About the Tutorial

A group of people coming together to learn a common subject or topic under the guidance of an instructor is called a class. The people taking the instructions are called students or pupil and the place where the instruction takes place is called the classroom. Ensuring positive learning environment in a classroom so that teaching takes place smoothly and successfully is called classroom management.

In this tutorial, we will discuss in detail how a teacher should handle her class and students successfully to achieve learning objectives. We will also discuss how standard practices like SWOT analysis and Kaizen can be applied in a classroom scenario.

Audience

This tutorial is designed for those professionals who have already been teaching for some years or plan to take up teaching in near future.

Prerequisites

Before proceeding with this tutorial, the reader is expected to be familiar with how teaching is conducted in schools and what are the day-to-day challenges faced by a teacher.

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A group of people coming together to learn a common subject or topic under the guidance of an instructor is called a **class**. The people taking the instructions are called students or pupil and the place where the instruction takes place is called the **classroom**.

Ensuring **positive learning environment** in a classroom so that teaching takes place smoothly and successfully is called **classroom management**.

**Need for Classroom Management**

As per our definition, classroom management is necessary to ensure the following:

- Students have some new take away from each class
- There is no disruption in the class
- All learning outcomes for the session are met

Whether you are already a teacher or plan to take up teaching, you know that every teacher goes to a class equipped with a **lesson plan**. This lesson plan ensures timely completion of class syllabus. However, to adhere to the lesson plan successfully, you must manage your classroom like a pro. If you fail to do that, your class will stray into unwarranted territory.
And if this continues even for 2 or 3 sessions, you and your class will struggle to complete the syllabus.

**Creating a Classroom Management Plan**

As a teacher you need to think ahead, without getting caught in daily classroom activities like taking attendance, resolving disputes, etc. These activities can eat into your lesson time, so always keep the bigger picture in mind and try to minimize time spent in non-teaching activities. To manage your classroom time well, create a classroom management plan of your own. This plan should include:

- Classroom rules that must be followed
- What should be the warning for each act of indiscipline
- Step to be taken if warning bears no fruit
- Criteria for escalating or de-escalating an issue

Unlike a lesson plan, which cannot be altered, a classroom management plan should be dynamic and take into account your progress with the syllabus thus far. For example, if you could not complete the targeted topics, plan to make up in the next class by cutting on other daily activities. Also, never plan for the full length of your classroom session. So, if you have a 40 minutes class, plan only for 30-35 minutes. You will spend a couple of minutes in reaching the class too!!

**Advantages of Classroom Management**

Teaching is 60% knowledge and 40% class management. If you are able to manage your class well, you will be a better teacher in the eyes of students, colleagues and school management. If that doesn’t convince you, here are some other tangible advantages of classroom management:

- You will complete syllabus in time
- You will be able to inculcate discipline in the students
- Students will learn positive classroom manners
- You will have a better relationship with your students

**A Disadvantage of Classroom Management**

As teachers, we must look at both sides of the coin. Classroom management principles provide a very structured learning environment, which ensures that all learning goals are achieved. But that also leaves very little scope for open discussions. It has been proved beyond doubt that open discussions encourage creative and lateral thinking in students. They learn to apply their learning to real life scenarios.

You can turn this disadvantage of too-structured learning on its head by pacing the classes such that you have ample time to have open discussions too. For example, you can allocate
one session after finishing a chapter to freewheeling discussions. But consider holding your class in the open or in large rooms so that you don’t disrupt other classes around you.
2. Classroom Management – Levels of Classrooms

Depending on the average age of students, classrooms can be divided into these categories:

- **Pre-primary** – 4 to 6 years
- **Primary** – 6 to 11 years
- **Middle School** – 11 to 14 years
- **High School** – 14 to 18 years

Classroom challenges for each category is different. So *classroom management plans* should also be different. What works for a 5 year old will never hold true for 15 year olds because the problems they face are very different. Let’s discuss some of those class management challenges.

**Pre-primary**

Managing a class of **pre-primary** students is interesting because they are just starting to understand the concept of a class. A place where they have to follow rules, show some semblance of order and obey their teacher. Here are some common challenges faced by teachers in handling **pre-primary** classes:
• **Age-appropriate development** – In this age group, the degree of development varies in children that are aged just three or six months apart. So the teacher has to take into account varied abilities of the students while teaching basic language and arithmetic skills.

• **Involvement of parents** – For pre-primary students, parents are either very involved with their studies or leave everything to the school. The first group doesn’t want its child to fail on a single parameter while the second group does not support learning at home for fear of overburdening the child. You need to talk patiently to both the sets of parents and share with them that the child needs to learn both at school and home though at her own pace.

• **School support** – The backing provided by the school in terms of infrastructure as well as psychological support plays a very important part in successful handling of children, without causing much stress and burn out in teachers. Every teacher should find out from the authorities what support she is entitled to and utilize it to the hilt.

**Primary**

Students of **primary school** start real academic as well as socio-behavioral learning. They are also considered old enough to start taking responsibility for their actions. In such a mixed developmental phase, some of the challenges faced by the teacher are:

• **More subjects more teachers** – Normally **pre-primary** students have one teacher for all subjects. As they move to primary class, they have to get used to the idea of different teacher for each subject. Each student responds to each teacher differently, so the class has to be managed dynamically depending on students’ reactions.

• **Lagging behind in studies** – Now that the real teaching begins, some students might lag behind in some or all academic subjects. As a teacher you have to be alert to students that are not able to cope up and provide additional support.

• **Widening horizons** – Depending on the school, activities of students in primary level increase manifold as compared to pre-primary classes. For example, they may be allowed to go out of the class unsupervised, visit library, do some class chores, etc. This might make them distracted and restless, making class management that much more challenging.

**Middle School**

In **middle school** the problems of **class management** have to do more with students’ behavior than anything else because children are emotionally vulnerable in their tween years. Some of the challenges that **middle school** teachers have to manage include:

• **Academic pressure** – In the **middle school** academics really start piling up due to increasing number of subjects as well as in-depth coverage of topics. These are also the formative years when teachers must lay emphasis on laying foundations of most of the subjects they have to deal with the rest of their lives. So, you should have enough room in your **classroom management plan** to spend more time on complex topics.
• **Onset of negative emotions** – During middle school years, children start feeling negative emotions like disappointment, rejection, low self-esteem. As a teacher you must explain to them that one success or one failure does not define them. If you fail to handle this you might have a class of half euphoric and half sullen students to teach. Incorporate some time in your plan to talk to your students about these emotional issues and if the need be refer them to counselling.

• **Bullying** – After pre-primary, this is the age where new bullies crop up in every class. Due to emotional vulnerability some children are prone to be bullied while others revel in bullying. Bullying must be stopped immediately. We will deal with this in detail in the next chapter.

### High School

As the level of the class increases, the classroom management skills required of a teacher increase as well. Here are some of the challenges that teachers need to handle in high school classes:

• **Academic excellence** – In high school students are already planning for their future career and make the subject choices that will lead them up their chosen path. So they expect their teachers to provide them with highest level of education. Teachers, in turn, need to teach at the highest levels and also assist the students in making their choices.

• **Disobedience** – Entering their teen years, students feel a new found independence that leads to disobedience in class. Teachers need to overcome disobedience from students without turning it into a confrontation.
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