



Read how to implement Kounin’s six behaviors of good classroom managers.

Research on classroom management began with **Jacob Kounin’s** 1970 study, in which he observed 49 first- and second-grade classrooms. Each class was videotaped for a full day and the behavior of selected students was coded for work involvement (called “engagement” today) every 12 seconds. From his research, Kounin summarized that **good classroom management is based on the behavior of teachers, not the behavior of students.**<sup>1</sup>

<b>Teacher Behaviors that Produced Student Learning</b>	
<b>With-it-ness</b>	<b>Group Alerting</b>
<b>Overlapping</b>	<b>Accountability</b>
<b>Smoothness and Momentum</b>	<b>Seatwork Variety and Challenge</b>

**With-it-ness**

Effective teachers have a gift called “with-it-ness.” The “with-it” teacher knows what is going on at all times in the classroom. Importantly, Kounin found it is not necessary for the teacher to actually know what is going on, but merely for students to perceive that the teacher knows what is going on.

**Overlapping**

These teachers can multitask several activities smoothly without being sidetracked from, or preoccupied with, one activity or student. These teachers help a student or a group of students, while staying alert for possible disturbances and tending to special needs for certain students when necessary. Students are more likely to stay on task if they perceive that the teacher is aware of what they are doing and can help them when needed.

**Smoothness and Momentum**

These teachers move through a lesson smoothly without being diverted or interrupting student seatwork. There is steady pacing, a smooth flow and momentum to the lesson so that learning moves forward. Effective teachers have the ability to scan the room and give directions, encouragement and correction to keep the learning environment humming.

**Group Alerting**

These teachers keep students alert and attentive. Effective teachers do this by choosing students to recite material, creating suspense in lessons, using chorus responses, and signaling to students that they may be called upon to respond.

**Accountability**

These teachers continually monitor student performance during a lesson and require students to show work and recite material individually or as a group. These teachers call for hands to show readiness to perform. They also use a rubric to assess and show student progress in a lesson.

**Seatwork Variety and Challenge**

These teachers have plans or procedures that are necessary to create high levels of student involvement so teaching and learning can take place. They provide varied and frequent shifts in activities to prevent boredom and to challenge students to work at a higher intellectual level. There are procedures in place that govern how things are to be accomplished so that teaching and learning can occur.



(continued)

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Kounin's research can be implemented with many of the procedures taught in ***THE Classroom Management Book*** or with the information found in ***THE First Days of School***:

- Have an agenda to schedule the day or class periods so you can track class work. Knowing how the classroom is organized for learning tells everyone you are “with-it” (Procedure 2).
- Keep your back to the wall. Constantly and systematically scan the classroom to keep your class on task (Procedure 21).
- Intervene quickly if you see a student off task, before it escalates into misbehavior. Remind and encourage the student to return to the task. A smile and a gentle point to the agenda may be all that is needed. This tells them you are “with-it”—on top of things (Procedure 21).
- When there are competing demands, have a procedure to keep a student on task until you finish with another student (Procedure 22).
- Use procedures and routines, specific directions and smooth transitions to keep students on task (Procedure 20).
- Keep students involved with activities that flow smoothly and gain momentum (Unit D in ***THE First Days of School***).
- Reduce monotony or boredom by changing or adding variety to lessons, using chorus responses, offering motivational challenges, and informing students of their progress (Procedure 27 and Unit D in ***THE First Days of School***).

<sup>1</sup>Kounin, Jacob S. (1970). *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms*. New York: Holt, Reinhardt and Winston.