

WHAT IS YOUR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PROFILE?



Answer these 12 questions and learn more about your classroom management profile. The steps are simple:

- Read each statement carefully.
- Write your response, from the scale below, on a sheet of paper.
- Respond to each statement based upon either actual or imagined classroom experience.
- Then, follow the scoring instructions below. It couldn't be easier!

1. = Strongly Disagree
2. = Disagree
3. = Neutral
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly Agree

- (1) If a student is disruptive during class, I assign him/her to detention, without further discussion.
- (2) I don't want to impose any rules on my students.
- (3) The classroom must be quiet in order for students to learn.
- (4) I am concerned about both what my students learn and how they learn.
- (5) If a student turns in a late homework assignment, it is not my problem.
- (6) I don't want to reprimand a student because it might hurt his/her feelings.
- (7) Class preparation isn't worth the effort.
- (8) I always try to explain the reasons behind my rules and decisions.
- (9) I will not accept excuses from a student who is tardy.
- (10) The emotional well-being of my students is more important than classroom control.

- (11) My students understand that they can interrupt my lecture if they have a relevant question.
- (12) If a student requests a hall pass, I always honor the request.

To score your quiz,

Add your responses to statements 1, 3, and 9. This is your score for the **authoritarian** style.

Statements 4, 8 and 11 refer to the **authoritative** style.

Statements 6, 10, and 12 refer to the **democratic** style.

Statements 2, 5, and 7 refer to the **laissez-faire** style.

The result is your classroom management profile. Your score for each management style can range from 3 to 15. A high score indicates a strong preference for that particular style. After you have scored your quiz, and determined your profile, read the descriptions of each management style. You may see a little bit of yourself in each one.

As you gain teaching experience, you may find that your preferred style(s) will change. Over time, your profile may become more diverse or more focused. Also, it may be suitable to rely upon a specific style when addressing a particular situation or subject. Perhaps the successful teacher is one who can evaluate a situation and then apply the appropriate style. Finally, remember that the intent of this exercise is to inform you and arouse your curiosity regarding classroom management styles.

The classroom management styles are adaptations of the parenting styles discussed in *Adolescence*, by John T. Santrock. They were adapted by Kris Bosworth, Kevin McCracken, Paul Haakenson, Marsha Ritt er Jones, Anne Grey, Laura Versaci, Julie James, and Ronen Hammer. Some researchers call the democratic style, “laissez-faire”, and some refer to laissez-faire style as “indifferent”. All agree on characteristics and outcomes of the four styles.

Authoritarian

The authoritarian teacher places firm limits and controls on the students. Students will often have assigned seats for the entire term. The desks are usually in straight rows and there are no deviations. Students must be in their seats at the beginning of class and they frequently remain there throughout the period. This teacher rarely gives hall passes or recognizes excused absences.



Often, it is quiet. Students know they should not interrupt the teacher. Since verbal exchange and discussion are discouraged, the authoritarian's students do not have the opportunity to learn and/or practice communication skills.

This teacher prefers vigorous discipline and expects swift obedience. Failure to obey the teacher usually results in detention or a trip to the principal's office. In this classroom, students need to follow directions and not ask why.

At the extreme, the authoritarian teacher gives no indication that he\she cares for the students. Mr. Doe is a good example of an authoritarian teacher. His students receive praise and encouragement infrequently, if at all. Also, he makes no effort to organize activities such as field trips. He feels that these special events only distract the students from learning. After all, Mr. Doe believes that students need only listen to his lecture to gain the necessary knowledge.

Students in this class are likely to be reluctant to initiate activity, since they may feel powerless. Mr. Doe tells the students what to do and when to do it. He makes all classroom decisions. Therefore, his style does little to increase achievement motivation or encourage the setting of personal goals.

One Middle-school pupil reacts to this teaching style:

I don't really care for this teacher. He is really strict and doesn't seem to want to give his students a fair chance. He seems unfair, although that's just his way of getting his point across.

Authoritative

The authoritative teacher places limits and controls on the students but simultaneously encourages independence. This teacher often explains the reasons behind the rules and decisions. If a student is disruptive, the teacher offers a polite, but firm, reprimand. This teacher sometimes metes out discipline, but only after careful consideration of the circumstances.



The authoritative teacher is also open to considerable verbal interaction, including critical debates. The students know that they can interrupt the teacher if they have a relevant question or comment. This environment offers the students the opportunity to learn and practice communication skills.

Ms. Smith exemplifies the authoritative teaching style. She exhibits a warm and nurturing attitude toward the students and expresses genuine interest and affection. Her classroom abounds with praise and encouragement. She often writes comments on homework and offers positive remarks to students. This authoritative teacher encourages self-reliant and socially competent behavior and fosters higher achievement motivation. Often, she will guide the students through a project, rather than lead them.

A student reacts to this style:

I like this teacher. She is fair and understands that students can't be perfect. She is the kind of teacher you can talk to without being put down or feeling embarrassed.

Democratic

The democratic teacher places few demand or controls on the students. "Do your own thing," describes this classroom. This teacher accepts the student's impulses and actions and is less likely to monitor their behavior.



Mr. Jones uses a democratic style. He strives to not hurt the student's feelings and has difficulty saying no to a student or enforcing rules. If a student disrupts the class, Mr. Jones may assume that he is not giving that student enough attention. When a student interrupts a lecture, Mr. Jones accepts the interruption with the belief that the student must surely have something valuable to add. When he does offer discipline, it is likely to be inconsistent.

Mr. Jones is very involved with his students and cares for them very much. He is more concerned with the students' emotional well-being than he is with classroom control. He sometimes bases classroom decisions on his students feelings rather than on their academic concerns.

Mr Jones wants to be the students' friend. He may even encourage contact outside the classroom. He has a difficult time establishing boundaries between his professional life and his personal life.

However, this overindulgent style is associated with students lack of social competence and self-control. It is difficult for students to learn socially acceptable behavior when the teacher is so permissive. With few demands placed upon them, these students frequently have lower motivation to achieve.

Regardless, students often like this teacher. A Middle School student says:

This is a pretty popular teacher. You don't have to be serious throughout the class.
But sometimes things get out of control and we learn nothing at all.

Laissez-faire

The laissez-faire teacher is not very involved in the classroom. This teacher places few demands, if any, on the students and appears generally uninterested. The laissez-faire teacher just doesn't want to impose on the students. As such, he/she often feels that class preparation is not worth the effort. Things like field trips and special projects are out of the question. This teacher simply won't take the necessary preparation time. Sometimes, he/she will use the same materials, year after year. Also, classroom discipline is lacking. This teacher may lack the skills, confidence, or courage to discipline students.



The students sense and reflect the teacher's laissez-faire attitude. Accordingly, very little learning occurs. Everyone is just "going through the motions" and killing time. In this aloof environment, the students have very few opportunities to observe or practice communication skills. With few demands placed on them and very little discipline, students have low achievement motivation and lack self-control.

According to one student:

This teacher can't control the class and we never learn anything in there. There is hardly ever homework and people rarely bring their books.

Mrs. Johnson is a good example of an laissez-faire teacher. She uses the same lesson plans every year, never bothering to update them. For her, each day is the same. She lectures for the first twenty minutes of class. Sometimes she will show a film or a slideshow. When she does, it becomes a substitute for her lecture, not a supplement. If there is any time left (and there always is) she allows students to study quietly and to talk softly. As long as they don't bother her, she doesn't mind what they do. As far as she is concerned, the students are responsible for their own education.