

Book Reviews

Models of Classroom Management: Principles, Practices, and Critical Considerations

J. Martin, J. Sugarman and J. McNamara. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2000, 260 pp., ISBN 1-55059-177-0

Classroom management is an obvious concern of both beginning and experienced teachers. It is an area that is difficult to teach because it is both context- and experience-driven. *Models of Classroom Management* provides an overview of both theoretical models and classroom research, with suggestions as to how these findings might be implemented in managing students.

The book begins with a general discussion of the importance of classroom management and the inescapable interplay between theory, research and practice. Following the first chapter are eight others that present different approaches to classroom management, based on these fascinating inter-relationships. Key foci of the chapters are: the importance of communication strategies for effective relationships and management; setting up democratic classrooms; effective teaching methods associated with effective management; the modification of inappropriate student behaviours; cognitive strategies for students to encourage problem-solving and self management; three approaches for setting up positive environments for a school system and finally, a range of socio-cultural approaches to allow for productive teacher-student interactions. The book follows a pattern in presenting an overview of the model, followed by theoretical principles that relate it to classroom management, then suggestions for how the model might be implemented, and finally an editorial-style critique of some of the weak points.

This book is well written, and provides substantive background for teachers, counsellors, and administrators on management strategies. Given the depth of the analysis, it is reasonably easy to read although it has an 'academic' feel to it. For example, one 25-page chapter has 67 references. The use of a recurring pattern of analysis is a positive feature because it requires focus and concentration to link the concepts within chapters. The key points in the analysis of theory appear to be very credible. The first chapter on the context for management issues and models, and the last on how one might develop one's own management system, were likely intended to provide the 'glue' that binds together the other chapters that deal with specific models. Each of the other chapters can sit on its own as a topic for study. However, the issue of how the various models might be linked together conceptually and practically may still be problematic for some readers. In short, the discussion of so many ideas and possibilities may create information overload for some readers.

The task of connecting research and practice is not an easy one. Some strengths of the book include its succinct summaries of theory, its substantiation

of key points with research, and the establishment of connections to real-world situations. In the end, the book seems to address the reality of the challenges that educators face in working with students. A very positive feature of the synthesis is the critical, thought-provoking analysis of each model. The suggested questions for further exploration are also commendable.

In concluding the book, the authors provide an insightful message for educators using any management book as a reference. In their view, “a book of this kind [management] does not guarantee that readers will acquire the actual teaching skills and attitudes necessary to enact effective classroom discipline and management programs in real life instructional environments” (p. 259). For such a book to be beneficial, there needs to be a context of reflective experiences in which to practice the strategies. They also emphasize the fact that a good classroom teacher must of necessity, be a good classroom manager.

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