

# Classroom Management in the University Context



McGill

Learning to Teach Day

November 10, 2018

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<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls>

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# Learning Outcomes



- Participants will learn how to:
  - Identify the elements of classroom management
  - Employ proactive classroom management strategies
  - Respond to common classroom management challenges

# What is classroom Management?



- Involves actions taken by the instructor to
  - Establish order
  - Engage students
  - Elicit student cooperation
- Why is classroom management important?

# What is classroom Management?



- Involves actions taken by the instructor to
  - Establish order
  - Engage students
  - Elicit student cooperation
- Why is classroom management important?
  - Enables student learning



“If you ask me to pick the single most critical issue that new instructors should focus on, it would be classroom management, because without a solid management system in place, all the good work one has done preparing for teaching can unravel right before your eyes.”

- Dr. Peter Saunders  
(Faculty Focus, 2008)

# What is classroom Management?



- It's being prepared for class
- It's motivating your students
- It's providing a safe and comfortable learning environment
- And.... It's different for everyone

# What is your classroom management style?



- What are your classroom procedures and policies?
- What are your expectations?
- What are your limits?
- What will you do if expectations are not met?
- What will you do if your limits exceeded?

# Classroom Management Style

## (Self-assessment)



Take the Quiz - Are you an interventionist, non-interventionist, or interactionist?



# What makes classroom management challenging?



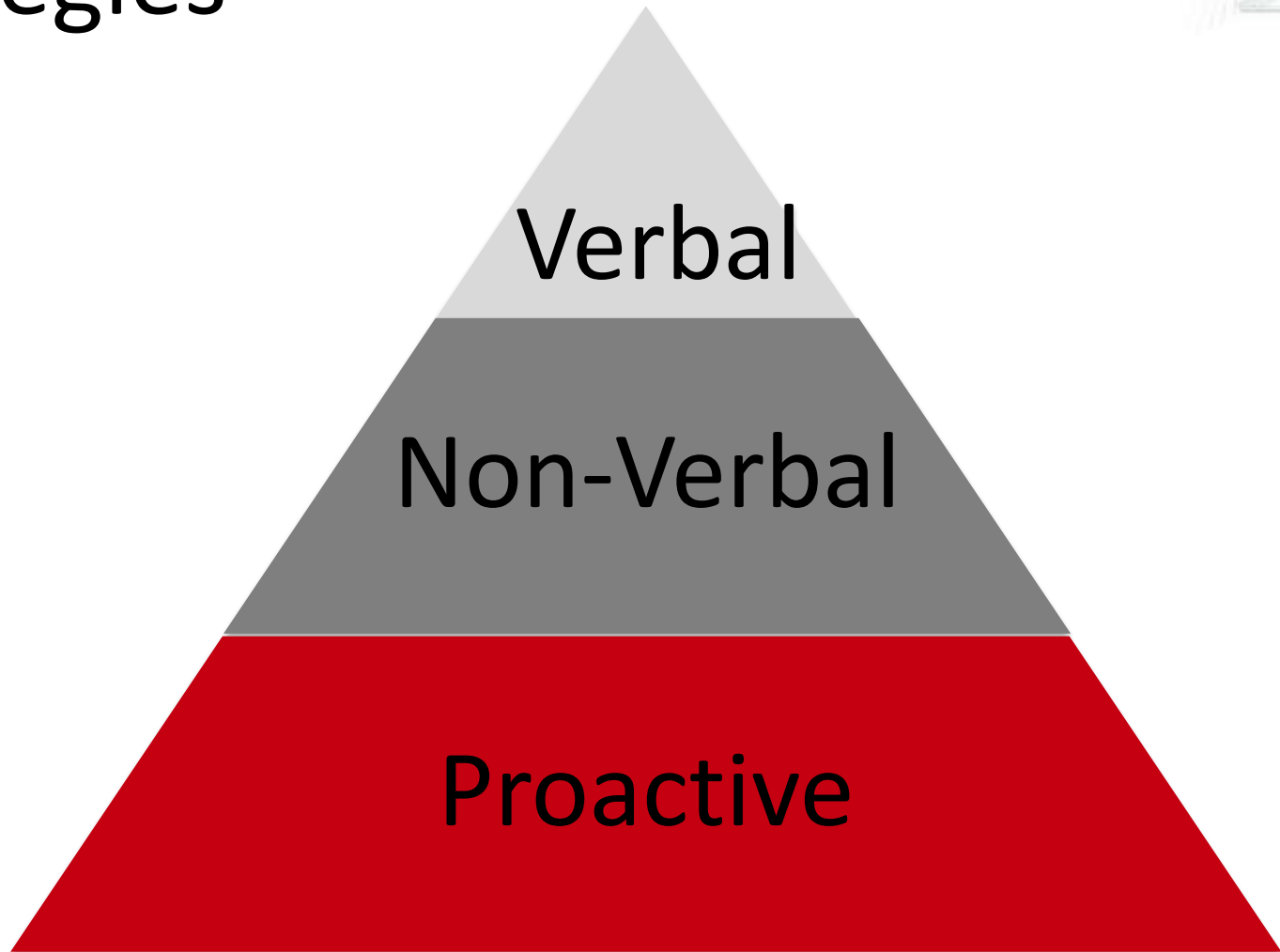
- Classroom life is complex with several properties of teaching
  - Multidimensionality
  - Simultaneity
  - Immediacy
  - Unpredictability
  - Publicness
  - History

Jackson (1968)



What classroom management challenges have you experienced?

# Classroom Management Strategies



# Proactive Strategies



- Clearly communicate policies, procedures and expectations
- Create a culture of learning
- Use organizational and group management strategies

# Creating a culture of learning



- Cultivate positive relationships between your students and with your students
- Empower students to contribute to the class
- Provide opportunities to learn from failure
- Celebrate student accomplishments

# Creating a culture of learning



- Use your first class to “set the tone”
  - Introduce yourself
  - Review the course outline
  - Make your academic and behavioral expectations very clear
  - Establish the routine
  - Give students a flavour of what they can expect
  - Encourage questions and allow frequent opportunities for students to ask them

# Organizational and group management strategies



- Plan each lesson in detail
  - How much time is needed?
  - What instructions will you provide?
  - What is the goal or purpose of activities?
- Actively monitor students
- Use “sign-posts”
- Allow for transition time
- Silence can be powerful

# Handling Classroom Management Challenges



- Be prepared for different types of challenges
- Goal is to de-escalate and avoid embarrassing the student
  1. Eye contact
  2. Proximity
  3. Verbal
    - Keep it positive
    - Use humour if comfortable
    - Decide on in the moment or delayed response



# Handling Classroom Management Challenges



(Case Analysis)

- Groups of 4
  - Each group member receives a different case
  - Review the case
  - Write what you could do to prevent the situation
  - Write what you could do to respond to the situation
  - Share in groups
  - Share as a class

# CASE # 1 – THE MONOPOLIZER

# Case # 1 – The Monopolizer

## (possible solutions)



### Proactive Strategies

- Before beginning the discussion, give students instructions for how you want them to participate.

For example:

***"I want to hear your thoughts and impressions on the readings I assigned. I am interested in hearing different perspectives, so please share! If you have already had an opportunity to share, try to leave space for other students. Please raise your hand if you want to contribute to the discussion."***

### Reactive Strategies

- Intervene to give other students a chance to participate

For example:

*"Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet."*

- Speak to the student after class

For example:

*"I was pleased with the amount of enthusiasm you had in our discussion today. While I am very interested in hearing your perspective I also would like to hear what other students have to say."*

# **CASE # 2 – THE DISRESPECTERS**

# Case # 2 – The Disrespecters

## (possible solutions)



### Proactive Strategies

- *Introduce yourself on the first day. Give students context to better understand who you are and the expertise you bring to the class*

### Reactive Strategies

- *Sometimes acting as if students are not challenging your authority (even when you suspect that they are) can convey a sense of confidence and control*

- *If you feel comfortable, use humor*

*For example:*

*"I've just age really well."*

# CASE # 3 – THE TECH SAVVY

# Case # 3 – The Tech Savvy

## (Possible Solutions)



### Proactive Strategies

- Make sure your expectations for technology use are clearly indicated in your outline as well as the consequences for inappropriate use

For example:

*"All electronic devices should be silenced prior to class and should not be used without instructor permission (e.g., phones, PDAs, laptops, recorders, etc.). Usage privileges may be revoked following inconsiderate device use (e.g., texting, loud typing, unrelated websites)."*

### Reactive Strategies

- Do what you said you were going to do
- Be consistent!

For example:

- *Verbally remind student of classroom policy*
- *Loss of participation points*
- *Device privileges revoked*

# CASE # 4 – THE CHATTERS



# Case # 4 – The Chatters

## (Possible Solutions)



### Proactive Strategies

- Make sure your expectations for classroom conduct explicit. You can even indicated this in your outline.

For example:

*"In this course all students are expected to behave professionally and respectfully. This includes coming to class prepared and being respectful of your peers and the instructor."*

### Reactive Strategies

- Make eye contact with chatting students
- Remind students of expectations for classroom conduct
- Verbally ask them to stop

For example:

*"I understand that you are excited about something and want to discuss it, but now is not appropriate. Chatting during the class is disruptive to myself and other students trying to learn. I would appreciate it if you could wait to finish your discussion until after class."*

# Culturally responsive classroom management



- Definitions and expectations of appropriate behavior are culturally influenced
- Sometimes classroom management problems occur when the instructor and students come from different cultural backgrounds
  - What is your ethnocentrism and biases?
  - What are your student's cultural backgrounds?
  - What is the broader social, economic, and political context?

Weinstein, C., Tomlinson-Clarke, S., & Curran, M. (2004)

# Let's review



- Effective classroom management is essential for student learning
- You will have your own classroom management style
- As much as possible use proactive strategies
- When you decide it is necessary to intervene your goal is to de-escalate

# Summary



- Classroom management is an essential skill
- Learning Outcomes
  - Identify the elements of classroom management
  - Employ proactive classroom management strategies
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THANK YOU!



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