thought out procedures? Would having procedures for all classrooms serve your school well?

Creating Classroom Procedures

A procedure is a method or process for how things are done within the classroom. They are directed at successfully accomplishing a specific activity. In life, to do anything success-

fully, you simply follow procedures. In the classroom the same is true. Well thought out procedures set the class up for learning to take place. A few examples of one teacher's classroom procedures are below.

Lining Up to Exit the Classroom

1. At the signal, put materials away and clear your desk
2. When your row is called, push in your chair and move quietly, walking to the doorway
3. Line up facing the door, keeping one space between each person
4. Keep hands and feet to self
5. Listen to the teacher and wait for the signal to depart

Independent Seatwork

1. When given the instruction to begin, get all materials out and begin within 5 seconds
2. Continue working until done
3. Visit quietly with a neighbor if you need help; all conversation is related to work
4. Raise your hand if you need help or to get permission to leave your seat
5. When your work is finished, review and check
6. Turn finished work into the work box

Large Group Instruction

1. Have out only the materials needed for the lesson
2. Sit up straight, eyes on the teacher or your materials
3. Listen attentively
4. Take notes if appropriate
5. Raise your hand to contribute or ask a question
6. Remain in your seat



As you might notice, defining the specific behaviors for a classroom procedure is essentially the same process as clarifying school-wide and non-classroom specific behaviors. Classroom procedures are an outgrowth of your 3-5 school-wide expectations and your specific behaviors for all classrooms defined in your matrix. You will again use OMPUA as your guide—your classroom procedures should be *observable, measurable, positively stated, understandable, and always applicable*. In addition, classroom procedures are a task analysis and the sequential listing of the steps that are necessary to successfully complete an activity or task. Classroom procedures are comprehensive and include all necessary steps, in order, while being as brief and concise as possible.



Activity:

Read through the lists of possible classroom procedures on the following pages. Check any that are applicable to your classroom and note any others not listed. You may want to go through your typical day and identify each routine activity. Then choose one procedure and identify the steps or specific behaviors for that activity. When done, ask yourself: Do they meet the OMPUA guidelines? Do they create a vision of a successful student in this activity or task? How will you assist staff in a process of developing procedures for their classrooms?

Considerations for Classroom Procedures–Elementary (Evertson & Emmer, 1996)

Room Areas/Use

- Student desks, tables, storage areas
- Learning centers, stations
- Teacher’s desk, storage
- Drinking fountain, sink, bathroom, pencil sharpener

Whole-Class Activities

- Student participation
- Student attention during presentations
- Making assignments
- Passing out/collecting papers, books, supplies
- Handing back assignments
- Make-up work
- Checking class work or homework

Small-Group Activities

- Student movement into and out of group
- Bringing materials to group
- Expected behavior of students in group
- Expected behavior of students out of group

Seatwork

- Talk among students
- Obtaining help
- Out-of-seat policy
- Activities after work is completed
- Turning in work

Other Procedures:

- Beginning of day/class
- End of day/end of class
- When absent
- Transitions
- Substitutes
- Office referrals
- Student conduct during delays, interruptions
- Leaving/returning to room
- Field trips



Possible Classroom Procedures
(Wong & Wong, 1998)

- Entering the classroom
- Getting to work immediately
- When you are tardy
- End-of-period class dismissal
- Listening to/responding to questions
- Participating in class discussions
- When you need paper and pencil
- Keeping your desk orderly
- Indicating whether you understand
- Coming to attention
- When you are absent
- Working cooperatively in small group
- Changing groups/activities
- Keeping your notebook
- Going to the office
- When you need help or conferencing
- When a school-wide announcement is made
- Handing out playground equipment
- Waling in hall during class time
- Passing in papers
- Exchanging papers
- Returning homework
- Late work
- Getting out materials
- Moving about the room
- Headings of papers
- Going to the library
- When you finish early
- Handling disruptions
- Asking a question
- Responding to a fire drill
- Responding to severe weather
- When visitors are in classroom
- If you are suddenly ill
- When the teacher is called away
- Grading criteria
- Restroom, water fountains

