

Classroom Organization

Classroom organization is important for teachers to do their work well. It consists of:

1. Classroom routine
2. Classroom layout
3. Decoration and wall display
4. Special jobs for children
5. Classroom cleaning
6. Behaviour - good class habits for teachers and children

Classroom Routine

Classroom organization begins before pupils enter the classroom. Children should be trained to enter and leave the classroom as quickly and quietly as possible. Once children are in the classroom they should be able to settle as quickly as possible so that the lesson can begin. If a teacher has the class properly organized he or she will find the work is easier and teaching will be so much more efficient. Heads might encourage their teachers to use the following routines:-

Entering and Leaving the Classroom

Children should assemble in classes in the playground and move in an orderly fashion to their classrooms when dismissed.

Should this prove to be either too formal or not appropriate, children should line-up outside the classroom to await the instruction of the teacher.

Children should enter the classroom in single lines and without noise. Teachers should lead lines of children rather than follow behind.

When they sit down they should be ready to start the lesson.

Pupils should not leave the classroom at the end of a lesson until told to do so by the teacher.

When they are dismissed, children should stand and walk out quietly in a single-line.

If pupils are allowed to rush into or out of classrooms there will be accidents and they will not be in the right mood to begin work.

Marking the Register

This should be done as soon as the children are settled at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Children's names should be called and answers given politely. A count of heads provides a quick double check but it is often easier to count unoccupied desks to find the exact number present.

Late-comers should be asked to apologise quietly to the teacher and to give the reason for their lateness. Punctuality makes a big difference to the school performance of some children.

Giving Out and Collecting Books and Equipment

This task should be done quietly and without fuss.

If children are to leave their places it should be with the teacher's permission.

The correct number of books or pieces of equipment should be allocated to each group or, where desks are in rows, placed on the front desk and passed back. The appointment of a group monitor might help with this.

When work or equipment is given in, only monitors should actually leave their seats.

Teachers should not throw books to children. Besides being impolite, it makes children believe that the proper treatment of books does not matter.

Text books should not be removed from the classroom by students.

General

Ask children to help you. Most children are willing helpers and anxious to please.

Children learn the habit of offering help. Teachers can encourage shy or naughty children by asking for their help.

Classroom Layout

Depending on their design, desks can be grouped in fours or sixes. More traditionally, they can be placed in rows.

Desks should be spaced so that the teacher can move around the class with ease. It is helpful to keep children in the same desks. This adds to their security and makes it easier for the teacher to learn their names.

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Children with poor eyesight should sit where they can see the blackboard more easily. The blackboard should be regularly painted.

Children with poor hearing should be placed so as to be able to both see and hear the teacher as easily as possible.

Children who have problems with concentrating for more than short periods should be seated close to the teacher.

Other furniture should include:-

- a. Blackboard - large and fixed to wall as well as smaller boards with easels
- b. Cupboard(s) - out of the way
- c. Teacher's desk - out of the way and not too big
- d. Display-board - where ALL can see it.

Classroom Displays and Decoration

Children and teachers will be happier and more ready to work if the classroom is bright, cheerful and airy.

Rooms are best painted with white or light colours so that light will be reflected rather than absorbed.

Heads and teachers should encourage children to care for their classrooms by bringing flowers or coloured leaves.

Any visual-aids put up by teachers should be explained to the children and changed regularly. Teachers should always choose pictures and charts which are suitable for the age of the children in the class and which are educationally suitable.

The displays which interest children most are often those that include their own work. Very attractive displays of children's work can be mounted. Good work from the child can, however, be spoiled by poor display-work on the part of the teacher.

As with visual aids, displays of work should be changed regularly before they lose their colour and begin to look torn and unattractive.

All displays are for the benefit of children and should be at a height appropriate for the age. Written work, in particular, should not be displayed where children have to strain to read it. Where a display of work has both pictures and writing, the writing should be as close to eye-level as possible.

Special Jobs For Children

No teacher can or should do everything in the class. Just as a Head must delegate some responsibilities to teachers, so each teacher will need the help of the children in the class.

Being appointed a 'monitor' encourages a sense of responsibility in children. Duties can be rotated so that all the children can have a chance to show their merit.

Teachers should show monitors what is expected of them and then expect the highest standards possible.

Children generally enjoy these extra duties and responsibilities and they allow more time for the teacher to do things that only he can do. Suggested jobs for monitors might include:-

- a. Class storekeeper - to look after the stocks of books in the cupboard and to distribute and collect them when asked to do so.
- b. Paint monitors - to prepare, mix and distribute art materials and to collect and clean materials after use.
- c. Pencil monitor - to collect pencils and see that they are sharpened before being re-distributed.
- d. Blackboard monitors - to clean the board and the board duster.
- e. Lights and fans monitor - in schools where lights and fans are fitted, a lot of money can be saved by a monitor being instructed to turn these things off when the class is unoccupied at playtimes and lunch-time.

Classroom Cleaning

Classrooms are best cleaned every day at the end of the afternoon session. Cleaning is made easier if any chairs are placed upside-down on the desks before the floor is swept.

More detail on cleaning will be found later under the heading 'School Health and Hygiene'.

Classroom Habits

Successful classroom work depends on good habits. At first, children should be shown, slowly, clearly and patiently, how to adopt good classroom practice. With practice these habits will come to feel 'natural' and much valuable time will be saved.

Children

Teaching children good working habits is essential to the learning process. Children do not learn these habits automatically. They have to be taught:

1. Children should be taught to prepare their exercise books quickly for daily routines. It should not take five minutes, for instance to rule a neat margin and enter the day's date.
2. A good teacher will insist that work begins immediately following instruction. School time is valuable and should not be wasted.
3. Children must pay great attention to instructions, otherwise they will disturb other children later in an effort to find out what they are supposed to be doing.
4. Unless asked to do so by the teacher, children should not copy down questions which are to be answered.
5. Children should be shown ways of overcoming difficulties with their work. They should ask for help or, if the teacher is occupied, they should move on to the next part of the assignment and then ask for help.
6. Children should be taught how to lay out their work neatly. Just complaining that a child's work is not neatly presented is not enough. Good habits of layout need to be taught.
7. Teachers should insist that children's work is corrected and children should be shown how this corrected work should be presented.
8. From the very beginning children should be told to speak in class so that they can be heard by everyone.
9. Set-work should be done quietly. If children are to work in groups, the groups are best kept small.
10. Books should only be on desks if they are needed. They should only be open if there is need for this. Children should not have too many things on their desks.
11. Children should move about the room with care and quietness.

Teacher

If children are to be taught good habits, teachers must be careful about their own classroom habits. Children will imitate a teacher's habits just as they will imitate his speech. Here are some points for Heads and teachers to remember:-

1. The teacher should call the class to attention before giving any instructions. The teacher should not speak until everybody is ready.

2. All instructions should be clear and simple. If books and page numbers are referred to, it is a good idea for these to be on the blackboard as reminders.
3. Teachers should speak slowly and clearly. They should not shout except in unusual circumstances. Teachers who are always raising their voices in the classroom lose a strong way of maintaining both attention and discipline. Noisy teachers often create noisy classrooms without realising why.
4. Teachers should prepare beforehand most of their board-work, but if the board is used during a lesson, teachers should write or draw quickly. This needs practice.
5. If a teacher prepares his lessons carefully, he will not be wasting valuable class-time.
6. Children listen more attentively to lively and interesting talk and instruction.
7. Good teachers praise neatness and quickness as well as correct answers.
8. Children's work should be marked carefully and promptly. Children's attention should be drawn to detail.
9. The best teachers are always observant of children's needs. They can anticipate possible problems and work with the children rather than against them.

The teacher and the child should work together as a team. They should be on the same side and not fighting against each other.