

Classroom Management, or Herding Cats with Standards Attached

Why control is a myth and consistency is your best friend.

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Let's get one thing straight:

You will never “control” a classroom. You can guide it, shape it, redirect it, and occasionally convince it to behave—but true control? That’s a fantasy sold by people who haven’t been inside one since the Clinton administration.

Classroom management isn’t about power; it’s about presence. Students don’t need a dictator. They need a director who knows when to cue the lights, drop the curtain, and improvise when the prop breaks.

Let me set the scene: I walked into a math classroom today. How did I know it was math? I asked a student. As a teacher that is problem number one. Most administrators and district personnel will not take the initiative to ask a student. They will say that you are not engaging the students. That the culture is lacking in the room and wonder what you do all summer since you obviously didn’t decorate the classroom (you know the one that was not assigned to you during the summer) and obviously you lack curriculum. When an Admin walks into the room there needs to be several things on the wall- why? I could tell you, but do you really care? Stupid- totally, but it's the difference between an admin walking in, checking a box and walking out. Versus walking in, walking around, confusion, writing up teacher, meeting with teacher and then another walk in. So lets start with what you NEED: (not want..not whats good for kids, but what you need)

1. Students work on a bulletin board. The WHOLE bulletin board. The board also needs to be labeled student work. Obviously kids writing on the board is student work, but let's pretend the admin is not the brightest light bulb.
 - a. How to cheat: take a white or colored 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper and staple the 4 corners to the wall. Then in the middle put a jumbo paperclip. Now you can easily slide work on and off with minimal effort. Your welcome
 - b. How often does it need to be rotated? Every report card (if not more). If we are on the 10 week report card, and you still have introduction faces on the wall you either have done nothing for the past 10 weeks, are too lazy to change materials or stopped teaching.
 - c. It does NOT need to be perfect work! In fact you can put A, B and C's up. Cover the names, and put the critic on it, so students can see how to improve! Or you can just put work on the board, but make sure you have at least one comment on the paper "good job," "nice work" is okay but if you can correct one spelling mistake or formula you will get extra points from the admin.
 - i. You want major points? Have the students grade each other work, put it on the wall and include the rubric used to grade it!
2. Standards
 - a. Are you only teaching 8th grade math? If so, what is the standard you are covering today? It should be on the board (not wall). Now if you are teaching more than one class or you might teach another class in the future, you should have ALL of the standards for ALL of the classes on a bulletin board. Then cut out an arrow and point it to the standard you are covering this week. You can make the arrow out of lined paper, construction paper, tissue paper... it doesn't matter, as long as you can identify what is pointing to! I would recommend laminating the arrow, you don't need to replace it as often.

3. White Board/Smart Board

- a. You need to have your agenda
 - i. Warm Up
 - ii. Activity
 - iii. Exit Ticket
- b. NO you can not skip one of the 3 parts above! Yes you need to label it Warm Up, Activity, Exit Ticket.
- c. Example:

October 19, 2025 Agenda

Warm Up- List 3 parts of an atom, and describe why those parts are important. If you do not remember, draw an atom and label it.

Activity:

Review Warm Up

WOC Book Notes & Discuss 115/22-28.

HW- 115/29-25

Exit Ticket- Recreate the diagram found on page 112

- 4. Can I go to a different screen after the warm up? NO
 - a. At all times the Agenda needs to be seen. Yes, it's stupid, but just do it. You can write the agenda on the white board and then use the smart board for your slide show or vice versa but you need to always see the agenda.
 - b. Work around? Have the students copy the agenda on the "warm up page" for their warm up and keep that paper on the desk at all times.
 - c. Have a sheet of paper with 5 boxes for the 5 days they will be in class this week. They put all of the warm ups on this sheet and you collect it on Friday.

- d. If you are an over achiever, you can also put a box for the homework on the same sheet and have parents sign it on Friday and it's due on Monday. Parent signature works for middle school and extra credit in high school.

5. Review

- a. You have a Bulletin Board with student work
- b. You have a Bulletin Board with state standards
- c. You have the agenda posted.
- d. Now you need a system.

6. System 1- First 10 min of any class

- a. When students walk in the room, what are they supposed to do?
- b. Do not say listen to directions! Kids don't listen! You don't listen. So what do you want them to do? Do you want them to get out their warm up page and start copying the warm up problem? Do you want them to grab their text book as they walk in and open it to a page and start reading? Do you want them to log into Schoology or whatever LMS you are using and complete the warm up there?
- c. Pick 1- DO IT! Don't ever change! Do one! Over and over and over and over again! This needs to be the routine. Kids need repetition, will you get bored? YES- but it is not about you, it is about the kids knowing exactly what to do when they walk in and you being able to submit the roll.
- d. Seating Chart! YES you need one! You should be able to sit at your desk, look at the room, see an empty chair, mark that kid absent on your system. If you are a control addict, you can mark it on your 5 column sheet and then on the computer. But you need to be able to do this in the 5 min it takes the kids to do the warm up. There is not excuse for not submitting roll first 5 min.
 - i. So the kid walks up to you in the first 5 min with a question? NO sit down, you do not answer questions the first 5 min.

ii. Is it an emergency? Okay lets break this down?

1. As a teacher do you see blood?
2. Do you see non-controlled blood?
3. For instance- bandaid fell off, yes there is blood but it is controlled- kid sit down and go do your warm up.
4. Bloody nose- handle that, then take roll.
5. Girls are on their period- go sit down, they should have prepared for that before your class or they can go to the bathroom after 10 min into class, but it is not an emergency!
6. In other words, emergency = nurse. If you do not need a nurse or an ambulance, it is not an emergency.

e. Sub Plans- This can be written up, put on your desk in the sub folder! The sub will need your seating charts and warm up... then they improv if needed, but have a system in place is a game changer! I use my sub folder EVERY DAY, that is where I keep my seating charts...

7. System LAST- last 10 min

- a. Assign a kid to play timer... the last 10 min of class they are supposed to let you know. Could you do it yourself? Probably, but this empowers a kid and ensures you a reminder so you can start cleaning up and working on exit tickets.
- b. Do you need to announce the exit ticket? NO, you already did that on the agenda, which is still on the board.
- c. Where do they put their exit tickets?
 - i. Honestly- I normally had them put them in a basket by the door, the kids got 1 point for turning it in. Absent? They didn't get the point. Forgot to turn it in, didn't get the point. Answers were wrong, correct or random- they got the point (assuming they copied the question and placed an

answer)... this was also a check and balance for me to ensure that I did roll properly and if a kid came to class late, I was able to update roll.

- ii. Teacher Assistant (TA)- My TA would alphabetize the exit sheets. Which is why all pages must have a last name, first. My TAs do not know all of my students, and the roster is alphabetized by last name. If a kid does not do this, they don't get a point. I don't have time for games. The TA would also put a check on the exit ticket and enter it on my 5 column roster.
- iii. Who is my TA? Depends on what level I taught. In Middle School, it would be the kid that finished their work early or the kid that needed an alternative assignment. In High School I always asked for a student TA and sometimes I would only get 1 for the day, and they would update that for me. If I couldn't get anyone to do it, I would do it during my conference period. Under NO circumstances, do you bring exit tickets home.

8. HARD PART- Activity

- a. What are you doing in class today? At this point the first 10 min and the last 10 min are done. At my current school, that leaves you 35 minutes.
 - i. Step 1 What are the standards you are going to teach and in what order?
 - ii. You should be able to map this for the entire year in the order you want to go in. You should also be able to look at a standard and say the kids could learn this in 3 days so the quiz will be on day 4.
 - iii. You should be able to group standards.
 - iv. How to cheat?
 - 1. Look at the text book! Is the book divided by chapter? Is there a test for the chapter? Does the Teachers Edition (TE) have a copy of the TEST? Can you move the test to your Learning

Management System (LMS)? Do you have the answers to the test?

2. Activities- what is listed in the book/TE for that chapter? Lately I have seen a lot of books with activities and lesson plans written out by the minute. Did you find that? You can always pivot once you have a starting point!

Boundaries Without Burnout

Boundaries aren't walls—they're fences with gates that you control. You can care deeply about your students and still lock your classroom door at lunch. You can give second chances without being a doormat.

Set the rules early and hold them with kindness and consistency.

MISSION YOU MUST ACCEPT- Before our next New Hero Meeting on October 28, 2025 in Dr. Lebental's Office from 3:30-4:15. Ask 3 mentors around campus what their rules are for

- *Late work? There's a system. What is it?*
- *Phones? A routine. What is it?*
- *Bathroom passes? A protocol. What is it?*

Because the second you make exceptions for one, you've made promises to thirty.

*And yes, they'll test you—especially when you're tired, hungry, or two minutes from the bell. Remember: **Your job is to model calm, not mirror chaos.***

Looking forward to debriefing with you!!!

Hero Rubric

Teacher:

Observer:

Date:

Time:

Do you have a Bulletin Board with student work		
Do you have a Bulletin Board with state standards?		
Do you have the agenda posted?		
Does your agenda have all three parts?		

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