



FOUR DIFFERENT TYPES OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STYLES



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Four different types of classroom management styles

In the 1960s, Diana Baumrind, a developmental psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley, conducted a study on childhood behaviour. She observed preschool-aged children and noticed that each child exhibited unique behaviours. During her research, Baumrind developed a theory that different parenting styles can lead to different child development and behavioural outcomes.

In 1966, based on her observations, interviews, and analyses, Baumrind identified three distinct parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting. Since then, researchers have found that these parenting styles also apply to teaching, and they added a fourth one, indulgent teaching.

Just as there is a close relationship between children's behaviour and parenting styles that impacts their development, there is also a strong correlation between students' behaviour and teaching styles. We're going to dig a bit deeper into how these four types of classroom management differ.

1. Authoritarian classroom management style

The authoritarian teaching style refers to a teacher with complete control over their classroom. Authoritarian teachers create a highly-structured learning environment with a strong emphasis on the rules. They expect undisputed compliance from their students and do not tolerate inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. If students don't behave exactly as expected, they are strictly punished, regardless of their circumstances. In addition, teachers who adopt an authoritarian classroom management style tend to have a low level of involvement with their students. They avoid seeking out opportunities to make connections and know very little about their students' lives. As a result, children in authoritarian classrooms often feel intimidated, distrusting, and distant from their teachers, making it difficult for them to want to learn.

As authoritarian teachers prefer a quiet, structured learning environment, they often opt for direct instruction rather than cooperative learning strategies. They expect students to simply absorb the information rather than play a role in constructing their knowledge. Teachers with an authoritarian teaching style do not encourage collaboration or active discussions, often resulting in poor classroom culture and an uninspiring learning environment.

2. Authoritative classroom management style

Although the names sound similar, authoritative teachers and authoritarian teachers are very different. Like authoritarian teachers, educators with an authoritative classroom

management style do have a high level of control over their classrooms. However, unlike authoritarian teachers, they also have a high level of student involvement. Authoritative teachers are firm, yet fair. They set up rules and consistently enforce them, but they also value their students' input. If a student has feedback regarding class rules or ideas to improve the learning environment, the teacher will graciously accept the suggestions and make changes as they see fit.

This type of teacher expects students to participate and collaborate while respecting the rules. An authoritative teacher encourages students to engage in active discussion and work together, but they communicate their expectations clearly before sending students off independently. By giving students guidelines and the freedom to take ownership of their learning, the authoritative teaching approach fosters autonomy and a strong sense of responsibility.

Additionally, educators with an authoritative teaching style are invested in the success of their students. Unlike authoritarian teachers, who put the blame entirely on their students when they do not achieve desired outcomes, authoritative teachers examine all contributing factors. They care about their students' home lives and are understanding of challenges both inside and outside of the classroom.

Authoritative teachers consider their students' unique circumstances when setting expectations and determining reasonable consequences for rule-breaking. They also consistently provide positive reinforcement for good work. For those reasons, an authoritative classroom management approach is ideal for students and teachers. Teachers are respected and liked by their students, and students are socially-competent and responsible.

3. Permissive classroom management style

Permissive teachers are the complete opposite of authoritative teachers. They have a low level of both student involvement and control over their classroom. Educators who adopt a permissive teaching style are extremely checked out. They do not plan lessons or activities in advance and frequently wing it relying heavily on movies and bookwork to fill the time.

Permissive teachers do not establish rules or punish poor behaviour. Students have too much freedom, resulting in a disorderly and unproductive learning environment. With the permissive classroom being so non-punitive and lacking structure, students often take control of it with little to no challenge from the teacher.

Because permissive teachers have lost their passion for teaching, they are not invested in their students' success. They interact very little with students and rarely attend to their needs. As a result, students who are subject to a permissive teaching style often do not grow either academically or socially in this type of learning environment. Without control or involvement in their classroom, permissive teachers cannot help their students reach their highest potential.

4. Indulgent classroom management style

Similar to permissive teachers, those with an indulgent classroom management approach has a low level of control over their classroom. Indulgent teachers often live by the philosophy that highly-structured classrooms hinder students' personal growth and self-esteem. For that reason, they allow students to express themselves freely and make their own decisions with no boundaries. This typically results in the students having too much freedom.

Unlike permissive teachers, indulgent teachers have a very high level of involvement with their students. They care deeply about their students and what is going on in their lives but tend to be too friendly. Consequently, indulgent teachers are generally well-liked by their students, who feel comfortable talking to them. However, these teachers frequently lose their authority as the students see them only as a friend. In addition to caring about their students' personal lives, indulgent teachers also care about their students' success. They do prepare daily lessons, but because of their lack of control and authority, indulgent teachers get forced off track by their students and struggle to redirect them. This leads to an unproductive classroom with little learning taking place.

Choosing the best classroom management style

When deciding which of the four different types of classroom management styles is right for you, consider which approach aligns best with your teaching philosophy and objectives. Here are a few questions to consider to help guide your thinking:

- What are your goals as a teacher?
- Why do you want to work with students?
- How do you want to be viewed by your students?
- What happens in a successful learning environment?
- Where do you want your students to be (academically/socially/emotionally) by the end of the year?

It's important to note that no teacher will constantly fit into just one category. Students are all unique, and different situations call for different practices. However, researchers

have determined that the closer a teacher is to an authoritative approach, the greater the impact they'll have on their students. Classroom management is the most important aspect of a successful classroom, but finding the right balance of control and involvement takes some trial and error.

If you're a new teacher, take your time to figure out what works best for you. Try different classroom management strategies and see how they impact your students. Then, ask yourself if the strategy impacts student outcomes positively or negatively. Once you have answered that question, pivot your approach until you find the right balance.

On the other hand, if you are a more experienced teacher, be sure to take the time to reflect on your classroom management style and adjust it as needed. Many teachers don't intentionally choose to be permissive or indulgent, but rather their decisions lead them to lose control of their classroom. Don't let yourself get stuck in your ways with the wrong approach. It's never too late to change your teaching style to serve your students better!

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