

Effective Teaching through High Expectation and Class Management

By Lisa M. Curry

In order to be an outstanding preschool/recreational coach, you need to see yourself as more than just a coach who simply teaches forward rolls, cartwheels, and handstands. You need to identify yourself as a professional educator. A teacher of discovery, life skills, and excellence along with all the wonderful physical fitness concepts we refer to as movement education. Children in today's society need teachers; effective teachers who are committed to student growth in all areas. Two important aspects of effective teaching are having high expectations and excellent classroom management skills.

"Each child is living the only life he has - the only one he will ever have.
The least we can do is not diminish it." - Bill Page

High Expectations

An effective teacher always has high expectations for students. High expectations can also be called positive expectations. High expectations are not the same thing as high standards. Standards are levels of achievement. Positive expectations means that a teacher believes in every student and that all students can learn on their own individual levels. Research shows that a teacher's expectations seem to be linked with a student's self-concept and achievement. Therefore, it is essential that teachers ensure successful student experiences and reach high standards by exhibiting, with words and actions, high expectations.

Classroom Management

An effective teacher is an excellent classroom manager. Classroom management is the methods we use to empower students as they develop responsibility, build character, and master skills. Why should you have a management system? For the safety of all students, to set limits, and encourage learning. Classroom management is not discipline, it is much more. Classroom management is having a well-organized environment, an instructor who is well prepared, a discipline plan with rules, reasonable consequences/rewards, and students who follow consistent class procedures.

First, the teacher needs to post rules along with consequences and rewards so that the students know from day one what is expected of them. The instructor also needs to specifically explain to parents and students what each rule means and review them frequently to ensure understanding. This is especially important in a gymnastics facility where safety is an enormous concern! A rule should be clear and specific, stated positively, and related to a behavior. If you have more than five rules, that is too many. Please remember that good consequences are also clear, specific, and logical, not a punishment. The best rules are simple!

Rules	Consequences	Rewards
1. Listen to your teacher and follow directions	Reminder	Fun class!

2. Stay with your class	Redo behavior correctly with teacher's help	Smile
3. Keep your hands, feet, all objects to yourself	Miss a turn	High five
4. Only one person on the trampoline at a time	Sit beside teacher for a few minutes	Praise
5. Land on your feet or seat in the pit	Talk to parents (safety)	"Happy" note

Second, effective teachers make sure to follow through with the discipline plan. Be calm, be fair, and be consistent. Use proximity, make direct eye contact, do not embarrass the student, and give immediate attention to consequences when rules are broken. It is crucial that a child knows the teacher finds his/her behavior unacceptable, not him/her as a person. Positive feedback and rewards should be given continuously.

Once the discipline plan is in place the most important part of the classroom management plan, class procedures, should be implemented. Consistent class procedures should be taught for every task. The ability to teach procedures determines a teacher's effectiveness. Children do not know class procedures; they must be taught and practiced until they become a habit. Procedures are the backbone of a smooth-running class. The students always know what to do at the beginning of every class, what the attention signal is, proper use of equipment, how to move about the gym, and what to do at the end of class. These behaviors must be modeled, rehearsed, and reinforced. This does take time, but it is time well spent. The instructor who uses class procedures has a class that is free of confusion and wasted time.

For example, this procedure can be taught as the attention signal.

GIVE ME FIVE

The teacher holds up one hand and says, "Give Me Five!" As the teacher counts to 5 aloud the students go through each of the five steps.

1. Stop
2. Look at the teacher
3. Be still
4. Listen
5. Follow instructions

Many children diagnosed with ADD and ADHD thrive in an environment of routines and procedures. When students know how the class is structured they actually feel more secure and comfortable because they always know what is going to happen. Hopefully these ideas about high expectations and classroom management will give you some useful knowledge and inspire you a little. The truth is, being a professional educator is not easy. It takes extra work and a lot of effort. Teaching is more than doing activities, covering lesson plans, and teaching skills. Teaching is an ART; an artform that is more rewarding than you can ever possibly imagine, not only to you, but also to the children whose lives you are certain to impact.

"Teacher - you are a gymnast, as you encourage the contortions and gyrations of thoughts and the flexing and strengthening of ideas. - Irish Marcuzzo

References and Additional Reading

- Williamson, Bonnie (1998). *Teacher's Guidebook*, Second Edition. Sacramento, CA: Dynamic Teaching Company.
- Wong, Harry K. and Wong, Rosemary T. (1998). *How to be an Effective Teacher, The First Days of School*. New York: Harry K. Wong Publications.

This article appears in the April 2000 issue of *Technique*, Vol. 20, No. 4.