

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

**DEALING WITH
EXCESSIVE
TALKING**

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DEALING WITH EXCESSIVE TALKING

- Some students just love to talk. They seem to have opinions about everything and are not shy about expressing them. They may stop talking in response to a teacher request but five minutes later may be at it again. Their talking may become contagious. If students see that their classmates are allowed to get away with it, they may start as well. The resulting chatter can significantly disrupt your classroom activities and impede your ability to teach a lesson

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- In your effort to gain quiet, you need to pay attention to the nature of your instruction as well as the structure in your classroom. This structure needs to include a clear rule regarding talking and a willingness to enforce that rule consistently without antagonizing your students. Also bear in mind that you do not want to discourage all talking by your students. Indeed, students talking among themselves can be a real source of learning, as exemplified by cooperative learning groups.

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- What You Can Do
 - I. Communicate your rules regarding talking. In conveying these rules to your students, make it crystal clear when students are allowed to talk and when they are not. You might, for example, tell them it is okay to talk when they raise their hand and are called on, when they need information to finish an assignment, or when they have completed their seatwork as long as they talk in a whisper. You might also tell them they are not allowed to talk when you are teaching, when a classmate is asking or answering a question, or when they are taking a test. Teach them the signal you will use to cue them to stop talking.

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- What You Can Do
 2. Cue the student to stop talking with a pre-arranged signal. Talk with him privately and agree on a signal you will give him when he is talking and you need him to stop. Get his agreement to this plan and ask for his suggestions about a signal. Some possibilities: pausing while you are speaking, raising your eyebrows, tugging on your ear or winking. You may need to say his name to get his attention before signaling him, but do not stop class to reprimand him. The idea is to give him a reminder without interrupting the flow of your lesson.

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What You Can Do

3. Stand by your students. If a student is talking while you're teaching, move in his direction while continuing to present your lesson. Stand there for a minute or two, perhaps making eye contact with him. Your presence will likely be sufficient to quiet him down. It is a good practice generally to move around the room in an unpredictable manner and vary where you stand when you present your lessons.

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What You Can Do

4. Do not bail out a student who has been talking. A student who is gabbing with his neighbor may miss out on directions or part of the lesson. If he asks you to repeat them, tell him he will need to figure out another way of getting the information. Let him know that he would have heard the directions if he had not been talking. You might avoid this problem by saying to your students before giving directions “I’m only saying this once.”

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What You Can Do

5. Use a noise meter. Try this simple strategy for quieting a noisy class. In the morning draw a noise gauge on the board and divide it into five or ten parts. Each time the noise reaches an unacceptable level in your class, fill in the gauge up to the next point. If the noise is really loud, you might go up an additional increment. If the gauge becomes filled to the top, consider imposing a consequence that you have previously discussed with the class. You can also use this in a positive manner by rewarding the class at the end of the day if the gauge has not risen above a certain point. Start with an empty gauge every day. The advantage of this technique is that it helps you quiet the class without speaking to your students.

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What You Can Do

6. Keep track of their noisiness using a stopwatch. Start the stopwatch as soon as the class becomes noisy and stop it when the class quiets down. Make sure your students see you doing this. Let them know that the amount of time they have been talking may be taken away from their recess or made up after school. You might also reward them if they can keep the time they were noisy under a standard you have set.

- Adapted from:

Shore, K. (2020, September 17). *Dealing with Excessive Talking*. Ken Shore.

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