

**Excerpt From *Classroom Management That Works: Research-Based Strategies For Every Teacher* (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering)**

Teachers play various roles in a typical classroom, but surely one of the most important is that of classroom manager. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom. If students are disorderly and disrespectful, and no apparent rules and procedures guide behavior, chaos becomes the norm. In these situations, both teachers and students suffer. Teachers struggle to teach, and students mostly likely learn much less than they should. In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. But a well-managed classroom doesn't just appear out of nowhere. It takes a good deal of effort to create—and the person who is most responsible for creating it is the teacher.

We live in an era when research tells us that the teacher is probably the single most important factor affecting student achievement—at least the single most important factor that we can do much about. To illustrate, as a result of their study involving some 60,000 students, S. Paul Wright, Sandra Horn, and William Sanders (1997) not the following:

The results of this study will document that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. In addition, the results show wide variation in effectiveness among teachers. The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. *Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels regardless of the levels of heterogeneity in their classes.* If the teacher is ineffective, students under that teacher's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically, regardless of how similar or different they are regarding their academic achievement.

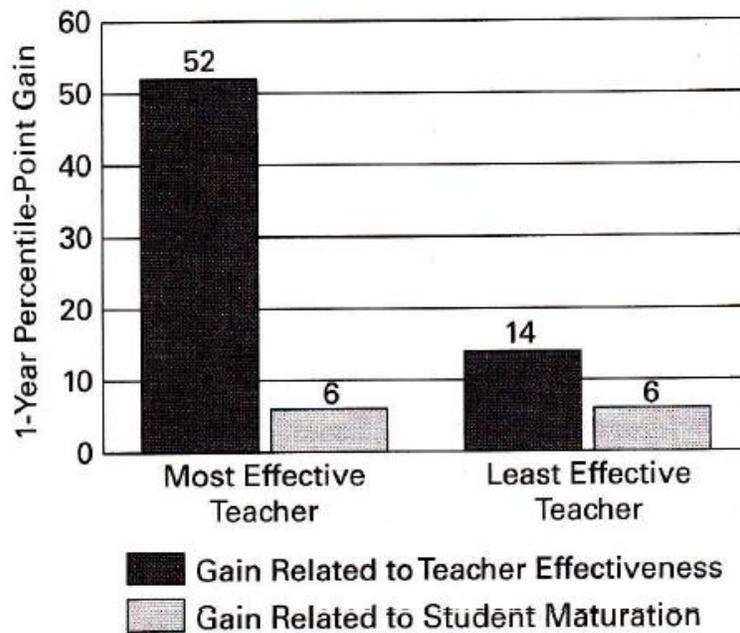
Researcher Kati Haycock (1998) uses the findings of this study and others conducted by William Sanders and his colleagues (e.g., Sanders & Horn, 1994) to paint a dramatic picture of the profound impact an individual teacher can have on student achievement. The point is illustrated in Figure 1.1, which depicts the differences in achievement between students who spend a year in class with a highly effective teacher as opposed to a highly ineffective teacher.

According to Figure 1.1, students in the classes of teachers classified as the most effective can be expected to gain about 52 percentile points in their achievement over a year's time. Students in the classes of teachers classified as least effective can be expected to gain only about 14 percentile points over a year's time. This comparison is even more dramatic when one realizes that some researchers have estimated that students will exhibit a gain in learning of about 6 percentile points simply from maturation—from growing one year older and gleaning new knowledge and information through everyday life (Hattie, 1992, Cahen & Davis, 1987). The least effective teachers, then, add little to the development of students' knowledge and skill beyond what would be expected from simply growing one year older in our complex, information-rich society.

To understand the impact that a teacher can make, let's consider each of the five scenarios in Figure 1.2. As depicted in Figure 1.2, if a student begins at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in mathematics, let's say, and attends an average school and has an average teacher, her achievement will still be at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile at the end of about two years. The student has learned enough to keep pace with her peers. But what happens to that student if she attends a school that is considered one of the least effective and is unfortunate enough to have a teacher who is classified as one of the least effective? After two years she has dropped from the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile. She may have learned something about mathematics, but that learning is so sporadic and unorganized that she has lost considerable ground in a short time. In the third scenario, the same student is in a school classified as most effective, but she has a teacher classified as least effective. Although the student entered the class at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, two years later she leaves the class at the 37<sup>th</sup> percentile. In contrast to the two previous scenarios, the fourth presents a very optimistic picture. The student is not only in a school classified as most effective, but also is in the class of a teacher classified as most effective. She enters the class at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, but she leaves at the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile. The fifth scenario most dramatically depicts the impact of an individual teacher. Again, the student is in a school that is considered least effective, but she is with a teacher classified as most effective. The student now leaves the class at the 63<sup>rd</sup> percentile—13 percentile points higher than the point at which she entered. It is this last scenario that truly depicts the importance of individual teachers. Even if the school they work in is highly ineffective, individual teachers can produce powerful gains in student learning.

**Figure 1.1**

Impact of Teacher Effectiveness on Student Achievement



**Figure 1.2**

Effects of a School vs. a Teacher on Student Entering at 50th Percentile

