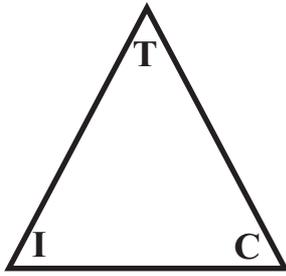


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INTRODUCTION

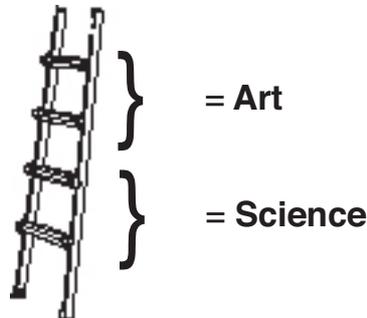
THE TRIANGLE OF THE CLASSROOM

The teacher is invited to switch from managing with power to being empowered to manage with influence.

The Art & Science of Managing

While *teaching* is often described as the “*Art and Science of Teaching*,” or in the case of ENVoY trilogy¹ the “*Art and Science of Management*,” in reality they are learned in the reverse sequence. The competencies of the science have to be consistently present before the art is broached. Just like wisdom is not the same as knowledge but is based on knowledge, so too, the art of managing has as its foundation the science of managing— but the art is not the same as the science.

There are four stages to a teacher’s professional development. The first two stages are the science and the other two are the art.



Science

The first stage of an educator’s career is focused on knowing the content. This is the *curriculum* tube of the educational binoculars.² This stage of the person’s development takes two to four years to master. Initially, the teacher is just learning the words to the content, then the teacher increases her repertoire of how to deliver the content. It is only after teaching the same content for this length of time that the teacher recognizes where the students have difficulty and how to present such concepts in a

To be respectful of gender equality and yet provide the educator with a fluid reading style, in this chapter the teacher is referred to by the female pronoun and the student by the male pronoun.

meaningful manner. This includes, but is not limited to, packaging the components of concepts in palatable sizes and in a sequence that is comprehensible. This is especially true for the special needs students. Most teachers have to concentrate on how to create the presentation for the class as a whole before addressing how to individualize instruction for these pupils.

It is a terrible hardship on teachers, both novice and veterans alike, that the scope and sequence of each curriculum subject (e.g., math, English) seem constantly in flux. Instructors have tremendous stress because the winds of curriculum are continuously changing. Unless the curriculum can be stabilized, educators can't practice the same content for three years and thus master delivering it.

Curriculum

The second stage of the teacher's development is the process of managing. This level of professional development consists mostly of skills and strategies—commonly referred to as competencies.³ To successfully operate on *A Healthy Classroom's* level of classroom dynamics, the teacher must have certain competencies. Veteran teachers who systematically employ non-verbal strategies might have all or some of these competencies.⁴

The question is, “What are the prerequisite competencies for a teacher to be an effective manager while preserving relationships with the students?” By answering this question, we identify the *science* of managing so we can mentor ourselves and others towards the *art* of managing. The answer has four components.

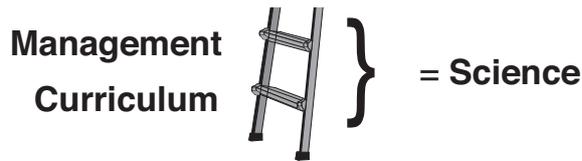
R—the teacher has established *relationships* with the class as a whole⁵ and especially the hard-to-reach students.

S—the teacher individualizes instruction so that the students, especially the inclusion students, are academically *successful*.

V—the teacher *visually* communicates.

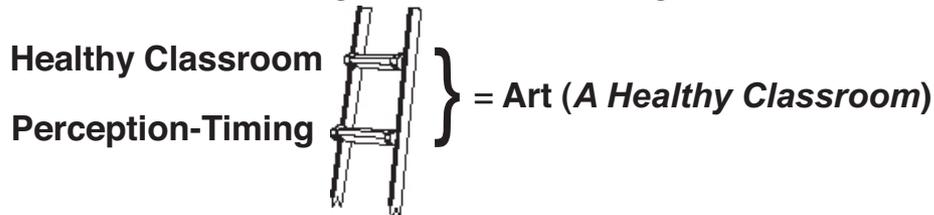
P—the teacher *pauses*.⁶

The first letter of the italicized words spell out the acronym RSVP. You are invited to A Healthy Classroom, and our four prerequisites competencies are your RSVP. Being group-oriented doesn't necessarily mean that the group takes precedence over the individual student; rather, it means that the needs of the group are held in paramount importance except during seatwork.



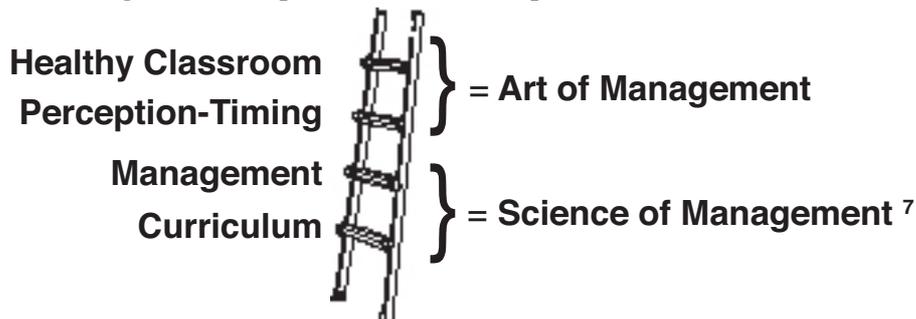
Art

The final two stages of our craft are *Perception-Timing* and *Healthy Classrooms*. The artisan of management has these two stages mastered.

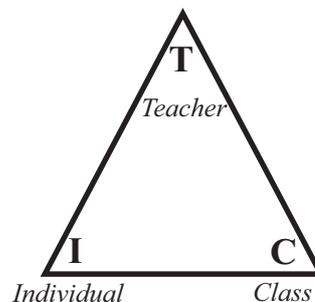


The *art* of management can't be understood on the strategy/maneuvers/intervention level alone. The *art* of management is the timing of employing these competencies with consideration to group dynamics. The printed word is not the appropriate vehicle for the teaching of perception-timing. Watching an artisan of classroom management on video, especially fast forward and frame-by-frame speed, allows the viewer to recognize the timing of the artisan. Once a teacher is trained in observing reality in "distorted" time, *A Healthy Classroom* provides the framework for viewing the classroom in real time. So while it would be easy to conclude that the benefit of practicing *A Healthy Classroom's* concepts is the entrance to the *art* of managing, actually, *A Healthy Classroom* presents the cognitive tenets of the *art*. This work provides the framework of managing classroom dynamics.

The four stages to one's professional development are:



In *A Healthy Classroom* we define classroom dynamics as the interaction between the teacher, the individual students and the class as a whole. Respectively, they are referred to as the teacher (T), individual (I) and the class (C). The interplay among these parties can be represented by a triangle.



perfunctorily polite to every instructor, the faculty was concerned that no teachers were making emotional progress with the class. They decided to hire a long-term substitute teacher—same results. The class had become a fully functioning emotional unit; they had no need for an adult.

6. Is there a unisance of response?



No

Initially: When the class is asked to do something, the response is staggered. If they are to turn to page 25, students begin to open their books at different times, frequently in waves. When the class comes in from lunch, how many waves are there? Sometimes the lack of unisance of response stems from good intentions.

For example, it is common in the classes below fifth grade for the smarter students to want to answer quickly—thus creating a division in the group during oral recitation. A class that is not formed as a unit is more likely not to respond in unisance.

Eventually: The unisance of response is the single clearest indicator that a class is a group. This includes laughing, moving into small group activities, quieting, coming back from breaks on time. From a group dynamic standpoint, it is more important that the group does what they do in unison as compared to doing what the teacher desires. For example, if the class comes back from lunch two minutes late, that is more important than having half of the pupils on time and the other half two minutes late. The unisance of response will vary based on the specific age and culture of the students. Teachers in the primary grades often have high auditory and kinesthetic techniques to create the unisance, such as clapping and singing with gestures. (I have a friend who claims that the adult equivalent is group aerobics at a gym; even joggers find the time passes quickly when they are occupied either by a companion or Walkman™. We unconsciously jog to the beat of the music.)⁴



Yes

The unisance of response is the single clearest indicator that a class is a group.

In the preceding section on Indicators, the two essential questions that need addressing to understand class dynamics were: Where is the class looking? and, Is there a unisance of response?

Breathing

As pupils become more comfortable with themselves, they breathe better, as evidenced by an increase in fluidity of movement, finding words and stillness. While difficult to detect, very formed classes actually breathe in unison.