

# The Essentials of Classroom Management

## for Elementary & Middle School Physical Education

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**Classroom management** skills are a **prerequisite** to **effective instruction**. Most students enjoy and appreciate a learning environment that is organized and efficient allowing for the maximum amount of time to be devoted to learning skills. The utilization of effective classroom management techniques allows for increased productivity from both students and the teacher.

Classroom management refers to the **efficient movement** and **organization** of student activity along with the **efficient transition** from one activity to another. It includes the rules, procedures, and protocols that facilitate an orderly and structured environment in which children can be productive and safe. It includes the ongoing interactions between children and their teacher.

Skills which allow for good **classroom management** should be taught to children in a manner similar to **teaching physical skills**. All skills need to be learned through **practice** and **repetition** until they become almost automatic. When classroom management is viewed as a set of skills, to be taught and practiced, then it is much easier to have empathy for students who do not perform well. Some students will perform management skills incorrectly, just as some students make mistakes when performing physical skills. A focus on correcting management problems by practicing the skill (spacing, stopping signal etc.) is much more constructive than lectures or accusations of a class for not doing things according to expectations.

The **management** of student behavior is a “**pay me now or pay me later**” proposition. The time you spend managing student behavior is time well spent. The time you spend now managing student behavior is time that you will save down the road or in the long run. Effective management systems tend to cause disruptive behavior to self-eliminate. At the same time **management is an ongoing and never ending process**.

### Principles of effective management

1. **Develop rules and consequences**
  - a. Establish 3-5 rules
  - b. Avoid being rule specific
2. **Establish efficient routines**
  - a. Stopping and starting
  - b. Retrieving/returning equipment
  - c. Grouping
  - d. Lining up
  - e. Notes, injuries, etc.
3. **Shape acceptable behavior**
  - a. Deliver specific positive feedback
  - b. Use names
  - c. Provide reinforcement
4. **Set clear, high expectations**
  - a. Students will meet your expectations
  - b. Shape behavior to meet your expectations
5. **Be attentive**
  - a. Scan after freeze and before, “Go”.
  - b. Scan during directions
6. **Be active**
  - a. Model enthusiasm for activity
  - b. Move randomly, but purposefully
  - c. Stay on the perimeter
  - d. Stop in different areas
7. **Develop effective lessons**
  - a. Deliver concise directions
  - b. Develop efficient transitions
  - c. Address equipment issues
8. **Reflect**
  - a. What did I do?
  - b. Did it work?
  - c. Could I have been more effective?

## Helpful Points

- Management is a skill: practice, practice, practice.
- Whistle or “Freeze” to stop the class. Make the signal a consistent one.
- Voice command to start class. Make sure all are listening before giving directions.
- Have students moving before talking to them. They will listen better when they are a bit tired.
- When before what: “When I say go, I want you to....”
- Move during transitions. Give students something to do other than standing or talking.
- Move if your class needs to be refocused. If they are not listening, ask them to move.
- Give a few instructions and begin the activity as soon as possible. Don’t explain the entire activity in detail and ask “Are there any questions?” You will know if they understand your directions by trying it. If it doesn’t work, explain it again, taking special care to remedy the problem areas.
- Basic reminders for grouping students:
  - Grouping takes practice.
  - Don’t look for a friend but the closest person.
- Get toe to toe with person nearest you for partners:
  - Students without a partner move to center of teaching area.
  - To split class in half, one partner sits and the other remains standing; move the standing student to desired location first.
- Larger Groups (groups of 5 or more): Take person nearest you-don’t pick friends. Sit when correct number is in your group.
- Use lines, circles etc. for quick formations. Teach automatic equal spacing.
- Stay on the outside or perimeter when delivering instructions. Don’t have your back to students.
- Always pause and scan the class after stopping them.
- Keep directions brief, concise, and to the point.
- Point out quality behavior in order to get rid of inappropriate behavior.
- Move throughout the area so students can’t purposely stay away from you.
- Use first names. Ask them their name in order to learn their name.
- Compliment first, correct second.
- Whenever you are not satisfied with student behavior. PRACTICE!
- Use consequences without emotion
- If you need to talk for more than 20–30 seconds, then have the students sit down.
- No more than 5-10 seconds for students to freeze.
- No more than 5-10 seconds for equipment transitions.
- For very brief direction do not use “When I say go....,” “Freeze,” “Sit down,” and “Toe to toe.”
- Consistently enforce your expectations and the rules by using your consequence system.
- Use these options to correct behavior:
  - Compliment someone doing it right.
  - Practice
  - Warning/Timeout
- Always deliver consequences individually and privately.

## Resources

Pangrazi, R. P. & Beighle, A. (2016). *Dynamic Physical Education for Elementary School Children*. (18th ed.) Pearson.

Beighle, A. & Pangrazi, R.P. (2002). *The seven habits of highly effective physical education teachers*. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*. 13(4), 6-9.