

How To Create An Independent, Motivated, And Mature Class

By Michael Linsin on October 28, 2017

When teachers first implement [an effective classroom management plan](#) . . .

- By teaching and modeling it in detail.
- By following it exactly as it's written.
- By being consistent day after day.

. . . they're often shocked by how peaceful their classroom becomes.

The respect, the contentment, the quietude. The smiles, the thank yous, the calm energy.

It's like having a whole new class.

But there is danger lurking.

You see, at the first sign of peace, it's all too common to start believing the lie that you're not doing enough.

The silence of independent work, in particular, has a way of making teachers uncomfortable and raring to help out.

So, without considering the impact, they burst through the sacred cocoon of concentrated work and begin [micromanaging](#) students.

They interrupt to offer hints, suggestions, and advice. They rush over and kneel down in response to every look mild frustration and every hand raised.

They assist and handhold and coddle, all the while undermining a critical part of the learning process and removing what students crave – and need – most:

Freedom and responsibility.

The students, in turn, begin believing that they really do need your help for every little this and that. Hands go up all over the room and they quickly lose confidence in their ability to listen, learn, and do for themselves (learned helplessness).

This causes boredom, irritability, low motivation, and the desire for you to personally reteach individually what you taught the entire class just minutes before.

And although a faithfully followed classroom management plan will still keep a lid on things, their dissatisfaction will manifest itself in sneaky, off-task, and behind-the-back misbehavior.

Work-habit expectations should be spelled out for your students, without a doubt, as well as the tools they need to do the work successfully.

But once these are established, you must cut your students loose. *Really cut them loose.* Send the message that independent work, whether individual or in groups, is truly independent.

Be reluctant to rush over to provide what they can work through all on their own. Allow them to make many of their own choices and decisions and wrestle with whatever you place before them.

Give them the space they need to take ownership of their work, and their imagination, their energy and passion, and their intrinsic motivation will kick into high gear.

Teach interesting and inspiring lessons. Provide everything they need to succeed. Check thoroughly for understanding and allow for every question. *Teach them well.*

But then get out of their way.

Shift 100% of the responsibility for doing the work over to your class while you fade into a corner to observe and take in the big picture.

Work on devoting more and more of the school day to independent work, projects, creative endeavors, etc. and less of the day to directed teaching.

Directed teaching is still important, mind you. In fact, it's critical that you become an expert in delivering lessons. But you must continually push the envelope on what your students can do for themselves.

This is learning. This is how they develop and thrive and become empowered to chart their own course. This is what prepares them for success in a rapidly changing world.

Take more of you out of the picture, and you'll discover your students becoming staggeringly more mature, independent, and responsible.

Their motivation, focus, and on-task behavior will increase tenfold, and they'll become persistent, self-directed problem solvers – even, and especially, the most challenging among them.

Your classroom management plan will still be there, obscured in the mist and watching over your students, but they'll hardly notice it anymore.

Because the joy of learning will take center stage.