



MARYGROVE COLLEGE  
*Master in the Art of Teaching*

## ▶▶ Classroom Management

# Classroom Management Tips for Elementary Teachers.

## 21 ways to keep your attitude fresh and your students interested.

Effective planning and classroom management is essential for motivating students. Successful teachers say it matters how a lesson is introduced, how meaningful the content appears to students, the pace at which information is imparted, the amount of variety introduced, and the amount of student involvement.

Here are some suggestions that you may find useful on how to meet these challenges throughout the school year.

1. Think of ways to advertise coming curricular attractions a week or two in advance. A little “sales pitch” can go a long way toward generating student enthusiasm. *“Next week, we will be reading Laura Ingalls Wilder’s Little House on The Prairie, and all students are expected to dress from that period in our history!”*
2. Use songs, poems or experience-based stories to begin a lesson. This kind of introduction invites students into the lesson, letting them know it will be fun and relevant to their lives.
3. Think of ways to use visual props with your spoken directions. Visuals can “hook” students into a lesson, and keep them interested and on-task. They will also be sure to attract the attention of students whose preferred learning style is visual. *Teacher introduces John Erickson’s “Hank the Cow Dog” series while wearing a cowboy hat and boots.*
4. Vary the presentation of the informational material between lecture, video, discussion and games. Changes in the format keep lessons moving and students interested. *Use YouTube for movie excerpts of a book you may be using for choral reading in class.*
5. Experiment with quick, random calling on students instead of waiting for hands during a discussion. This should keep students on their toes and attentive.
6. Try talking at different speeds and volumes when you give directions or present information. See which work best at keeping student interest by evaluating the number of students with their eyes focused on you.
7. Insist that all students look at you when you give directions. If a few students begin looking somewhere else in the room, pause and wait for them to give you their full attention.
8. Use a variety of colored chalk when writing directions or giving information on the chalkboard. Making the presentation appealing is as important in a classroom as it is in a restaurant. The more attractive the package, the more likely students will want to see what’s inside.
9. Ask the class often if they remember each step in a series of directions you’ve given. This encourages their ongoing attention to your instructions. It also gives you the chance to keep students on track, where they’ll be less likely to tune out the lesson and distract others.

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10. Have a variety of work stations for some students to complete written work. Allowing them to move around from station to station burns off physical energy and doing a variety of work tasks keeps them from getting bored.
11. Vary the seating chart more than once a month. Familiarity can lull students into not paying attention. Seeing the classroom from a new seat can keep them fresh.
12. Be sure each week includes some form of “hands-on” project. Students learn best when they’re “doing” and students who are learning will cause fewer disruptions than those who are bored.
13. Establish the relevance of your lessons. With basic academic areas, such as math and spelling, think of ways you can begin the lesson by explaining how it is pertinent to an athletic or recreational activity students care about, or to some later life skill or lucrative occupation. *“Story problems are a great way to train your mind to think through a situation. Logical reasoning and the ability to quickly solve a problem are important skills that pilots need to fly an aircraft.”*
14. Ask the class often if they understand what they are being asked to do and why they are being asked to do it. You can defuse potential problems by asking students “Who cares?” before they have a chance to - and then insisting that they answer the question!
15. Limit your help to an individual student to less than a minute, keeping one eye on the rest of the class. This won’t give other students a chance to become disruptive.
16. Let students know in advance that any recitations must be very short. Students tend to get distracted when they listen to long student presentations. If other students aren’t paying attention, cut the talk short.
17. Try to break up written work periods during the day so that none is longer than 20 minutes. Remember, the research shows that too long a time on independent tasks can lead to discipline problems.
18. Count down the last five minutes of a seat-work period, reminding students of the expected results.

Students will stay on task when they know they’ll be held accountable for a finished product at a given time.

19. Be sure that all materials for the day are organized and ready for quick distribution. If you’re distracted and flipping through papers, students are more likely to get rowdy - so be in your top form!



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20. Mentally rate the interest level of your lessons on a 10-point scale and make a note of those with a rating of seven or above. See if you can accumulate enough 7+ lessons to fill the school year.
21. Ask other teachers what they taught last week that seemed to pique the interest of their students the most. Getting ideas from other professionals can keep you fresh and keep your students engaged and learning. Implementing these suggestions will improve your ability to reach your students, and the more you can reach them, the fewer discipline problems you’re going to have.

*-From The Discipline Checklist by Ken Kosier. Copyright 1998, the National Education Association.*

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"I cannot say enough about the quality of students this program enrolls. It has renewed my faith in the teaching profession to be involved with such dedicated teachers who manage to maintain quality classrooms and still do quality graduate level study, research, and writing. Two of my students have had their Capstone research papers accepted for publication which will further enhance the reputation of the Marygrove program; further proof of the excellence of the students it attracts and the quality of the coursework."

Mary Boehnlein, Ph.D.  
Mentor, Marygrove College

## What Graduates are Saying About Marygrove's MAT Online Degree Program.

"I loved my MAT experience at Marygrove because I was able to work at my own pace and apply practical knowledge into my classroom on a daily basis." Bainbridge said. "It really helped me focus on my reading instruction, particularly in the area of explicit teaching of comprehension skills. I would recommend the MAT program at Marygrove to anyone who is ready to critically examine their teaching practices and increase their effectiveness as an educator."

Christina Bainbridge  
MAT Graduate '09



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- Elementary Mathematics, K-5
- Middle Level Mathematics, 6-8

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### For additional information:

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