ABSTRACT
        The crucial importance of beginning-of-the-year
activities in establishing good behavior patterns in the elementary
classroom is asserted. Observations were made of two groups of
teachers who were very different in management effectiveness
throughout a school year. A number differences between the two
groups' first- day and beginning-of-the-year activities were noted.
Examples of the behavior of these teachers are presented with
discussions on observed student reactive behaviors. It is concluded
that effective classroom organization and management during the year
can be predicted from the first several weeks of the school year.
(JD)

ED178542

Effective Classroom Management at the Beginning of the School Year

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The influence of initial teaching

activities upon the remainder of the

year has long been assumed by educators,

and is a part of the folklore of teach-

ing. For example, Waller (2:301)

observed, "It is axiomatic among school

men that the first day of school, or the

first meeting of a class, is all-

important in determining the success or

failure of the school year." And Bagley

(3), in a book on management published

in 1907, gave considerable coverage to
initial activities, including a series
initial activites, including a series of
prescriptive statements for the first
day. However, only a few studies of
beginning-of-year activities have been
conducted. Tikunoff, Ward, and Dasho
(4) reported case studies of three
fourth grade teachers who were
extensively observed during the first
seven weeks of the school year. Their
observations highlighted the central
role of rule-setting during the initial
weeks, teacher sanctioning behavior, and
the socialization of the children to the
teacher's system of rules and
procedures. Moskowitz and Hayman (5)
observed "best" and first year junior
high school teachers in two inner-city
schools. Best teachers used the first
class day for orienting and climate
setting, whereas new teachers tended to
jump into content more quickly. Best
teachers also dealt more with student
feelings, had less off-task behavior,
smiled and joked more, and talked more
than new teachers on the first day.

Observations made later in the year caused the authors to conclude that the first day was crucial for setting the pattern for the year.

Additional support for the importance of beginning-of-year activities can be inferred from propositions offered by Brophy and Putnam (6) and Doyle (7). Brophy and Putnam stress the importance for classroom management of several features that are established early in the year, including the organization of instruction to promote student engagement, the prevention of problems, and the orchestration of various elements of management into a coherent system. Doyle proposes that teachers monitor pupils' behavior related to their cooperation level, or lack of deviance. Deviant pupil behaviors increase until the teacher takes some action, at which point they may decrease slightly. Doyle observes that once a high level of deviant pupil behavior is established, it does not revert to earlier, lower levels. Thus, we would predict that the beginning-of-year

activities are especially important for determining the level of pupil cooperation during the remainder of the year.

In spite of a clear practical and theoretical rationale for studying classroom processes at their inception, research on teaching typically has obtained cross-sectional samples of behavior at some point after the school year has begun, without observations of classrooms at the beginning of the year. In the area of classroom organization and management, in particular, the initial phase of the year should be of paramount importance.

How to begin the year is a question that all teachers have considered. A major goal of the project reported here was to identify how teachers who are effective managers begin the year and to determine what basic principles of management underlie their teaching activities. The basic research strategy was to conduct extensive observational studies of classrooms during the first week of school and to continue

throughout the year. Then, using several criteria for effective management obtained after the beginning of the year, teachers were classified and subsamples of more and less effective managers were selected. Narrative records and other descriptive data obtained during the first three weeks were then used to contrast the initial organization and management characteristics of the two groups of teachers.

The nature of the data is descriptive-correlational, rather than experimental. What we will describe are antecedent events which were associated with year-long managment effectiveness. Thus, although many of the results may suggest causal links, experimental work along with further correlational evidence is needed to extend the findings and to support causal inferences.

Methods

In order to study the initial phase of classroom organization and management, it was necessary to be in classrooms when schol began. Consequently,

27 third-grade teachers* in eight
elementary schools were recruited into a
beginning-of-year observational study.
Only a few of the teachers in the eight
schools chose not to participate;
generally, the nonparticipants were new
teachers. However, the final sample did
include six first-year teachers. Four
of the eight schools were Title I
schools, the remaining four were "near"
Title I schools. The ethnic/racial
composition of pupil populations in five
of the schools was a mixture of Anglo
and minority pupils; in one other school
most of the children were Black; in the
two remaining schools most of the

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*Initially, all the teachers were to
have taught third-grade classes, but two
teachers were shifted, one to a second
grade class and one to a fourth grade
class. They were left in the final
sample. Two other teachers who were
observed during the first three weeks
took leaves-of-absence during the first
half of the school year; data from their
observations are not included here.

children were Mexican-American.

Observers were trained to gather several types of information. The chief source of information about organization and management practices was the Classroom Narrative Record, consisting of specimen records written by observers during each classroom visit. Each observer recorded, in narrative form, as much information as possible about observed classroom processes. Guidelines for observers focused them on many classroom processes and characteristics including room arrangement, materials, assignments, introductions, classroom rules, consequences of misbehavior, initiation of activities, transitions, delays, student reactions, grouping patterns, the nature of individual work and organizational procedures, desired student activities, problems, response to inappropriate behavior, consistency of teacher responses, systems for contacting students, procedures for various teacher and pupil activities, the nature of group work, monitoring, feedback systems, reward and

punishment systems, and teacher cues.
Observers recorded their written
narratives onto a form that also allowed
the recording of the class activity,
grouping, and content format at all
stages of the narrative.

Another source of information about
classroom processes was the Student
Engagement Rating (SER). At 15-minute
intervals the observer counted the num-
ber of students who were on-task or
off-task, and noted the subject and
activity, thus permitting the assessment
of student engagement rates during var-
ious formats. A series of ratings,
called the Component Ratings, consisted
of 34 rated variables and checklist
items. It was used at the end of each
observation to record observer judgments
about particular aspects of the
teacher's instruction or behavior
management. The component ratings can
be used for comparisons between groups.
A higher average rating on a variable
for some group means that the rated
characterisitcs or behavior was observed
more frequently or judged as more

adequately performed by that group of teachers.

Observations were begun at 8 a.m. on the first day of school in 12 of the classrooms, and all teachers were observed at least once during the first two days. During the first three weeks each teacher was observed on eight to ten occasions. Typically, a morning observation began at the start of the school day, and lasted until the beginning of the lunch break. Afternoon observations began after the lunch break, and continued until the close of the school day. A majority of the observations were made in the morning, but each teacher was observed several times in the afternoon. Each teacher was seen separately by two observers.

Observations were resumed in November, but on a reduced scale. For the remainder of the year, each teacher was observed once every three weeks by observers who were different in most cases from those who observed the teacher during the initial three weeks. At the end of the school year, observers

made a number of summary ratings of
selected teacher characteristics and of
other instructional variables. Teachers
were interviewed twice, in October and
at the end of the year, to acquire
information about planning and other
unobservable characteristics.

Preliminary Treatment of the Data

Before using the data to describe the
characteristics of effective classroom
management, several steps were taken.
These included reliability checks on the
data sets, preparation of narrative
record summaries, and selection of sub-
groups of teachers.

Observer agreement on the Component
Ratings was estimated in several ways,
including intraclass correlations
between observer pairs on each scale
during the first three weeks' observa-
tions, during the remainder-of-year
observations, and correlations between
the average ratings from the two time
periods. Scales were retained for
subsequent analysis only if they showed
adequate observer agreement, i.e., a
statistically significant intraclass

correlation (p < .05) or, in the case of

marginal agreement, if the correlation

between average ratings during the two

time periods was significant (p < .05),

the latter case indicating stable

measurement of the rated characterisitc

over time. Of the original 34

variables, 25 were retained.

Student Engagement Ratings (SER's)

were obtained every 15 minutes during

all observations. A frequency tally was

made of the number of students engaged

in academic, procedural, or off-task

activities. Each variable was expressed

as the percent of students who were

classified in each category. To check

reliability the SER's were listed

sequentially and separated into two

sets, in odd-even fashion. Each SER

variable was then estimated from each

set by averaging across the remainder-

of-year observations. Reliabilities

were estimated by correlating these

split-half averages, and applying the

Spearman-Brown prophecy formula to

estimate the reliability of the combined

sets of observations. The estimated

reliability of the engagement rate in all content activities was .85; in reading/language arts activities only, the reliability was .86. The reliability of on-task, academic activities, was .71 for all content areas, and .76 for reading/language arts alone. The reliability of off-task (unsanctioned) behavior was .91 for all content, and .89 for reading/language arts alone. Thus the engagement rates were highly reliable.

The narrative descriptions of each teacher/class were in specimen record form and quite lengthy, ranging from 4-5 pages for a brief observation to more than 20 pages for a long observation. These were reduced by three readers, who prepared narrative summaries organized around several areas: behavior control, instructional management, meeting student concerns, physical arrangements, constraints on the teacher, and personal characteristics. Each area was divided into subparts, and the readers worked together on several summaries until adequate agreement was reached on the

nature of the information to include in
the summaries. Narrative records were
then divided into two sets: first three
weeks and remainder-of-year. No reader
was responsible for both the initial
summary and remainder-of-year summary
for a teacher.

In addition to preparing a summary,
each reader also rated the teacher's
adequacy in each of the areas: control-
ling behavior, instructional management,
meeting student concerns, physical
arrangement, and constraints. The
latter was given a dual rating: the
severity of the constraints faced by the
teacher, and the degree to which the
teacher was able to cope with them.
Initial checks among the readers
indicated that these characteristics
could be reliably rated based upon
reading the narrative records. This
provided some assurance that the
narratives could be used to characterize
the organizational and management
behaviors of the teachers.

An analysis of the stability of
beginning vs. remainder-of-year

management effectiveness was conducted
using the narrative summary ratings of
management characteristics and the
student engagement ratings. Correla-
tions between beginning-of-year ratings
and remainder-of-year ratings are shown
in Table 1 for on-task pupil behavior
and for the teacher variables taken from
the narrative records. The correlations
are all significant ($p < .05$) and
generally moderate to high. It should
be noted however, that the narrative
Variables 1, 2, 3, and 6 are highly
intercorrelated. This may reflect
actual interdependence; for example,
good behavioral managers are also good
instructional managers. It may also
reflect halo on the part of the readers.
Thus, although we will continue to
distinguish conceptually between these
management domains, the reader should
realize that they are undoubtedly
linked. Based upon the stability
analysis, it is reasonable to conclude
that the management characteristics of
the teacher and the level of student
task engagement during the school year

are at least moderately, and in some areas, highly predictable from the first three weeks' behavior.

At this stage of the data analysis, after having run reliability and stability checks, we felt that the data were sufficiently dependable to attempt to describe the management characteristics of the teachers. For that purpose, subsamples of teachers were selected.

Sample Selection

The goal of the subsample selection procedure was to identify two groups of teachers with initially comparable classes, but who were highly differentiated on their management effectiveness during the year. A three step process was used.

Step 1. Using the California Achievement Test reading score obtained by each child in April of the preceding year, class mean CAT scores were computed.— Classes were ranked and divided into three groups. Selection of subsamples was restricted so that each subsample would be balanced according to entering CAT mean.

Step 2. Within each CAT level,
teachers were ranked on three management
effectiveness criteria obtained during
the remainder-of-year data collection:
(1) student engagement rates, (2) reader
ratings using the average of the behav-
ior control and instructional management
variables, and (3) a management score
derived from observer end-of-year
ratings.

Step 3. Class mean residual gain on
CAT reading was computed, using scores
obtained during April of the study year
regressed onto the previous year's
scores. Although these are not an
entirely valid indicator of teacher
effects for several reasons (for
example, in Title I schools, many pupils
received reading instruction partly from
their regular teacher and partly from a
reading specialist), they were used as a
check on the selection procedure in Step
2 to make certain that the samples of
more effective managers and less effec-
tive managers were differentiated with
respect to reading achievement.

The two selected subgroups each

consisted of seven teachers. The two groups were equivalent with respect to their initial class mean CAT reading scores. Also, the two groups were distributed evenly across schools, including the two Title I-non-Title I groups. On the other hand, the groups were different with respect to several measures of pupil and teacher behavior obtained during the remainder of the year. In the groups identified as having more effective managers, the average student engagement rates were higher and the amount of off-task behavior was lower during the November--May observations, the end-of-year observer management ratings were higher, and the average residual reading achievement was higher than in the groups of less effective managers' classes.

Comparisons of More and Less Effective
Managers at the Beginning of the Year

The beginning-of-year activities of the more and less effective managers were compared statistically by t-tests of the narrative ratings of management areas, the student engagement and

off-task variables, and the instructional
component ratings. These contrasts are
shown in Table 2. Most of these
contrasts were statistically significant,
indicating clear differences on
beginning-of-year management
effectiveness and a number of
instructional and behavioral components.
In addition to the statistical treatment
of the data, the narrative records from
the first three weeks were analyzed
according to each of the narrative
management areas, in order to describe
the activities and behaviors of the two
groups of teachers. Numerous differences
were apparent between the more and less
effective managers. These differences
are described below.

Discussion

In this section we will integrate the
results of the statistical contrast of
the two groups with the descriptive
analysis of the narrative records. The
presentation of results is organized
around the narrative summary ratings of
management areas.

Behavior management. The two groups of

teachers exhibited striking differences in initial behavior management activities. The differences were most apparent in the areas of classroom rules and procedures, monitoring of pupils, and the delivery of consequences.

Both groups of teachers had rules and procedures for their classes. What distinguished the more effective managers was the degree to which the rules and procedures were integrated into a workable system and how effectively the system was taught to the children. These teachers planned the first day so that they had maximum contact with and control over the children. Name tags and initial greetings were handled smoothly with no milling about. Children had interesting activities to work on, usually by themselves, once they were in their seats. Teachers stayed with the children, even when parents interrupted or the office called. As soon as most students had arrived, the teachers began describing rules and procedures. In some cases but not always, pupils were asked to suggest

rules. The rules and selected procedures were explained clearly, with examples and reasons. Not all procedures were discussed, only those which were needed for initial activities (e.g., bathroom, storage, pencil sharpener, water fountain). In other words, children were taught what they needed to know about using the room, but were not overloaded with information.

The better managers typically spent considerable time during the first week explaining and reminding students of the rules. Their pupils were _not_ uniformly "ready" after the first day or two, and several of the teachers had relatively high amounts of off-task behavior initially. However, they _taught_ the pupils to behave appropriately, through a variety of means. Some teachers used rehearsal of procedures, such as lining up. Other teachers used incentive systems to shape behavior. Most of the teachers taught the children to respond to specific signals, such as a bell or the teacher's call for attention. In this respect, on the component ratings,

more effective managers were rated

higher in their use of a variety of

rewards and in giving signals for appro-

priate behavior.

When the first "academic" activity

was introduced, it was a simple, enjoy-

able one, such as drawing and coloring.

The teacher did not attempt to group

children, nor was there any hurry to get

into workbooks or readers. The teacher

stayed with the total class, monitored

them closely, and gave them clear, spe-

cific directions. This mode of instruc-

tion continued for several days, usu-

ally. The teachers primarily worked

with the total group, monitored closely,

and introduced procedures and content

gradually. If the teacher did individ-

ual assessment or had to leave the total

group to perform a clerical or proce-

dural task, there was always a specific

assignment and the teacher continued to

monitor their activities. If inappro-

priate behavior occurred, it was stopped

quickly. Evidence for better monitoring

behavior is found in the higher rating

for eye contact for the more effective

managers. They were also rated as more
likely to stop disruptive behavior
quickly. During the first three weeks
these teachers' classes exhibited a
higher academic engagement rate and
lower rates of off-task behavior. On
the component ratings, the pupils were
rated as engaging in less disruptive
behavior. In many respects these
teachers did not appear to handle
disruptive behavior, when it occurred,
differently than the less effective
managers. For example, there are no
significant differences in their rated
responses to misbehavior for the use of
time out, criticism, or punishment.
"Ignoring" is marginally significant
however, with more effective teachers
rated as doing less ignoring. The major
distinguishing characteristic of the
more effective managers was that they
monitored students carefully and when
disruptive behavior occurred, they
stopped it quickly.

In summary, the more effective mana-
gers clearly established themselves as
the classroom leaders. They continued

to work on rules and procedures until
the children learned them. The teaching
of content was important for these
teachers, but they stressed, initially,
socialization into the classroom system.
By the end of the first three weeks,
these classes were ready for the rest of
the year.

In contrast to the more effective
managers, the poorer managers did not
have well worked-out procedures. This
was most evident in the behavior of the
beginning teachers. For example, one
new teacher had no procedures for using
the bathroom, pencil sharpener, or the
water fountain; the children seemed to
come and go as they pleased. Conse-
quently, children wandered about,
enormously complicating the teacher's
organizational tasks. Another new
teacher rehearsed lining up and exiting
for fire drills on the first day. An
experienced but less effective teacher
tried to use a bell as a signal, but
allowed children to ignore it
frequently. Another one tried
instituting a system in which one bell

ring meant the children should stop
talking and two rings meant "pay
attention." Unfortunately the teacher
merely explained the system, without
rehearsing it. Furthermore, she added
the "two rings" signal before the
children had learned to respond
correctly to one ring. In short, the
poorer managers had not thought through
very clearly the essential procedures to
teach the children on the first days of
school.

All of the poorer managers had rules,
as did the better managers. However,
there was a great difference in the way
these were presented and followed up.
In some cases the rules were vague ("Be
in the right place at the right time.")
and then not clarified. In other
instances they were introduced casually
without discussion, as though a single
presentation to a class of third graders
would be perfectly comprehended and
retained. Thus, the teachers did not
use rules as cues for appropriate
behavior, and they did not teach the
rules to the children.

The poorer managers were also inef-
fective monitors of their classes. In
some cases, this was caused, in part, by
their not having efficient procedures
for routine pupil activites. When chil-
dren are wandering around a room, it is
difficult to keep tabs on all of them.
In addition, however, many of these
teachers simply busied themselves in
some clerical task or ancillary activity
early in the first week. For example,
some teachers removed themselves from
active surveillance of the whole class
to work with a single child on an
individual reading assessment. Some
teachers left their rooms during the
first day or two to get materials, to go
to the office, etc. One teacher left
her pupils three times during the first
hour of the first day. A major conse-
quence of the combination of vague or
untaught rules and procedures and poor
monitoring was that the children were
frequently left without enough
information to guide their behavior.
When that occurred, the children were
more likely to interact with each other,

to seek information, amusement, or
diversion. In effect, the teacher had
lessened her role as the classroom
leader, and by default, allowed students
greater freedom to define the situation.
It is clear from interviews with the
teachers that they did not _intend_ to
share this leadership function with
their pupils. Nonetheless, it happened,
primarily because the teachers did not
have well-thought-out rules and
procedures, communicate these to the
students, nor monitor pupil behavior
closely enough.

One further aspect of overall manage-
ment characterized the less effective
teachers: The consequences of good
behavior or inappropriate behavior were
not as apparent in their classrooms nor
were they delivered quickly enough.
Sometimes they issued general criticisms
that did not focus on the particular
offenders: "Some of my children are too
noisy." They would frequently threaten
or warn children, but then not follow
through. One teacher issued
"reminders," with an accumulation of

several reminders producing a letter to
the parents at the end of the week.
Initially effective, the "reminders"
lost their impact when the teacher
failed to be consistent in administering
them, allowing much of the inappropriate
behavior to go untended. As a conse-
quence of the lack of follow-through on
the warnings, some children tended to
push at the limits, causing further
problems.

It is easy to see how deficiencies in
each of the areas of rules and proce-
dures, monitoring, and delivery of con-
sequences compound each other and pro-
duce a devastating net effect on overall
organization and management. Uncer-
tainty about teacher expectations is
likely to lead to a wider range of pupil
behavior, including some that is inap-
propriate or off-task. Unfortunately,
lack of teacher vigilance allows the
behavior to continue, which increases
the likelihood of inconsistency in
applying consequences. Children who are
behaving appropriately or who want to do
so will be less likely to be noticed and

reinforced, thus reducing the clarity of
the rules and procedures further. Once
a few weeks have elapsed, undesirable
patterns of behavior and low teacher
credibility became established and
persist throughout the school year.

Instructional Management

Many of the instructional problems
faced by the less effective teachers
grew out of their difficulties in behav-
ior management. Likewise, the instruc-
tional management of the better managers
was facilitated by their good management
practices. Teachers in both groups used
a wide variety of approaches to both
reading and mathematics instruction.
Some highly individualized systems for
reading instruction were operated by
teachers in both groups, although group-
ing into three or four groups and basal
instruction was the most frequent mode.
In arithmetic, the range of practices
was from totally individualized systems,
to groups, to total class instruction.
In other subject areas, large group
instruction was the predominant mode.

The better managers tended to have

better procedures for instructional
activities, just as they had for their
overall classroom organization. They
generally managed time well, with
smoother, shorter transitions. Once
finished with regular work, their pupils
had other activities to keep them busy.
These teachers had worked out systems
for managing instruction that avoided
problems. Thus, some students might be
assigned the role of helper when the
teacher was with a group. Directions
and instructions were given clearly, and
written on the board, and routines were
established early. Directions and
routines were often taught in a
step-by-step format, with the teacher
monitoring to verify that each step was
performed appropriately. These teachers
also held students accountable for their
work, frequently monitoring their
seatwork and keeping track of their
progress on assignments. The instruc-
tonal activities didn't always run like
clockwork during the first three weeks,
but in each teacher's class there was a
sense of purpose and organization to the

activities. Evidence for instructional
effectiveness also comes from the com-
ponent ratings. The more effective
managers were rated as more adequate in
describing objectives clearly, using a
variety of effective materials, having
materials ready, and giving clear
directions. Their activities and
lessons were rated as more clearly
presented, and students were generally
rated as evidencing higher rates of
success in the content activities.

Less effective managers' problems
were often a function of their general
organization. To a degree, the curricu-
lum aided them by providing a structure
to work in. The worst instances of
instructional management occurred when
new teachers attempted to implement
individualized instruction systems.
Their procedures were inadequate and,
coupled with poor monitoring, produced
frequent off-task behavior and occa-
sional chaos. It should be noted that
the teachers did not initiate the
individualized systems; rather, they /
used them because other grade level

teachers at their schools had such
systems. A common characteristic of
these teachers was a lack of clarity
in their directions for academic work,
particularly seatwork. They stated
instructions vaguely and did not check
to see if the children understood what
they were supposed to do. This resulted
in off-task behavior, considerable talk
with peers to find out what steps to
take, and frequent interruptions of the
teacher. Some of these teachers also
varied their daily schedule of activ-
ities. This, along with their more
poorly established procedures, ineffec-
tive monitoring, and poor delivery of
consequences, resulted in a lack of
predictability in these classes.

Student Concerns

An important aspect of the teacher's
organization and management system is
the degree to which it accommodates stu-
dent concerns. We considered student
concerns to be met when several condi-
tions were satisfied. First, the
classroom did not pose an apparent
threat to the child's physical safety

and emotional well-being. This meant
that the teacher prevented children from
physical attacks on each other, deterred
verbal abuse, and refrained from either.
In addition, the child should have
received fair treatment from the
teacher, had an opportunity to be
successful, and received recognition for
it. This involved having enough
information to make productive use of
time in the classroom. Because a poorly
organized classroom is likely to result
in some loss of productive time, this
aspect of management is linked with the
preceding two areas, as the correlations
among the narrative ratings also bore
out.

The more effective managers seemed to
have a sense of how children perceive
the classroom. This is suggested by the
way in which procedures were introduced
and taught. The first procedures were
ones related to the child's immediate
needs: where to put the lunch box, how
to use the bathroom, the use of certain
areas in the classroom, when and where
to get a drink. The initial activities

were designed to ease the child's entry
back into the world of school. The
organization of their classrooms made
them havens of security from the some-
times rough-and-tumble school halls and
neighborhood streets. The modal cli-
mate, as inferred from narratives and
from observer ratings was relaxed and
pleasant, but also work-oriented. Some
teachers would allow occasional breaks
from work, perhaps to play a record,
sing, or dance. Most teachers relied on
a variety of different instructional
activities and assignments, along with
scheduled P.E., art, and music
activities to relieve the occasional
tedium of the basics. Evidence that the
better managers were perceived as
meeting their students' concerns more
effectively is also provided in the
component ratings. More effective
managers were rated higher in consider-
ing attention span in lesson design, in
relating content to pupil interest and
background, in providing reasonable work
standards, and in providing activities
having a high degree of pupil success.

In the less effectively managed classrooms, we judged student concerns to have been less adequately met. Although no serious problems with physical security are noted during the first three weeks, there were more incidents in these teachers' narratives of verbally aggressive behavior among the children, and a potentially dangerous incident occurs occasionally. For example, in one of the lowest SES schools, a teacher used straight pins for name tags. Several students were poked with them later in the morning. (A more effective teacher in this school used tape to secure her children's tags.)

As a group, less effective managers were as equitable in their treatment of the children as the more effective managers. Similarly, these teachers did not inflict verbal or physical abuse. However, their overall organizational style did reduce the productive time in their classes, so that they were less helpful than they might have been. In particular, they prevented their

students from developing greater
independence as a result of their poor
directions and procedures. By not
monitoring closely enough nor stopping
inappropriate behavior quickly enough,
they tended to promote more off-task
behavior and to increase the potential
for interference with the productive time
available to on-task children. Finally,
these teachers didn't seem as tuned in to
the needs of their children. Their
initial activites seem less in touch;
such as the teacher who on Day One
rehearsed fire drill procedures, or
another who gave a difficult math ditto
within the first hour of the first
morning.

Constraints, Room Arrangement

A constraint is any condition in the
school, room, or environment that has
the potential for interfering with the
teacher's conduct of her class. The
average narrative rating of constraints
of the more effective managers was not
different from that of the less effec-
tive managers. However, the more
effective managers were judged to have
better arranged rooms and to have coped

more effectively with their constraints
than the less effective managers.

The range of constraints is note-
worthy, and many of them were formid-
able. Several teachers were assigned to
their school and grade level less than a
week before school began, leaving little
time to prepare psychologically or
instructionally for the first few weeks
in that setting. One teacher was
assigned her room on the Thursday before
the first week—and it had not even been
cleaned. In some schools the teachers
were frequently interrupted on the first
day by late-arriving children and their
parents, school office staff,
custodians, other teachers, and calls
over the intercom. Other constraints
included missing books and supplies,
smaller than usual classrooms, no air
conditioning with afternoon temperatures
of 95°, and the arrival of new students
one or two weeks after the year began.
In this latter case as many as five or
six new students were added to several
classrooms during Week 2 to accommodate
unpredicted enrollment shifts.

The coping strategies used more
effective teachers evidenced several
themes. First, they had procedures for
coping. For example, if new pupils were
coming, helpers were appointed to
acquaint them with rules and routines,
and to make them feel welcome. The
teacher would monitor the new students
carefully at first, to get them started.
In other words, a system was invoked to
handle the new pupils; it was simply a
part of the teacher's overall
organization. By contrast, the less
effective managers would welcome the
children, but not supply the information
about the classroom. Their new students
would be left more on their own to infer
the rules and procedures in an already
poorly organized setting.

A second characteristic of the more
effective managers is that they were
more effective planners. They thought
about their potential problems before
the year began and made some prepara-
tions. Foreseeing a shortage of
materials, they made sure they got
theirs early. Anticipating a too-small

room, they moved furniture out and
arranged desks to allow better movement.
Finally, the teachers did not allow the
constraints to interfere with the
attention they gave to their students.
This was most evident in the first few
days of the year when, in some schools,
many interruptions occurred during class
time. These teachers simply would not
attend to the distraction until they had
the pupils involved in some activity.
They rarely left the classroom, even
briefly. If they had to talk with a
visitor, they conversed inside the room.
Thus, these teachers allowed no oppor-
tunity for diminution of their leader-
ship role. In contrast, the less
effective managers simply had poorer
procedures for coping. They did much
less in the way of anticipating and
planning for problems and once those
problems began to impinge on their
instruction, they tended to be diverted.
Thus, absence from the room and
withdrawal into clerical and
administrative tasks were routinely
observed. Such behavior lessened these

teachers' roles as effective leaders in their classrooms.

Personal Characteristics of the Teachers

Differences in personal characteristics were not generally evident when the narratives from the first three weeks are searched for evidence. More effective managers were not more likely to be described as warm, enthusiastic, composed, articulate, anxious, or critical than were less effective managers. On the component ratings they were not different on the rating of distracting mannerisms.

The more effective teachers did exhibit better affective skills, receiving higher component ratings on both listening and expressing feelings. The definitions of these variables were based upon Gordon's work (8). The utility of such skills is apparent when management subcomponents include designing procedures and activities that met student concerns and communicating teacher expectations about appropriate behavior. A good listener will be able

to identify the concerns; a teacher who
can express feelings will give pupils
clear signals and will be more
predictable.

Summary and Conclusions

The data in this study are correla-
tional and descriptive, rather than
experimental. Two groups of teachers
who were very different in management
effectiveness throughout a school year
were identified, and antecedent behav-
iors and conditions were sought, through
the use of extensive observations which
had been made during the first three
weeks of the year. A number of differ-
ences between the two groups of
teachers' beginning-of-year observations
were noted in all three types of data
collected in the study: frequency
counts of behaviors, ratings, and
narrative descriptions. It is not
likely that these differences are due to
chance, or to selection effects in the
samples, because the two groups were
matched with respect to obviously
biasing characteristics such as pupil
entering ability levels, school, and

Title I status. Although the findings
are suggestive of possible causal
relationships, further correlational and
experimental research are needed for
verification and extension of the
results. With the above reservations in
mind, we feel that it is reasonable to
conclude that effective classroom
organization and management during the
year can be predicted from the first
several weeks of the school year. The
teaching characteristics and behaviors
that appear to discriminate best among
more and less effective managers include
the quality of leadership exhibited by
the teacher in managing behavior and
instruction, planning for student
concerns, and coping with constraints.
The more effective managers had a
workable system of rules and procedures
which they taught to their students as a
primary goal of the first several weeks.
They monitored their students carefully,
and did not "turn them loose" without
careful directions. They did not
appear to treat inappropriate behavior
differently than the less effective

managers, but they stopped it more quickly. Consequences of appropriate and inappropriate behavior were clearer in their classrooms and were applied more consistently. Thus these teachers established their credibility early and they were predictable.

These results are consonant with current thinking and research about organization and management (9:Ch4). For example, teacher monitoring would appear to be conceptually linked to Kounin's (10) "withitness," which he found to be related to student work involvement and freedom from deviancy. Also, we note Brophy and Putnam's (6:183) emphasis upon "pro-active teacher planning and organizing and in planning and maintaining a learning environment that minimizes the need to deal with problems in the first place."

Doyle's (7) propositions regarding the teacher's role in promoting cooperation also are supported in our first three weeks' observations, and also by the positive correlation between off-task behavior rates during the first

three weeks and the remainder of the year. Teachers who monitored behavior carefully at the beginning of the year and stopped disruptive behavior quickly were able to set and maintain deviant behavior rates at a low level.

The present study provides additional evidence of the importance of the teacher's activities at the beginning of the year. In particular we would stress the teacher's need for having an efficient system for organizing procedures, rules, and initial activities, and for treating the communication of this system to the pupils as a major teaching task at the beginning of the year. The present study suggests that such a system, augmented by the teacher's ability to monitor, to respond to pupil concerns, and to exhibit basic communication skills (both instructional and affective) will facilitate classroom management throughout the year.

References and notes

1. The authors gratefully acknowledge
   the assistance of many people who
   were instrumental in conducting the
   study or in preparing this report.
   Throughout the project, valuable
   cooperation was given by many
   persons in the Austin Independent
   School District: the principals
   and teachers in the eight
   participating schools; Dr. M. G.
   Bowden, director of Elementary
   Education; Dr. Freda Holley,
   coordinator of the Office of
   Research and Evaluation. Regular
   classroom observers were Barbara
   Clements, Alice Haynes, Nadine
   Hudson, and Nancy McMurtry.
   Special classroom observers
   included Dick Calkins, Susan Guinn,
   Cherry Kugle, Mary Jane Leahy,
   David Malitz, Norton Rosenthall,
   Ginger Saunders, Jim Twa, and Debby
   Yarborough. Data analysis
   assistance was provided by Jeanne
   Martin, Robert Morgan, and Don
   Veldman. The manuscript was

prepared by Betty Ancheta and Carol
Culp. The study was supported in
part by the National Institute of
Education, Contract
OB-NIE-B-78-0216, The Research and
Development Center for Teacher
Education, The University of Texas
at Austin. The opinions expressed
herein do not necessarily reflect
the position or policy of the
National Institute of Education,
and no official endorsement by that
office should be inferred.

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Table 1

Beginning-of-year and Remainder-of-year

Correlations (n = 27)

Variable	r
Student Engagement Ratings	
On-task, all activities	.51
On-task, all academic activities	.46
Off-task, unsanctioned	- .54
Narrative Rating Variables	
Behavior control	.83
Instructional leadership	.74
Student concerns	.68
Physical arrangements	.41
Constraints	.61
Coping with constraints	.76

Table 2

Comparisons of More and Less Effective Managers

During the First Three Weeks: Component Ratings

and Student Engagement Rates

Variable	More Effective (n = 7)		Less Effective (n = 7)		t (df = 12)	$p \leq$
	X	SD	X	SD		
Behavior Management						
1. Variety of rewards	4.3	1.03	3.1	.88	2.48	.05
2. Signals appropriate behavior	5.4	.70	3.8	.87	3.81	.01
3. Eye contact	6.1	.43	4.9	.81	3.54	.01
4. States desired attitudes	5.5	.79	3.9	.81	3.77	.01
5. Reinforces inattentive behavior	2.7	1.29	3.6	1.50	1.19	ns
6. Disruptive pupil behavior	3.0	1.31	4.8	1.06	2.82	.05
Responses to Disruptive Behavior						
7. Stops quickly	4.9	.70	3.5	1.03	3.10	.01
8. Criticizes	1.8	.79	2.4	1.16	1.16	ns
9. Punishes (frequency)	.6	.48	2.0	.85	1.24	ns
10. Ignores	2.9	.77	3.6	.55	1.95	.10
11. Time out (frequency)	.9	.35	1.0	.79	.35	ns
Instructional Management						
12. Describes objectives clearly	5.1	.72	3.1	.97	4.40	.01
13. Uses a variety of materials	5.6	.70	3.7	.58	5.66	.01
14. Materials are ready	6.2	.56	4.4	.84	4.62	.01
15. Materials support instruction	6.0	.57	4.3	1.07	3.55	.01
16. Clear directions	5.2	.80	3.8	.84	3.14	.01
17. Clear presentation	5.8	.59	4.1	1.26	3.22	.01
18. Provides/seeks rationale or analysis	4.9	1.07	3.4	1.13	2.48	.05

Table 2-Continued

Variable	More Effective (n = 7)		Less Effective (n = 7)		t (df = 12)	$p <$
	X̄	SD	X̄	SD		
Meeting Student Concerns						
19. Attention spans considered in lesson design	5.24	.70	2.8	.78	6.23	.01
20. High degree of pupil success	5.5	.63	3.9	.72	4.22	.01
21. Content related to pupil interests	5.2	.61	3.6	.45	5.99	.01
22. Reasonable work standards	5.8	.47	4.6	1.03	2.83	.05
Personal Characteristics						
23. Distracting mannerisms	1.9	.52	1.6	.32	.99	ns
24. Listening skills	5.4	.76	3.8	.67	4.30	.01
25. Expresses feelings	5.0	1.08	3.2	.22	4.41	.01
Student Engagement Rates						
26. On-task, all activities	.86	.06	.75	.09	2.72	.05
27. On-task, in content (not procedures)	.65	.06	.59	.06	1.92	.10
28. Off-task, unsanctioned	.07	.03	.16	.09	2.57	.05

Note. Except for variables 9 and 11, which are frequency counts per observation, the scores for variables 1 through 25 are average ratings made during the beginning-of-year observations. The scales range from 1 to 7, where a 1 represents little or no evidence of the rated characteristics or behavior and a 7 indicates relatively high amounts or frequent occurrences. Variables 26 through 28 are average proportions, based on frequency counts at 15-minute intervals.