

# CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

## **Behavior Management**

Encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior

## **Productivity**

Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities

## **Instructional Learning Formats**

Focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities

present and write the number on the attendance chart. During other times, the teacher structures lessons in a way that allows more student initiation and choice. For example, the teacher may set up an art area and a writing area without providing instructions for specific projects; instead, students are allowed to use the materials within the area to do a project of their own choosing. Some students may paint in the art area, whereas others may cut or glue. The teacher responds to student initiation and ideas. When students say they want to make kites, the teacher gets out tissue paper and string and allows interested students to make kites. In the writing area, some students may write letters to their family; some may write about something interesting they did that morning; and others may write out forms and receipts, pretending they are in a post office or grocery store. Materials are available and accessible to the students, and they are not required to ask the teacher to gain access to or use them. Students often lead activities. For example, students may lead a transition by thinking up creative ways to dismiss their peers from one activity to go to the next. In addition, there may be evidence in this classroom that students have classroom jobs such as announcing cleanup time or watering plants.

***There are many opportunities for student talk and expression.*** Activities and lessons provide ample opportunities for students to talk and share their ideas. The teacher appears genuinely interested in understanding how the students see the world and in getting them to express these thoughts. In these classrooms, student talk may predominate or be equal to teacher talk. During center or free time, students talk openly with teachers and with one another. During more structured teaching activities, teachers encourage a balance of student and adult talk by asking questions and making sure that students are given opportunities to be part of the activity and to share their perspectives. For example, while reading a book about fall, students are given the opportunity to share their ideas about what fall is and how they know it is fall.

***The students have freedom of movement and placement during activities.*** Although teachers should have clear behavioral expectations for students, teachers high on this scale set behavioral expectations that are in line with students' developmental needs and appropriate to the activity at hand. For example, students may be free to choose the spot where they sit on the carpet during circle time or may be allowed to call out, get up, and jump around when something related to these physical activities occurs during a book reading. If a student is wiggling around a bit or standing up instead of sitting in his chair but is not interfering with his or other students' learning or attention, the teacher allows this to happen. This should not be confused with chaos; the teacher who scores high on this scale should have clear expectations for student behavior and not rigidly adhere to behavioral guidelines at moments when it is not necessary.

to share their view of the world but, at other times, seems more concerned with simply giving them information. For example, while reading a book about a boy losing his mitten, the teacher solicits ideas from the students about how the boy must feel and whether the students ever have lost something and how they felt about it; however, the teacher then goes on to read the rest of the book with no opportunities for student input.

***The teacher is somewhat controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.*** At times, the teacher requires students to be quiet and remain seated, but other times the students may move about freely. For example, while reading a book containing suggested movement activities, the teacher may be very controlling of how the students act out the movements. He may direct them to stay on "their spot" rather than allow them free movement opportunities. Later, during center time, however, the students are allowed to move about the room freely.

### **High Regard for Student Perspectives (6, 7)**

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***The teacher is flexible in his or her plans, goes along with students' ideas, and organizes instruction around students' interests.*** The teacher appears to be constantly on the lookout for opportunities to involve students in a meaningful, formative way within the classroom. The teacher does not rigidly adhere to an agenda or plan at the expense of learning opportunities and students' interest in activities. Being flexible and going along with students' ideas does not distract from the lesson but allows the teacher to incorporate the students' interests and ideas into the lesson's goals. For example, the students may be talking about the snow outside, so the teacher incorporates their questions into their morning weather discussion—he may even forgo attendance or some other part of the morning circle plan to go outside and focus on the students' interest in the weather. During center time, the teacher may interact with groups of students by playing alongside of them, following their lead in building a bridge for trains and creating a house for kitties. During these interactions, the teacher follows the students' interests, pace, and signals. The teacher also is able to develop a new activity based on the interests of the students. For example, the teacher may bring dolls to the water table to have their hair washed after students begin putting their own hair in the water to see what happens.

***The teacher provides consistent support for student autonomy and leadership.*** The teacher makes appropriate decisions enabling students to be as independent as possible within a given activity. For example, during an activity intended to help students understand that words make up sentences, the teacher allows the students to generate the sentences to maximize the students' autonomy within the context of the structured lesson. Students in this particular lesson are not given complete freedom to choose what they will be doing because that would run counter to the goals of the lesson; however, a considerable effort is made to allow them to feel as if they are actively contributing to the activity. During morning meeting time, this teacher may make a considerable effort to ensure that students are involved in administrative tasks. For example, rather than taking attendance himself, the teacher may ask a student to count the number of students

***The teacher is highly controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.*** Although some activities require more control of students than others (e.g., whole-group activities versus free play time), the teacher consistently exerts a high degree of control over student movement. The teacher frequently reminds students that they must stay on their bottoms, be quiet, and sit still, even at times when this does not appear necessary. Students may be required to sit in their seats and be prohibited from talking to their peers throughout the observation.

### **Middle-Range Regard for Student Perspectives (3, 4, 5)**

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***The teacher may follow the students' lead during some periods and be more controlling during others.*** The classroom may seem moderately teacher-regimented, but some consideration is given to students' choices and interests during the observation period. The teacher sometimes rigidly adheres to an agenda or plan at the expense of learning opportunities and students' interest in activities but at other times appears more flexible and goes with the flow of students' ideas. At times, students may be moved through activities and lessons following the teacher's plan rather than the students' interests and understanding. For example, the teacher may create an art and a science center based on the students' expressed interest in caterpillars, but the students may be required to remain in their centers until the bell rings rather than be allowed to move freely from center to center upon completion of an activity or in response to their interests. Or, a student may bring up an idea during a group lesson and, rather than going with the students' idea or completely dismissing it, the teacher may tell the student that he will think about doing it another time.

***The teacher sometimes provides support for student autonomy and leadership but at other times fails to do so.*** The teacher may sometimes appear to look for ways to maximize students' autonomy but at other times asks students to complete activities in very rigid ways. Often, the teacher is supportive of students' autonomy during free play or centers but is much more controlling during structured lessons. For example, during center time, the students are free to choose what they would like to do; however, during a lesson on rhyming, the students must fill in a worksheet in which they draw a line between words that sound the same rather than, for example, draw a picture of things that rhyme. The teacher often uses whole-group instruction; although he or she may ask occasionally for student input and provide roles for one or two students, most of the lesson is teacher-driven and students are simply asked to respond to questions rather than play a more formative role. Students occasionally are given roles or responsibilities in the classroom. For example, the teacher may direct attendance but allow a student to hold the pointer and lead the calendar activity. Conversely, the teacher may allow a student to count the number of students in attendance but writes the number on the attendance chart him- or herself.

***There are periods during which there is a lot of student talk and expression but other times when teacher talk predominates.*** In this classroom, teacher talk predominates but students do participate and are allowed to share ideas at a minimal level or for short periods of time. At times, the teacher may appear somewhat interested in getting students

## Low Regard for Student Perspectives (1, 2)

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**The teacher is rigid, inflexible, and controlling in his or her plans and/or rarely goes along with students' ideas; most classroom activities are teacher-driven.** The content and method of instruction in this classroom are largely based on the teacher's agenda. The teacher rigidly adheres to an agenda or controls activities at the expense of providing learning opportunities and maximizing students' interest in activities. For example, as a student makes little snowmen out of playdough, the teacher walks over and says, "It is spring. What are you doing making snowmen? Why don't you try making some vegetables since that is what we are studying right now." In general, the teacher does not allow students to contribute their ideas to an activity and often provides all of the information and direction. The teacher does not follow students' lead in activities. For example, as students in the block area are making bridges for their cars, the teacher says, "I am going to make a tower," and changes the direction of the students' activity. Or, as some students are jumping over blocks to see how far they can jump, the teacher changes the direction of the students' activity by telling them to count the number of blocks they have and asking if they have more long blocks or short blocks. Often, the teacher appears to rigidly adhere to lesson plans. For example, he may read a lesson script without paying attention to opportunities to veer from the lesson in a way that will better match the students' interests.

**The teacher does not support student autonomy and leadership.** The teacher rarely looks for opportunities to involve students in a meaningful, formative way within the classroom. Teachers at the low end of this scale rarely, if ever, provide activities or opportunities within lessons for students to assert their independence or follow up on student-initiated activities or ideas. Students rarely have choices between or within activities and must complete tasks in a very rigid way. For example, the teacher may ask the students to make thank-you cards for the music teacher; instead of simply having the students make their own cards, the teacher gives them a piece of photocopied paper with a musical instrument and the words "thank you" on it to color in. During center time, this teacher may provide very specific instructions about how students are allowed to play at the centers. For example, one center has materials to make a paper plate monkey mask. The students must color the mask brown and all use the same materials in a very specific way to complete the mask. The teacher may control all materials very tightly so that students have to ask the teacher's permission every time they want to use something. Students are not given opportunities to lead lessons or activities or given classroom responsibilities such as watering plants, cleaning tables, and so forth.

**There are few opportunities for student talk and expression.** Activities and lessons designed by this teacher provide few opportunities for students to share their ideas. The teacher does not make an effort to have students express their ideas during whole-group, small-group, or individual work. The teacher appears disinterested in understanding how the students "see the world" and in getting them to express these thoughts. Teacher talk predominates in this classroom. During whole- or small-group instruction, the teacher goes through lessons without encouraging students to talk by asking questions or prompting them to share their thoughts and ideas.

## Regard for Student Perspectives

Captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy

<b>Low (1,2)</b>	<b>Mid (3,4,5)</b>	<b>High (6,7)</b>
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### Flexibility and student focus

- Shows flexibility
- Incorporates students' ideas
- Follows students' lead

The teacher is rigid, inflexible, and controlling in his or her plans and/or rarely goes along with students' ideas; most classroom activities are teacher-driven.

The teacher may follow the students' lead during some periods and be more controlling during others.

The teacher is flexible in his or her plans, goes along with students' ideas, and organizes instruction around students' interests.

### Support for autonomy and leadership

- Allows choice
- Allows students to lead lessons
- Gives students responsibility

The teacher does not support student autonomy and leadership.

The teacher sometimes provides support for student autonomy and leadership but at other times fails to do so.

The teacher provides consistent support for student autonomy and leadership.

### Student expression

- Encourages student talk
- Elicits ideas and/or perspectives

There are few opportunities for student talk and expression.

There are periods during which there is a lot of student talk and expression but other times when teacher talk predominates.

There are many opportunities for student talk and expression.

### Restriction of movement

- Allows movement
- Is not rigid

The teacher is highly controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.

The teacher is somewhat controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.

The students have freedom of movement and placement during activities.