



# Better

## Evidence-based Education

### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

What teachers should know –  
some practical advice

Does positive reinforcement work?

Engaging students is key to effective  
classroom management

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*  
Institute for Effective Education

JOHNS HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY

School of Education

Center for Research and Reform  
in Education

# From tourists to citizens

**Jerome Freiberg** describes an approach to classroom management that is rooted in person-centered psychology

**THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE IS IN** disequilibrium. Society has become more complex and this complexity is reflected in the micro-societies of schools and classrooms. Historically, young people have been sustained and nurtured by five pillars of support (family, community, culture, religion, and school). Four of these five pillars are in flux as they redefine themselves. Schools, the fifth pillar, are expected to carry an ever-increasing social-emotional and academic load. Schools are also in transformation, becoming more bureaucratic and rule-based. Subsequently, parent-school and community relationships are more formalized, with students and parents becoming educational tourists who are passing through rather than engaged

citizens. Adding to this, technology shifting how and where information is obtained creates uncertainty leading to both distractions and opportunities. Student behavior and classroom management become flashpoints in our micro-societies of education.

This article describes a prosocial, person-centered approach to classroom management, Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline® (CMCD®). For the past 20 years, CMCD has proven to be a resourceful evidence-based alternative, going beyond standard behavioral classroom management models of compliance and obedience to help children and young people build the self-discipline they need to excel in an ever-changing world.

CMCD emphasizes a multi-layered

Behavioral, Instructional, and Organizational (BIO) classroom management approach that provides teachers, administrators, students, and school staff with the tools they need to build community and organizational capacity within their classrooms and schools. CMCD emphasizes the prevention of discipline problems, the improvement of student self-discipline through a positive school and classroom climate, the effective management of instructional time, and student engagement, all resulting in greater student achievement. CMCD can be implemented in individual teachers' classrooms or schoolwide. Furthermore, CMCD is not limited to a single age group; the program has been effectively implemented at all levels, from Head Start through high school.

So, how exactly does it work? Rooted in person-centered psychology, CMCD presents a system for creating a balance between the needs of the teacher and learner. To facilitate



## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

### Person-centered psychology

#### Teacher-centered and person-centered orientations to classroom management

Teacher-centered classrooms	CMCD person-centered classrooms
Teacher is the sole leader	Leadership is shared
Management is a form of oversight	Management is a form of guidance
Teacher takes responsibility for all the paperwork and organization	Students are facilitators for the functions of the classroom
Discipline comes from the teacher	Discipline comes from the self
A few students are the teacher's helpers	All students have the opportunity to become an integral part of the management of the classroom
Teacher makes the rules and posts them for the students	Rules are developed by the teacher and students in the form of a classroom constitution or compact
Consequences are fixed for all students	Consequences reflect individual differences
Rewards are mostly extrinsic	Rewards are mostly intrinsic
Students are allowed limited responsibilities	Students share in classroom manager responsibilities
Few members of the community enter the classroom	Partnerships are formed with business and community groups to enrich and broaden the learning opportunities for students

Source: Freiberg HJ (Ed) (1999). *Beyond Behaviorism: Changing the Classroom Management Paradigm*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. © H. Jerome Freiberg. Used with permission.

Behavioral, Instructional, and Organizational management, five key themes – Prevention, Caring, Cooperation, Organization, and Community – allow teachers and students to share classroom responsibilities and build meaningful relationships.

#### Five CMCD themes

**Prevention:** Teachers are encouraged to prevent problems before they begin by providing students with a consistent, flexible, and active learning environment.

**Caring:** Students want to know how much you care before they want to learn how much you know. Students learn how to solve disputes, prevent problems, and work and learn in groups, all within a supportive, caring

environment. The teacher's role is to create fair, consistent, and engaging instruction with predictable daily classroom routines. The classroom is the key change agent. The goal of consistency management is to enable students to feel comfortable, cared for, and at liberty to take intellectual risks in a predictable, flexible learning environment.

**Cooperation:** Teachers are encouraged to provide students with opportunities for cooperative discipline, starting with the rules in the form of a classroom constitution. All students are given the opportunity to become leaders in the classroom with “job” responsibilities as CMCD one-minute managers. Students apply and interview for classroom positions, from substitute teacher manager to student absence managers.

**Organization:** Assignments, objectives for the lesson, and homework are listed daily on the board or on the teacher's blog. Questions are asked randomly using a “Go-Around Cup,” and a countdown poster near the door charts projects. Overall, the teacher's role within consistency management is to fashion a support system in the classroom in which students are active citizens, not passive tourists.

**Community:** Each person has a voice in the operations of the classroom. During classroom meetings, student opinions and perspectives are heard. Students need to see people in the school and classroom who are not paid to be there. Community organizations and leaders are invited into the classroom. Parents attend workshops for CMCD at home, and teachers are provided with a range of parent connectedness activities such as “Bring a Smile Note Home” or

a “Vine of Kindness for the Home”.

The five themes provide educators with a predictable and engaging classroom.

#### Research support

The CMCD program has been researched in studies over time. The findings from both qualitative and quantitative studies show a strong positive change in many of the outcomes viewed as desirable for reforming schools and transforming classrooms. Research on past person-centered and student-centered learning studies found positive cognitive and emotional learner outcomes in person-centered environments, including creativity/critical thinking, self-esteem, and a reduction in dropouts.

The following CMCD findings are found in the research literature:

- Significant increase in teacher and student attendance.
- A 45 to 78 percent reduction in office discipline referrals.
- Significant increase in student achievement in math and reading, with effect-size gains that equate to one-third to three-fourths of a year's gain in math and reading on state and national tests.
- Improvement in classroom and school climate.
- External researchers report CMCD teachers having from 2.5 to 5.4 weeks more time to teach – time previously used for discipline or management purposes.
- Significant improvement of students' sense of ownership in urban elementary schools.
- Helped students to use more comprehensive strategies for learning when compared with non-CMCD schools.

#### About the author

**H. Jerome Freiberg** is a John and Rebecca Moores Professor in the College of Education, University of Houston. He is a fellow of AERA, founder of CMCD®, *Journal of Classroom Interaction* editor, and taught in middle and high school.

#### Further reading

Freiberg HJ, (Ed) (1999). *Beyond Behaviorism: Changing the Classroom Management Paradigm*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Freiberg HJ & Lamb SM, (2009), Dimensions of Person-centered Classroom Management. *Theory into Practice*, 48, 99–105.

Freiberg HJ, Huzinec CA, & Templeton SM (2009), Classroom Management—A Pathway to Student Achievement: A Study of Fourteen Inner-city Elementary Schools. *Elementary School Journal*, 110(1), 63–80.

#### What we know

- A review of 800 discipline/management programs by 14 external organizations found few had research to support their program outcomes.
- Time gained or lost to behavior directly affects student achievement.
- Meta-analyses conclude:
  - Elementary school mathematics achievement is enhanced by classroom management that affects daily classroom practices.
  - Person-centered classroom management improves both social-emotional and cognitive development.
  - Classroom management is the first of the top five factors influencing school learning.