1. The Intentional Teacher

There is no formula for good teaching, no seven steps to 'Teacher of the Year'. Teaching involves planning and preparation, and then dozens of decisions every hour. Yet one attribute seems to be characteristic of outstanding teachers: *intentionality*. Intentionality means doing things for a reason, on purpose. Intentional teachers will constantly think about the outcomes they want for their students and about how each decision they make moves children toward those outcomes. Intentional teachers know that maximum learning does not happen by chance. Yes, children do learn in unplanned ways all the time, and many will learn from even the most chaotic lesson, but to really challenge students, to get their best efforts, to help them make conceptual leaps and organize and retain new knowledge, teachers need to be purposeful, thoughtful, and flexible, without ever losing sight of their goals for every child.

2. The Effective Lesson

The lesson is where education takes place. All other aspects of schooling, from buildings to buses to administration, are designed to support teachers in delivering effective lessons; they do not educate in and of themselves. Conducting effective lessons is at the heart of the teacher's craft. Some aspects of lesson presentation have to be learned on the job; good teachers get better at it every year. Yet, educational psychologists have studied the elements that go into effective lessons, learning a great deal that is useful in day-to-day teaching at every grade level and in every subject. A brief description of these elements follows:

- *State learning objectives and orient students to the lesson.* Tell students what they will be learning and what performance will be expected of them. Whet students' appetites for the lesson by informing them how interesting, important, or personally relevant it will be to them.
- *Review prerequisites.* Go over any skills or concepts students need in order to understand the lesson.
- *Present new material.* Teach the lesson, presenting information, giving examples, demonstrating concepts, and so on.
- *Conduct learning probes.* Pose questions to students to assess their level of under-standing and correct their misconceptions.

- *Provide independent practice.* Give students an opportunity to practice new skills or use new information on their own.
- *Assess performance and provide feedback.* Review independent practice work or give a quiz. Give feedback on correct answers, and reteach skills if necessary.
- *Provide distributed practice and review.* Assign homework to provide distributed practice on the new material. In later lessons, review material and provide practice opportunities to increase the chances that students will remember what they learned and also be able to apply it in different circumstances.

3. Creating Learning Environments

A positive learning environment must be established and maintained throughout the year. One of the best ways to do this is to try to prevent problems from occurring at all. However, when problems arise – as they always do – an appropriate response is important.

3.1. The Need for Organisation

Classrooms are particular kinds of environments. They have distinctive features that influence their inhabitants no matter how the pupils or the desks are organised or what the teacher believes about education. Classrooms are multidimensional. They are crowded with people, tasks and time pressures. Many individuals, with differing goals, preferences, and abilities, must share resources, accomplish various tasks, use and re-use materials without losing them, move in and out of the room, and so on. In addition, actions can have multiple effects. Asking questions of low-ability pupils may encourage their participation and thinking, but may slow the discussion and lead to management problems if the pupils cannot answer. Actions and events occur simultaneously – things happen at once, the pace is fast and teachers have hundreds of exchanges with pupils during a single day.

3.1.1. The Basic Task: Gain their Cooperation

No productive activity can take place in a group without the cooperation of all members. This obviously applies to classrooms. Even if some pupils don't participate, they must allow others to do so. So, the basic management task for

teachers is to achieve order and harmony by gaining and maintaining pupil cooperation in class activities. Given the multidimensional, simultaneous, fast-paced, unpredictable, public, and historical nature of classrooms, this is quite a challenge.

Gaining pupil cooperation means much more than dealing effectively with misbehaviour. It means planning activities; having materials ready; making appropriate behavioural and academic demands on pupils; giving clear signals; accomplishing transitions smoothly; foreseeing problems and preventing them before they start; selecting and sequencing activities so that flow and interest are maintained – and much more. Also, different activities require different managerial skills. For example, a new or complex activity may be a greater threat to classroom management than a familiar or straightforward activity and appropriate pupil participation varies across different activities.

Obviously, gaining the cooperation of young children is not the same task as gaining the cooperation of 13- to 16-year-olds. Brophy and Evertson (1978) identified four general stages of classroom management, defined by age-related needs. During *nursery* and the *first few years of primary school*, direct teaching of classroom rules and procedures is important. For *children in the middle primary years*, many classroom routines have become relatively automatic, but new procedures for a particular activity may have to be taught directly, and the entire system still needs monitoring and maintenance.

Towards the *end of primary school*, some pupils begin to test and defy authority. The challenges for teachers at this stage are to deal productively with these disruptions and to motivate pupils who are becoming less concerned with teachers' opinions and more interested in their social lives. By the *end of secondary school*, the challenges are to manage the curriculum, fit academic material to pupils' interests and abilities and help pupils become more self-managing.

The aim of classroom management is to maintain a positive, productive learning environment but the imposition of strict order

for its own sake is an empty goal. It is unethical to use classroom management techniques just to keep pupils docile and quiet and give the teacher a quiet life. So, what, then, is the point of working so hard to manage classrooms? There are at least three reasons:

- **More time for learning**

If there is plenty of time in school, one important goal of classroom management is to expand the sheer number of minutes available for learning. This is sometimes called allocated or available time[1]. One current approach to maximising available time is to develop policies and practices in e-learning; termed by some as 'any time– any place–anywhere' learning.

Simply making more time for learning will not automatically lead to achievement. To be valuable, time must be used effectively. As you saw in the lectures on cognitive learning (semester 1), the way pupils process information is a central factor in what they learn and remember. Basically, pupils will learn what they think about and practise thinking about. Time spent actively involved in specific learning tasks often is called engaged time or sometimes time on task.

However, spending time on task doesn't guarantee learning. Pupils may be struggling with material that is too difficult or using the wrong learning strategies (as you shall see in lecture 02). When pupils are working with a high rate of success – learning and understanding – we call the time spent successful learning time[2]. Much of the psychology of education and psychological research into what happens in classrooms seeks to establish how teachers provide pupils with successful learning time.

Another goal of class management is to increase successful learning time by keeping pupils actively engaged in worthwhile, appropriate activities through interaction about their learning with teachers and fellow pupils.

- **Access to learning**

Each classroom activity has its own 'rules' or conventions for participation. Sometimes these

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[1] Time set aside for learning.

[2] Time when pupils are actually succeeding at the learning task.

rules are clearly stated by the teacher, but often they are implicit and unstated. Teacher and pupils may not even be aware that they are following different rules for different activities. For example, in whole-class teaching pupils may have to raise their hands to make a comment, but in led group discussion in the same class, they may simply have to catch the teacher's eye.

The rules defining who can talk, what they can talk about, and when, to whom and how long they can talk are often called participation structures. In order to participate successfully in a given activity, pupils must understand the participation structure. Some pupils, however, seem to come to school less able to participate than others. The participation structures they learn at home in interactions with siblings, parents and other adults do not match the participation structures of school activities. Yet teachers are not necessarily aware of this conflict. Instead, the teachers see that a child doesn't quite fit in, always seems to say the wrong thing at the wrong time or is very reluctant to participate, and they are not sure why.

- ### Management for self-management

The third goal of any management system is to help pupils become better able to manage themselves. If teachers focus on pupil compliance, they will spend much of the teaching/learning time monitoring and correcting. Pupils come to see the purpose of school as just following rules, not constructing deep understanding of academic knowledge. And complex learning structures such as cooperative or problem-based learning require pupil self-management. Compliance with rules is not enough to make these learning structures work.

Encouraging self-management requires extra time, but teaching pupils how to take responsibility is an investment well worth the effort. When primary and secondary teachers have very effective class management systems but neglect to set pupil self-management as a goal, their pupils often find that they have trouble working independently after they move on from these 'well-managed' classes.

3.2. Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Sometimes pupils become disruptive because the work assigned is too difficult. Also, pupils who are bored by lessons well below their ability levels may be interested in finding more exciting activities to fill their time. In one sense, teachers prevent discipline problems whenever they make an effort to motivate pupils. A pupil engaged in learning is usually not involved in a clash with the teacher or other pupils at the same time. All plans for motivating pupils are steps towards preventing problems.

As well as planning for routines and rules we need to consider another kind of planning that affects the learning environment; designing the physical arrangement of the class furniture, materials and learning tools.

3.2.1. Planning spaces for learning

Spaces for learning should invite and support the activities planned for the classroom, and they should respect the inhabitants of the space. This respect begins at the classroom door for young children by helping them identify their class. One school that won awards for its architecture painted each classroom door a different bright colour, so young children can find their 'home'. Once inside, spaces can be created that invite quiet reading, group collaboration or independent research. If pupils are to use materials, they should be able to reach them.

In terms of classroom arrangement, there are two basic ways of organising space: shared interest areas and personal/group spaces. These types of organisation are not mutually exclusive; many teachers use a design that combines the two types of space. Groups of individual pupil's desks – their spaces – are placed in the centre, with shared interest areas in the back or around the periphery of the room. This allows the flexibility needed for whole class, group, small-group, paired and individual activities.

3.2.1.1. Personal spaces

Can the physical setting influence teaching and learning in classrooms organised by spaces? Front-seat location does seem to increase participation for pupils who are predisposed to speak in class, whereas a seat in the back will

make it more difficult to participate and easier to sit back and daydream. But the action zone[3] where participation is greatest may be in other areas such as on one side or near a particular area. To 'spread the action around', it is suggested that teachers move around the room when possible, establish eye contact with and direct questions to pupils seated far away, and vary the seating so the same pupils are not always consigned to the back. Staying to the outside of the room and using 'circle and scan' techniques helps to keep pupils on task and 'connected' to the learning intentions of the lesson.

3.3. Maintaining a Good Environment for Learning

In this final section we compared the different ways in which effective and ineffective classroom managers organised their class in the first weeks of teaching. The evidence is clear that making a good start really helps. However, a good start is just that – a beginning. Effective teachers build on this beginning. They maintain their management system by preventing problems and keeping pupils engaged in productive learning activities. We have discussed several ways to keep pupils engaged. In the chapter on motivation, for example, we considered stimulating curiosity, relating lessons to pupil interests, establishing learning goals instead of performance goals and having positive expectations. What else can teachers do?

3.3.1. Prevention is the best medicine

To help promote pupil engagement, teachers have to manage any problems that arise. The ideal way to manage problems, of course, is to prevent them in the first place. In a classic study, Kounin (1970) examined classroom management by comparing effective teachers, whose classes were relatively free of problems, with ineffective teachers, whose classes were continually plagued by chaos and disruption.

Observing both groups in action, Kounin found that they were not very different in the way they handled discipline once problems arose. The difference was that the successful managers were much better at preventing problems.

Kounin concluded that effective classroom managers were especially skilled in four areas: 'withitness', overlapping activities, group focusing and movement management. More recent research confirms the importance of these factors.

Withitness

Withitness means communicating to pupils that you are aware of everything that is happening in the classroom – that you aren't missing anything. 'With-it' teachers seem to have eyes in the back of their heads. They avoid becoming absorbed or interacting with only a few pupils, because this encourages the rest of the class to wander off task. They are always scanning the room, making eye contact with individual pupils, so the pupils know they are being monitored. These teachers prevent minor disruptions from becoming major. They also know who instigated the problem, and they make sure they deal with the right people. In other words, they do not make what Kounin called timing errors (waiting too long before intervening) or target errors (blaming the wrong pupil and letting the real perpetrators escape responsibility for their behaviour).

Overlapping

Overlapping means keeping track of and supervising several activities at the same time. For example, a teacher may have to check the work of an individual and at the same time keep a small group working by saying, 'Right, go on,' and stop an incident in another group with a quick 'look' or reminder.

Group focus

Maintaining a group focus means keeping as many pupils as possible involved in appropriate class activities and avoiding narrowing in on just one or two pupils. All pupils should have something to do during a lesson. For example, the teacher might ask everyone to write the answer to a question, then call on individuals to respond while the other pupils compare their answers. Responses might be required while the teacher moves around the room to make sure everyone is participating. To encourage individual answers from large groups, pupils can

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[3] Area of a classroom where the greatest amount of interaction takes place, increasingly the area around the interactive digital whiteboard.

hold up small whiteboards or number fans. This is one way teachers can ensure that all pupils are involved and that everyone understands the material.

Movement management

Movement management means keeping lessons and the group moving at an appropriate (and flexible) pace, with smooth transitions and variety. The effective teacher avoids abrupt transitions, such as announcing a new activity before gaining the pupils' attention or starting a new activity in the middle of something else. In these situations, one-third of the class will be doing the new activity, many will be working on the old lesson, several will be asking other pupils what to do, some will be taking the opportunity to have a little fun, and most will be confused. Another transition problem Kounin noted is the *slowdown,* or taking too much time to start a new activity. Sometimes teachers give too many directions. Problems also arise when teachers have pupils work one at a time while the rest of the class waits and watches.

Caring relationships: Connections with school

When pupils and teachers have positive, trusting relationships, many management problems never develop. Pupils respect teachers who maintain their authority without being rigid, harsh or unfair and whose creative teaching style 'makes learning fun'. Pupils also value teachers who show personal caring by being 'themselves' (not just as teachers), sharing responsibility, minimising the use of external controls or threats, including everyone, searching for pupils' strengths, communicating effectively and showing an interest in their pupils' lives and pursuits. All efforts at building positive relationships and classroom community are steps towards preventing management problems. Pupils who feel connected with school – remind yourself about attachment theory in Lecture 2, Semester 1 – are happier, more self-disciplined and less likely to engage in dangerous behaviours such as substance abuse, violence and early sexual activity.

Pupil social skills as prevention

When pupils lack social and emotional skills such as being able to share materials, read the intentions of others or handle frustration then classroom management problems often follow. So, all efforts to teach social and emotional self-regulation are steps for preventing management problems. Over the short and medium term, educators can teach and model these skills, then give pupils increasing responsibility for their learning and their 'behaviour for learning'. Over the long term, teachers can help to change attitudes that value aggression over cooperation and compromise.

Dealing with discipline problems

Being an effective manager does not mean publicly correcting every minor infraction of the rules. This kind of public attention may actually reinforce the misbehaviour. Teachers who frequently correct pupils do not necessarily have the best-behaved classes. The temptation is to show far more disapproval of pupils than approval of good behaviour. Some studies show 80 per cent of teachers' comments to pupils about behaviour were disapproving statements. The key is being aware of what is happening in your classroom and knowing what is important so you can prevent problems.

Most pupils comply quickly when the teacher gives a desist order (a 'stop doing that') or redirects behaviour, but some pupils are the targets of more than their share of desists. Disruptive pupils seldom comply with the first teacher request to stop. Often, the disruptive pupils respond negatively, leading to an average of four to five cycles of teacher desists and pupil responses before the pupil complies.