

## A NOTE

The books in this series serve as manuals discussing the most basic and fundamental issues as regards the topic area each one is treating. They are meant to serve as quick references for teachers, offering them an on-the-spot suggestion or solution to questions they have on the specific subject, as well as practical, easy-to-prepare activities and self-monitoring activities for teachers. For further study and more detailed discussion and theory, teachers can refer to the bibliography in the back pages of each manual.

Our position is that we are constantly interested in empowering learners. However, we need to think of empowering teachers as well. Our suggestions and proposed strategies or techniques are not 'rabbits out of the hat', but age-old concerns approached in a more informed and up-to-date way.

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## WHY IS MANAGEMENT RELATED TO TEACHING?

A question often asked by many teachers, mother tongue or foreign language ones. The classroom is a small community, a microcosm, and like any community it needs a framework within which to operate and be effectively functional. Being aware of the most basic and fundamental management principles and using a number of them, enable a teacher to develop self-confidence as well as self-esteem and to be able to communicate with and relate to her learners more effectively, and, most important, in a more pleasant manner.

Teaching is one of the oldest professions and it has established a number of principles as regards human communication and interpersonal relations. The role of the teacher, and especially of the foreign language teacher, is not simply to teach the rules of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Any mechanical equipment could very easily do this. The role of the teacher is to acknowledge first the value of each individual learner in her classroom, while maintaining intact her own individual value, and to bring together and empower these unique individuals so they can coexist within the same environment. At the same time, the teacher enables learners to acquire, on the one hand, a new language and, on the other, to develop sociologically and to learn a number of strategies which not only apply to language learning, but also to 'life learning', especially if we are talking about children. And, in the case of adults, strategies which apply to a number of social skills, which were not taught to them or which contribute a welcome dimension to their personality.



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST BASIC MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES?

The following principles are as important in the classroom as in any corporation. Observing them ensures success and effective collaboration between teacher and learners and among the learners themselves. All of these principles are of equal importance and they create a more effective classroom atmosphere. There is no moment that teachers do not exercise one or more of them in the classroom.

### Know Thyself:

Probably the most important of all, as only when we truly know who we are, what we are, our strengths, our talents, our weaknesses, and when we can acknowledge our feelings, can we fully understand those of our learners.

### Priorities:

Teachers make decisions almost every other minute in class. Knowing their priorities, what is most important and what their specific goal is, helps them make effective decisions without causing problems or difficulties and without differentiating among their learners.

### Planning:

Looking ahead both in terms of Lesson Plans as well as projects, events, materials, etc.

### Making Decisions:

A necessary strategy, whether it refers to language learning or to interpersonal relations.

### Organisation:

Planning without any organisation would be less effective, almost non-existent: organisation within the classroom, organisation of materials, activities, equipment, etc.

### Time Management:

Operating within a restricted period of time, the teacher needs to be aware of the specific time limits for any activity taking place within the classroom, as well as outside the classroom, especially when dealing with homework assignments. Thus she needs to develop and observe a number of time management strategies which will make her more effective.

**Firmness:**

It relates to decisions teachers make, both in terms of learning issues as well as of behavioural ones. Firmness does not mean being strict, but it does deal with our examining the reasons and the results of the decisions we make before we make them known. Once we have done this, we need to be firm as per the specific decision, especially when it applies to more than one learner.

**Discipline:**

The most misunderstood and misinterpreted principle of all. Discipline is another word for harmony. If we think of the Arts – Music, Dance, Poetry, Painting, Sculpture, Theatre – we will see that discipline is the most important element which defines them. Discipline in the classroom is the teacher's ability to create a harmonious whole.

**Delegating Responsibilities:**

Part of Interpersonal relations is accepting and assuming responsibilities. The teacher's major goal is to learn when and to whom to delegate responsibilities and how much.

**Interpersonal Relations:**

One could also say public relations: the teacher's ability to create an atmosphere where the learners coexist harmoniously and develop the ability to collaborate, cooperate, contribute and co-decide among themselves.

**Assessment:**

The driving force behind self-knowledge, which leads to self-confidence and self-esteem, and thus a necessary tool for each teacher. Assessment refers to the teacher's assessment of herself, her strategies and techniques, to her learners' development and progress as well as to the teaching materials used.

**Feedback:**

Once assessment has taken place, there is a need for feedback to and from the learners. It can be formal as well as informal and it can refer to more than the learning taking place in the classroom.

**Humanism:**

The acknowledgment, acceptance of and respect for each individual as a unique entity with feelings, rights and opinions.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER?

Within the context of management, the teacher assumes a number of roles.

She is a ...

- **Manager**  
setting the framework, informing and coordinating
- **Coach**  
organising practice, encouraging achievement
- **Guide**  
giving instructions, helping with examples, 'opening up' roads to progress
- **Consultant**  
in language performance, career development, as well as in personal matters, occasionally
- **Resource person**  
not all-knowing, but trained to guide the learners themselves to find the answers to the questions on their own
- **Interpersonal Relations Expert**  
ensuring and encouraging that the channels of communication remain open among her learners
- **Leader**  
mainly because the teacher serves as a model and as a motivator, encouraging and often unwittingly shaping the learners' goals and dreams
- **Life's 'salesperson'**  
life is often 'seen' through the teacher's eyes, especially during the formative years. These 'eyes' should be full of hope and dreams, beholding beauty and vision. A teacher's personal failures and bitterness have no place in the classroom
- **Mentor**  
rarely something known or announced to a teacher, but an occasional 'blessing' for some ...



## WHAT IS CLASS MANAGEMENT?

Starting with the classroom itself, which needs to be clean, attractive, well organised and, in the case of primary learners, with desks and furniture appropriate to their size and height, the well-managed classroom ...

- provides a positive atmosphere for learning;
- encourages self-respect and aims for success;
- has a set plan with guidelines for behaviour, encourages achievement and praises progress, thus anticipating behavioural problems and misconceptions;
- establishes an 'unwritten contract' of behavioural patterns, sets fair and mutually accepted limits and offers gentle guidance;
- enables both teacher and learners to express their expectations of each other, to give and receive feedback and to re-evaluate policies and expectations;
- encourages delegation of responsibility, which once given cannot be taken away, nor doubted or criticised;