

Preface

Over the past 10 years, I have initiated many discussions with teachers and asked them to describe classroom management. Although the term is widely used in education, the teachers I spoke with found the concept of classroom management difficult to verbalize, much less define. The following are some of their responses:

“I guess it is that difference in some classrooms.”

“It is a hope, dream, and a wish.”

“All teachers want it. It is something that some teachers have and others do not. It is something I wish I had.”

“It is magic!”

“It is what you need to be successful.”

“If you are having trouble, you better get management.”

“It is like law and order!”

“I read about it but I still don’t know if I have it.”

“You are lucky if you have it!”

Many books and articles are available to help teachers create a well-managed classroom. However, *Planning Classroom Management: A Five-Step Process to Creating a Positive Learning Environment* is unlike others because it offers the reader more than a definition of the term and a presentation of theorists and their ideas on classroom management. *Planning Classroom Management* provides a model for classroom management by demonstrating it as a process. By following the steps in the process, teachers learn to observe and identify how classroom management works and then develop and implement a personal classroom management plan (CMP) in their classrooms.

The contents of this book have been field-tested for more than 10 years by preservice teachers in undergraduate and graduate programs and students in alternative certification programs (shorter, condensed programs). Preservice teachers agreed that the classroom management Observation Guide kept them focused and on task when they conducted classroom observations. One alternative program student said, “The Observation Guide served as an integrative activity that put all the content I was learning into a format that I could take directly to the classroom.”

The book, the Observation Guide, and the classroom management plan (CMP) have been reviewed by more than 100 practicing teachers for suggestions, clarifications, and feedback. Administrators and principals reviewed the material, provided their perspective on classroom management, and described their expectations for how teachers and classrooms should work. One school administrator commented that this text finally makes classroom management approachable and available for all teachers. A principal stated he is thrilled that someone has attempted to demystify this term and give all educators a chance to really know what classroom management is and how to pursue it. Discussion with the school administrators revealed that adopting and mandating a districtwide or even schoolwide discipline approach has never worked because it soon became random, inconsistent, and arbitrary at the classroom level. They concluded that this book and its approach integrate concepts of teacher personality, management, and instruction as well as current thoughts on discipline and articulate them into a plan that can be successful in every classroom.

Several school personnel recruiters in Virginia thought it impressive that preservice teachers’ portfolios included a personal classroom management plan. Upon hiring one of the graduates who participated in the CMP field test, one superintendent of schools in Tennessee said that based on the CMP, he felt he was hiring an experienced teacher.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Planning Classroom Management A Five-Step Process to Creating a Positive Learning Environment describes the development of a personal classroom management plan. Questions, activities, and examples throughout the text help teachers further explore and understand classroom management as a process. Descriptions of how teachers can use a CMP appear in each chapter. Some of these examples are fictional; others are based on actual teacher accounts of the value of the CMP in their classrooms.

Specifically, Chapter 1, *Classroom Management*, provides an overview of classroom management and how to use the book. This chapter outlines the five steps of the classroom management process—introspection, classroom observation, development of the CMP, implementation of the CMP, and revision of the CMP—and the importance of a classroom management plan.

Chapter 2, *Classroom Management Plan*, describes the CMP and outlines the four components of the CMP: classroom organization, instruction, evaluation, and professional development.

Chapter 3, *Introspection: Getting in Touch With Your Teaching Self*, describes the first step in the process of creating a CMP. The classroom management process begins with introspection. The questions and activities in Chapter 3 are designed to assist the teacher in identifying his or her teaching self. Teacher reflection also includes the thought processes teachers engage in outside the classroom. Getting in touch with their thoughts, attitudes, and personality styles, both inside and outside the classroom, allows teachers to focus the CMP to capitalize on personal strong areas and strengthen weak areas. Having identified thought processes and other internal characteristics, the next step is for teachers to step outside themselves and observe teaching practices and behaviors of practicing teachers.

The Observation Guide in Chapter 4, *Classroom Observation*, helps teachers observe and record specific classroom information, which they then use to develop their CMP. The See, Hear, and Feel method helps teachers record the classroom setting and operation. Other sections help teachers collect information on classroom management in operation—what it is, how it works, when it works, and why it works. Teachers are encouraged to visit many classrooms and interview many teachers using the Observation Guide.

In Chapter 5, *Developing a Personal Classroom Management Plan*, the teacher composes his or her own CMP. The information gathered in Chapters 3 and 4 serves as a resource in developing the personal CMP.

Chapter 6, *Implementing the Classroom Management Plan*, focuses on how to teach the CMP to the class—the implementation step of the process. In addition to guidance on planning and writing lessons to teach the CMP, this section offers CMP mini-lessons that teachers can incorporate into the curriculum.

Chapter 7, *Revising the Classroom Management Plan*, focuses on reflective thinking and offers a method that turns reflection into revision and thinking into action. A teacher's personal CMP remains a dynamic, ever-changing script for effective classroom management.

Chapter 8, *Samples of Effective Teachers' Classroom Management Plans*, offers five sample CMPs written by teachers of primary, intermediate, middle, and secondary grades to give further guidance on creating an effective CMP.

The second edition of this text has been modified and enhanced by feedback received from professors and students using the first edition in teacher preparation courses and field experiences, beginning teachers using the CMP in their first year, and mentors reflecting on ways to help mentees improve their classroom management. Several enhancements have been made to provide an even clearer understanding of the development of the personal classroom management plan.

This edition expands on the descriptions of the CMP components—classroom organization, instruction, evaluation, and professional development—and includes a greater number of references to the research that underpins the text's critical concepts. More attention has been given to managing the diverse student populations found in classrooms, so that the CMP is practical, relevant, and effective in structuring successful classroom management for all learners. In addition, more emphasis has been

placed on reflective teaching practices for professional growth and development and on the importance of reflective revising of the CMP.

USING THIS BOOK

Planning Classroom Management: A Five-Step Process to Creating a Positive Learning Environment meets an important need for both preservice and practicing teachers. The term *preservice teacher* refers to a student enrolled in a teacher education program and involved with field experiences, from the initial levels of classroom observation to the student teaching experience. A *practicing teacher* currently teaches in a classroom. The classroom management process is easy to teach, learn, and implement. It can be done by everyone involved with classroom teaching. It can be done individually, by teams, by grade levels, or as a schoolwide effort. It can be taught to any number of teachers at one time or any combination of teachers. For example, it could be an inservice activity for a school, all sixth-grade teachers, all math teachers, all first-year teachers, all teachers needing remediation, and so on. For remediation purposes, principals and teachers must often devise a self-improvement plan. The process described in this book provides a direct, responsive, nonthreatening plan for improvement.

Planning Classroom Management is aimed primarily at preservice and practicing teachers, although others involved in education will also find the information extremely useful. Undergraduate and graduate teacher education students could use it as a primary text in methods courses in education, when doing observations, in practicums, and in the student teaching experience. Teacher education programs can require preservice teachers to make observations throughout the program and may require the development of a personal CMP for use in the first year of teaching.

The CMP could be included in a comprehensive teacher's portfolio and in a mini-portfolio used when interviewing for school positions and left with the principal. This mini-portfolio may include a resume, a teaching philosophy statement, a CMP, scores from required tests, letters of recommendation, and evaluations from field experiences. The CMP, portfolio, and mini-portfolio are valuable assets in securing a teaching position.

The description of the classroom management process is particularly helpful to the alternative certification student. The alternative certification program—usually a shorter, condensed teacher preparation program—is for people who are changing careers and many of them have little classroom experience. This text highlights the most important information in organizing a classroom and structuring teacher and student autonomy. An alternative certification student writes, "My CMP has become my learning rubric. I am beginning to understand how we learn, what can impede us in the learning process, what strategies will work for me, and how to structure those strategies into a personal CMP."

Facing their first teaching job, many new teachers worry about what to do first. Beginning, maintaining, and ending the year with a management plan can alleviate some of this apprehension. In addition, this book provides

an opportunity for both preservice and practicing teachers to prepare before the first year of teaching or the school year begins.

Many practicing teachers who may feel burned out or ready to give up or who want more from teaching would benefit from constructing or reconstructing a plan for classroom management. Teachers returning to the profession can prepare a CMP before entering the classroom. Teachers changing grade levels can construct a CMP appropriate to that grade level before the year begins. Teachers moving from school to school, area to area, or state to state can take the CMP with them.

Principals, school administrators, district supervisors, and superintendents can endorse this classroom management process because it offers consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness in setting standards of classroom operation. It is easy to implement as a schoolwide and districtwide policy. Knowing what to do and how to do it, faculty and staff can assist and support each other. A team of teachers can develop a CMP together by grade level or subject area.

This book can support teacher induction programs. The classroom management process developed in this book gets to the heart of the concerns and problems of teachers searching for classroom management. The book can help both mentor and mentee establish a cooperative dialogue in communicating essentials of teaching, collecting and sharing information, developing a CMP, and reflecting on specific information for professional growth and development.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Public education is important to nearly all Americans, and the public's concerns are high on the national agenda. According to the 36th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Rose & Gallup, 2005), 47 percent of respondents awarded the nation's public schools a grade of A or B, and 61 percent of respondents rated their local public schools a grade of A or B. Topping the list of public concerns was the lack of financial support (21%) with lack of discipline and overcrowded schools tied for second place (10%). Discipline dominated the poll as a major concern until 2000. In 2001, the lack of financial support tied for first place with the concern for discipline. However, since 2001, lack of financial support has claimed the top spot. Discipline, overcrowded schools, use of drugs, and fighting/violence/gangs consistently remain on the list as public concerns (Rose & Gallup, 2005). In *Education 97/98*, Elam, Rose, and Gallup (1997a) state the following:

One of the principal goals of education is to produce individuals capable of clear moral judgment and self-control. But in the real school world, establishing a climate for the development of self-control as well as for academic achievement often requires the exercise of external authority and control. (p. 33)

Educators know that, ultimately, exercising external authority and control is not the answer. The answer lies within people. Self-control is an educational goal that needs to be developed in schools. *Planning Classroom Management: A Five-Step Process to Creating a Positive Learning Environment* contains a format that assists a beginning or practicing teacher, a teacher new to a school system, a teacher new to a grade level, and even a teacher seeking remediation. The hope is that the text challenges school administrators, teachers, and teacher educators to rethink the rhetoric of classroom management. It adds promise to teacher preparation programs and for teachers seeking to improve their teaching by making classroom management a process and, therefore, accessible to every teacher and every classroom. *Planning Classroom Management: A Five-Step Process to Creating a Positive Learning Environment* can place teachers and students in a position to meet the demands for higher standards, more discipline in the classrooms, and improved student learning.

The time has come to replace, if not eliminate, the words guess, hope, dream, wish, magic, and luck from teachers' discussion of classroom management. The time has come to take the term classroom management and make it a process that can be taught, learned, and implemented in today's classrooms.