

PL T CONCEPT REVIEW SHEET

Concepts addressed:

Principles of Effective Classroom Management and Strategies to Promote Positive Relationships, Cooperation and Purposeful Learning: **GIVING TIMELY FEEDBACK**

Providing feedback to students on their learning is well supported in the research literature and plays a key role in classroom management. For example, a 1987 U.S. Department of Education report found that constructive feedback from teachers, such as praise and specific suggestions, was one characteristic of effective teachers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has identified the concept that "teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning" as one of its five assessment principles for a national board certificate.

Thus, teachers should have procedures for giving students feedback about their academic performance. Regular and systematic feedback is more effective than sporadic feedback because it offers students more information and reduces the amount of time students spend making errors if their performance is incorrect.

It may be helpful to keep the following in mind:

- Students can be allowed to check some of their own assignments just be sure to monitor this procedure and spot-check the papers yourself for quality control.
- Students can exchange and correct each other's paper which saves times and provides for timely feedback on performance. It is best to alternate grading partners.

Students may benefit from keeping their own record of academic performance on daily homework, quizzes, and tests. Provide a format for students to keep an ongoing record so that they can monitor their own progress.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Teachers should, but may not always be able to, rely on help from parents when dealing with issues of classroom management. Keeping an open line of communication between home and school can be quite advantageous. It is always best to be proactive and contact parents before things are too out of control.

Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences present an ideal time to discuss issues. Be sure to present a balanced picture of the student, sharing his/her strengths and weaknesses. Work with parents toward a shared goal as it relates to their son or daughter's academic success. In addition, letters, phone calls, and e-mails can keep parents informed. Many teachers maintain a website with links to classroom policies, homework assignments, contact information, and other school-related information to help keep parents informed.

Parents react best if they feel they are not being blamed or held responsible for their child's behavior in school. Describing the situation and inviting their support can help to resolve the problem. Be a good listener and have your grade book handy so you can provide specific, up-to-date information about a student's progress.

USING OBJECTIVE BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTIONS

Effective classroom management is based upon the assumption that students understand what behaviors are expected of them. A carefully planned system of behavior expectations makes it easier to clearly communicate expectations to students. It can be effective to teach expectations to students just as you would teach them content to ensure a shared understanding of acceptable behavior. Rules and procedures typically articulate a teacher's expectations regarding behavior. It has been suggested that it is more effective to state rules in positive terms rather than negative ones. For example, "You may talk when given permission," implies it is inappropriate to talk without permission. Procedures also communicate expectations for behavior. Procedures usually apply to a specific situation or activity such as turning in papers, participating in classroom discussions, or for leaving the room.

ARRANGING CLASSROOM SPACE

A logical starting point when considering classroom management is arranging the physical environment for teaching. It is much easier to focus on other aspects of teaching and managing the classroom once there is a clear idea of how the physical features of the classroom should be arranged.

There is no one best floor plan for arranging your classroom space. Many questions come to mind when considering how to arrange your classroom space ... should the desks be in rows, where should the teacher's desk be, where should materials and supplies be stored, and so on.

Keep in mind that you may have up to 30 or more students in your classroom participating in a variety of activities and using different areas of the room. In addition, you will have students coming and going with each period of the school day.

Using the following as basic guidelines:

PACING AND STRUCTURING THE LESSON

- ~ Use a room arrangement that is consistent with your instructional goals and activities.
 - o If you use small groups, arrange student seating accordingly.
 - o If your main activities are teacher-led, consider traditional rows.
- ~ Keep high traffic areas free of congestion.
 - o Group work areas or the pencil sharpener for example. ~ Be sure students are easily seen by the teacher.
 - o If you are to monitor students' behavior, you have to be able to see them-maintain clear lines of sight.
- ~ Keep frequently used teaching materials and student supplies readily accessible.
 - o Minimizing time spent getting ready and cleaning up can help facilitate an orderly classroom.
- ~ Be certain students can easily see instructional presentations and displays.
 - o Be sure your students can easily pay attention and arrange things so you don't constantly have to move desks and chairs. ~ Consider what accommodations may need to be made for student with special needs.
 - o Space between rows to accommodate wheel chairs or lowering pencil sharpeners will help facilitate all students' independence and ability to fully participate in lessons and activities.

Keeping students on-task means providing engaging and motivating lessons to minimize classroom management issues. It is best to keep the lesson pacing lively. Typically, if the lesson is too difficult, long, or boring students will begin to exhibit off-task behavior. Take time to assess your students' background knowledge to plan lessons that are developmentally appropriate. Teachers should be "with-it" and able to clue into how well the lesson is progressing. It is best to have an alternative lesson plan ready to implement if the pace of the lesson is not effective. It might work well to shift from large to small groups or whole class to individual work. Teachers should draw from a repertoire of teaching strategies to help keep students interested and motivated. Nobody likes to do the same thing day after day; your students are no different. Following an instructional framework when structuring lessons can provide a solid foundation for the day's lesson. Take care to prepare your students for the lesson by activating their prior knowledge and helping them to connect in some way to the lesson. Simply asking a question, offering a quote, or brainstorming can get students connected to the topic for the day and engage them. During the lesson, be sure to support your students' learning by thinking aloud, modeling processes, and providing comprehension checks on a regular basis. At the conclusion of the lesson, be sure to step back with students to reflect upon what was learned and what is yet to be explored. An instructional framework provides structure and order for lessons and helps to keep students engaged and on-task. Appropriate pacing of the lesson along with careful planning and adherence to an instructional framework will together help to minimize students' off-task behavior.