



Three Categories Of Teachers

May 11, 2019 by Michael Linsin

I may ruffle some feathers with this week's article. But it's a critical topic, and thus worth taking the heat.

Last week, I detailed [how to not quit teaching](#).

If you haven't yet read the article, I recommend doing so before continuing.

In that article, I mentioned the importance of becoming an expert in classroom management.

Given the comments both here on the site and via email, however, I don't think I emphasized it enough.

The truth is, it's *everything* to your success.

No single area of teaching comes remotely close to providing the joy, the peace, and the effectiveness every teacher desires.

Several years ago, I had an idea for an article about three categories of teachers based on my observations and experience here at SCM. I've been apprehensive about making it public because I was afraid it may come off a bit harsh.

But after reading the heartbreaking comments from last week, I decided that it's worth the risk.

What follows are three categories of teachers.

Category #1 Classroom management is their number one priority.

These are teachers who determined even before having a classroom of their own that classroom management would be their path to a long and enjoyable career.

Perhaps they had an excellent mentor teacher or happened upon a book [or article](#) that laid out the supreme benefits of focusing on behavior management.

But they understood then and know now that pursuing excellence at this *one thing* opens the door to all the rest. It frees them to love teaching, build influential relationships, and make extraordinary progress with students year after year.

They are the small cadre of experts that leap out of bed in the morning and grow bored during the summer months.

Category #2 Classroom management becomes their number one priority.

After discovering that they've been sold a bill of goods on the realities of teaching, and experiencing the profound stress and frustration of unmotivated, ill-behaved students, this group changes course.

The lightbulb explodes.

Maybe it comes during their first year of teaching and maybe it comes many years later, but like a ton of bricks they're hit with the realization that unless they learn a new set of skills, their discontent will never end.

They accept the hard truth that they must set aside the 101 excuses why they can't and make a wholesale change of mind, body, and soul. They put in the time to read and learn and study *what really works* and then boldly put it into practice.

The transition isn't easy for everyone – old habits can die hard – but it's open to everyone. And the result are even better than they imagined.

Category #3 They'll always struggle.

For even a single day I couldn't do what these teachers do week after week. The resilience it takes to wake up every morning and hang in there every day is extraordinary.

The disrespect, the talking when they're teaching, the noisy, chaotic lessons and routines . . . ugh!

Sadly, tragically, in most cases they never realize what's possible (or believe that it even is possible). They never experience teaching as it can and should be.

They listen to the justifications of other beleaguered colleagues and sometimes indulge in them themselves. They dabble in one classroom management approach after another to little or temporary success.

They assume that it's just how things are or buy into the myth that their problems lie with the students, parents, school, or administration. The unvarnished truth, however, is that in the presence of good, solid classroom management, none of it matters.

To those who relish transforming classrooms and making a difference that lasts a lifetime – and have acquired the classroom management skills to do it – a handful of difficult students or working in a challenging school is nothing more than a wonderful challenge to overcome.

It's what make the game exciting and worth doing.

If you're stressed and struggling and stuck in this category, know that there is a way out. I've heard from thousands of teachers over the past ten years who have done just that.

And you can too.

But you have to stop experimenting with strategies that were never meant to be used together. You have to stop bribing students, trying to convince them to behave, or believing that you just have a chatty bunch – as if you're at their mercy.

You have to stop listening to the dime-a-dozen excuses why you can't have the career you really want. They're all a great big lie.

The good news is that *anyone* can do it. Anyone can have a well-behaved class year after year and in a relatively short amount of time. This doesn't mean perfection or that you must create a room full of little soldiers or compliant robots.

Far from it.

It simply means creating a classroom that your students love being part of – where they *want* to listen, learn, behave, and please you.

Don't Look Back

There is a ton of misinformation about classroom management echoing down the hallways and through the staff lounge of every school.

You'll hear excuse after excuse, complaint after complaint, and one band-aide strategy after another. Range in abilities, changing policies, moody administrators, challenging students, parents who don't seem to care . . . we've *all* got them.

Don't listen to any of it. It doesn't concern you. You are a different breed of teacher.

But you do have to know what really does work. You have to be well versed in the principles and strategies that predictably transform a class no matter how challenging.

If you put what you learn into practice, and remain consistent, you'll not only see stunning results almost immediately, but you'll be on your way to the long, happy career you've always wanted.