



Eastern Ontario Catholic
Curriculum Cooperative

Classroom Management



November 2001



Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative

Working Together for Catholic Education

FORWARD

The Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative would like to acknowledge the creativity and hard work of the members of the Classroom Management Document. Thanks is extended to Dale Henderson, Project Manager, Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board; Tammy Clune, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Stephanie Froats, Renfrew County Catholic District School Board, Michael Arseneault, Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board.

INTRODUCTION

The support document, Classroom Management, was initiated to extend material developed through the Elementary Curriculum Unit Project; Implementation Support Document, 2001. Classroom management involves elements of planning, preparation, positive reinforcement and collaboration between teachers, students and parents.

Planning for meaningful learning experiences based on enduring understandings will assist teachers both in straight or combined grade classes. Teachers may find it helpful to use the Journey Activities document with the Learning Continuum sheets contained in the Implementation Support Document to make those meaningful connections, establish prior learning/enduring understandings, and design learning activities necessary to prepare students for subsequent learning stages.

This Classroom Management resource will serve as a foundation of quality approaches, best practice and sound theory. The development process involved examining current research and shared experience from educators. We welcome you to develop the suggestions and consider your own approaches to managing your program.

Gerry Bibby, Executive Director of EOCCC

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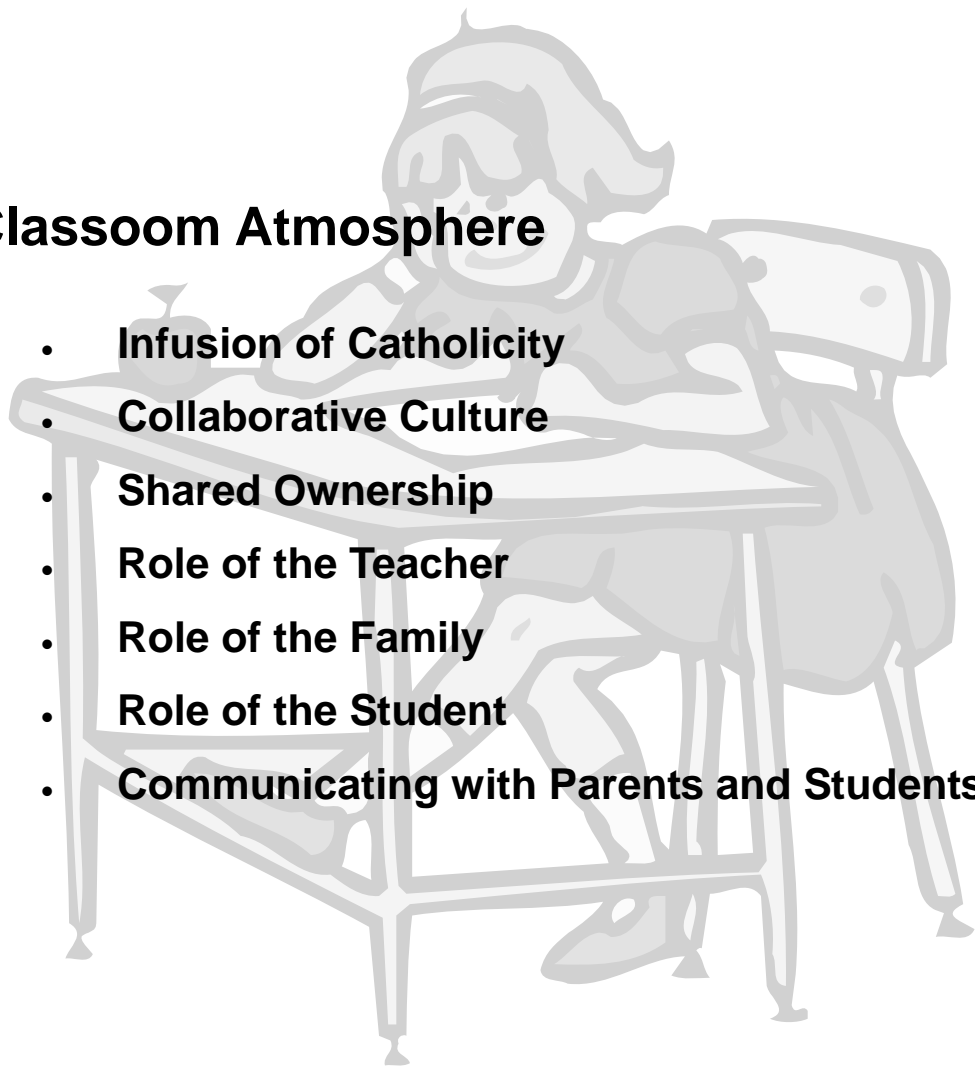
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I. Classroom Atmosphere

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Classroom Atmosphere

Infusion of Catholicity

Sustained by our spiritual vision, we can keep on, knowing that sometimes we sow, other times we water, and God “gives the growth”. (Corinthians 3: 6-7)

Thomas Groome

Our goal, as Catholic educators is “to promote and maintain Catholic schools animated by the Gospel and reflecting the tenants of the Catholic faith.” (ICE, Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations). As Catholic educators who have accepted the invitation to follow Jesus Christ, we do this by teaching the students about Jesus Christ so that they too can accept the invitation. “Catholic schools must be places where students can hear Jesus’ invitation to follow him, where they can realize his presence and his promise to be with them always.”¹ Therefore, Catholic schools are both places of learning and places of believing.

Teachers in Ontario Catholic schools use the Ontario Catholic School Catholic Graduate Expectations “to make decisions concerning program planning, instructional strategies, evaluation, and assessment.” (ICE) The Catholic School Graduate Expectations (CGE) provide a greater purpose for knowledge, skills, and applications mandated by curriculum policy documents. “It is not simply enough to insert (these) theological characteristics abstractly into existing curriculum. They are the *raison d’etre* of our Catholic education system, and must permeate everything we do in our Catholic schools.”² Every learning activity, planned by every teacher, should help students become the kind of graduate envisioned by these expectations. The Ministry of Education’s Curriculum Unit Planner contains the CGEs for Catholic curriculum writers to use in their planning and writing of curriculum units. All units created specifically for Catholic schools should meet various CGEs as well as the Ministry expectations.

www.catholic.net
www.catholic.org

Additional information on the Ontario Curriculum Planner is available in Chapter VI.

Catholic education views human life as an integration of body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in this vision, Catholic education fosters the search for knowledge as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest. The expectations of Catholic graduates, therefore, are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes, and actions.

*Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
Institute for Catholic Education*

Holistic education, educating the body, soul, and the mind, is the thrust of the CGE. The seven components of holistic education are:

1. discerning believer
2. effective communicator
3. reflective thinker
4. life-long learner
5. collaborative contributor
6. caring family member
7. responsible citizen

When designing or implementing curricula, teachers must ask themselves, Do the planned activities help students **grow** in the direction envisioned by the CGE? Do the planned learning activities help students **become** Catholic graduates?

See Figure 1.1 - Working From The Catholic Graduate Expectations Action Template.

Collaborative Culture

A community is a group of men and women who found the truth in Christ and in His gospel and who follow the truth and join together to follow it more strongly. In the group, each one finds that the brother or sister is a source of strength and that in moments of weakness they help one another and, by loving one another and believing, they give light and example.

Archbishop Oscar Romero



Walk into any classroom and you will find that it is like no other. Every classroom is unique, having its own culture, values, and rules.

Early in the year, the classroom community is shaped and built, creating a predictable, safe environment for students to learn and interact with each other. The classroom culture cannot be anticipated or determined prior to the beginning of the school year. It must evolve out of the shared interests, values, and goals of the students. However, teachers can begin to lay the foundation for the classroom community prior to the commencement of the new school year. Preparing for the students' arrival can tell children what you expect and value. Bulletin boards, classroom arrangements and displays, name cards for children's desks and hooks, and even desk arrangement tell students and parents a little about your teaching style, interests, and preferences.

When students arrive on the first day of school, teachers must implement the routines and expectations that he/she has envisioned immediately. Students, like all children, want to know the boundaries of the behavioural expectations. Boundaries make children feel safe because they know what they and others can and cannot do within those boundaries. Teachers must have a clear idea of what their classroom will look like behaviourally before the first student arrives.

Teachers and students should decide on a few class rules that everyone is expected to follow. "The teacher's ability to act on those rules will determine whether or not the rules make a difference."³ Most teachers will need to have a direct discussion with students of the behavioural expectations. This, in combination with the way the teacher responds to a student's failure to comply with behavioural expectations, will set the tone for the year. Some considerations for a class discussion of the code of behaviour are:

1. Aim for five rules or less.
2. Establish a rationale for each rule.
3. Explain ambiguous terms. For example, explain what "Use your inside voice" means.
4. Ensure that roles and responsibilities are learned.
5. State the rules in positive terms. For example, "Treat each other with respect." Rather than, "Don't put each other down."

www.2learn.ca/projects/together/keywords/balancea.html

Collaborative Learning

"A classroom community enables teachers to address children's basic needs, promote their resilience to hardship conditions, teach the values of respect and responsibility, and foster their social and academic competence."⁴

"The challenge in setting up every classroom is to make everything in the space promote the behaviours and learning outcomes which are desired."⁵

"Effective teachers know that what they do during the first two weeks of the school year sets the vision for the rest of the year. Once that two-week window closes it becomes increasingly difficult to alter the norms that are being established."⁶

Shared Ownership

A classroom is a shared environment. Students, teachers, and educational assistants share a common workplace for five or six hours a day. Therefore, everyone is responsible for ensuring that that workplace is one in which everyone contributes to its vitality and success.

As we get older, more and more responsibility is placed on us. Even at an early age, we had some responsibilities: feeding the dog, cleaning our rooms, and helping with the dishes. Responsibility-taking is a learned process. Therefore, we should be teaching students to take responsibility for their own schooling so that they can be competent, independent decision-makers. Teaching students to be life-long learners and to take responsibility for their own learning is essential in today's society. Our children are our future. We want to equip them with the skills that they will need to function in their working adult lives.

One way to achieve this is through **facilitative leadership** (Freiberg). Facilitative leadership promotes shared decisions. A facilitative teacher involves others, students, parents, colleagues, and the community, in the learning process. Freiberg believes that students process learning faster and at a deeper level if they have made choices. They become more competent directors of their future learning if they have had some responsibility in choosing some aspects of their learning. For example, students should be involved in establishing a code of behaviour for the classroom. In addition, they should have input as to the consequences of failing to abide by the code of behaviour. Internalizing the rules through a democratic process of creating them helps to ensure that students see the inherent value in having a set of standards in the first place.

Both students and teachers must take ownership of the learning that takes place in the classroom. For example, many teachers assign jobs to individual students on a rotational, weekly basis. By having the students take responsibility for the care and cleanliness of the environment ensures that they will treat it with respect. Students are experts at ensuring that other students do the same. It involves the students in the daily activities of the classroom routine – not to mention that it saves the teacher a tremendous amount of work. Older students can take responsibility for creating and putting up bulletin boards, taking attendance, handling milk money, designing a class or school newsletter, and for tracking intra-murals sports results. Younger

[www.cssb.ab.ca/
tech/otn/learn/
collaborative.html](http://www.cssb.ab.ca/tech/otn/learn/collaborative.html)

Collaborative
Learning and
Cooperative
Learning Strategies

students can take some responsibility for cleaning chalk brushes, distributing workbooks, dusting low shelves, and taking notes to the office. Most students are eager to help. Others must be encouraged to do so. In the end, everyone benefits – the teacher is relieved of some of the duties and the students learn valuable organization skills and responsibility-taking that they will need to function as an adult in society.

Role of the Teacher

In education, all of the stakeholders share the same goals: to help children become life-long learners and socially competent members of their community.

In the end, the mind of the teacher is the most powerful influence in any classroom. What she knows and believes about children will create the atmosphere affecting their learning. What she does in every single situation originates in what she thinks.¹³

Alice Yardley

Teachers and students have complementary responsibilities. Teachers are responsible for developing a range of instructional strategies based on sound learning theory. They need to address different student needs and bring enthusiasm and a variety of teaching approaches to the classroom. Good teachers know that they must persevere and make every reasonable attempt to ensure sound learning for every student.

The teacher's role is to foster a love of learning in her students. In order to love learning, students need to be motivated to learn by an effective teacher. An effective teacher is interested in kids, knows learners as people rather than students, helps learners come to own their knowledge, cultivates humour and spontaneity, explains why you do things and shows the logic, encourages questions, and tests the work of the classroom against work in the world outside.⁷ To be an effective educator:

1. Know as much as you can about your students.
2. Know about assessment and evaluation.
3. Know about the subjects you are teaching.
4. Know about the Catholic Graduate Expectations.
5. Know about the Ontario curricula.

www.catholiceducation.org

Catholic Educator's
Resource Centre—
Lesson Plans

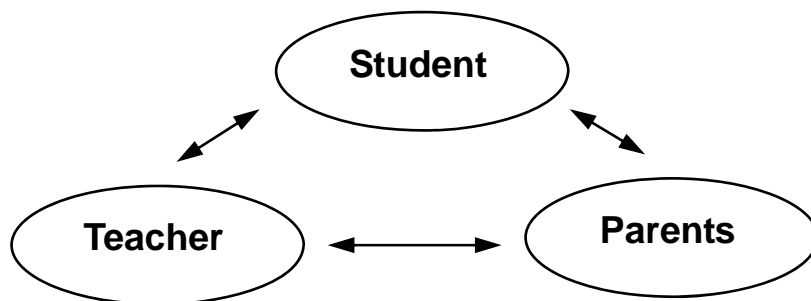
www.catholicteacher.com

A parent-child-teacher relationship is integral to the education of students. Open communication between the parent and teacher fosters a solid, consistent parents of students a teacher must understand the parents' past experiences with the school system. If they have not had a positive experience, they may feel left out of their child's education and distrustful of the teachers.

"...parents are your friends. Show your interest in a child and parents are on your side. Be casual, off-handed, be cold toward the child and parents can never work closely with you...To touch the child is to touch the parent. To praise the child is to praise the parent. To criticize the child is to hit at the parent. The two are two, but the two are one."⁸

Parents look to teachers for ways in which they can help their child succeed in school. They ask for ideas for helping their child improve his or her reading skills, math skills, and social skills. They ask for help in choosing an appropriate novel for their child. Parents seek reassurance that they are 'doing the right thing' when helping their child with schoolwork. As educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that parents feel that their efforts are appreciated, valued, and respected. This makes it more likely that parents will continue to support their child's progress in school and keep the lines of communication open.

Administrators play a vital role in establishing and supporting positive school-home relationships. "By creating a school atmosphere that welcomes parents and all family members, and by recognizing the importance of effective relationships with parents, administrators enable staff to feel positive and enthusiastic about involving parents."⁹



www.cssb.ab.ca/tech/otn/learn/teacherrole.html

How the Teacher Role is Changing

1. The Changing Role of the Student
2. The Changing Role of the Teacher

"Teachers and schools that view families as partners in the educational process become better schools."¹⁰

Role of the Parent and Family

Studies show that students perform better in school if their parents are involved in their education. Parents therefore have an important role to play in supporting their child's learning. By reading the curriculum, parents can see what their children are learning in each grade and why they are learning it. This awareness will enable parents to communicate with teachers, to offer useful information, and to ask relevant questions about their child's progress.

The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Language. Ministry of Education, 1997



“Learning is most successful when students, parents/guardians, and teachers communicate and work together.”¹¹ Children bring their families to school through the stories they tell. They want to tell you about themselves and their family experiences. “Families are already part of your classroom community. Children do not enter into your classroom alone; they bring their families with them.”¹²

Parents can become involved in many aspects of their child's education. As a teacher, you can involve parents by encouraging them to: accompany the class on field trips, become involved in school council, assist small group reading, develop with students a class newsletter, co-teach computers, put on a Physical Education clinic in basketball, head-up the baking of birthday cakes for student birthdays, maintain the class book order club, participate in parent conferences, attend information sessions, and speak to the class as a guest speaker (e.g., fire fighter, police officer, or dietitian).

As teachers we must remember that every parent wants his or her child to succeed. It is our job to help parents become vital contributors to their child's success.

Role of the Student

Studies show that home factors and family experiences continue to exert a powerful influence on children's success in school. Children spend more of their time learning outside of school. Therefore, learning to take responsibility for one's progress and learning, especially outside of the school walls, is an important part of education for every student.

Students also have responsibilities, which increase as they advance through elementary and secondary school. Good students have learned that attention and a willingness to work hard will enable them to develop the skills, knowledge, creativity, and personal qualities that good programs can foster. Some young people face extra challenges and may be growing up in environments that provide little or no support. For these students, taking responsibility for learning may be more difficult, and the patience and encouragement of sensitive teachers may be an extremely important factor for success. Nonetheless, learning to take responsibility for one's progress and learning is an important part of education for every student.

Communicating with Parents and Students

Parents

Keeping open communication lines between families and school is essential to any home-school relationship. "Many factors influence the effectiveness of communication: language, literacy levels, listening skills, voice tone, cultural expectations, values, and beliefs, and body language."²¹ There are many ways to communicate with parents including newsletters, checklists, notes, telephone calls, e-mail, student agenda books, correspondence books/logs for some students, workshops (after-school), and interviews. Any written form of communication should be followed by personal contact to ensure that the parent(s) have understood the message and to give them the opportunity to ask questions.

See Figure 1.2—Sample Letter to Parents

Establishing a trusting, respectful relationship with parents through open communication takes time. Body language and tone of voice conveys more information to a person than do the words spoken. Often, misunderstandings occur when the words spoken do not match the body language and tone of voice of the speaker.

- When communicating with a parent, look directly at him or her, smile, and use appropriate body language to show that you are interested in the conversation.
- Try to understand the parent's point of view. Listen carefully.
- Speak clearly avoiding educational language that a parent may not understand.



- Respect cultural differences between yourself and the parents. You may not agree with their views but do not judge them.
- At the end of an interview, say something positive about the child. Parents will leave on a positive note.

When sending home written notes, be sure that the vocabulary that you use is easily understood. Literacy organizations recommend the following¹⁴

- Use short, easy, familiar words.
- Avoid long introductions – get to the point.
- Keep sentences short (no more than 20 words) and try to avoid words with multi-syllables.
- Write in logical order (who, what, where, when, why, and how).
- Be direct – use “you” instead of “parents”.
- Use the active voice – “Please join us” rather than “Your participation is encouraged.”
- Avoid jargon or abbreviations that parents might not know.
- Use pictures and headings to break up text.
- Have written communication translated for families who do not speak English.

Students

Teachers should communicate with every student every day. With some students demanding so much of our energy and time, it is easy to overlook the shy, quiet students. These students need as much of our undivided attention as any other student.

As educators we “have a responsibility to inform students about the significance of assessment in the teaching/learning cycle and their role in this process.”¹⁵ This enables students to see the connections between the expectations, learning activities, and the assessment process. In knowing what will be assessed prior to beginning a learning task, students can set personal targets for achieving a certain level of performance. They can assess their own work based on the same criteria as the teacher.

Students should be made aware of the expectations that they will be addressing prior to a unit of study or lesson. Teachers must communicate to them what they must do to achieve a Level 3 Provincial Standard. Teachers may show previous student work samples or other visuals as references for the students. This

information is not inherent in the teaching of the unit – students must be told in advance.

Communication throughout a unit enables students to monitor and adjust their performance to meet their goals. Regular feedback in the form of notes, discussions, journals, and rubrics enables students to find areas for improvement. Teachers can also offer suggestions as to what the student must demonstrate to achieve at a higher level.

Conferencing with individual students, while time-consuming, can provide valuable information for both the student and the teacher. This one-on-one interaction allows for more in-depth analysis of a student's thought processes which enables both parties to find the best strategy for performance improvement. Journals are another more private form of communication between students and teachers.

Communication is the key. Students need to know where they are going, and what they need to get there so that they will know when they have arrived.

Figure 1.1

Working From Catholic Graduate Expectations: Action Template

Description of Activity	Expected Result
Facilitator/Leader	Audience/Context
Stage	Details and Special Considerations
Awareness	
Illumination	
Design	
Articulation	
Integration	
Documentation	
Celebration	
Effectiveness	Follow up

November 15, 2001

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones:

In mathematics, our Grade 1 class is learning about the passage of time and how to tell time using an analog clock. Joshua seems to enjoy the unit activities and can tell time accurately to the hour.

Joshua is having some difficulty telling time to the half hour and writing time. I would like to schedule a short meeting for us to discuss strategies to help Joshua learn and master these concepts.

Please choose two dates and times that are suitable for you and I will call you to confirm the date and time. I am available to meet from 8:00 a.m. – 8:55 a.m., 11:00 a.m. – 11:35 a.m., and 3:25 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. If these times are not convenient, we can schedule a later or earlier meeting.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. L. Smith

Please cut and return the bottom portion to Mrs. Smith as soon as possible.

I prefer to meet to discuss Joshua's math progress:

	Date	Time
Choice 1	_____	_____
Choice 2	_____	_____

Parent's Signature _____