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Classroom Management Plan

*"One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude
to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw
material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul
of the child."-Carl Jung*

Part 1: Personal Philosophy of Classroom Management

I believe that teaching is a moral endeavor. As a teacher, I have the responsibility of not

only teaching children well, but a responsibility of teaching children to become active,

participating citizens in our society. Our classrooms serve as a platform for this teaching and

learning. Thus, in order for this platform to be created, an efficient, practical and flexible

classroom management plan needs to be in place. As a teacher, my classroom should be an

environment that adapts for all my students' individuality, in which my students develop

character and form a community where their voices are recognized and appreciated. My personal

philosophy is that an efficient classroom must consist of a positive and motivating learning

community where students' individuality are recognized and appreciated, who are treated fairly

and whose individual needs are being met. These core values stem from classroom observations,

David Funk and Jim Fay's *Love and Logic* and William Glasser's non-coercive discipline model.

In order for any type of learning to occur, children first and foremost must feel

comfortable and safe. Children must feel that their classroom is not only theirs, but that they will

not be ostracized and/or made fun of about the comments that they may have. "Students behave

appropriately and learn more effectively in environments that meet their basic personal and

psychological needs. All students learn best in school settings in which they are comfortable and

feel safe and accepted," (Jones and Jones, 2001). I will create a physical environment that allows

students to feel safe to learn and play. I feel that it is important to recognize that my students will

have certain needs that need to be met, and that the physical aspect of the classroom may serve some of these needs.

As William Glasser (2002) points out, all human beings have genetic needs for many things including survival, belonging, power, fun, freedom. Two of the most important needs that I feel student need is to feel a sense of belonging and fun. Students need to feel they belong. Thus, the classroom will be designed to serve this need for all of us. Students will be seated in groups to promote collaboration, teamwork, and also learn core social skills. These social skills include-respect, sharing and trust-all part of developing character. Fostering the physical class environment cannot only meet students' needs to belong but also facilitate the development of students' characters. (This will be addressed further in a latter section)

Additionally, in order to create a community in which student's individuality are being recognized and appreciated, I will create opportunities for students voices to be heard. For example, during the first week of school, I will sit down with my students and create a set of classroom norms together and agree upon together as a classroom. "Glasser points out that students sense belonging when they are involved in class matters, receive attention from the teacher and other, and are brought into discussions of matters that concern the class," (Charles, 2002). I feel that by involving my students into creating these norms and guidelines, they will be more likely to succeed and develop as students. These classroom norms will thus serve as expectations for ourselves but also guidelines for success. They will be posted up and referred to throughout the school year and will be an integral part of classroom meetings and classroom management.

Throughout the course of the school year, I expect that there will be instances in which my students may engage in misbehavior. Misbehavior in the classroom includes situations where

students are not abiding by classroom norms and expectations. I believe that misbehavior

requires attention in the classroom because teachers and students must recognize that classroom

expectations and norms were taught for important reasons-for students to feel safe and able to

learn. Once misbehavior occurs, I believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to correct this

misbehavior immediately, but also take into account the numerous factors that may cause

students to misbehave.

As we have learned throughout the quarter, students bring with them social, emotional,

cultural and physical variables into the classroom. These variables all contribute to the overall

classroom community and in turn contribute to their behavior within the classroom. For example,

if students are experiencing difficult issues with their family at home, these may affect their

behaviors at school.

Part 2: The Practice of Classroom Management

Issues

Currently, I am placed in a Kindergarten/1st multiage classroom in a school that has 526

students enrolled; almost 75% of students are Caucasian, 22% are Asian American; 3% are

Hispanic; 1% are African American and the last 1% are Native American. Roughly about 90% of

the staff are Caucasian, the rest of the staff are Asian and African American. An average

classroom size is about 20 students. Overall, we have an adequate participation from families and

the surrounding community. At my school, "we consider ourselves 'a community of learners.'

We encourage all parents/guardians to participate in our family programs, volunteer

opportunities and educational programs," (Posted around school).

Based on my experience in various elementary school environments, I believe that there

are many issues that I will be facing throughout my career as an educator. All of these issues not

only impact my overall classroom, but impact individual students as well. Some of the issues I

believe that I will face include: cultural differences; defiance and students with special needs. As an educator, one of my vital responsibilities is to identify and resolve these particular issues to the best of my ability. However, I must take into consideration that there may be some issues outside of the school environment that greatly impact my students. In any case, my role as a teacher should be to resolve these issues or work with these issues to the best of my ability so that all my students are given the best positive and learning environment.

One of the most common issues I have seen is cultural differences. The families that our students belong to have a great impact on how they behave in the classroom. As I have mentioned above, I believe that parents and families can be a great contributing factor to children's behaviors. One of the ways in which we, as teachers, can turn these factors into a positive outcome is to initially build trust with our students' parents.

Our classrooms are comprised of a diverse group of students, stemming from unique family backgrounds. One of my first roles as a teacher is to communicate to students' families and to create a relationship with them. We must build trust among parents and work with them to education their children both at school and home. Margolis and Brannigan (1986) suggest various strategies and behaviors that educators can use to initiate trust building with parents including listening to parents empathetically; working with parents by involving them in the classroom and also let these parents' voices be heard.

One of the ways to create this relationship is through constant communication. During the summer, I plan to write an introductory letter that will serve as an initial contact between students' parents and myself similar to the one that I have included as part of my paper. Jones and Jones (2002) suggest that these letters serve as a foundation for creating a relationship with my students' families and will help initiate conversation between families and myself. I also will

send out a letter during the first week of school describing norms and behavior consequences. Moreover, I will continue to foster this communication by creating opportunities in which families can become involved with the classroom community. One way I plan to do this is send weekly newsletters that keep parents and families updated on what we are doing at school. I believe that if parents understand what is occurring in the classroom that it will be one less thing to stress about, and in turn will not be a factor in student misbehavior.

Another issue I may face as a teacher is defiance. As a teacher, my role is to guide my student in recognizing what he or she is doing is interfering with their overall learning, as well as other students' overall learning. I am a supporter of William Glasser's theory in providing students with a sense of power as well as Jim Fay and David Funk's *Love and Logic*. Glasser believes students have needs and among them is the need to feel that that have power in the classroom. "Students sense power when the teacher asks them to participate in decision about procedures for working in the class," (Charles, 2002). This power is also emphasized in Fay and Funk's problem solving strategies. Fay and Funk believe that there are four basic principles that represent the most useful human interactions: 1) sharing the control; 2) sharing the thinking; 3) balancing consequences with empathy and 4) maintaining self-concepts. As a teacher, I will do my best to problem solve with my student by working together to identify areas in which they may have difficulties. Together, we will brainstorm ways in which we can help alleviate these difficulties.

Working with students with special needs is also another issue that I will encounter as a teacher. One of the most important components of working with special populations is the collaborative effort I need to make with other teachers in my school, most importantly I would need to work closely with the special education teacher. Collaborative efforts will increase the

likelihood of meeting the needs of my students. From working with other faculty, I will become more aware of the special accommodations and modifications I would need to make for my students in order for them to succeed in my general education classroom. Also, I would need to be aware that all my students need to feel successful, thus one responsibility I have is to create opportunities and situations in which my students feel successful.

Physical Layout of Room

Please see diagram of my future classroom in the appendix. The classroom that I am currently in resembles a classroom that I hope to create during my first year of teaching. I am designing my classroom in a similar way because I believe the physical environment directly affects the motivation and degree to which my students learn in the classroom. Since I highly believe that a positive learning environment needs to be created, I would like my classroom to be open, warm, organized and welcoming to my students.

In any classroom that I become part of, I will always have two aspects of the classroom that will remain constant. These two aspects are having a circle area and a library/reading area. This circle area will serve as a circle of learning area in which we as a classroom gather for story time, class meetings and also gather during transitions. I find that this area will serve as a good place for my students to feel as though they are part of a supportive and cohesive community. Having a classroom library or reading space where students can enjoy literature is important. In my past experiences, it has been highly effective for students to enjoy a book or listen to a story right after recess. It has helped children relax and unwind after being outside. I believe that the library and circle area should be close together since both areas serve as a part of our classroom community.

My goal is to create a nurturing environment in which students feel comfortable and safe to learn and grow from. During the first week of school, I plan on taking my students for a school tour as well as a classroom tour. I will make sure to emphasize that everything in the classroom-our supplies, books, etc-is ours to share. We need to all take care of these things so that everyone can have a chance to play or work with them. This particular classroom creates a sense of classroom community, as a result of students working collaboratively at group tables. This sense of classroom community maximizes positive behavior and learning, which is an integral part of my philosophy of classroom management. There are a group of 4-6 students at each table, with a community supply caddy in the middle. At the beginning of the year, I will probably choose my students' seats for them, and change seats occasionally throughout the year so they will have a chance to sit with other students. Though some of the students are not facing the front of the room, I will walk around the classroom while I am teaching whole group lessons. I will make sure that while I am working with at guided reading group at the table in the front that I am facing the classroom. Facing my students is a great way for them to acknowledge my presence in the classroom.

Components of Classroom Management-The Nitty Gritty

Based on my classroom experiences and class readings, I have identified the following as essential components of classroom management. I will establish classroom expectations and rules with my students, starting from the first day of school, which will be explicitly taught throughout the first month of school. I envision having a classroom meeting on the very first day of school and brainstorming ideas that we feel is important for all children to learn. I will remind my students that the only rule I have is that we all need to learn in a safe and positive

environment. I will start off the meeting with asking my students to think of some ways we can all learn best together. As a teacher, I do have guidelines and expectations of my students in order for learning to occur. The following are some examples of student generated rules that are integrated with my needs as a teacher.

- ✓ I will keep my hands and feet to myself
- ✓ I will listen and look at the speaker.
- ✓ I will do my best.
- ✓ I will work hard and let others work.
- ✓ I will be respectful to others by using positive words.
- ✓ I will help take care of myself, our friends and our classroom.

I believe that students need to feel ownership in creating a classroom community and this is one way to do so.

Additionally, I have identified critical routines that I will use in my own classroom. For example, when students are being dismissed for specialists, recess or lunch, their whole table group needs to demonstrate their "readiness". From the first day of class, I will teach, model and role play how this may look like. For example, all group members must be seated and should not be speaking. All my students know that in order to be dismissed they must work together to achieve this goal. Students will also practice what it looks like to be lining up and walking down the hall. For example, we will practice hands on our hips and fingers on our lips. I will remind my students that we put our hands on our hips to remind us to keep our hands to ourselves and we put our fingers on our lips to remind us to be quiet.

Teaching/Reteaching Classroom Rules

During the first week of school, I will explicitly teach and model what these behaviors should look like. I will remind students that these norms are set in order for us to learn. The following is a lesson plan I would teach during the first week taken from a former TEP student, Jennie Castor, who is a 1st year teacher at my school.

<u>Lesson Plan for Teaching Norms</u>

Grade Level: Kindergarten or 1st grade

Purpose: For students to gain understanding of the norm, "I will respect others by using positive words."

Plan:
Hook:
- Read over the classroom norms with students. Do they think these norms are being followed? Say, *"We are going to do an activity together so as a class we can better understand what it means to say, 'I will respect others by using positive words."*
- Ask students to describe how we feel when someone gives us putdowns or uses negative words (write emotions on chart paper and have the children express feelings by making faces).
- Ask students to describe how we feel when someone gives us a put-up or uses positive words to tell us their feelings (write on chart paper)
- Ask students, *which way would we rather feel? What kinds of words should we be using?*

Activity
- Give the students a scenario. "*Let's say that you are out on the playground and Gruff (a class puppet) does something that makes you upset. We are going to write in our journals about how we could deal with this situation by using only positive words.*"
- Brainstorm some ways students can respond to Gruff without using negative words or putdowns. (For example, Gruff, when you tell me I can't play it hurts my feelings).
- After brainstorming, have students go back to their seats and begin writing or drawing (if they can't write) in their journals what they would say or do to let Gruff know how they feel without using negative words or putdowns.
- Ask for volunteers to share their journals.
- Repeat this lesson using other norms.

Assessment
- Use journals as a way to assess the students' understanding of social skill(s)

Follow-up
- Have a list of positive words that are appropriate to use in the classroom that is added to throughout the year as additional social skills are discussed.

If I find that my students are not demonstrating the behaviors found in the norms, I would

also engage in role-playing activities. From class discussions, I have found that role-playing

is one effective way to teach students how behaviors that are discussed in our classroom

norms should look like. I would have students work in small groups and act out what norms

should look like and share as a whole group after a period of time. For students who need further explanations, I would also demonstrate how the norms should not look. I would try and find a story or demonstrate it through a puppet show. For new students arriving after the first month, I would pair the new student up with a buddy. Since norms and rules will be discussed quite frequently during class meetings, this new student can easily transition and learn our classroom norms.

Consequences

As a teacher, I have discovered ways in which I will deal with behavior issues and positive and negative consequences for my students. For example, I would like to use PEP (privacy, eye contact and proximity.) I feel that by using PEP, students dignity will be preserved, (class discussion, October 2003). Preservation of students' dignity is essential in creating a safe and comfortable environment in which students feel successful. As a teacher, I would also like to use "I" statements. Jones and Jones (2002) as well as Fay and Funk (1995) believe that "I" statements can give further understanding to the problem at hand.

I believe that consequences can be either positive or negative. For example, if I were to give specific, verbal praise to students' contingent on their positive behavior, it will be a positive reinforcement to them. However for students who are not demonstrating these positive behaviors, these will be a negative consequence for them since they are not receiving this verbal praise. One way I have seen to be effective in younger classrooms is motivating the whole classroom to work for a celebration. For example, two of the classrooms I have seen have a marble jar that the teacher fills when students are exhibiting desired behaviors. However, I would have to explain the purpose for the marble jar and also explain that none of the marbles could be taken away. Other negative consequences include verbal warnings, mini-conferences, creating a

behavior plan with the students and taking time from recess or choice time to complete
assignments if students were not completing these assignments during the appropriate times.

Part 3: Communication

My letter to parents is located in the appendix.

Part 4: Application

Please refer to the attached mini-case as reference.

In summary, Joy engaged in a temper tantrum when she was unable to play in the
housekeeping area during choice time. Joy had already happily made her choice of water color
painting, but became bored after about 10 minutes. Joy walked over to the housekeeping area
and was told that she could not play because there are only supposed to be 5 students playing the
area. She discussed this with my cooperating teacher, but proceeded to ask if she could play with
the other children. Joy became unruly and decided that she did not want to participate and my
cooperating teacher told her to "rest".

Antecedent Strategies

My desired behavior for Joy is to think about an activity that she would like to engage in
during choice time and make this choice based on what she really wants. Some of the antecedent
strategies that I can use in a whole group setting is to review and model the various activities that
are available during choice time before choice time occurs. This will help other students to
really think about what activity they would like to engage in during choice time. Additionally, I
could have other students model how appropriate behaviors would look during a certain choice

time activity. Modeling can include how to play with the toys, how to share and how to work together.

Another antecedent strategy I would use is to review the rules of choice time, which are related to the classroom norms. For example, one of the norms is to be safe. One way that we are being safe is to make sure that one area is not too crowded for students playing in that area. I would remind the students that there can only be a certain number of students in certain choice time activities. This would need to be in their minds when they are making their choices.

I would also change the way in which I choose students to make their choice. For example, I think I will always have a set of Popsicle sticks with my students' names on them so I can randomly pick students to make their choice. This will decrease the likelihood of students becoming upset when their name is not called.

I can also try other positive antecedent strategies, such as encouragement, structuring incentives and enthusiasm. For example, I could give Joy and other students verbal encouragement by saying, "I know you can make the right choice!" I can also structure incentives by saying, "Students who have really thought about making their choice will enjoy their choice time activity during choice time." I can also be enthusiastic with Joy. "Wow, Joy you look like you are really thinking about your choice! Don't forget that this is something you can enjoy for about 15 minutes!"

Behavior Teaching Strategies and consequent strategies

One of the ways in which I can teach the desired behaviors is to teach or re-teach the rules of choice time immediately when Joy or another student misbehaves. Here are some of the rules that we came up with as a class during choice time:

- ✓ I will be safe by respecting my own space and other people's space.

- ✓ I will think hard about my choice and remember if I get done with my first choice then I need to find another activity to have fun with.
- ✓ I will share all the materials with others.
- ✓ I will remember that there can only be certain number of people at some activities. (Water color painting easel station-3 people; computers-6 people; housekeeping-5 people)
- ✓ I will have fun!

I can also teach how these norms may look like during choice time and have students role play what these norms should look like. I can also review the consequences that may arise if students are not abiding by these norms. One of the consequences is that they are not going to have fun. In the younger grades, I strongly believe that other students have a large influence on one another. When students see that their peers are enjoying themselves, they would like to also. If the temper tantrum continues even after the norms have been taught/re-taught, then that student would have to sit out during the rest of choice time. Prior to the next choice time, I would remember to review with Joy or another student what had happened last time. I would also assure her that choice time is fun if we can do our best to make it fun. When Joy or another student demonstrates desired behavior, I can give positive feedback immediately and praise her for making a good choice.

<u>Conclusion</u>

I believe that all children can learn and develop in our classrooms. Our responsibility as educators is to provide a nourishing and organized environment that children can grow from. Recognizing that children have needs and feelings are important in creating a positive learning environment . "The blending of caring and order both helps meet students' personal and academic needs and is essential for teachers to meet their obligation to create a safe and positive learning environment," (Jones and Jones, 2001). I believe that this is a core aspect of fostering classroom management. I also believe that as an educator, I will continually revisit my classroom management plan and understand that it may be revised depending on my students. However, I also feel that classrooms serve as a platform where students can learn and develop skills necessary to be active participating citizens in our society.