

# *Tidbits and Teaching Techniques for Tired Teachers*

## **Classroom Management**

*Betty Phillips, Universidad del Valle de Mexico*

---

There are many books, articles and printed material on classroom management skills and techniques. There are so many, in fact, that it is overwhelming for the EFL teacher.

Many teachers rely on their natural instincts in the classroom or sometimes, even worse, on the way *they* were taught and they seem to pass those skills on into their classrooms. I think all teachers will agree that if a teacher's classroom management techniques lack discipline or organization, much precious time is wasted.

Many teachers find themselves secretly looking at other teachers' classrooms, seeing what they do, and maybe adopting the techniques they see to their own classrooms. Unfortunately, what they borrow may not always work. What works for one teacher may not always work for another. What works in your morning class, may not work in your afternoon class. Personalities, schedules, age, level, books and schools all come into play with classroom management.

Here are some techniques that might help teachers in the classroom.

### **Teacher Management**

1. Examine yourself. Ask yourself questions: *Do you like your job? Do you like your surroundings, your colleagues, administration, etc.?* If you're not happy with what you're doing and where you are or the people you work with, it will be very difficult to be a good teacher, thus leading to poor classroom management.
2. Be prepared. Have activities planned for your classes. Have different topics ready for use in case of emergencies.
3. Be enthusiastic, active. Move around your classes. Don't sit behind the desk or just stand at the board. Be physically aware of your class.

### Classroom Management

1. Check light, ventilation, and for room to move around. Stuffy, dark, crowded, poorly lit and poorly ventilated rooms add to disruptive, loud, disorderly classes. Ask for a room change, if necessary.
2. Arrange seating so that it will be easy to circulate around the classroom for both teacher and students. Use a seating chart for young adults, high school or secondary students who tend to sit in the back with their friends and make noise, joke or are constantly making trouble. In Junior high and high schools, boys tend to sit in the back rows and girls in the front; change the order.

### Student Management

1. Teachers who have not had formal teacher training tend to yell, shout, humiliate or insult students. This is definitely not acceptable or effective. Be careful. Respect the students. They want attention, but at the same time they want to be disciplined. Be firm, but not unbending. Have a sense of humor. Have activities they seem to like to do. Break up long sessions of class with warm-ups. Use visuals, jazz chants, pair work. These activities help deactivate tensions and restlessness.
2. If you have real trouble with some young adolescents, talk to them after class. Ask what is wrong. Ask their opinions about the class. They might have family or social problems that they can't handle and are taking their frustrations out on your class. Above all, do not confront or challenge a student in front of the other students in class. You have nothing to gain from this confrontation and much to lose, even if the student is totally wrong.

In conclusion, be yourself; adjust your ideas. Ask for peer-coaching (ask a friend to come into your class and tell you what your class is like.) Be sensitive to the needs of others. Don't be overly sensitive and always on the defensive. Be open to ideas. Accept constructive criticism. And *good luck*.

### REFERENCE

- Kfoury, Carol. 1993. "Practical methods for classroom management." *Forum*. (31) 3. July. 40-41.