

BOOK REVIEW:

The effectiveness of classroom management: 5 pivotal ingredients

Jerome St-Amand
Université du Québec en Outaouais
Canada

Gaudreau, N. (2017). *Gérer efficacement sa classe: les cinq ingrédients essentiels*. Québec (Québec): Presses de l'Université du Québec.

In the last decades, many classroom management books have been written to address students' needs and the challenges that students face on a daily basis. Nancy Gaudreau is the author of the book *Gérer efficacement sa classe: les cinq ingrédients essentiels* [The effectiveness of classroom management: 5 pivotal ingredients]. Gaudreau believes that it is essential to develop a classroom management strategy that focuses on prevention. With a wealth of experience in the field of classroom management as a special education teacher, as well as strong expertise in the field of education as a researcher, the author presents a model in which each component comprises pedagogical practices that are concrete and applicable in a classroom context, and where it is essential to be upstream, as much as possible, from the problems that students may experience at school.

Not very large but still containing essential information on classroom management, the book has a clever chapter organization that makes it pleasant to read while encouraging the reader to continue reading. In fact, in each chapter, numerous tables and figures summarize and explain the author's words in a concrete way, thus facilitating understanding. In addition, at the end of each chapter, Gaudreau presents self-tests related to the component under examination that can be completed by the teacher (the reader) to ensure that she or he applies the teaching practices associated with the component. Then, there are summaries of the essential concepts to remember for each chapter, which greatly contributes to the retention of information.

In Chapter 1, Gaudreau contextualizes the concept of classroom management by conducting a literature review on this topic. The author presents various themes associated with classroom management, including the explanation of some key theoretical models of classroom management like those of Skinner, Kounin, and Canter. In doing so, Gaudreau insists that there is no perfect model of classroom management. Rather, Gaudreau emphasizes the importance of adopting the most effective teaching practices because, according to Gaudreau, “plus le coffre à outils de l’enseignant est garni, plus ce dernier est en mesure de choisir la meilleure intervention pour atteindre ses objectifs” [“the more the teacher’s toolkit contains various strategies, the more the teacher is able to choose the best intervention to achieve one’s goals”] (loose translation) (p. 21).

In Chapter 2, the author presents the classroom management model referred to in her book, which is a proactive model that includes five core components that, according to Gaudreau, are associated with each of the fingers of the hand: (1) the management of resources, (2) the establishment of clear expectations, (3) the development of positive social relations, (4) the student’s engagement toward learning, and (5) the management of undisciplined behaviors. Links are exposed between components of the theoretical model, which provides very relevant content. The next five chapters are devoted to the analysis of each of these five components.

Chapter 3 presents the different elements related to the management of resources. In this chapter, the author is interested in time management, classroom layout, classroom materials, and the management of human resources (e.g., parents and members of the school environment such as students and teachers). In addition to presenting very clearly the advantages and disadvantages of different classroom settings, Gaudreau explains many strategies that enhance parents’ engagement in their child’s schooling. In light of this, she emphasizes that resource management directly influences the other components of classroom management.

Chapter 4 focuses on behavior management such as effective classroom rules, routines, and reinforcements. According to the author, the winning recipe for preventing disruptive behaviors is based on the formulation and application of the rules. In this sense, the teacher who has the ability to formulate rules in a positive way by emphasizing the expected behaviors rather than the ones to be avoided will lead students toward adopting good behaviors. For students to adopt the rules, it is essential to come up with the right wording.

In Chapter 5, the author reviews a pivotal topic in the field of education: the development of positive social relations among members of the school community (e.g., parents, teachers, and students). This chapter emphasizes the importance given to the social relation between the student and the teacher

because it plays a key role in motivating students. Indeed, as mentioned by the author, simple gestures such as knowing the names of students or being open to discussion with them can have an impact on students' perception toward their school. In the appendix, the author proposes a series of questions to determine students' perceptions toward their social relations at school, which is very useful for teachers concerned by their classroom climate. In this context, it would nevertheless have been relevant to briefly examine the importance of social relations between staff members, especially in a context where teamwork is of paramount importance when intervention is necessary.

Chapter 6 examines ways to engage students and get their attention in the classroom. The author proposes strategies aimed at every age group. Gaudreau points out the importance of planning meaningful teaching tasks while emphasizing strategies to differentiate teaching (e.g., memory strategies or support measures).

Chapter 7 looks at the causes behind undisciplined behaviors. In this chapter, Gaudreau mentions that it is necessary to act on the causes and the observable behaviors without making judgment. Moreover, many preventive strategies are proposed as well as some strategies to adopt in response to behavioral problems.

Then, the book ends with appendices that present useful tools that can be used by teachers. All things considered, education professionals will find in this book many concrete practices that can be used in their classroom from the beginning of the school year to the end. Indeed, the impressive list of teaching strategies presented in the book corresponds in some respects to what teachers wish to observe in their classroom, that is, students who are engaged in educational tasks. I therefore strongly recommend this book to education science students as well as experienced teachers who wish to enhance their classroom management practices and start the school year off right.