



How To Begin 2015 On The Right Classroom Management Foot

By Michael Linsin

Time away from you, from their friends, and from the daily routine has a way of wiping the slate clean.

It has a way of distancing and repositioning. It has a way of changing perspectives, healing wounds, and renewing spirits.

Students return from extended breaks more open, more relaxed, and more appreciative of school. They tend to sit up straighter and listen more readily.

All of which affords you an opportunity.

It affords you an opportunity to establish – or reestablish – who you are, what you're about, and what it means to be a member of your classroom.

It affords you an opportunity to ensure that they remain so receptive and contented.

Because it doesn't last long. If left alone, if allowed to drift into familiarity, by midday unwanted behaviors will begin to arise. By midweek your students will revert back to whoever they were, however they behaved, and whatever you accepted before the break.

So you must strike while the iron is hot. You must strike the moment they arrive at your door.

Here's how:

Greet each student.

It's easy to get so caught up in starting anew, so determined to implement a fresh approach, that you forget to make a personal connection. So greet your students at the door. Stop each one before they enter, look them in the eye, and tell them how glad you are to see them.

These fleeting moments cost nothing, but mean so much. They [build instant rapport](#) and likability and launch a chain of reciprocal kindness and thoughtfulness that will spread throughout your classroom.

They also draw your students to you, on your side, and into your circle of influence – trusting that whatever you have in store for them is in their best interest.

Model and practice the first routine.

As soon as your students sit down, [begin modeling](#) how you expect them to enter the classroom each morning.

Throw on your coat and a backpack and show them precisely how to walk into the room, put away their materials, check their mailboxes, ready their homework, start their initial assignment, etc.

Be as detailed as possible, leaving nothing to chance. After asking a few students to model, send your entire class outside to practice.

By reviewing and perfecting a common routine first thing in the morning, you'll be sending a message of excellence that will transfer to everything they do – behavior, work habits, attentiveness, and so much more.

Enjoy their company.

Spend some time enjoying your students and getting reacquainted. Allow them to share their holiday experiences, and share some of your own. Be open and personable and let them see the real you.

You're not only modeling how to have polite conversations, and gently drawing them back into the flow of learning and participation, but you're also building critical rapport.

It's your relationship with your students, after all, that provides the leverage and influence you *must have* to effectively curb misbehavior. It's your leadership and influential presence that cause students to want to please you and behave for you.

Unscripted moments just visiting and enjoying each other is time well spent.

Reteach your plan.

After wrapping up your chat, [teach your classroom management plan](#) as if it's the first time.

Review each rule and consequence in detail. Model the most common misbehaviors you've witnessed so far, and walk them through the steps a

student would take from initial warning to letter home. Leave nothing to chance and no room for excuses.

After taking questions and checking for understanding, promise your students that you will protect their right to learn and enjoy school by following your classroom management plan as it's written – no exceptions.

Establish a calm, easy pace.

As you move on to the rest of your day, keep in mind your demeanor, pace, and temperament. They have a profound effect on behavior and learning and demonstrate a major difference between exceptional teachers and those who struggle.

Teachers who struggle with classroom management tend to do *everything* too fast and with an undercurrent of tension, which causes excitability, distraction, and misbehavior.

Establishing a calm, easy pace, on the other hand, is reassuring to students. It frees and energizes. It promotes an environment students love being part of and that is most conducive to learning.

A Greater Whole

Unless your class had completely fallen off the rails before vacation, there is little reason to approach the first day back as if it's the first day of school.

In most cases, a detailed review of key expectations is all that is needed to take advantage of your suddenly eager group. But it must be accompanied

by a commitment to classroom management principles that are best for *all* students and proven to work.