



Indicator: All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.
(4444)

Explanation: The evidence review verifies that when teachers establish an organized and well-defined system for storing and maintaining class learning materials, classroom management success, essential to student achievement, is increased. In addition, consistent adherence to the classroom materials storage system strengthens the likelihood that students will adopt a respect for their learning materials. In turn, an internalized respect for learning materials may assist in bolstering student organizational skills for their own learning materials in school and at home.

Questions: How will the Leadership Team determine that teachers have established and maintain an organized system for classroom materials storage? What types of organization systems do teachers use to manage, store, and protect classroom materials? How successful have these systems been in contributing to classroom management efficiency? In what ways have students benefited from well-organized learning materials?

The most widely replicated findings concerning the characteristics of teachers who elicit strong achievement score gains are:

- 1. Teacher Expectation/Role Definition/Sense of Efficacy:** Teachers accept responsibility for teaching their students. They believe that students are capable of learning. They re-teach if necessary, and alter materials as needed.
- 2. Student Opportunity to Learn:** Teachers allocate most of their available time to instruction, not non-academic activities, and learning activities are carefully aligned to standards.
- 3. Classroom Management and Organization:** Teachers organize their learning environments and use group management approaches effectively to maximize time students spend engaged in lessons.
- 4. Curriculum Pacing:** Teachers move through the curriculum rapidly but in small steps that minimize student frustration and allow continuous progress.
- 5. Active Teaching (sometimes called Direct Instruction):** Teachers actively instruct, demonstrating skills, explaining concepts, conducting participatory activities, reviewing when necessary. They teach their students rather than expecting them to learn mostly from curriculum materials. They do not just stress facts or skills, they also emphasize concepts and understanding.
- 6. Teaching to Mastery:** Following active instruction, teachers provide opportunities for students to practice and apply learning. They monitor each student's progress and provide feedback and remedial instruction as needed, making sure students achieve mastery.
- 7. A Supportive Learning Environment:** In addition to their strong academic focus, these teachers maintain pleasant, friendly classrooms and are perceived as enthusiastic, supportive instructors.

(Brophy & Good, 1986; Good, 1996; Reynolds, 1992; Waxman & Walberg, 1991)

Stronge (2007) says, “Teaching is a complex activity that involves careful preparation and planning objectives and activities on an hourly, daily, and weekly basis. In addition, long-term planning ensures coverage of curriculum across a marking period, semester, and year. Further, effective educators demonstrate high expectations for students and select strategies to propel the students’ learning. Beyond planning and preparation of materials, effective organizing for instruction also involves the development of a conscious orientation toward teaching and learning as the central focus of classroom activity. Teaching and learning as a focus must be consistently communicated to students in the classroom and to observers..... Use of time can be optimized in the classroom by careful planning or by using pacing materials. Students often want to know what is coming up next week or next month. Therefore, having a scope and sequence helps the teacher to plan and addresses student needs for information. For example, the use of calendars for long-term, weekly, and daily planning, in addition to providing a visual reminder to the teacher, can help students plan for work. Effective teachers are not only organized, but also convey this vital skill to their students. Sharing with students how the teacher organizes time can serve as a model for students to assist in their own planning, thus equipping them with tools of success in the larger world and instilling in them habits of efficiency. Staging areas help teachers maximize time by organizing materials for upcoming activities.” Stronge advises teachers prepare materials in advance: “Teachers determine how content and skills are delivered in the classroom. School district curriculum, state standards, and national standards play a role in what students should learn, but it falls to the teacher to structure how students should learn it. Planning is a deliberate process that results in teachers being well-prepared prior to walking through the classroom door for the day. Organizing time and preparing materials in advance of instruction have been noted as important aspects of effective teaching. Both the organization of time and the preparation of materials are components of the broader practice of planning carefully for instruction.”

In his 2013 book *The Blended Classroom*, Fahlvik described the characteristics of an online classroom, including the fact that the online classroom gives you the opportunity to extend activities long after the class has finished, allowing you to stretch time and re-engage your students with the work that they have done in class.

“You can, for example, provide students with presentations or other classroom materials via the online classroom, or continue classroom discussions online. You can even add teaching videos or recordings of your teaching to the online classroom so that students can review what they learned in class and reinforce their understanding.” Fahlvik says, “In the flipped classroom, the teacher makes teaching material – most often video but also other learning materials such as PDFs – available in the online classroom that the students work on at home. The teacher then uses the physical classroom to work with any issues students may have.”

Kauchak and Eggen (1998) find that materials should accommodate differences in learning styles with a variety of activities and modalities. Learning differences include slow versus fast, impulsive versus reflective, field dependence versus independence, and modalities spatial, mathematical, logical, and other dimensions of intelligence. Effective instructional approaches include alternative problems, tasks, and projects; encouragement of reflectiveness; individual as well as group work; and structured and unstructured activities -- some with more explicit instructions or prompts, especially at the lower grade levels. A feasible approach to accommodate different rates of progress among students is to provide alternative learning materials, with additional support and guidance for those who need it, and additional enrichment for the others. Similarly, activities that support modifying instructional materials work well (e.g., rewriting or annotating text material, tape recording directions, simplifying laboratory apparatus). A variety of modalities for students’ various learning styles also provides adaptability of guidance and support in instructional materials. Examples of types of activities include verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, and body-kinesthetic.

In his article concerning meaningful work for classroom downtime, Pappalardo (2014) asked, “Want to get those pesky little quick finishers off your tail? You veteran teachers know what I’m talking about. The kids who finish first and need to tell you they’re finished. ‘I’m done’ – those two words bring chills to my spine every time I hear them.” Pappalardo asked for possible solutions, and Thomas (2014) replied: “I taught my students when writing to say ‘I’m ready for the next step.’ I also teach them to be reflective when doing all their work – Did I give my



best effort? – basically, have I checked my work.

“For other times I have the ‘What To Do List’ pocket chart. When they forget about the chart and ask me what to do, I silently point to the chart. For instance, the What To Do List may have items like ‘1. Finish draft of poem. 2. Plant log measurement. 3. Fix-n-Finish folder. etc.” I rearrange, add, and remove items on this list to keep it fresh. One side of the Fix-n-Finish folder is labeled ‘Must Be Done’ and the other is ‘Can Be Done’. All students have enrichment tasks/projects in their ‘Can Be Done’ side. Items in the Must Be Done side need to be complete before moving on to the Can Be Done. Must Be Done items are make-up work or items not finished in the time allowed.

“There are those quick finishers that are always caught up and never absent – for them, have them pick a topic and then create some sort of mini-project they can do in all that spare time. Sometimes the project will be a continuation of a unit and sometimes it is just one of their hobbies or topics they want to know more about.

“When I have a quick finisher I always ask myself, ‘Have I set the bar high enough on the content? Does the student have other areas of need?’ For instance, I have had several extremely talented mathematicians in the last few years. I ask them how they did the problem and they shrug – the answer just magically appeared, of course. A majority of those kids have had social/communication difficulties. So as a result, instead of the What To Do list, I get them to either write about their math work/process, or have them learn how to communicate better by supporting other students who need help. This is a win for everyone – the early finisher gets to share their knowledge and learn how to communicate better. The students in need get support from their peers. It only serves to strengthen the community. I also work to get the slow finishers time to support other students in a similar way so it isn’t just the quick finishers who get that social/communication piece. Kids as teachers is a key element in my room for so many reasons.”

Study after study agree: When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students should be occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher. In The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement’s July 15, 2009 newsletter, Six Quality Indicators of High-Achieving Schools include Effective Instruction, and Effective Instruction includes: “Activities and assignments

(including homework) are engaging, relevant to the content, and reinforce or extend the objective of each lesson.”

References and Resources

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