

## Action Activity: Classroom Management Profile?



Your classroom management style will determine how well you can interact with your students, how well you can build a positive relationship with them, and how well they will learn from you. It can also affect how your children behave (or misbehave) and how you discipline your students, that is, whether you are more prone to using negative discipline rather than positive methods to help your student learn proper behaviours. To start determining your management style, read each of the statements in the table below carefully. Then answer whether or not you agree or disagree with the statement or, better yet, if it is actually what you do.

| Characteristic  | Agree | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|
| 1. I believe the classroom must be quiet for students to learn.   |       |          |
| 2. I believe assigned seating in a structured arrangement (such as rows) reduces misbehaviour and promotes learning.  |       |          |
| 3. I do not like to be interrupted when I am teaching.  |       |          |
| 4. Students should learn to follow directions and not ask why.  |       |          |
| 5. My students rarely initiate activities. They should concentrate on what I am teaching them.  |       |          |
| 6. When a student misbehaves, I punish or discipline him or her immediately, without further discussion.  |       |          |
| 7. I do not accept excuses for misbehaviour, such as being tardy or not doing homework.   |       |          |
| 8. Depending upon what is being learned, my classroom may have many different arrangements.   |       |          |
| 9. I am concerned about both what my students learn and how they learn.   |       |          |
| 10. My students know that they can interrupt my lecture if they have a relevant question.   |       |          |
| 11. I give praise when it is warranted, and I encourage students to do better.  |       |          |
| 12. I give students projects as a learning exercise, or ask them to develop their own project. Afterwards, we discuss what they have learned, and what more they still need to learn. |       |          |
| 13. I always explain the reasons behind my rules and decisions.   |       |          |
| 14. When a student misbehaves, I give a polite, but firm, reprimand. If discipline is needed, I carefully consider the circumstances.   |       |          |

| Characteristic   | Agree | Disagree |
|--|-------|----------|
| 15. I believe students learn best when "they can do their own thing," that is, do what they feel they can do well.                             |       |          |
| 16. The emotional well-being of my students is more important than classroom control. It is important that my students see me as their friend. |       |          |
| 17. Some of my students are motivated to learn, while others don't seem to care.   |       |          |
| 18. I don't plan in advance what I will do to discipline a student. I just let it happen.  |       |          |
| 19. I don't want to monitor or reprimand a student because it might hurt his or her feelings.  |       |          |
| 20. If a student disrupts the class, I give him or her extra attention because he or she must surely have something valuable to add.           |       |          |
| 21. If a student requests to leave the room, I always honour it.   |       |          |
| 22. I don't want to impose any rules on my students.   |       |          |
| 23. I use the same lesson plans and activities year after year so I don't have to prepare in advance for my classes.                           |       |          |
| 24. Field trips and special projects are not possible. I don't have the time to prepare for them.  |       |          |
| 25. I may show a film or slideshow instead of lecturing.   |       |          |
| 26. My students tend to look around the room and out of the windows a lot.   |       |          |
| 27. If the lesson ends early, my students can study quietly or talk softly.  |       |          |
| 28. I rarely discipline my students. If a student turns in a homework assignment late, it is not my problem.                                   |       |          |

Next, add up the number of "Agrees" for statements 1-7, then 8-14, then 15-21, and then 22-28. For which set of statements do you have the highest number of "agree" responses? This is your preferred management style, though don't be surprised if you also have characteristics of the other styles.

In the above table, statements 1-7 reflect an **authoritarian** style; "I'm the teacher and we'll do things my way." This style is good for making a well-structured classroom, but it does little to increase achievement motivation or encourage the setting of personal goals. Students in this class are likely to be reluctant to initiate activity, since they may feel powerless.<sup>60</sup> They must obey the teacher at the expense of their personal freedom.

Statements 8-14 reflect an **authoritative** style; "Let's work together." Though limits are placed on student behaviour, the rules are explained, and students are also allowed to be independent within these limits. An authoritative teacher encourages self-reliant and socially competent behaviour. Moreover, he or she encourages students to be motivated and achieve more. Often, he or she will guide the students through a project, rather than lead them.<sup>61</sup>

Statements 15-21 reveal a **laissez-faire** style; "Whatever you say." The laissez-faire teacher places few demands or controls on students. This teacher accepts a student's impulses and actions and is less likely to monitor a student's behaviour. He or she may strive to not hurt the student's feelings and has difficulty saying no to a student or enforcing rules. Although this type of teacher may be popular with students, his or her overindulgent style is associated with students' lack of social competence and self-control. It is difficult for students to learn socially acceptable behaviour when the teacher is so permissive. With few demands placed upon them, these students frequently have lower motivation to achieve.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, statements 22-28 reveal an **indifferent** style; "Do whatever you want." The indifferent teacher is not very involved in the classroom. This teacher places few demands, if any, on students and appears generally uninterested. The indifferent teacher just doesn't want to impose on the

---

<sup>60</sup> <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i2/authoritarian.html>

<sup>61</sup> <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i2/authoritative.html>

<sup>62</sup> <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i2/laissez.html>

students. As such, he or she often feels that class preparation is not worth the effort. Also, classroom discipline is lacking. In this aloof environment, the students have very few opportunities to observe or practice communication skills. With few demands placed on them and very little discipline, students have low achievement motivation and lack self-control.<sup>63</sup>

If you're still not sure which of the four classroom management styles is closest to your own, ask a colleague, a teaching assistant, or an older student to watch you for a day or two. Then ask them to read through the list of characteristics and management styles above and help you to decide which one is the closest to your own. Does this style affect how much your students are motivated to learn? Does it affect their behaviour? Does it affect how you discipline your students, and how your students react to you? Do you think there is any room for improvement? Try changing your style, or one of the characteristics above, and watch to see if your students become more motivated and easier to teach. Keep a diary of what changes you make and whether or not your classroom is now easier to manage and your students are practicing good behaviours and interpersonal skills.

---

<sup>63</sup> <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i2/indifferent.html>