

The Best Classroom Management Strategy For A Crazy Class

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No, your class isn't terrible.

They're just silly, unfocused, excitable. In a word, crazy.

It's frustrating because you've been over your classroom management plan again and again.

And they do get it.

In fact, individually they're great kids.

It's just, as a group they tend to get out of hand. They waste time and chat, and you struggle to get through lessons.

This is a common scenario.

You like your students, and at times they do really well – so you know they have it in them – but you can't seem to mold them into a truly good class.

There is no consistency. Before starting a lesson, you never really know what you're going to get.

Now, before we get to the solution, it's important to first identify the cause. If the above scenario sounds like your class, and you have a good relationship with them, then 99 times out of 100 the reason is *you*.

No, I'm not blaming you. It's just that here at SCM we believe (we know) that with the right approach, you can create the class you really want.

This is good news because it means you have the power to fix it. The truth is, *something you're doing* is causing your class to be excitable, distracted, talkative, silly, etc.

So what is that something?

You're going too fast. You're moving, talking, and teaching at a rate that brings tension into your classroom. This in turn is causing your students to act, well, crazy.

This is why they're so unpredictable. It's why they seem close to being a good class but can never get there. It's why every day you experience moments of frustration. So what's the solution?

The solution is to do the opposite. That's right, you're just going to slow down. Here's how in three steps.

Step #1 - Pause often.

[Pausing is effective](#) for many reasons, not the least of which is that it gives your students time to breathe. It slows down their revving heartbeats and overstimulated brains.

It allows them the space they need to listen, focus, and download whatever learning or information preceded it. And it does so naturally and predictably.

Pausing also slows you down and reminds you to act, move, and speak with efficiency.

Just be sure to vary your pauses, from brief breaths between words to long, even awkward, exhalations. This keeps their attention on you and your message. It keeps them on their toes guessing, anticipating, and predicting.

It keeps them rooted in the learning zone and their distractions at bay.

Step #2 - Move with purpose.

Teachers who rush around the room and bounce from one thing to the next *always* have excitable, ill-behaved students. Because movement, noise, clutter, etc. in the environment increases stress and interferes with their ability to concentrate.

Thus, it's important to have a purpose for why you move and to where.

Here at SCM, we believe in being cautious, even reluctant, about kneeling down to [help individual students](#), and this is one reason why. They need room to grow and mature and learn how to wrestle with the challenges you give them.

When observing independent work, try limiting your movements. Watch from a distance and recede from their awareness so they can focus without interruption.

When giving directions or providing information, stand in one place. Both strategies are incredibly powerful. They calm and soothe frayed nerves, cause students to hone in on their responsibilities, and result in better behavior, focus, and learning.

Step #3 - Go from one success to the next.

One of the secrets to maintaining the right pace is to never move on until you're getting what you want from your students. This doesn't mean that you repeat everything again and again, however.

It means that you set your students up for success by teaching every detail and nuance they need to succeed *ahead of time*, before sending them off to work on their own.

It means making sure they prove to you they understand and can do the work or perform the routine as taught. You want to *know* they're going to be successful before giving [your 'go' signal](#).

This builds confidence and is deeply and intrinsically motivational. It increases learning and eliminates the desire to goof off or find stimulation outside of their responsibilities.

It keeps them purpose-driven and all but guarantees their success, which you can then build one atop the next all day long, from morning bell to dismissal.

Slow Is Fast

The saying “slow is smooth and smooth is fast” is common among first responders and those in the military, but it’s also applicable to teaching.

The idea is slow down enough to ensure your students are learning the building blocks to being successful in your classroom. By taking your time, moving deliberately, and doing things the right way, you limit mistakes, misunderstandings, and misbehavior.

You change the culture of your classroom to one that revels in hard work and the satisfying feeling of individual success. Habits then become grooved. Maturity, time on task, and learning increase tenfold.

And you find yourself flying through the curriculum.

But it starts with you, the daily mantra, the missing piece, the key to a calm, focused class.

Slow is smooth and smooth is fast.