

WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

Your Illustrated Guide to Classroom Management is a dynamic and visually rich companion for educators at every stage. Fisher, Frey, Smith, Blythe, and Hansen translate evidence-based practices into accessible, actionable strategies that foster belonging and success for all learners.

—**Angela Hietala**, Director of Elementary Learning, Kodiak, AK

Your Illustrated Guide to Classroom Management blends philosophy with practical tools for teachers at every stage of their career, working with students of all ages. Grounded in evidence, research and restorative practice, and presented in an easily digestible format, it equips educators with clear, effective strategies and examples while helping them avoid common pitfalls. This book inspires engaging classroom communities built on connection, and it will resonate with any educator who believes that strong relationships and structures make deep learning possible.

—**Katrina Stewart**, Director of Secondary Learning, Kodiak, AK

Classroom management plays an integral role in student learning and achievement yet can be one of the most challenging aspects of teaching. *Your Illustrated Guide to Classroom Management* thoughtfully breaks down the essential components of effective classroom management and offers practical research-based tips, strategies, and tools. It is designed to equip and empower all teachers and educators—regardless of level or years of experience—to take the next step forward in creating learning spaces where all students can thrive.

—**Ray DeVore**, Principal, Clear View Elementary School

Your Illustrated Guide to Classroom Management is a powerful addition to the Visible Learning family of resources. Through clear illustrations and research-based guidance, the authors translate complex ideas about classroom management into practical routines teachers can use immediately—from managing classroom entry to grouping students and encouraging participation. Having spent several years implementing Visible Learning and Teacher Clarity work across our district, I can already see this becoming a go-to resource for educators.

—**Shayla Samuels**, Tucson Unified School District

Your Illustrated Guide to Classroom Management

Your Illustrated Guide to Classroom Management

A Commonsense Approach

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Visit the companion website at
<https://companion.corwin.com/courses/ClassroomManagement>
for downloadable resources.



FOREWORD

JOHN HATTIE

Classroom management has often been misunderstood as the art of controlling behavior. For many years, conversations about management centered on discipline, compliance, and order. However, the research on learning tells a very different story. The most powerful classrooms are not those where students are quiet because they must be, but those where they are engaged because they want to be. In these classrooms, students feel safe enough to think, brave enough to take risks, and supported enough to learn.

Management, when it involves transparent, caring, supportive, and inviting procedures and routines, becomes the foundation for great teaching and learning—for students, teachers, and leaders. Some common adages include: Classroom management is not about control; it is about creating conditions for learning. Discipline should teach better choices, not punish mistakes. The purpose of discipline is return, not removal. Students learn best where they feel safe enough to think—not know—and make errors. Clarity prevents more disruption than discipline.



This book captures that essential shift. It reframes classroom management not as a system of control, but as the architecture of learning. The routines, relationships, expectations, and instructional design that teachers create determine whether a classroom becomes a place where learning flourishes or merely a place where students sit. As the authors remind us, management is proactive—it is the structure that allows instruction to work—while discipline is the repair kit we use when learning is interrupted.

From a Visible Learning perspective, this distinction is crucial. Over decades of synthesizing research across thousands

of studies, one of the clearest messages is that learning thrives when classrooms have strong relational foundations and instructional press.¹ Teacher credibility, clarity of expectations, strong teacher–student relationships, and appropriately challenging learning goals all exert substantial influence on student achievement. When students trust their teacher and understand what success looks like, engagement and learning increase dramatically.

The message is simple but profound: climate first, learning second, progress to achievement third. We cannot skip any of these steps. A classroom where students feel disconnected, unsafe, or uncertain will struggle to sustain deep learning. When teachers deliberately build a climate of belonging, clarity, and purpose, learning becomes possible—and achievement follows. All this is based on the clarity of management.

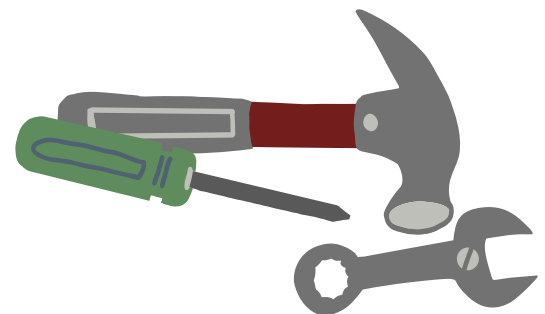
One of the most compelling aspects of this book is its emphasis on relationships as the foundation of management. Trust, fairness, and consistency are not soft extras; they are among the most powerful drivers of

engagement and behavior. When students believe that their teacher cares about them, knows the content, and is invested in their success, they are far more likely to participate, persist, and take intellectual risks. Credible teachers do not rely solely on authority; they build influence through competence, dynamism, and immediacy. If you ask a student before they walk into a class, “Are you going to learn from and with this teacher?” and they say no, then, no matter how brilliant the teacher’s methods are, there is likely to be little progress for this student. Teacher credibility, in the eyes of the student, is what matters. They are quick learners about teacher credibility.



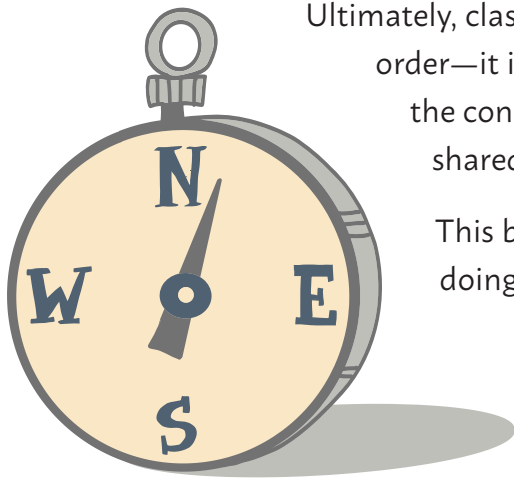
Equally important is the book’s restorative perspective on discipline. Instead of viewing discipline as punishment, the authors present it as guidance, resolution, and repair. Students make mistakes—that is part of learning. Effective teachers use those moments to teach responsibility, rebuild relationships, and help students rejoin the community with dignity. This approach aligns strongly with what we know about motivation, belonging, and long-term behavioral change.

Another strength of this work is its practicality. The ideas presented here are not abstract theories, but tools teachers can use immediately: routines that create predictability, strategies that foster engagement, and language that supports respectful correction. These practices transform classrooms from reactive spaces—where teachers constantly respond to problems—into proactive environments designed for learning.



The authors also remind us of a powerful truth: classroom management is inseparable from teaching. The quality of instruction influences behavior just as much as rules or consequences. When lessons are clear, challenging, and meaningful, students are more likely to engage. When learning lacks clarity or purpose, disengagement often follows. Thus, the most effective management strategy is often excellent teaching.

This illustrated guide will help teachers think deeply about the environments they create and the influence they have on students. It invites educators to see themselves not as controllers of behavior but as designers of learning conditions. When teachers orchestrate climate, relationships, and clarity effectively, they create classrooms where students can thrive academically and socially.



Ultimately, classroom management is not about maintaining order—it is about maximizing impact. It is about creating the conditions where learning becomes visible, progress is shared, and every student has the opportunity to succeed.

This book provides a clear and thoughtful roadmap for doing exactly that.

John Hattie

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dominique Smith is Chief of Educational Services and Teacher Support at Health Sciences High and Middle College in San Diego, CA. He is passionate about creating school cultures that honor students and build their confidence and competence. Smith's major area of research and instruction focuses on restorative practices, classroom management, growth mindset, and the culture of achievement. In addition to his school leadership

responsibilities, Smith provides professional learning to K–12 teachers in groups large and small, on many topics that address classroom and school climate and organization. He is a regular presenter at many conferences, including Empower (ASCD's annual conference). Smith holds his doctorate in Educational Leadership from San Diego State University with a focus on equity and a Master's degree in social work from the University of Southern California. He also holds credentials from San Diego State University in administrative services, child welfare, PPS, and attendance. He is the winner of the National School Safety Award from the School Safety Advocacy Council. He delivered a TED Talk in 2018 about building relationships between students and teachers.



Nancy Frey is a Professor of Educational Leadership at San Diego State and a teacher leader at Health Sciences High and Middle College. She is a credentialed special educator, reading specialist, and administrator in California. She is a member of the International Literacy Association's Literacy Research Panel. Her published titles include *50 Strategies for Activating Your PLC+*, *The Illustrated Guide to Visible Learning*, *Welcome to Teaching*

Multilingual Learners, *Teaching Foundational Skills to Adolescent Readers*, and *RIGOR Unveiled: A Video-Enhanced Flipbook to Promote Teacher Expertise in Relationship Building, Instruction, Goals, Organization, and Relevance*.



Douglas Fisher is Professor and Chair of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University and a teacher leader at Health Sciences High and Middle College. Previously, Doug was an early intervention teacher and elementary school educator. He is a credentialed English teacher and administrator in California. In 2022, he was inducted into the Reading Hall of Fame by the Literacy Research Association. He has published numerous articles on reading and literacy,

differentiated instruction, and curriculum design, as well as books such as *The Teacher Clarity Playbook 2/e*, *Your Introduction to PLC+*, *The Illustrated Guide to Teacher Credibility*, *Instructional Strategies that Move Learning Forward: 30 Tools that Support Gradual Release of Responsibility*, and *Welcome to Teaching!*



Carl Blythe is a dynamic and mission-driven educational leader who serves as Principal of Mary Castle Elementary in the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township in Indianapolis, Indiana. With a strong track record of leadership, Dr. Blythe is known for fostering a culture of high expectations anchored in belonging, student voice, and collective accountability. He holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree,

a Master's degree in Education, and a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. His research and professional practice emphasize building collaborative instructional systems, developing teacher leadership, and cultivating a school culture that supports the success of every learner. Dr. Blythe has led district-aligned efforts in professional learning communities, instructional rigor, culturally responsive practices, and community engagement. He is particularly passionate about creating school environments where all students feel seen, supported, and challenged to reach their fullest potential—believing that relationships and results go hand in hand. As a writer, professional development facilitator, and thought leader, Dr. Blythe brings a practitioner's lens to transformational work in schools and is committed to equipping educators with the tools to lead with purpose, impact, and integrity.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Taryl Hansen, NBCT, Ed.D. is a visual practitioner and the creator of Frame the Message Ink, LLC (framethemessageink.com). She is an associate trainer for Cognitive CoachingSM and holds a doctorate in Teacher Leadership and Innovation from Arizona State University. Taryl has been trained by Thinking Collaborative and Grove Consultants International, leaders in the fields of learning and cognition. As a live graphic

recorder and illustrator, Taryl works internationally to create vibrant and engaging visuals that bring essential elements to the forefront for learners, enhancing retention, driving engagement, and inspiring learners to collaborate in more meaningful ways.

CLASSROOM



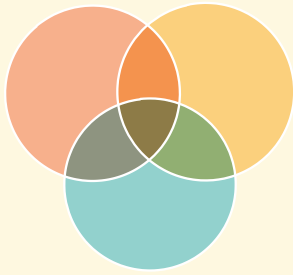
INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is not about keeping students under control. It's about building the conditions where learning can thrive. A well-managed classroom is one where students feel safe, connected, and respected, and where instruction flows smoothly because routines, relationships, and expectations are clear.

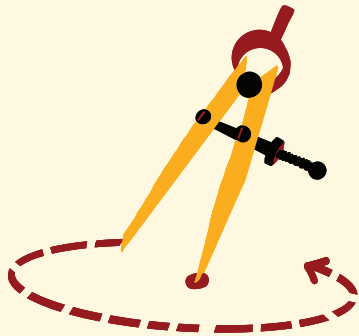
Over the years, many teachers have been given quick fixes or simplistic advice about “managing” students. Some of that advice works for a moment, but it rarely sustains a positive climate. Students don't thrive in environments built on intimidation or compliance alone. They thrive in classrooms where they trust their teacher, where expectations are consistent and fair, and where the learning community is purposeful and welcoming.

That's why this book takes a broad view of classroom management. Management is not the same as discipline, though they are connected. Classroom management is the architecture, the routines, physical space, relationships, and instructional design that make learning possible. Classroom discipline is the repair kit. It's the set of strategies we use when expectations are broken, so students can be guided back into community. Strong management reduces the need for discipline, but it never removes it entirely. Both are essential parts of effective teaching.

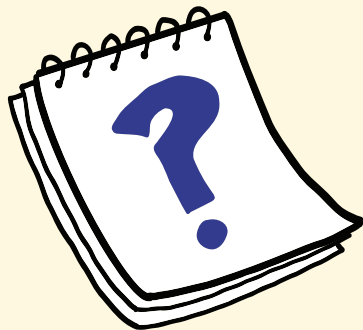
YOU'LL FIND THE FOLLOWING IN THESE PAGES:



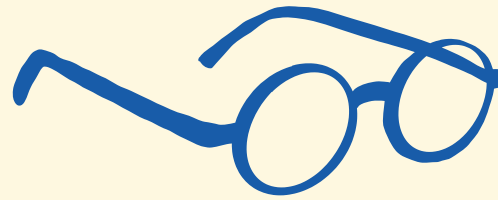
Fundamentals of management and discipline—clear explanations of what they are, how they differ, and how they work together



Proactive strategies—for structuring the environment, designing instruction, and building agreements with students that promote responsibility and belonging



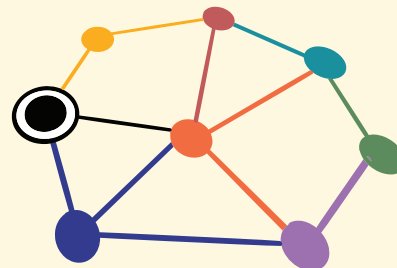
Quick guides for common challenges—concise, teacher-friendly references for addressing off-task behavior, blurting, work refusal, peer conflict, technology misuse, and more



Research-based practices—including classroom climate, teacher credibility, restorative practices, and the role of engagement



Practical routines and organizational tools—to start the year strong, manage daily transitions, and make the most of instructional minutes



Approaches for complex issues—frameworks such as functional behavior analysis to understand and address persistent challenges

This book is not about memorizing a set of rules. It's about building a repertoire of practices that connect, engage, and restore. You'll see research, illustrations, routines, and strategies that you can implement right away. You'll also see how classroom management is woven through everything teachers do: planning lessons, arranging space, setting expectations, and responding to behavior with dignity.

Our hope is that as you read, you'll see yourself reflected in these pages. Some strategies will affirm what you already do. Others may stretch your thinking or inspire new habits. Above all, we hope you find encouragement here. Teaching is demanding work, but it is also deeply human work. When you combine strong management with responsive discipline, you create classrooms where students are safe enough to learn, brave enough to take risks, and supported enough to grow. And that is the heart of effective teaching.

**—Dominique Smith, Nancy Frey,
Douglas Fisher, and Carl Blythe**



VIDEO 0.1: Students talking about the importance of classroom management
qrs.ly/jwh0kzt

TEACHER TALK

“

I used to think
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
MEANT BEING
STRICT.

NOW I KNOW IT'S ABOUT
CLEAR ROUTINES
AND TRUST.
DISCIPLINE

IS JUST
ONE PART OF THE PICTURE.

”

Part 1:
**FUNDAMENTALS
OF CLASSROOM
MANAGEMENT**



WHAT IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

A classroom is more than a room filled with students. It is a complex learning community filled with humans who are growing and developing, negotiating their way through life. At its best, it is an environment where young people feel known, safe, and valued, and where they are challenged to think deeply and grow academically.



THE TEACHER IS THE ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

The teacher orchestrates the classroom community, shaping both the physical and emotional climate. But classroom management goes far beyond keeping order or making students comfortable. It is about creating the conditions in which learning flourishes. Classroom management ensures that students interact productively with one another and engage meaningfully with the content.



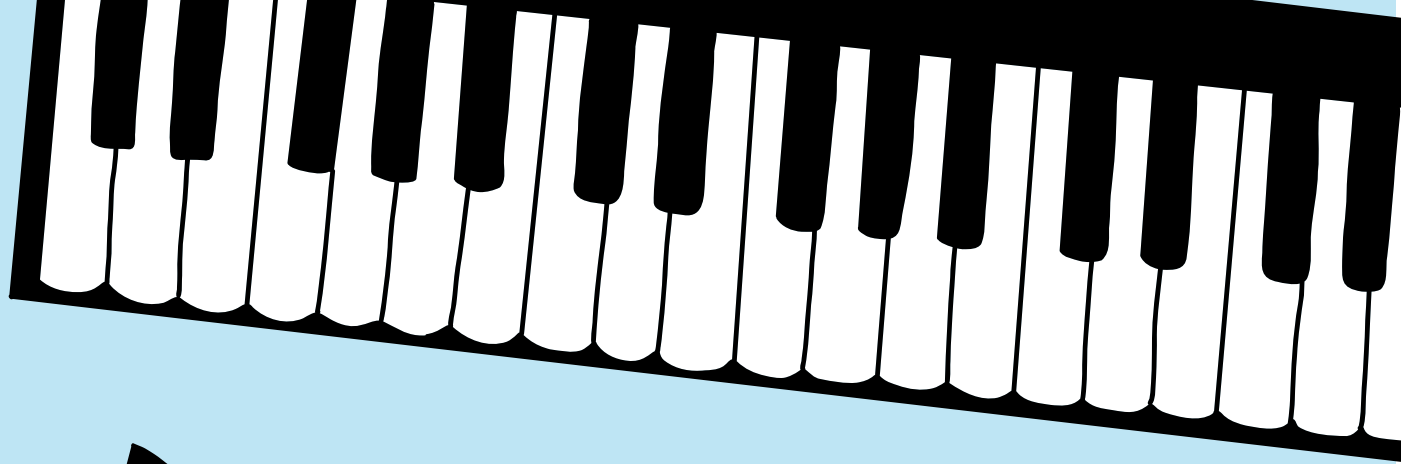
Effective classroom management requires attention to multiple dimensions at once:

- **Climate:** ensuring the classroom feels safe and welcoming
- **Relationships:** building trust and mutual respect between teacher and students, and among peers
- **Instructional design:** organizing lessons, routines, and structures that make learning clear, engaging, and purposeful
- **Teacher presence and credibility:** establishing consistency, predictability, and responsiveness so students know they matter

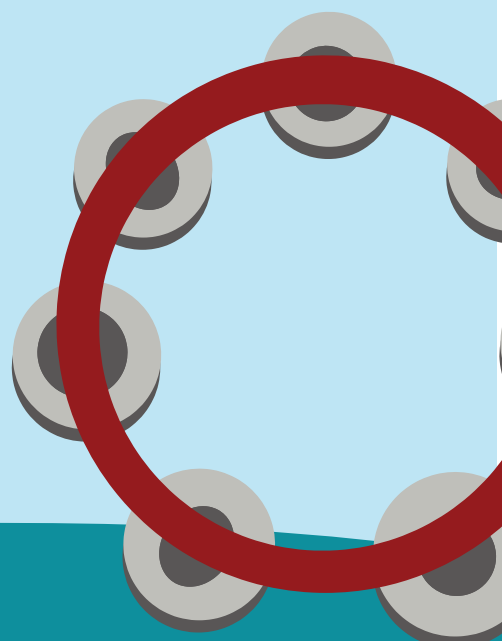


VIDEO 1.1: Dominique explains the dimensions of classroom management qrs.ly/smh3dyk





When these pieces come together, students experience a learning environment where they, and the content they are learning, are of value.



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IS NOT THE SAME AS DISCIPLINE

The terms **classroom management** and **classroom discipline** are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. Confusing the two can leave teachers frustrated and students misunderstood.

- **Classroom management** is everything a teacher does to set the stage for learning. It's the structures, routines, and relationships that make instruction possible. It is proactive, preventive, and relational.
- **Classroom discipline**, on the other hand, refers to how a teacher responds when expectations are not met. It is about addressing problematic behavior after it occurs.

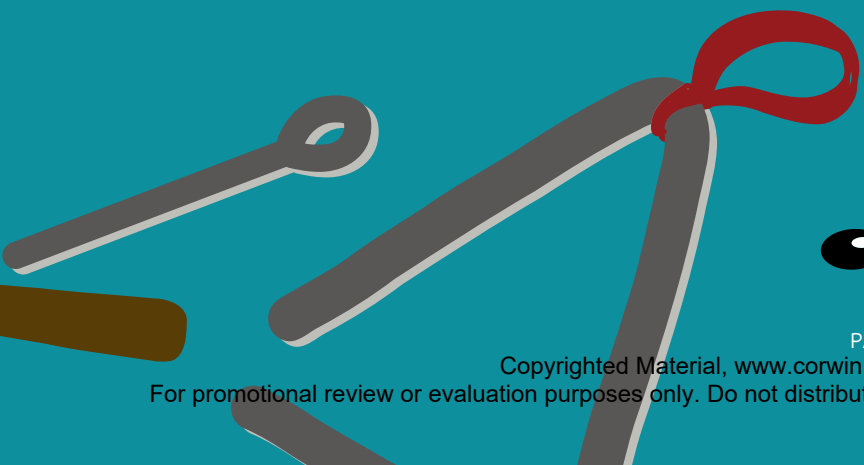
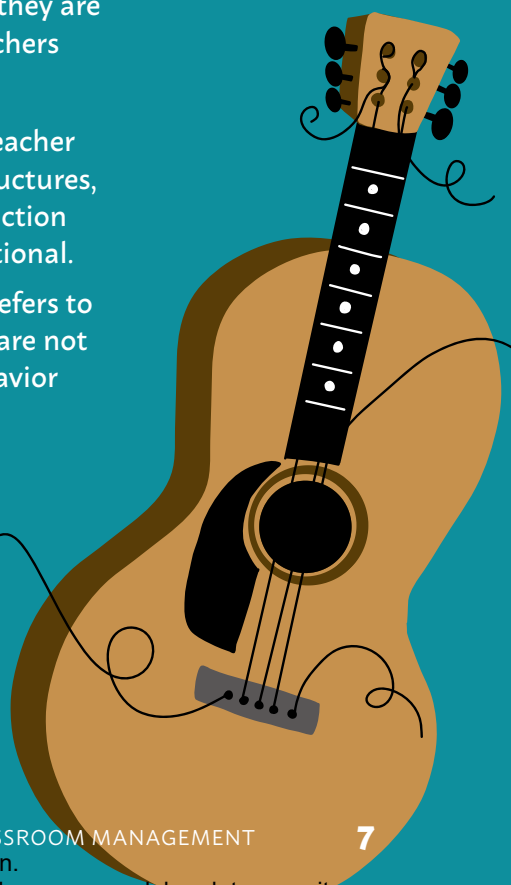



Table 1.1: Comparison of Classroom Management and Discipline

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	ASPECT	CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE
To create a positive, predictable, and productive learning environment	Purpose	To guide students back to expectations when misbehavior occurs
Primarily proactive, focusing on setting routines, expectations, and building relationships before problems arise	Proactive vs. Reactive	Primarily reactive, responding to behavior after it occurs, while reinforcing expectations
Encouraging engagement, fostering student responsibility, and building classroom community	Focus	Addressing behaviors that disrupt learning and ensuring accountability
Supportive, relational, instructionally aligned	Tone	Firm, corrective, and accountability focused, with opportunities for repair
Relationship building, cocreated norms, restorative practices, engaging instruction, classroom procedures	Strategies Used	Clear consequences, reteaching expectations, restorative conversations, logical responses
Long-term behavioral and academic growth; student agency and belonging	Goal	Immediate restoration of order and guidance toward better choices in the future



VIDEO 1.2: Carl compares classroom management and classroom discipline
qrs.ly/yeh3dys



Classroom management and discipline are not competing ideas. They are complementary parts of effective teaching. **Management** is the architecture of the learning environment: the routines, relationships, and structures that make it possible for students to thrive. **Discipline** is the repair kit: the set of tools teachers use when expectations are broken, so learning and community can be restored. When management is strong, the need for discipline decreases, but it never disappears. Both are essential. Together, they create classrooms where students feel safe, respected, and empowered to learn.



When management is strong, the need for discipline decreases, but it never disappears. Both are essential. Together, they create classrooms where students feel safe, respected, and empowered to learn.

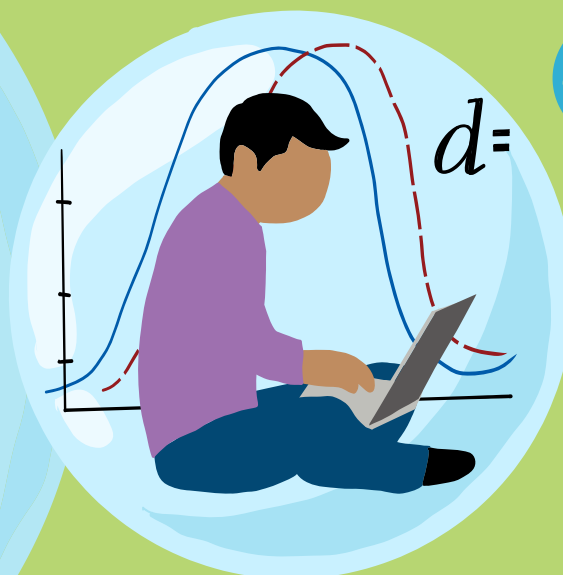


CLIMATE FIRST. LEARNING SECOND. ACHIEVEMENT THIRD.

VISIBLE LEARNING

The central purpose of the database is to identify and quantify the relative impact of various factors on student learning, using a statistical tool called an effect size as a common metric to gauge impact. Effect sizes are represented mathematically as d . The *Visible Learning* database (www.visiblelearningmetax.com) summarizes the effect sizes for hundreds of influences on learning. The average effect size is **0.40**, which means that anything above 0.40 has the potential to accelerate learning. Considering effect sizes allows educators to identify which teaching strategies, school conditions, and student characteristics have the greatest potential to improve learning outcomes.

Knowing what works in education goes a long way in understanding what works in classroom management. The **VISIBLE LEARNING**® database is a comprehensive synthesis of over 2,100 meta-analyses related to student achievement, representing findings from tens of thousands of individual studies and millions of students worldwide.¹



NO SHORTCUTS!

One of the big ideas that emerges from this sprawling work is²

Climate First. Learning Second. Achievement Third.

In other words, there is no shortcut. You can't leapfrog over the first and second and simply pay attention to the third. Without learning, student performance on measures of achievement will not improve. And without a continuous investment in the climate of the classroom, learning is reduced.

Achieve
ment

Learning

Climate

CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND CLASSROOM CULTURE

Classroom culture and classroom climate are closely related but fundamentally distinct concepts. **Culture** refers to the shared norms, routines, expectations, and procedures that shape how a classroom functions on a day-to-day basis. It's what you **do**. It includes how students enter the room, how materials are managed, and how transitions occur. In contrast, **climate** is how the classroom **feels**. It reflects the emotional and psychological atmosphere experienced by students and teachers. A classroom might have clear routines but still feel tense because those routines are harsh or confining. Alternatively, a classroom without clear routines and procedures struggles with disorganization, and the resulting climate feels chaotic or unsafe because it lacks structure.



KNOW THE RESEARCH ON THE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Effective teaching requires attention to both: building a strong, predictable culture that supports smooth operation, while cultivating a positive climate ensures students feel safe, valued, and ready to learn. Classroom management through a restorative lens seeks to align the classroom culture of routines and procedures with a nurturing climate where learning occurs, and students and their teachers thrive.



VIDEO 1.3: A sample of classroom routines
qrs.ly/pvh01y

Table 1.2: Visible Learning Influences on Learning Related to Classroom Climate

INFLUENCE ON LEARNING	COHEN'S <i>d</i> EFFECT SIZE	DESCRIPTION
Appropriately Challenging Goals	$d = 0.62$	The Goldilocks Principle: not too hard, not too easy, not too boring
Belonging	$d = 0.46$	The extent to which students feel respected, included, accepted, and encouraged by others in the social environment of school
Classroom Cohesion	$d = 0.66$	The sense that the teacher and the students are working together toward positive learning goals
Classroom Discussion	$d = 0.82$	Well-managed discussions contributing to engagement and positive climate, requiring strong facilitation and behavioral norms
Classroom Management	$d = 0.44$	Teacher behaviors that maintain order, maximize learning time, and support positive relationships
Collaborative Learning	$d = 0.46$	Students' meaningful interactions with each other during tasks to consolidate their learning requires clear routines
Decreasing Disruptive Behavior	$d = 0.82$	Interventions that reduce off-task or defiant behavior improve learning conditions for all students
Teacher Autonomy Support	$d = 0.61$	Instructional practices used to foster student autonomy, self-determination, ownership of learning, and engagement
Teacher Clarity	$d = 0.85$	Clear explanations, expectations, and learning goals help students know what to do and how to succeed, which are central to managing learning proactively
Teacher Credibility	$d = 1.09$	When students see their teacher as trustworthy, competent, and caring, they are more likely to learn
Teacher Expectations	$d = 0.58$	When teachers believe in their students' potential and communicate high behavioral and academic standards, student actions align accordingly
Teacher-Student Relationships	$d = 0.58$	Strong relationships reduce behavioral disruptions and build a classroom climate where students feel respected and valued



VIDEO 1.4: Doug discusses effect sizes
qrs.ly/wrh0l27



YOUR CREDIBILITY IS YOUR MOST POWERFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TOOL

Teacher credibility is built on trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy and has a powerful influence on student learning and classroom management.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER CREDIBILITY

Teacher credibility has one of the highest effect sizes on student achievement ($d = 1.09$), making it foundational to both classroom management and instruction. When students believe their teacher is knowledgeable, fair, and genuinely invested in their success, they are more likely to engage, comply with expectations, and take academic risks. Credible teachers foster respect not through authority alone, but through consistent actions and clear communication. This trust strengthens classroom routines, reduces misbehavior, and enhances the emotional climate of the classroom.



VIDEO 1.5: Nancy discusses teacher credibility
qrs.ly/igh0l36

RELATIONAL TRUST

Relational trust is the foundation of teacher credibility. It develops when students believe their teacher cares about them as individuals and acts with integrity and fairness. Teachers who build relational trust consistently follow through on commitments, treat students with respect, and create emotionally safe environments. When students trust their teacher, they are more likely to cooperate, take academic risks, and engage in learning.³ This trust also supports effective classroom management, as students are more inclined to follow expectations when they feel respected and understood.

COMPETENCE

Competence refers to a teacher's subject-matter knowledge, instructional clarity, and ability to manage the learning environment effectively. Students are more likely to listen to, respect, and be influenced by teachers they view as skilled and confident.⁴ Competent teachers communicate goals clearly, structure lessons coherently, and respond accurately to student questions. In classroom management, competence is demonstrated through proactive routines and calm responses to disruption. When students believe their teacher knows what they are doing, they are more likely to feel secure, stay on task, and engage in learning.



DYNAMISM

Dynamism reflects a teacher's energy, enthusiasm, and passion for teaching and content. It's the "spark" that brings lessons to life and captures students' attention. A dynamic teacher uses voice, movement, storytelling, and emotion to make learning compelling and memorable.⁵ In classroom management, dynamism helps prevent disengagement, which is a frequent cause of misbehavior. Students are more likely to stay focused and motivated when their teacher radiates genuine excitement and purpose, reinforcing the teacher's credibility and leadership in the room.

IMMEDIACY

Immediacy refers to the behaviors teachers use to reduce psychological distance and build connection with students. This includes eye contact, positive body language, friendly tone, and personal engagement. High-immediacy teachers greet students by name, respond warmly to questions, and show interest in students' lives. These behaviors foster relational trust and support a positive classroom climate. Immediacy also strengthens classroom management as it correlates to student participation in class.⁶ When students feel close to their teacher, both emotionally and physically, they are more invested in learning.

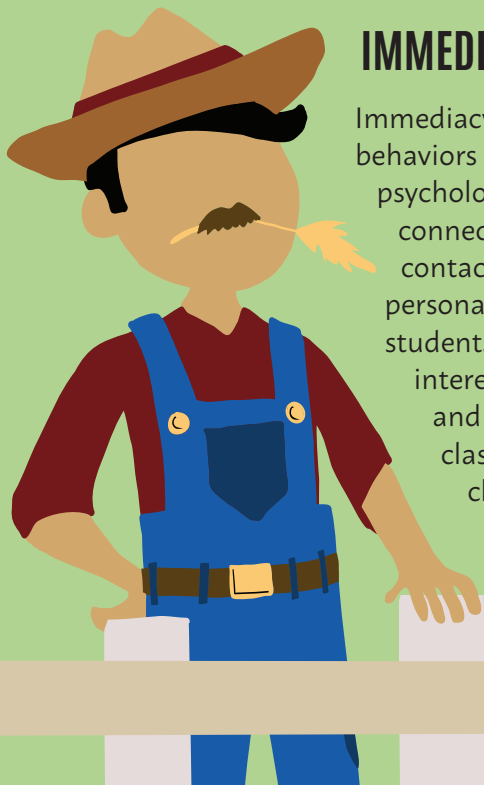


Table 1.3: Teacher Credibility Self-Assessment

Reflect on each of the Teacher Credibility practices that follow and select the number from the rating scale that best represents your current practice.

Rating Scale: **1** = Not Yet **2** = I am working on this. **3** = This is a strength of mine.

TRUST			
I follow through on promises and commitments.	1	2	3
I strive to treat every student fairly and consistently.	1	2	3
I admit mistakes and correct them openly.	1	2	3
COMPETENCE			
I demonstrate strong content knowledge in my subject.	1	2	3
I plan and deliver lessons with clear learning goals.	1	2	3
I provide and seek accurate, helpful feedback to students.	1	2	3
DYNAMISM			
I bring energy and enthusiasm to my teaching.	1	2	3
I vary my instructional methods to maintain engagement.	1	2	3
I show passion for my subject and for student success.	1	2	3
IMMEDIACY			
I monitor my body language, tone, and facial expressions.	1	2	3
I learn and use students' names quickly.	1	2	3
I make time for brief, positive interactions with every student each day.	1	2	3



Visit the companion website at <https://companion.corwin.com/courses/ClassroomManagement> for downloadable resources.

VIDEO 1.6: Teachers explore their strengths in teacher credibility qrs.ly/rjh0l3k



RELATIONSHIPS ARE YOUR CURRENCY

Effective classroom management begins with strong relationships, and one powerful way to understand this is through the metaphor of trust as currency.

MAKING DEPOSITS AND BANKING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Just like money deposited in a bank, each positive interaction with a student, such as greeting them at the door, showing interest in their lives, and acknowledging their efforts, serves as a deposit into a relationship account. Over time, a teacher who consistently invests in these small, meaningful moments builds up a substantial reserve of trust. When a moment of conflict or challenge arises, the teacher can make a “withdrawal” from that account, drawing on the established trust to redirect behavior or correct a misstep without damaging the overall relationship. Without that trust in reserve, however, even small disciplinary actions can feel harsh or unfair to students, leading to disengagement or defiance.



VIDEO 1.7: Teacher banking time with a student
qrs.ly/xah0l3u

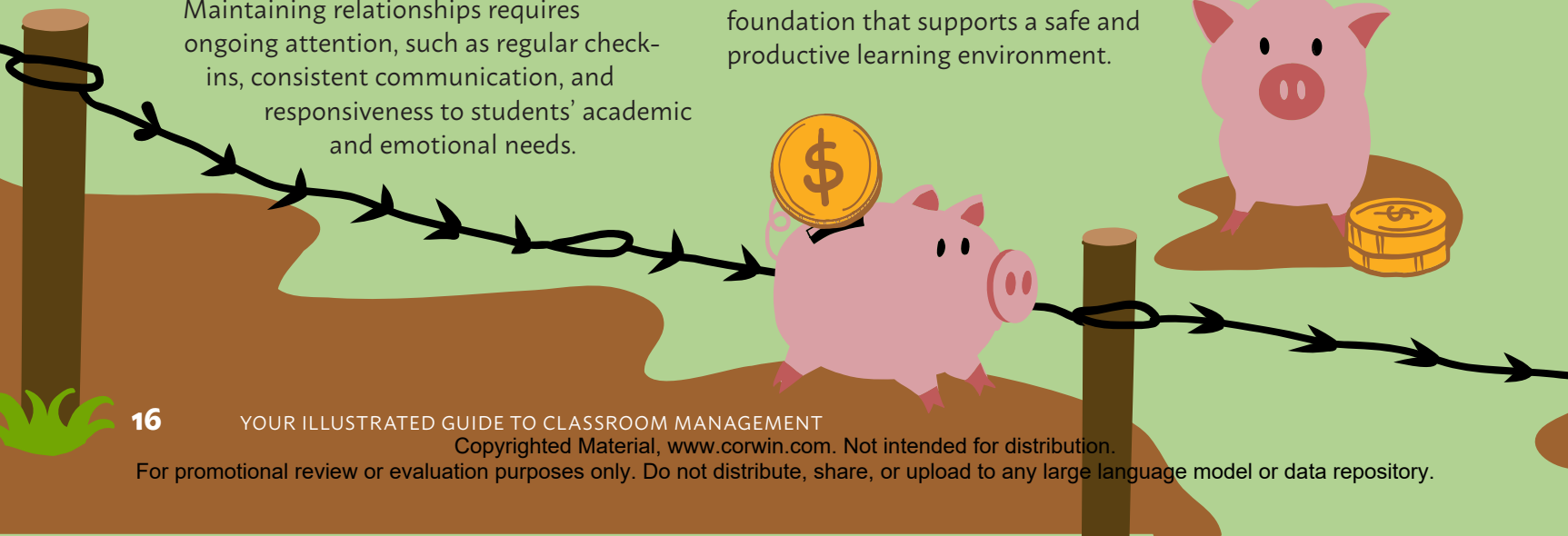


ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN, AND RESTORE RELATIONSHIPS

Strong relationships in the classroom have three critical dimensions: establishing, maintaining, and restoring (EMR).⁷ Establishing relationships begins on day one, through intentional efforts to get to know students, build mutual respect, and set a tone of care and high expectations.

Maintaining relationships requires ongoing attention, such as regular check-ins, consistent communication, and responsiveness to students’ academic and emotional needs.

However, even the strongest relationships can experience strain, which is why restorative practices are essential. Restoring relationships after a conflict or miscommunication involves listening, acknowledging harm, and rebuilding mutual respect. Together, these dimensions create a relational foundation that supports a safe and productive learning environment.



MAKE EMR PART OF YOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN

To embed these principles into a classroom management plan, teachers must move beyond rule enforcement and into relationship-centered routines and procedures. A strong plan includes proactive strategies like community-building activities, structured opportunities for student voice, and clear expectations that are coconstructed and revisited regularly.

Maintenance is embedded in daily routines like advisory circles, warm welcomes, and reflective closures. When conflicts arise, the plan should include steps for restorative conversations, reintegration processes, and reflection that support both accountability and healing. In doing so, classroom management becomes not just about controlling behavior, but about cultivating a climate of respect, trust, and shared responsibility.



PRO TIP

Maintain Relationships Throughout the School Year (not just the first few weeks)

- 1. Greet students daily** with eye contact, a smile, and their name.
- 2. Check in regularly** on both academic and personal well-being.
- 3. Prevent slippage** by revisiting routines, expectations, and rapport-building after breaks.
- 4. Notice and acknowledge growth**, academically and socially.
- 5. Be present and consistent** in tone, follow-through, and availability.



VIDEO 1.8: Students talking about their relationships with teachers
qrs.ly/n6h0l4y



BUILD YOUR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH EMR IN MIND

As you craft your classroom management plan, use these reflective questions to align your practices to a framework that focuses on establishing relationships, maintaining relationships, and restoring relationships. These reflective questions can guide the development of a classroom management plan that is rooted in relationships, not just rules, making it more sustainable, equitable, and effective.

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

1. How will I intentionally get to know each of my students as individuals?
2. What routines or activities will I use during the first weeks of school to build a sense of belonging and safety?
3. How can I communicate high expectations while showing students I care about their success?
4. In what ways will I learn about and incorporate students' cultures, interests, and strengths into the classroom?
5. What is my plan for ensuring that every student feels seen, heard, and valued from the beginning?



MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

1. How will I consistently check in with students throughout the school year?
2. What strategies will I use to ensure ongoing, two-way communication with students and families?
3. How will I monitor the emotional climate of the classroom and respond when it shifts?
4. How do I show appreciation for students' efforts and growth over time?
5. What daily or weekly routines help me sustain connection and community in the classroom?

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS

1. How do I respond when a student violates a rule or expectation so that I focus on restoration rather than punishment?
2. What tools or protocols (e.g., restorative conversations, reflection sheets, reentry plans) will I use to repair harm?
3. How do I model humility and accountability when I make mistakes with students?
4. How can I help students reflect on their behavior in ways that promote learning, not shame?
5. Do I provide opportunities for reconciliation that preserve students' dignity and rebuild trust?



PREDICTABILITY, PRESENCE, AND CONSISTENCY: SETTING THE TONE DAILY

Three tenets are the “secret sauce” when it comes to effective classroom management:

1. **Predictability**
2. **Presence**
3. **Consistency**

Think of these as three legs of your classroom management stool. If one leg is missing, the stool loses its balance. Together, these three principles create a safe, structured environment where students know what to expect, feel seen and supported, and can focus on learning without uncertainty or disruption. These habits build trust and promote a positive classroom climate.

PREDICTABILITY

Predictability is essential for effective classroom management because it creates a sense of safety and stability for students. When routines, expectations, and teacher responses are consistent, students know what to expect and how to behave, reducing anxiety and misbehavior. Predictability supports executive functioning and helps students focus their energy on learning rather than navigating uncertainty. It also builds trust between teachers and students, as learners feel confident that their environment is structured and fair. A predictable classroom is not rigid. Instead, it allows for flexibility within a reliable framework that nurtures autonomy, engagement, and a strong classroom community.

PRESENCE

Presence is conveyed through interactions with others. Teachers demonstrate personal support for others when they are responsive to needs, create a positive climate, and display interest in what others have to say. This is better able to occur in organized classrooms where pacing is attuned to student needs, disruptions are kept to a minimum, and productivity is maximized.

CONSISTENCY

Daily consistency in classroom management builds trust, reduces anxiety, and reinforces expectations. When students know what to expect, including how the teacher will respond, how routines work, and what behaviors are valued, they feel safer and more focused. Inconsistent responses and routines can create confusion and lead to power struggles. Consistency supports fairness, strengthens the classroom culture, and helps students internalize positive behaviors. Over time, it creates a stable environment where both learning and relationships can thrive.

Finally, student skills are built systematically and purposefully, with a deep understanding of the content.

VIDEO 1.9: Noticing a teacher's presence
qrs.ly/e3h0l5v



HOPE WITHOUT A PLAN IS JUST A WISH

A classroom management plan with a restorative lens is one that is proactive. Anticipating daily circumstances is crucial for developing a plan that allows you to foster an optimal learning environment that prevents problematic behavior from occurring. Parts 2 through 7 of this book will help you build plans.

ADVISABLE COMPONENTS OF A CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Vision and Values.

A clear, student-centered vision for the type of learning environment you want to create; core values (e.g., respect, responsibility, inclusion) that anchor expectations

Classroom Norms and Expectations.

Three to five positively stated expectations (e.g., “Take care of yourself, take care of each other, and take care of this place”)

Student Engagement.

Explicit discussion about what cognitive, social, and psychological engagement look like and sound like

Physical Environment.

Seating arrangements, movement flow, and accessibility; include visuals to support routines, expectations, and calming strategies

Routines and Procedures.

Daily entry and exit routines, as well as routines for transitions, turning in assignments, and group work

Relationship-Building Strategies.

Welcoming rituals, 2 x 10 conversations, family contact, and positive reinforcement; opportunities for student voice and participation

Instructional Strategies.

Active engagement techniques, checks for understanding, clear instructions

Acknowledgment and Reinforcement.

Systems for recognizing positive behavior (e.g., specific praise, peer shout-outs, class celebrations)

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING A CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

- What kind of climate do I want students to experience in my classroom?
- What values will guide our shared behavior?
- How will I cocreate and teach expectations?
- What routines do students need for smooth operation of the day?
- How will I teach and reinforce these routines?
- How will I build trust and connection with each student?
- How will I acknowledge positive behavior and effort?
- What strategies will I use to teach and maintain student engagement?
- How will I respond when students struggle with behavior?
- How do I support students' social and emotional development?
- In what ways does my plan reflect the assets of my students?
- How will I monitor the effectiveness of my plan and adjust as needed?

Response to Misbehavior.

A hierarchy of interventions aligned with the function of behavior (e.g., redirection, private reminders, restorative chats) as well as relationship repair

Inclusive Supports.

Additional personal, curricular, or technology supports for multilingual learners and some students with disabilities who may need them

TEACHER TALK

“

I've learned that
DISCIPLINE
IS TEACHING,
JUST LIKE
READING
OR MATH.
EVERY CORRECTION
IS A CHANCE TO
HELP KIDS
GROW.

”