

## Chapter 13: Classroom Organization and Management

Orderly, efficient classroom organization is an important component of effective reading instruction. Many teachers are moving toward an integrated language arts curriculum, which allows children to understand the relationships among reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing, as they use these skills in meaningful situations. Teachers, with student input, select worthy themes as the focus of an integrated curriculum, and they use large blocks of time to schedule language arts and content-area activities. Whole language classrooms usually follow the integrated curriculum model.

Several other possibilities exist for organizing a classroom, including different ways of grouping children. Cooperative learning is an organizational plan that allows children to work with partners and in small groups to meet academic goals. Types of reading-related groups include literature circles, achievement groups, interest groups, project or research groups, friendship groups, special skills or needs groups, and pupil pairs or partners. Teachers create most of these arrangements for a limited time and a specific purpose. Students also benefit from individualized and whole-class instruction.

The classroom's physical environment is an important factor in determining how well children learn. Some teachers use learning centers, classroom libraries, and computers in the instructional program. The classroom's social-emotional environment is also important. Teachers should establish a community of learners within a learning-centered classroom and develop motivated readers.

The teacher is the key figure in the classroom and makes countless decisions daily that affect student learning. In some cases, the teacher assumes the role of researcher by making systematic observations and records of student behaviors. The teacher is also a learner, always alert to information supplied by research and theory, professional interactions, and the children themselves.

Teachers should communicate with parents frequently in a variety of ways, including conferences, report cards, meetings, and publications. Teachers can offer suggestions to parents to help them create supportive reading environments in the home.

Teachers can benefit from the assistance of both paraprofessionals and tutors in the classroom. Paraprofessionals can provide a variety of reading-related services, including listening to children read, grading papers, preparing instructional materials, and assisting children in locating and using reference materials. Peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring are also effective for helping children learn to read.