

Introduction

This book introduces a fresh approach to classroom management by following the educational management philosophy DREAM, an acronym formed by the chapter titles:

Develop and Delegate

Recruit and Respect

Enhance and Enjoy

Appraise and Attend

Mentor and Motivate

DREAM covers most areas and issues related to classroom management (Quirke & Allison, 2008, 2010; Quirke, 2006, 2011). The DREAM philosophy places teachers at the core of the institution, and the application of the theory to classroom teaching places students at the core of effective classroom management. Based upon numerous workshops by the author and colleagues, this book gives fresh insights into one of the key pedagogical discussion issues in staffrooms around the world.

What Is Classroom Management?

I like to define classroom management as the ability to create and maintain a conducive, collaborative learning environment with and for students. This is clearly a definition that is simplistic, yet when unpacked it gives us an indication of the true complexity behind our daily work in the classroom—a complexity that is largely tacit in most

teachers' knowledge (Wright, 2005, p. 8), and which therefore requires reflection for us to effectively describe what we do in our classrooms (Farrell, 2008).

The “ability to create” emphasises the role of the teacher in setting up the classroom and how the teacher deals with what Wright (2005) calls the “observables” (p. 9) of space, time, learning and teaching activities, communication / interaction, atmosphere, and artefacts.

The “ability to maintain” infers a longer-term commitment to classroom management that requires consideration of Wright's (2005) “unobservables” (p. 16). These include individual affective and cognitive domain factors; group factors; and wider social, cultural, and other influences. The affective domain is reflected most clearly in the participation and engagement of the students that is at the heart of all learning (van Lier, 1996) and effective classroom management (Wright, 2005, p. 17), and is the clearest indication of student motivation.

“Conducive” is a broad term that includes many factors essential to classroom management. Primarily, we must answer the question of “conducive to whom?”. And the response must be to our students as a group, addressing Wright's (2005) social psychological factors, and individuals, addressing Wright's affective and cognitive domains.

“Collaborative” addresses the social constructivist (Vygotsky, 1978; Grossman, 1990; Rosen, 1996; Wink & Putney, 2002) nature of language learning, and focuses attention on team building, group formation, and classroom communities (Farrell, 2008).

The “learning environment” is a complex web of interrelationships, which we as teachers can positively shape (Farrell, 2008). “Classrooms are environments where participants through engagement and participation, use and produce resources—social, intellectual and emotional” (Wright, 2005, p. 18).

The inclusion of “with students” in the definition is an indication of the importance of involving students in classroom management, and ensuring students are central in everything we do, consider, and plan for (Fennimore, 2002).

Finally, the term “for students” emphasises the need for the teacher to focus on both individual students and the students as a group when shaping the learning environment for effective classroom management (Farrell, 2008).

The DREAM approach (Quirke & Allison, 2008) to classroom management is a series of 10 principles that ensure students remain at the heart of a structured, practical, and effective method of maintaining student focus that addresses all the factors discussed in the above definition.

Laying the Foundation

Chapter 2 examines the principles of *develop* and *delegate*. The develop principle (Quirke, 2011) focuses on the importance of planning with the students the group's approach to behaviour and interaction: ethos (Scrivener, 2012, p. 232), the aims of the individual students and the group as a whole, and vision (Magy, 2010), an awareness of where they are now in terms of language (mission) and how they will reach their aims (strategy). This chapter emphasises how critical this initial stage is in effective classroom management. The delegate principle reviews how the delegation of teaching roles and classroom activities (Lotan, 2004) can improve classroom management.

Involving Students

Chapter 3 describes the application of the *recruit* and *respect* principles. The recruit principle deals with how we work with students to build effective cooperative learning teams within the class (Ayers & Gray, 2000, p. 5) and how we can use the technological skills of our students to find and develop resources that can support their English language development. Recruit therefore also focuses on building awareness in our students of the infinite number of resources for language learning and practice that surround them even in the most remote contexts. The respect principle explores how teachers can ensure a culture of respect throughout their lessons. This is one of the key features of this approach to classroom management and one that directly addresses those problem classes and undisciplined students often ignored in English language teaching (ELT) literature (Hedge, 2003).

Making Classroom Management Fun

Chapter 4 explores the *enhance* and *enjoy* principles. The enhance principle discusses how a focus on individual student language

development plans can dramatically impact classroom management. The enjoy principle emphasizes the importance of humour in effective classroom management (Powell & Andresen, 1985; Smith & Laslett, 1993, p. 38).

Addressing the Individual

Chapter 5 details the approaches taken when applying the principles of *appraise* and *attend*. The appraise principle (Quirke, 2006) focuses on methods to clearly communicate the assessment strategies used to evaluate students' language learning, and the importance of involving students in both the process and assessment from the start of the course. This clarity is essential in any effective classroom management approach. The attend principle refers to how the individual students and their specific needs are addressed in the classroom, and how this requires us to know our students (Underwood, 1987).

Building Strong Interpersonal Student Relationships

Chapter 6 examines the principles of *mentor* and *motivate*. The mentor principle (Quirke & Allison, 2010) reviews how strong interpersonal relationships can be built by using mentoring techniques, which can be applied to the classroom to effectively involve students in peer development (Scott, 2012) and thereby create an environment conducive to learning. The motivate principle then summarises the DREAM approach to classroom management by highlighting the motivational impact each of the other principles has on the students and their language learning.

REFLECTIVE BREAK

- What classroom management issues are you currently facing with your students?
- Which of the 10 DREAM management principles do you expect to help you address these issues?