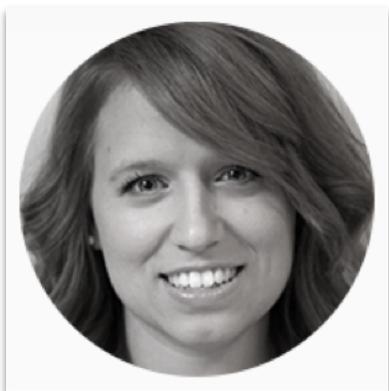


## Case Studies: Classroom Management



Jennifer Borel

**Tell us a little bit about yourself and your teaching position (students, district, class load, schedule, etc.). What makes your classroom experience different from every other classroom?** I have been an elementary art teacher for five years. Before that I student taught in elementary, middle, and high school. During the summers I taught art at a summer enrichment program. This year I am teaching 350 students at my home school, but one day a week I travel to another school in my district and teach a 4th grade and kindergarten class in order to "relieve" the art teacher at that school. The district that I teach at is one of the largest districts in Eastern Kansas. We have 35 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 4 high schools with a 5th one being built. In my district we teach an A-E schedule instead of Mon-Fri. This ensures we see every class especially when holidays fall on weekdays. My schedules allows me to see every grade level for one a hour each week with the exception of half day kindergarten which I only see for 30 minutes. On a typically day I do morning duty in the lunch room, and help with instruction

focus. I normally see 4th, K, 2nd, 3rd, 5th/K, and then 1st grade. So my brain is all over the map when it comes to changing out how I teach the grade just based on their learning skills. After school is over I complete my afternoon duty before returning to the art room to clean it up.

**What does your classroom management plan look like? (rules, consequences, etc.)** This year I am trying out [this system](#) to help me manage my students. So far I am loving being able to make the students accountable for their own actions. It is also helping me maintain my expectations.

**How do you hold your students accountable? What about parents/families?** See the article above for how I am holding my students accountable. My students know that there are no "what ifs" in my classroom. Instead we focus on "we cans". This is especially true with turning projects in on time. Students know that if they just can't focus at their table they can ask permission to go work at the "Chill out Chair" (essentially a safe seat). This helps them focus on their work without distractions. On top of that my students know that occasionally they may have to visit the "chill out chair" because they are being the distraction and I may direct them to the chair even without them asking me if they can go. My students also know that if they break one of classroom rules like being disrespectful, hitting, negative words, using materials in an inappropriate way they will have to visit the "COC" and fill out a Think Sheet. I immediately send an email home. I learned that in my first year of teaching. If I let my students reach their parents first, some students would distort the story of why they got a Think Sheet. I ended up with one parent that deemed they were "going to get me fired" because her student lied to her so he wouldn't be in trouble. Sigh. So now I just have a simple email that let's parents know there is a think sheet coming home and I will explain more once I am done teaching classes for the day. It has done wonders with keeping families accountable.

**What has been your biggest classroom management challenge and how did you overcome it?** It is kind of like I wrote in the article above, "Even the same teacher can be inconsistent from week to week depending on stress, sleep, lifestyle, and the troublemaker from the previous class that smeared paint all over her nice pants." I found

myself not being consistent from one class to the next. My new management system is really keeping me accountable for my classroom management expectations.

**What is one piece of advice you could share for successful classroom management at your grade level?** Don't overwhelm yourself or your classes with so many rewards and things to keep track of. For awhile I was handing out rewards, and stars, and prizes to individual students. I was SO exhausted from keeping up with it. This year I feel like I am less stressed because I can easily keep track of how many points the classes are earning. Everything from my slips of paper that I keep track on to my point chart is right by the door. So every time we line up I just talk with the class about how we feel the class went and mark it down. I also love that now they have to work as a team to earn one reward a semester. This makes it easier on me to keep track of what I am doing. It also helps the students collaborate together to earn their rewards.



Amanda Heyn

**Tell us a little bit about yourself and your teaching position (students, district, class load, schedule, etc.). What makes your classroom experience different from every other classroom?**

My name is Amanda Heyn and I taught elementary art at a K-4 school in southern Wisconsin.

Our district was mid-sized, with three elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school and a high school. My school had about 430 students broken into 20 different classrooms. I saw each class once every four days on a rotating schedule. Class sizes were between 21-26 students.

The students were pretty homogenous in terms of ethnicity (white), but I had students from a wide array of socioeconomic backgrounds. My

classroom experience was unique because of the focus on cross-curricular projects. The classroom teachers and I worked very closely to connect art

with other core subjects such as language arts, social studies and math. Each grade level completed multiple cross-curricular projects each year. I also was

a huge fan of using literature in the classroom and often tied projects to master

texts for inspiration. Students in my room also got a good dose of art history as I tied in artists to as many projects as possible. In addition, I had an overflowing free choice station so that I could incorporate some choice-based learning on certain days or when students were finished.

**What does your classroom management plan look like? (rules, consequences, etc.)** My classroom management plan was a proactive model. This means that I tried to anticipate and avoid behavior problems before they even started. I did this in a variety of ways. One way was to have an extremely organized classroom. Using labels and clear tubs helped me and my students keep things neat and tidy. Less visual clutter helped those students that get easily overwhelmed. In addition, my rules and consequences were clearly posted and referenced often. Students always knew what was expected of them. I often wrote the day's schedule on the board and previewed it with students before beginning. A sample for an Eric Carle Collage project might say, "Read story, Review warm and cool colors, Demo: cutting shapes, Work Time, Demo: gluing shapes, Work Time, Clean Up." I did clean-up the same way. Clear expectations were a huge factor in making my classroom run smoothly! One other thing I did was to have a beginning routine. Every time students came to the art room they came to sit at the carpet to hear about what we were going to do that day. No surprises!

As far as rules go, my school had a school-wide system, which was fantastic. The rules were the same no matter what area of the building students were in. We also had a wonderful multi-age level program where we talked about positive behavior each week. My rules were: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be a Learner, Be Your Best. At the

beginning of the school year, students and I did activities to figure out what these school rules meant in the art room.

I am also a fan of love and logic and used it often in my classroom. Giving students choice is powerful. For example, if a student was unable to focus on the carpet, I could say, "Johnny, it looks like you're having a hard time focusing. Would you like to try and calm your body down or sit at your own table." In extreme situations, the question might be, "Susie, would you like to use your scissors safely or go work in the office?" Of course, threatening behavior or severe behavior got an immediate call to the office, although it only happened a handful of times.

If a student couldn't correct their behavior during class, there were a few different consequences, which students knew about ahead of time. If talking or distracting others was a problem, I had a separate seat away from table groups that students could work at. If students couldn't correct their behavior after 3 reminders, I sent an "oops" note home- very similar to Jessica's system. At recess, the students and I discussed which rule was broken and how they would fix it for next time. Depending on the age level, I or the student wrote down what we talked about and it was sent home to be signed by a parent or guardian. I also usually did a quick email home to let families know that the note was coming and was meant to be a positive interaction to help their student do his or her best job in the art room.

**How do you hold your students accountable? What about parents/families?** The oops note mentioned above was the main form of accountability in the art room. We also had a school-wide system called "Check-in, Check-Out." This system was for students who were really struggling with behavior. Each morning they would check in with the guidance counselor, who would pump them up for the day. These students carried half sheets around and checked in with their teacher at various points throughout the day to monitor their own behavior. At the end of the day, these students came to check out with me in the art room. It worked beautifully. These students were kids that needed that extra adult attention and were very motivated to do well so they could come and tell me that they had a great day!

As far as parents and families- if an Oops note came back unsigned, I would follow up with a phone call. I always started out by saying something positive and then framing the conversation about ways to help their student be more successful in the art room. 99% of parents were extremely responsive to this method!

**What has been your biggest classroom management challenge and how did you overcome it?** My biggest classroom management challenge was taking the place of a really laid-back, permissive art teacher before me. The kids were used to having full reign of the art room- it was chaotic and nothing was getting done. There were no routines or procedures, and no one was listening to directions. For the first year, I had a sticker chart. Students would work as a class to earn a sticker and after so many stickers, would earn a reward like a free choice day or a day where they got to choose their seats. I slowly dropped the sticker chart as students got used to the routines.

**What is one piece of advice you could share for successful classroom management at your grade level?** My piece of advice for the elementary art room is to set up a routine that you follow each class. This can work in a traditional classroom as well as a TAB classroom. Post the routine in both words and pictures so even non-readers can follow along. If students know what to expect, they will be much more successful!



Nichole Hahn

**Tell us a little bit about yourself and your teaching position (students, district, class load, schedule, etc.). What makes your classroom experience different from every other classroom?** I have been working with ISD 728 for 11 years now. This was not my first job, but it has been my longest in my career. I started out as a traveling teacher with no room, on a cart/ in the teachers lounge/in the cafeteria. But I was teaching Art and loving the elementary level. After 3 years I got a full time job, great room and wonderful students at Rogers Elementary in Rogers Minnesota. I worked at RES for a total of 7 years when a retirement in the Middle school came up. I was able to apply and was accepted for what was an amazing experience with middle school students. I worked 3 years at Rogers Middle School and last year was asked to travel again. This time to another elementary school in our district. Shifts have taken place and I am teaching Elementary this year. At Hassan Elementary I am on a 6 day rotation teaching about 750 students.

**What does your classroom management plan look like? (rules, consequences, etc.)** In the Middle School I had the rules set up quite nicely.

There were only [4 rules](#)... Be Productive, Be Safe, Be Responsible, and Be Respectful. That is short and to the point but at the beginning of the quarter, each of these rules were broke down a lot more ([click here for link](#)). The breakdown came from past experiences. I found that this set the expectations of my classroom and it was a smooth transition into my class for most of my students. I'm developing a whole new system now for my elementary class. I'm starting with the set up of my room. So far, I have some great storage solutions ([click here](#)). I also created a wonderful space for my table boxes ([click here](#)). [Table numbers](#) have come in handy for set up and cleanup activities. Other systems that have worked well in my elementary classroom is the '[Ask 3 before you ask Me](#)' sign and the '[talking brush](#)' I'm continuing to implement and develop new ideas for my elementary classroom. I have a whole [pin board](#) just waiting to be implemented into my classroom.

**How do you hold your students accountable? What about parents/families?** When communicating with parents I encourage students to be my sounding board. I get my kids to write emails home and they tell parents some highlighted points. This helps communication about what is going on in art class, as well as increase conversation about art between parents and kids. Here is an example of what I have done in the past ([click here](#)). My student population always asks for extra credit. I have taken this opportunity to encourage conversation with parents. I have students ask their parents to fill out a short online google form ([click here](#)). In short, parents have to tell me what they have learned from their student. By doing these two things, I have found that communication about expectations, curriculum, techniques, mediums and much more takes place between students and parents. It's a great thing to facilitate!

**What has been your biggest classroom management challenge and how did you overcome it?** I'm still finding a good way to include parents as volunteers in my classroom. I have ideas of how to do this, but I have am working on it as of now. I also need to make more clean up procedure visuals. I do have some plans for this... just need to find the time to make some signs.

**What is one piece of advice you could share for successful classroom management at your grade level?** I feel that communication is one the the most important parts of managing a classroom. Keeping labels, and an organized classroom is critical. This communicates to kids how you want your room to remain. Communicate to students why they are learning what they are learning is important. 'I can' statements, or targets are helpful in this endeavor. One of my favorite parts of communications was from and idea I got from Jessica Balsley a the 2014 summer AOE conference. I sent out both a [paraprofessional letter](#) and a [teacher letter](#) to introduce my new art

room. This helped teachers know what to have the kids bring, how to drop them off (in door and out door), and how they can support the art room. As for the para's, I have gotten nothing but praise for communicating. It opened the lines of communication between me and the people working closest to some of my highest needs students.



Tim Bogatz

**Tell us a little bit about yourself and your teaching position (students, district, class load, schedule, etc.). What makes your classroom experience different from every other classroom?** My name is Tim Bogatz, and I am the Art Department Chair at Bellevue East High School in Bellevue, Nebraska. We are a 9-12 school in an Omaha suburb with about 1500 kids. We have a mixed racial makeup with moderate poverty and we are HEAVILY impacted by Offutt Air Force Base--almost 35% of our kids are military dependents.

I teach 5 classes, 51 minutes each, from Intro to Art to AP Studio Art and everything in between. My AP class is my small one (18 this year), and all other classes are between 30 and 34 students. That's bigger than I'd like, but I need a lot of kids in my program to do everything I want to do.

As far as my classroom, I want kids to know exactly what to expect when they come into my room. I use a lot of principles from the Montessori method in my classroom to develop the culture and environment that I think best serves my students. I use little concepts like always helping students while standing on their dominant side; I work toward big concepts like developing students' ability to make intelligent choices, be creative, and to work autonomously. For more information on the Montessori Method [click here](#).

It helps me as a teacher when I can develop that specific, consistent environment that fosters creativity, higher order thinking skills, and enjoyment of art. When these things are happening, kids are engaged and they are willing to put in the work to create some great artwork. It takes a little while to get kids into that environment, and used to the process, but after a couple years with me, kids see the progress they are making as artists. When they finally see that, they have usually bought in to being part of the art room culture and things run very smoothly for them and for me. Consistency, autonomy, and artistic skill and thought are the things that make my classroom unique.

**What does your classroom management plan look like? (rules, consequences, etc.)**

I hate to say this, because I know how bad it sounds, but I don't really have any discipline problems, so I don't worry a lot about rules and consequences. For me, it is about establishing a culture of respect--I respect my kids by valuing their opinions, not talking down to them, and not ever being condescending in any way. When they see how they will be treated (as an adult), they will treat me, my classroom, their classroom, and our materials with respect in return. It's pretty simple.

On a side note, I think most high schools do a terrible job of preparing kids for life past high school. They'll be living on their own in a matter of months, but they still need permission and a signed pass to walk 40 feet to the bathroom? When kids are treated like mature individuals, they respond as such and act as such. That, more than anything, is what my classroom management plan looks like.

**How do you hold your students accountable? What about parents/families?**

First you engage them, THEN you hold them accountable. If you don't have buy-in, you don't have genuine accountability. I spend a lot of time developing a specific classroom culture, as aforementioned, and once that is established kids are accountable to themselves. They are motivated (some intrinsically, some not) to work hard and create art. More importantly, they hold each other accountable for behavior, taking care of the room, completing work, and making sure it is quality work. In addition, when kids buy in, the parents are generally supportive as well. I invite families to be a part of things--visit the room, attend our art shows, engage on social media, etc., so they feel part of the process as well.

Until that point when kids are engaged and part of the program, I use traditional parent contacts (phone calls, emails) and school specific consequences (Saturday school, lunch detentions, etc.) to make sure work is completed.

**What has been your biggest classroom management challenge and how did you overcome it?**

My biggest challenge was changing the culture of my classroom when I first came in to take my job. To say the teacher before me ran his classroom as a free-for-all would be putting it mildly. I had to change attitudes, change work ethics, raise expectations and raise the quality of the work. It took me three full years before I was able to get things where I wanted them to be. If I were to do it again, I think I could do it more quickly, but that was quite a battle.

I understand that not everyone will be in that situation, but my universal advice comes from that experience: Have high expectations, and keep them high no matter the circumstances. Some kids will work to meet them immediately, others will take a while to come around. But they will all get there eventually, and when they do, they will be proud of their art and proud of themselves. It is worth it.

**What is one piece of advice you could share for successful classroom management at your grade level?**

Relationships! The biggest thing you can do with high schoolers is show them that you care about them. I cannot emphasize this enough! Smile when they come into your class--even if you can't stand them and they smell terrible and they annoy everyone in the room, convince yourself you are happy to see them. High fives for girls, handshakes for boys as they come in. They feel welcome, they feel safe, and they feel like they belong, which allows them to be more successful and more confident. Take a look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; we're climbing it like a ladder :)

My goal is to talk to every kid every day. It might be that "good to see you" at the door, or it might be a substantive discussion about their project. If I'm teaching all day, I can't always meet that goal, but I make VERY sure I talk to them the next time I see them.

For more information, Tim's blog can be found here: [eastartroom.wordpress.com](http://eastartroom.wordpress.com)