

Managing the Differentiating Classroom



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KNOW.....



- **Research and rationale to support building healthy classroom environments**
- **Ways to assess students' learning profiles and how to use the information to develop healthy learning communities**
- **Strategies to develop classroom communities that support differentiation including flexible grouping strategies**
- **Classroom management techniques that support differentiation**

UNDERSTAND THAT.....



- A student-centered classroom based on well-defined individual needs provides the appropriate context for differentiation.
- When students assume ownership and responsibility for classroom procedures, learning, and developing a personal best work effort, the result is high achievement and motivation.
- A classroom environment that supports differentiation balances student voice and choice with teacher direction, is cooperative rather than competitive and honors and celebrates student differences instead of hiding or ignoring them.

BE ABLE TO DO.....

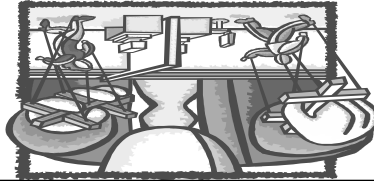


- o Assess learning profiles and manage the information for all students
- o Determine practical applications for new knowledge, understanding, and skills related to classroom communities
- o Discuss, collaborate, question, plan, and reflect
- o Self-assess

When we manage students

...the more we “manage” students' behavior and try to make them do what we say, the more difficult it is for them to become morally sophisticated people who think for themselves and care about others.

Alfie Kohn



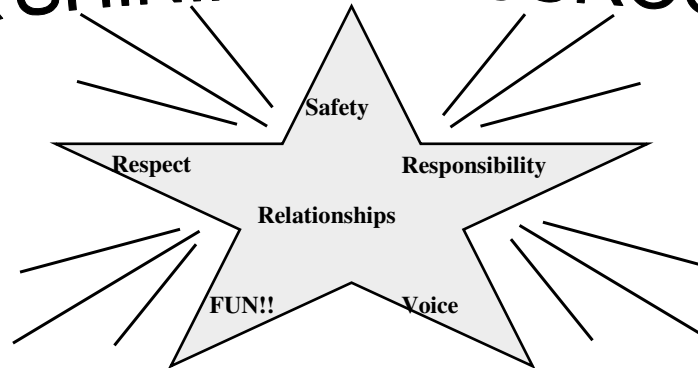
Where You Teach



Effective teachers understand that the learning environment they create in their classrooms may be the single most important make-or-break element in helping students become the best they can be. This is a matter of the heart.

Tomlinson, 2003, p. 5

A SHINING CLASSROOM



“As with any successful relationship, a classroom community must be nurtured each and every day.”

Smith & Rex, 2002

A SHINING CLASSROOM

RELATIONSHIPS:

- teacher - student, student - student
- know and value students individually
- teamwork

RESPECT:

- feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and ideas
- property and space
- no put-downs, show appreciation

SAFETY:

- physical and emotional
- to be a risk taker
- to be yourself

RESPONSIBILITY:

- ownership for life-long learning
- personal best work ethic
- classroom operation

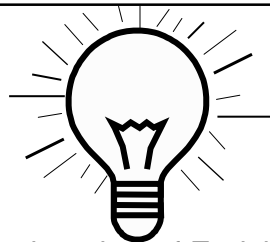
VOICE:

- classroom agreements
- reflection and assessment
- choice

FUN:

- CELEBRATE!
- enjoy each other's company
- Create community

A SHINING CLASSROOM
CREATES LEARNING THAT IS
EXCITING! MEANINGFUL!
ENGAGING!



Marian Diamond, author of Enriching Heredity and Magic Trees of the Mind, has been studying the impact of enriched environments on the brain at the University of California at Berkeley. She says:

"So our environment, including the classroom environment, is not a neutral place. We educators are either growing dendrites or letting them wither and die. Enriched environments unmistakably influence the brain's growth and learning. The trick is to determine what constitutes an enriched environment."

Setting Up Classrooms to Make Kids Feel Good About Learning

According to Diamond, an enriched environment for children:

- Includes a steady source of positive support;
- Stimulates all the senses (not all at once);
- Has an atmosphere free of undue pressure and stress but suffused with a degree of pleasurable intensity;
- Presents a series of novel challenges that are neither too easy nor too difficult for the child at his or her stage of development;
- Allows social interaction for a significant percentage of activities;
- Promotes the development of a broad range of skills and interests: mental, physical, aesthetic, social and emotional;
- Gives the child an opportunity to choose many of his or her efforts and to modify them;
- Provides an enjoyable atmosphere that promotes exploration and the fun of learning;
- Allows the child to be an active participant rather than a passive observer.

Diamond, M. (1998) Magic Trees of the Mind

Qualities of Effective Teachers

James Stronge, ASCD. (2002)

Effective teachers:

- work *with* students as opposed to doing things *to* or *for* them.
- allow students to participate in decision making.
- pay attention to what students have to say.
- demonstrate a sense of fun and a willingness to play or participate.
- Productive interactions involve giving students responsibility and respect; also treating secondary students as adults when appropriate.

A BETTER SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

Two important factors: FUN & HAPPINESS!

"It's the teachers who are **excited** about what they're doing that kids flock to, and it's in schools filled with such teachers that kids are successful. You've got to make sure that **FUN** is part of the kids' day-to-day experience. On one of Ted Sizer's visits to The Met, our kids told him that they could never be absent because they were afraid they might miss something. Part of this is building **celebration** into the culture."



The Big Picture, 2004. Dennis Littkey



A BETTER SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

Student Voice

"To learn about democracy and about how to participate in and contribute to one, students must be a part of a democratic environment."

"To me, a silent school is not a school at all. Enforced quiet (Dewey) not only keeps the kids from being themselves and keeps teachers from finding out who the kids are, it also kills learning. **Communication is the lifeblood of education.**"



The Big Picture, 2004. Dennis Littkey

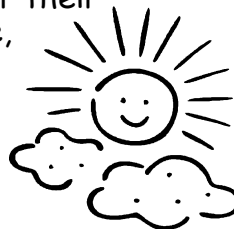
A BETTER SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

Building and Cultivating a Positive Culture

"If kids are going to be respectful, they must feel respected. And respecting them means allowing them to make decisions about the things that affect them and, most of all, believing in their potential."

"The amount of respect and trust that exists in a school's culture is directly related to the amount of responsibility students are given over their environment, the equipment they use, and their learning."

The Big Picture, 2004. Dennis Littkey



Some Ways to be Responsive to Where We Teach...

Focus on Community	Clear Routines
Space / Time to Move	Flexible Grouping
Flexible Furniture Arrangement	High Relevance
Consistent Representation of all Cultures	Flexible Time
High Expectations / Tall Scaffolding	Affirmation
Focus on Personal Best	Language Bridges
Emphasis on Strengths	Student Experts
Opportunity for Mid-Point Correction	Quiet / Noise
Each Learner a Contributor	Quality and Effort Rubrics
Shared Responsibility	Positive Humor
Competition Against Self	Making Meaning
High Engagement	Wait Time
Pre-Established Groups	Student Choice
Teach High	Keeper of the Book
Study Teams	

**TO BE UNDERSTOOD YOU
MUST FIRST SEEK TO
UNDERSTAND**

- Rainer Martins

*Understanding one's own
magical mystery is one of
the teacher's most
important assets if he is to
understand that everyone is
thus differently equipped.*

---Buckminster Fuller

“The most effective classroom managers did not treat all students the same: they tended to employ different strategies with different types of students.”



Robert and Jane Marzano
Educational Leadership, Sept. 2003

Learning Profile Factors

Group Orientation

independent/self orientation
group/peer orientation
adult orientation
combination

Gender & Culture

Learning Environment

quiet/noise
warm/cool
still/mobile
flexible/fixe
“busy”/“spare”

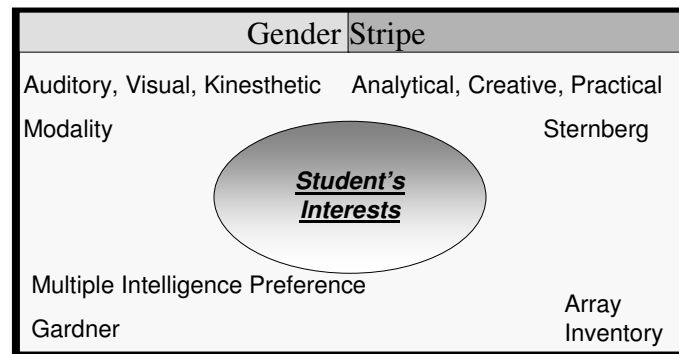
Cognitive Style

Creative/conforming
Essence/facts
Expressive/controlled
Nonlinear/linear
Inductive/deductive
People-oriented/task or Object oriented
Concrete/abstract
Collaboration/competition
Interpersonal/introspective
Easily distracted/long Attention span
Group achievement/personal achievement
Oral/visual/kinesthetic
Reflective/action-oriented

Intelligence Preference

analytic
practical
creative
verbal/linguistic
logical/mathematical
spatial/visual
bodily/kinesthetic
musical/rhythmic
interpersonal
intrapersonal
naturalist
existential

Learner Profile Card



Flexible Grouping



Should be purposeful:

- may be based on student interest, learning profile and/or readiness
- may be based on needs observed during learning times
- geared to accomplish curricular goals (K - U - D)

Implementation:

- purposefully plan using information collected - interest surveys, learning profile inventories, exit cards, quick writes, observations
- list groups on an overhead or place in folders or mailboxes
- "on the fly" as invitational groups

Cautions:

- avoid turning groups into tracking situations
- provide opportunities for students to work within a variety of groups
- practice moving into group situations and assuming roles within the group

Judy Rex, 2003

Pre-Assigned “Standing” Groups

Text Teams

Similar Readiness
Reading Pairs

Synthesis Squads

Sets of 4 with visual, performance, writing, metaphorical (etc.) preferences

Teacher Talkers

Groups of 5-7 with similar learning needs with whom the teacher will meet to extend and support growth

Think Tanks

Mixed Readiness
Writing Generator
Groups of 4 or 5

Dip Sticks

Groups of six with varied profiles used by teacher to do “dip stick”, cross-section checks of progress, understanding

Peer Partners

Student selected
Groups 3 or 4

Teacher Checklist for Group Work

- Students understand the task goals.
- Students understand what’s expected of individuals to make the group work well.
- The task matches the goals (leads students to what they should know, understand, and be able to do).
- Most kids should find the task interesting.
- The task requires an important contribution from each group
- The task is likely to be demanding of the group and its members.
- The task requires genuine collaboration to achieve shared understanding.
- The timelines are brisk (but not rigid).
- Individuals are accountable for their own understanding of all facets of the task.
- There’s a “way out” for students who are not succeeding with the group.
- There is opportunity for teacher or peer coaching and in-process quality checks.
- Students understand what to do when they complete their work at a high level of quality.

Tomlinson • 2000

Working Conditions for Alternate Activities

If you are working on alternate activities while others in the class are busy with more teacher-directed activities, you are expected to follow these guidelines:

1. Stay on task at all times with the alternate activities you have chosen.
2. Don't talk to the teacher while he or she is teaching.
3. When you need help, and the teacher is busy, ask someone else who is also working on the alternative activities.
4. If no one else can help you, continue to try the activity until the teacher is available, or move on to another activity until the teacher is free.
5. Use "6-inch voices" when talking to each other about the alternative activities. (These are voices that can be heard no more than 6 inches away.)
6. Never brag about your opportunities to work on the alternative activities.
7. If you must go in and out of the room, do so soundlessly.
8. If you are going to work in another location, stay on task there, and follow the directions of the adult in charge.
9. Don't bother anyone else.
10. Don't call attention to yourself.

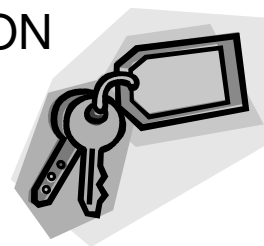
I agree to the conditions described above, and know that if I don't follow them, I may lose the opportunity to continue with the alternate activities and may have to rejoin the class for teacher-directed instruction.

_____ *Teacher's signature*

_____ *Student's signature*

(Winebrenner '97)

STUDENT VOICE and CHOICE are KEYS to successful DIFFERENTIATION



Create a student driven classroom by
involving students in important decisions
about processes and procedures!

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM

“ ... A wise teacher understands that virtually everything in the classroom will work better if it “belongs to us” rather than “belonging to me”.

Positive environment
Mutually agreed-on guidelines
Clear routines
+ Plentiful support for success

Student pride and ownership

Carol Tomlinson, [Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom](#)

Classroom Procedures Defined and Practiced

- ✓ Classroom agreements
- ✓ Classroom cues
- ✓ Home base seating
- ✓ Moving into groups
- ✓ Materials distribution and turn in
- ✓ Anchor activities





- The IDEAL Classroom
 - voice and choice
 - flexibility
 - ownership
 - appreciation
 - sharing
 - empathy
 - problem solving & conflict resolution
 - listening
 - responsibility
 - respect
 - teamwork and inclusion
 - self-awareness
 - safety (physical and emotional)
 - personal best (high expectations for all)
 - Fun!
 - and the list goes on and on...

Judy Rex and Nanci Smith, 2002

Classroom Agreements

- We agree to give mutual RESPECT: to ourselves and others; to property, space and feelings.
- We agree to promote SAFETY: both physical and emotional safety is important to us; to be encouraging and helpful; no put-downs; to be tolerant and appreciative of our differences.
- We agree to be ACTIVE AND EXCELLENT LEARNERS: positive attitudes; responsible, excellent role models, attentive listeners; always giving my **personal best effort!**



Judy Rex and Nanci Smith, 2000

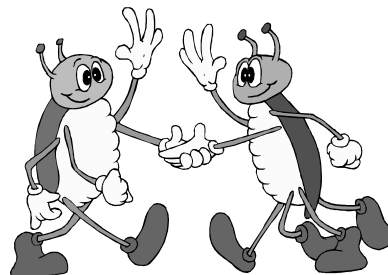
BRAIN RESEARCH SHOWS THAT. . .

Eric Jensen, *Teaching With the Brain in Mind*, 1998

Choices content, process, product groups, resources environment	vs.	Required no student voice restricted resources
Relevant meaningful connected to learner deep understanding	vs.	Irrelevant impersonal out of context only to pass a test
Engaging emotional, energetic hands on, learner input	vs.	Passive low interaction lecture seatwork
Increased intrinsic MOTIVATION	EQUALS	Increased APATHY & RESENTMENT

ALL FEEL INCLUDED

- ❖ *Learning Zones*
- ❖ *Alternatives to hand raising*
- ❖ *Resident Experts / Sub days*
- ❖ *Mystery Messages*
- ❖ *Inside / Outside Circles*
- ❖ *Diversity is celebrated*
- ❖ *Messages of appreciation
and thanks*
- ❖ *NO PUT-DOWNS!*



Judy Rex & Nanci Smith

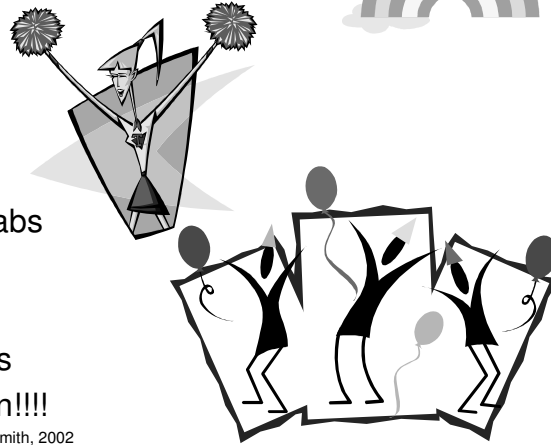


CELEBRATIONS!

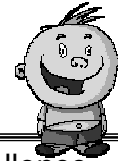


- High Fives
- Study groups
- Paper slip rewards
- Salt & sugar ratio labs
- Birthdays
- Gift of words
- Games / Energizers
- Laugh and have fun!!!!

• Judy Rex and Nanci Smith, 2002



Paper Slip Rewards



Paper slip rewards are randomly given for excellence. They could include the following:

- One free answer on a test.
- Extra day for homework.
- Extra question chip for your group.
- Hang out time.
- And the list goes on....

On your table are appreciation slips! Be sure to write a thank you to someone who has helped you out today.



GOAL SETTING

Challenging – Measurable – Attainable

- Goal Bank of academic and personal quality goals is determined by students, teachers, and parents
- Daily/Weekly goals
- Usually no more than 2-3
- Individual/whole class
- Maintained by student and teacher
- Self-reflection on a regular basis
- Shared with parents
- Work/Study/Project Logs and Goals
- Individual or group objectives for short in class work period.
- Process journal entries indicate accomplishments, difficulties, and/or questions.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Students accept ownership for behavior and responsibility for consequences.
- Clear expectations are developed collaboratively - **IN ADVANCE!**
- Behavior plans or contracts - What are you doing?
- "I" messages, peer mediation
- Conferences, community circles, sticky notes
- Have an "On Their Side" attitude. Find out why the behavior occurred.

The Incessant Interrupter

Possible Causes:

- Students need to seek attention and appreciation
- Inattention to group instructions
- Extreme competitiveness, nervousness, insecurity, or impulsiveness



Teacher Actions:

- Try a non-verbal gesture, gain eye contact, invent a secret signal
- Use a direct statement such as “John is speaking now” or “It’s Mary’s turn” made in a noncommittal, unemotional tone of voice
- If the student is working in a small group give him/her a job to do.
- Give a token the student can “cash in” when he or she wants to speak. This guarantees a time to share, but places responsibility on the student as to when to best use it.

Vindictiveness, Rudeness, and Defiance

Possible Causes:

- Student is begging for help, but attempting to analyze the situation while it is occurring is difficult. The goal is to defuse the situation and end the “show.”

Teacher Actions

- Give the class an assignment or redirect them back to their work. This assures the class you can handle the problem and you haven’t lost your cool.
- Ask the student why he or she chose that action.
- Deal with the student without expressing personal anger. Use “I” statements. This probably isn’t about you.
- If it is a personal attack on you, you might want to let the situation cool down—“Susie, obviously you are quite upset. We can talk about this later when we both feel less angry.”
- Calmly redirect the student back to her seat. If she is far from her seat, walk toward the door without making the student feel as if you are going to touch her. “Susie, please step outside and compose yourself. I will be out to speak with you in a moment.”



The Classroom Bully

Possible Causes:

- The student is seeking classroom status
- The student may be dealing with true anger over his/her person situation



Teacher Action

- Supply a system whereby he or she can become composed
- Help the student to understand the causes of angry feelings and ways in which to deal with them
- Address certain situations that seem to incite the behavior
- Plan ahead for ways the student will react in those situations
- Pair the bully with a student he or she really admires who handles social situations more appropriately


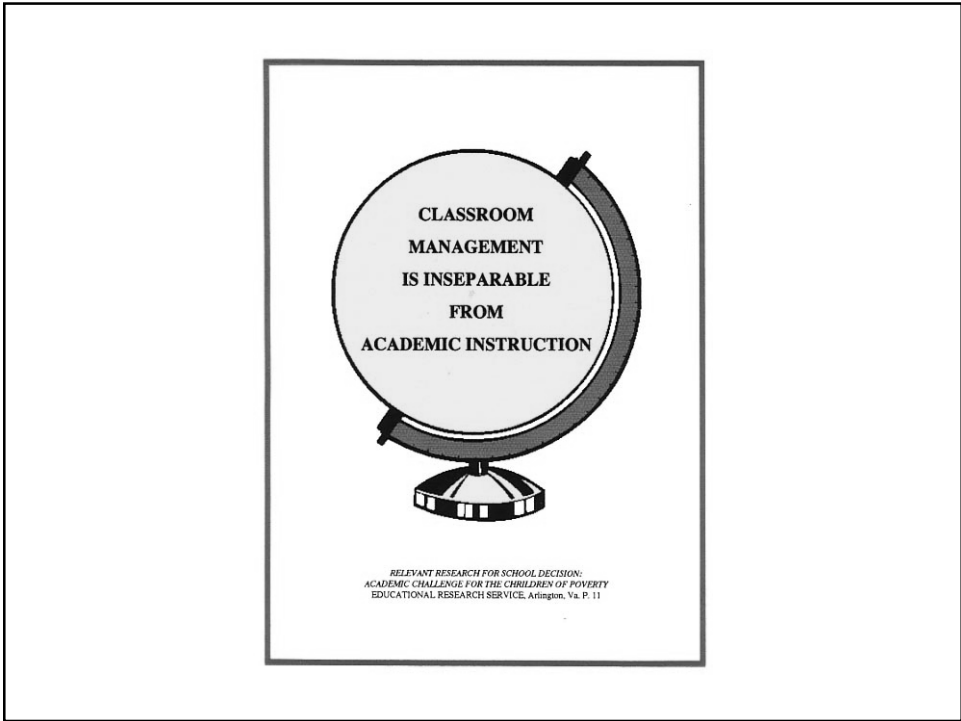
Nonaccountability

Possible Causes:

- Unable to set personal goals and carry them out
- Lacking self-confidence, assertiveness, responsibility

Teacher Actions

- Monitor the student frequently.
- Privately find out if the problem is inability to perform the work or lack of motivation and a sense of responsibility.
- Give students small goals and praise for accomplishing them.
- Set a new goal immediately after completion of the first goal.
- Establish a chart or record book to record accomplishments.
- Make students accountable to parents or other adults in the school.
- Make sure the student understands that everyone is accountable for their actions and their work.
- Get outside help from the counselor or principal when necessary.



The greatest sign of
success for a
teacher...

Is to be able to say,
“The children are
now working as if I
did not exist.”

-Maria Montessori

Organized Flexibility

Procedures defined and practiced!

- Anchor activities
- White board messages
- Stackers, wall-folders, etc. by class
- Signals
- Name sticks
- Question chips
- Expert “Yellow Pages”
- Task Cards, tape recorders, etc.
- Classroom supplies and arrangement
- Turn in folders
- Exit Cards
- Calendars
- Flexible seating: practice changing groupings and home base
- Where to get notes, RICE (Recall, Imagine, Check, Expert of the Day), 3 before Me



Judy Rex and Nanci Smith, 2002

10 Strategies for Managing a Differentiated Classroom

1. Have a strong rationale for differentiating instruction based on student readiness, interest and learning profile.
2. Begin differentiating at a pace that is comfortable for you.
3. Time differentiated activities for student success.
4. Use an “anchor activity” to free you up to focus your attention on your students.
5. Create and deliver instructions carefully.

10 Strategies for Managing a Differentiated Classroom

6. Have a “home base” for students.
7. Be sure students have a plan for getting help when you are busy with another student or group.
8. Give your students as much responsibility for their learning as possible.
9. Engage your students in talking about classroom procedures and group processes.
10. Use flexible grouping.



Anchor Activities

A task to which a student automatically moves when an assigned task is finished,

TRAITS OF EFFECTIVE ANCHOR ACTIVITIES:

Important—related to key knowledge, understanding, and skill,

Interesting—appeals to student curiosity, interest, learning preference,

Allow Choice—students can select from a range of options

Clear Routines and Expectations—students know what they are to do, how to do it, how to keep records, etc.

Seldom Graded—teachers should examine the work as they move around the room. Students may turn in work for feedback. Students may get a grade for working effectively, but seldom for the work itself. The motivation is interest and/or improved achievement.

Beginning Anchor Activities...

- Teach one key anchor activity to the whole class very carefully.
Later, it can serve as a point of departure for other anchors.
- Explain the rationale.
Let students know you intend the activities to be helpful and/or interesting to them.
Help them understand why it's important for them to work productively.
- Make sure directions are clear and accessible, materials readily available, and working conditions support success.
- Think about starting with one or two anchor options and expanding the options as students become proficient with the first ones.
- Monitor student effectiveness with anchors and analyze the way they are working with your students.
- Encourage your students to propose anchor options.
- Remember that anchor activities need to stem from and be part of building a positive community of learners.



Anchor Activities

What Do I Do If I Finish Early?

- Read – comics, letters, books, encyclopedia, poetry, etc.
- Write – a letter, poetry in your Writer's Notebook, a story, a comic, etc.
- Practice your cursive or calligraphy
- Keyboarding
- Help someone else
- Create math story problems or puzzles
- Work on independent study of your choice
- Play a math or language game
- Find out how to say your spelling words in another language
- Practice ACT / SAT cards
- Solve a challenge puzzle with write it up
- Practice anything!
- Get a jump on homework
- Use your imagination and creativity to challenge yourself!



Rex and Smith, 2000

What Do I Do if I Finish Early?

- Keyboarding
- Arithmetwists
- Illustrate a story you've written
- Play a quiet math or language game
- Write a morning message for a class
- Practice your cursive or
- Calligraphy
- Read - comics, letters, books, poetry, encyclopedia, etc.
- Help someone else (this is NOT an opportunity to chit chat)
- Work on an independent study of your choice
- Find out how to say your spelling words in Spanish
- Pick something from the X Factor volunteer Board to do
- Use your imagination and creativity to challenge yourself
- Write--a letter, poetry in your writer's Notebook, a story, etc

When you think you are faced with nothing to do (OH NO - NOT POSSIBLE!):

First, ask yourself - is there anything else I need to finish? If the answer is no, THEN choose something from this list that we brainstormed.



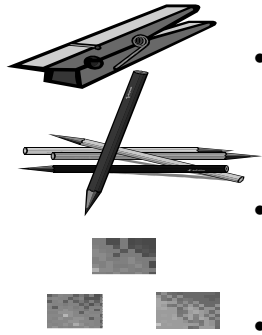
Transitions



- Directions for transitions need to be given with clarity and urgency.
 - Time limit for transition
 - Address the acceptable noise level
 - Rehearsal



Assigning Groups



- Clothes pins with student's names to assign them to a particular task
- Color code children to certain groups (a transparency with students names in color works well)
- Table tents with numbers correlated to group lists on the overhead
- Cubing allows you to assign groups by interest or readiness level

Giving Directions



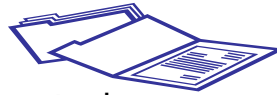
- If the whole class is doing the same activity then give the directions to the whole group.
- Do not give multiple task directions to the whole class.
- For small group work, tape directions so students can listen to them repeatedly
- Use task cards to give directions to small groups.
- A general rule is that once the teacher has given directions the students can't interrupt while he/she is working with a small group
 - Ask Me Visors

Handling Materials

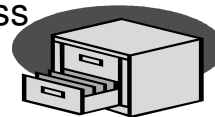


- Assign jobs to different students (materials handler, table captain)
- As a teacher ask yourself, “Is this something I have to do myself, or can the students learn to do it?”
- Remember that you have to teach children how to become responsible for their own things.
- Have set procedures of where to hand in papers and how to pass out papers.

The Paper Trail...



- Color-coded work folders or stackers
- Portfolios – goals, work in progress, tests, finished pieces, reflections, quarterly assessment portfolios
- Baskets for each curricular area or class period
- Filing Cabinet, rolling files, crates
- Clipboard with index cards for each student
- Record keeping calendars for students / class
- Student reflections and self-evaluations



Key to these organizational patterns is that the children have access to their own work and know how to file and/or find what they need to accomplish a task.

Time



Must be flexible in order to address every child's readiness level

- Catch-up days
- Anchoring Activities
- Postcards for Writing Ideas
- Independent Investigations

Ask Yourself About Your Classroom Community...

- How do we begin and end our time together?
- In what ways do students assume ownership of the classroom?
- How do we understand and celebrate our similarities? Our differences?

Ask Yourself About Your Classroom Community...

- How do I know that each student feels included in the community? What action do I take to ensure this?
- How do I interact with students? How do students interact with each other?
- What are indicators that the classroom is a “safe” environment physically, emotionally and intellectually?

Ask Yourself About Your Classroom Community...

- How are problems solved and conflicts resolved?
- What happens when student behavior reflects a breakdown in the community?
- How do I give affirmation to students’ strengths? How do I respond to deficits?

Ask Yourself About Your Classroom Community...

- How are expectations communicated and evaluated?
- How do students assume responsibility for their own learning and behavior?
- How do I promote teamwork?

Ask Yourself About Your Classroom Community...

- In what ways do students take risks with their learning?
- Is this a place where my students and I collaborate to work hard and have fun together?

Judy Rex & Nanci Smith, 2002

“I’VE COME TO A FRIGHTENING CONCLUSION THAT I AM THE DECISIVE ELEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM. IT’S MY PERSONAL APPROACH THAT CREATES THE CLIMATE. IT’S MY DAILY MOOD THAT MAKES THE WEATHER. AS A TEACHER, I HAVE A TREMENDOUS POWER TO MAKE A CHILD’S LIFE MISERABLE OR JOYOUS. I CAN BE A TOOL OF TORTURE OR AN INSTRUMENT OF INSPIRATION. I CAN HUMILIATE OR HUMOR, HURT OR HEAL. IN ALL SITUATIONS, IT IS MY RESPONSE THAT DECIDES WHETHER A CRISIS WILL BE ESCALATED OR DEESCALATED AND A CHILD HUMANIZED OR DEHUMANIZED.”

Ginott