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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Keep CALM and Teach* by Victoria Lentfer. In this complimentary activity from the book, teachers can engage in the first step toward having a CALM classroom: visualizing their ideal classroom.

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## ACTIVITY #1

### Visualize and describe your ideal classroom

Prior to school beginning, take a moment to visualize the ideal classroom and make it as perfect as possible. Note every detail in order to create a classroom that will promote a safe, productive learning environment. Visualize different situations that may occur in the classroom and how you would react if they do. What does your classroom look like during the first month? What does it look like halfway through the year? Fast-forward and envision how your classroom will look at the end of the year.

Why is this important? You have to begin with a vision before you are able to execute the plan. Visualize the outcome, create goals, execute a plan, and expect amazing results. It will provide the pathway. This is the first step in having a CALM Classroom.

*I thought at first this was crazy to visualize what my ideal classroom would look like. Dr. Lentfer even had us visualize what it would sound and smell like. I thought that this would never work. She continued to refer to this activity as we were developing our classroom management plan. I didn't think any of these things mattered. But when I got into the classroom, I realized these key details made a difference in the organization and student behavior. I have since continued to visualize. In fact, it has helped me to gain confidence as a teacher because I will visualize what and how I teach on a daily basis.*

Marisol Fernandez,  
science, Grades 7–12

Let's begin the CALM Management process. Write down everything you envisioned, and be as detailed as possible. Here are some ideas to consider while visualizing:

Culture	<p>What is the feel of the classroom? —warm, inviting, inclusive, valued</p> <p>What is the first impression?</p> <p>Would a parent or student be inspired to come back to your room?</p>
Wall art	<p>Can you see encouraging messages, inclusive art, student art, or artifacts that tell your story?</p>
Literacy	<p>Do you have multicultural literature, picture books, all genres available?</p> <p>How are they displayed?</p> <p>Is there a reading area that is comfortable?</p>
Sound	<p>Is there music that represents all cultures?</p> <p>Can you hear positive conversations?</p>
Voice	<p>Are voice levels appropriate?</p> <p>Are students engaging in productive discourse?</p> <p>Are students generating appropriate voice inflections?</p>
Noise	<p>What is the noise level?</p> <p>Is there a low hum of conversation or a cacophony of shouts and jabs?</p> <p>Is there laughter?</p> <p>Is there silence?</p>
Talking	<p>Who is doing most of the talking—teacher or students?</p> <p>Do students raise their hands?</p> <p>Do students wait to be called upon?</p> <p>Are the conversations on-topic?</p>
Smell	<p>Does it smell good?</p> <p>Are there air fresheners?</p> <p>Do you have a window open?</p>

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Teacher	<p>Is the teacher doing all the work?</p> <p>Is the teacher off to the side facilitating?</p> <p>Is there a shared workload between the students and teacher?</p>
Students	<p>Are students on-task, productive, and supportive of one another?</p> <p>Where are your students from? What do you know of their personalities and personal cultures? What are their backgrounds?</p>
Seating arrangement	<p>Are students sitting in rows or pods of desks?</p> <p>Are students able to walk easily between each desk or pod?</p> <p>Can they move into rows or groups easily?</p>
Technology	<p>Is technology integrated into the curriculum?</p> <p>Are students using their devices appropriately?</p> <p>Is it a paperless classroom?</p> <p>Are you skyping with students from other countries?</p> <p>Are students recording themselves teaching?</p> <p>Is technology used to substitute, augment, modify, or redefine the curriculum?</p>
Movement	<p>Are students keeping their hands and feet to themselves while walking?</p> <p>Are they moving at the appropriate time?</p> <p>Are they talking while they are moving, or are they quiet?</p>
Individual work	<p>Are students in their seats quietly working?</p> <p>Is the teacher off to the side facilitating?</p>
Partner work	<p>Are students talking and working together?</p> <p>Are they on-task?</p> <p>Is the teacher to the side facilitating?</p>
Group work	<p>Are students collaborating in a supportive manner?</p> <p>Are all students engaged?</p> <p>Is the teacher to the side facilitating?</p>

Presenting	Are students presenting their findings? Are students quiet while others are presenting? Do they ask relevant questions after each presentation?
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*Keep these ideas in mind as you begin to develop your CALM Management plan. All of the details listed should parallel your expectations for your classroom and students. This vision will define your ideal classroom and what you represent.*

Activity #1 is an excerpt from Chapter 2 of  
*Keep CALM and Teach*  
Victoria Lentfer

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