

Article Review: “9 Ways To Have More Authority Next School Year”

Source: <https://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2017/07/22/9-ways-to-have-more-authority-next-school-year/>, accessed 2 Apr 2018

Review

Article outline:

1. Authority is important in the classroom because
 - a. it affects how students view you
 - b. it affects how students behave around you
2. The nine traits of authority
 - a. Dress neatly
 - i. Not necessarily expensively
 - ii. General neatness and appearance of quality
 - iii. Helps students perceive you as a leader
 - iv. Makes you feel better, too
 - b. Stand tall
 - i. Project confidence
 - ii. Allows students to trust your leadership
 - iii. Simply changing your posture can help
 - c. Follow through
 - i. Do what you say you will do
 - ii. Avoid being wishy-washy
 - d. Honor the truth
 - i. Avoid over-the-top flattery
 - ii. Steer clear of manipulation, reward systems, “catching students doing good”
 - iii. Base your words of praise on true accomplishments and be genuine
 - iv. Tell them the truth
 - v. Be direct. It gives you dignity and morality
 - e. Be pleasant. Avoid intimidation
 - f. Be calm and prepared. Avoid projecting nervous energy.
 - g. Improve your speaking.
 - i. Avoid filling in silences with “hms” and “ers”
 - ii. Avoid overcommunicating, with extra details and unhelpful words
 - iii. Slow down, pause, finish your sentences, stay on target
 - h. Be physically prepared
 - i. Be at your best each day, stay focused, learn to say “no”
 - ii. Be productive, not just busy
 - iii. Get enough rest, exercise, and eat right
 - iv. Enjoy time away from school; engage in hobbies
 - i. Choose to see only the best
 - i. Avoid negative self-talk
 - ii. Look for the best in people, situations, problems

3. You choose how you present yourself to your class
4. These traits are available to all who wish to adopt them

I agree that all these traits are important. Any time you can project confidence to others, they will respond well to it. Sometimes you get a person who wants to challenge your confident leadership. If they are right and you shouldn't be leader, you can confidently and with dignity step aside. If they are incorrect, you can confidently assert your leadership, and they typically back down.

A number of articles have pointed out the value of being honest and real in your praise and other communications. You want to praise the behaviors and accomplishments, not the person, by describing what it is that was done right or done well. Similarly, when addressing problems, describe what is wrong and how to fix it or improve. This way no one has to spend any mental time trying to figure out what you want or if you are actually communicating some other message.

Being calm is important as well as being able to project excitement (versus nervous energy). The key is knowing when to project it, and to not over-do it. Too much excitement, too often, will burn the class out.

Basically, this article is saying to treat yourself well physically, mentally, and emotionally, and that will allow you to do the same for your students. That will all work together to allow you to lead your students confidently and let them place their trust in you.

Article Text in Full

9 Ways To Have More Authority Next School Year

by Michael Linsin on July 22, 2017

Authority plays an important role in effective classroom management.

Because it affects how students view you.

It affects how well they listen to you and follow your directions.

It affects their behavior around you, their trust in you, and their respect for you.

Some teachers seem to have it right out of the box.

They walk into a room and students immediately sense a strong, sure leadership presence.

And it changes them.

They become calmer, more mature, and more polite. It imbues them with a desire to please and behave and be better students and people.

Although, at first glance, authority appears to be an inborn gift reserved for a lucky few, there is really no mystery at all.

Anyone can have more of it by emulating the following nine traits.

1. Dress neatly.

Teachers are dressing more casually now than ever before. You'll do well to buck the trend—because it has an effect on whether students perceive you as a leader worth following.

This doesn't mean that you must dress formally or wear expensive clothes. General neatness in appearance and quality of clothing is key.

Dress like the leader you are and your students will treat you with greater respect. Sharp clothing will also make you feel more confident, which will further improve your authority.

2. Stand tall.

Confidence in the way you carry yourself sends the message to students that you know what's best for them and that you're steering them in the right direction.

This frees them to let their guard down, accept your words as true, and place their trust in you.

So stand tall. Throw your shoulders back. Move, behave, and express yourself as if you know exactly what you're doing. If you're not *feeling* confident, that's okay.

The appearance of confidence can have the same effect. According to research, simply changing your posture can make you feel more powerful and thus behave more confidently.

3. Follow through.

This one is huge. Do what you say you're going to do and over time your authority will skyrocket.

Be wishy-washy, however, break your promises and ignore your classroom management plan, and you'll lose authority quickly. Everything you say will be called into question.

Your students will challenge you, argue with you, or pay you little mind. Some may even try to wrest control of the classroom right out of your hands.

4. Honor the truth.

Be upfront and honest in all your dealings with students. Refuse to engage in over-the-top flattery or manipulation.

Steer clear of do-this and get-that rewards, catching students doing good, or token economies—which effectively snuff out intrinsic motivation.

Make your words of praise genuine and based on true accomplishment. Tell your students the truth about where they are both behaviorally and academically.

A direct approach is highly motivational. It will give you strong authority as well as a dignity and morality that is common to all great leaders.

5. Be Pleasant.

The use of intimidation in any form is terrible leadership.

Lecturing, glaring, scolding, and losing your cool may frighten students into behaving in the short term, but the price is your respect, plummeting authority, and more and more misbehavior.

Being consistently pleasant, on the other hand, will give you effortless rapport, powerful leverage, and behavior-changing influence.

It will cause students to love you and want to get to know you better, without any additional effort from you. It will make your classroom management plan *matter* to them and work like it should.

6. Be calm.

Teachers who rush around, who are frazzled, scatter-brained, and tense, will never have the same level of authority as those who are calm and prepared.

It's not even close.

Nervous energy has a way of spreading throughout the classroom, infecting every inch. It causes excitability, inattentiveness, and a form of misbehavior that is very difficult to eliminate.

It also makes you look like you don't know what you're doing.

7. Improve your speaking.

Teachers who struggle to gain authority tend to talk fast and ramble on and on. They repeat themselves and fill silences with ums and ers. They include details and asides that neither help nor advance learning.

They *over* communicate.

To improve your authority, as well as learning and interest, slow down. Be concise and stay on message. Finish your sentences and pause often to give your class a chance to comprehend what you say.

This will cause students to lean in and focus. It will draw them *to* you rather than push them away.

8. Be physically prepared.

You can't be an effective teacher, or one your students look up to, if you're stressed out, tired, and irritable. Good teaching requires you to be at your best every day of the week.

Which means you must become efficient with lesson planning. You must stay focused during work hours and learn to say no. You must be productive rather than just busy.

Go home at a decent hour and get away from even thinking about school for a few hours.

Get your rest, exercise for energy, and sit down to eat real, whole food. Spend time with your family and friends or enjoy your favorite hobby.

This will not only improve your authority and likeability, but it will also make you a calmer, happier teacher.

9. Choose to see only the best.

Negative thoughts—about students, your job, the curriculum, etc.—have a way of bubbling to the surface and revealing themselves in your behavior, body language, facial expressions, and even in the things that you say.

It's something you can't hide. And it will severely damage your ability to be an effective teacher.

Great teaching and inspired leadership is predicated on setting aside negative self-talk, refusing to engage in it and choosing instead to see only the best in the people, situations, and circumstances at hand.

It's a choice, after all. It's a choice that has a profound effect on how your students view you—as well as on your very happiness.

Do You Have It?

The nine ways to improve authority will separate you from the pack.

They'll cause students to decide within just a few minutes of sizing you up that you're someone worth their attention and respect.

They may not be able to put their finger on what it is about you that is special. But they'll know it's there, and that it's different and powerful.

You just have it.

You have that secret sauce, that inexplicable mystery of presence and authority that causes parents and staff members alike to whisper words like charismatic, gifted, and “a natural” when describing you.

But the truth is, it's nothing more than a set of traits available to anyone.

They're available to anyone willing to adopt them for themselves and dare to be more than just another teacher.