

TEACHING WITH HEART

## **Classroom procedures**

### **Aim to achieve a positive learning atmosphere**

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Teaching entails preparing and delivering course content, as well as setting up and sustaining the effective context for learning. While the former is easily accomplished, the latter can cause significant stress.

Surveys conducted in several developed and developing countries reveal that one of the main reasons for teacher resignations is the frustration many teachers have trying to manage and deal with the context for learning, i.e., classroom management.

Often, the conflict between teachers and students becomes so intense that learning no longer takes place within the parameters set by the school system. This implies that in most cases, learning in the classroom takes place in a negative atmosphere.

### **Prelude**

Avoiding negative classroom environments can be achieved by using the proper classroom procedures. Effective procedures, like any other content, need to be taught to students.

Traditionally, teachers have always expected students to know what to do or what not to do when in class. However, this is erroneous thinking.

Students need to be taught classroom procedures just like they are taught any subject. When a teacher sets up, properly implements and promptly renews classroom procedures, the delivery of content becomes more efficient and effective.

Students who adhere to these procedures rarely engage in disruptive behaviour. In such a situation, learning becomes an enjoyable and meaningful experience for all in the classroom.

The same, if not a greater, amount of time must be spent in teaching classroom procedures to students, regardless of their age and maturity. It is advisable that teachers spend the first few days or weeks of school in setting up, communicating, implementing, reinforcing and reviewing classroom procedures. Examples of learning activities that require concrete procedures are: using classroom resources such as dictionaries and manipulatives; transitioning from one subject to another; preparing to learn; queuing; turning in assignments; asking for permission; working in groups; and answering questions from the teacher.

### **Modus operandi**

In order to teach classroom procedures effectively, a teacher would have to first determine what procedures are needed for his or her students. Having identified the procedures, he then breaks them into simple steps. These steps are taught to students in a variety of ways, i.e., visually, orally, and/or kinaesthetically.

The use of visual rubrics containing pictures of behavioural expectations is useful at this stage. To see if students have understood the procedures, the teacher checks for understanding through Q&A (questions-and-answers) sessions or physical demonstrations (of following procedures) through short skits.

Once procedures are understood and assimilated, students practise them on a regular basis. The teacher reinforces the same by using prompts and gentle reminders \_ consistency is the key at this stage. Both students and teacher could regularly review the procedures to remove redundant element(s) and/or add relevant ones.

### **Procedures for group work**

For example, teaching classroom procedures for effective functioning in group work would include a series of systematically executed behaviours, such as removing one's belongings, desk or body; recording responses, eliciting responses; respecting the opinions of others, etc.

When teachers take the initiative and time to establish classroom procedures like the ones shown above, chaos and inefficiency are averted. Consequently, the teaching-learning processes are enhanced. Additionally, classroom procedures serve as an avenue for developing students' social-emotional intelligence.

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