

Classroom Management Philosophy

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The key to a successful classroom is not only caring for students, but also having great classroom management skills. If a teacher, whether first year or veteran, has poor control over his classroom, he will never be able to properly present the materials needed for his students to succeed. Having a great philosophy about how to properly manage a classroom will help any teacher make it through the year with even the most troublesome group of students.

Every teacher needs a clear management plan regarding each different school year. It is important for teachers to address their philosophy on teaching, how to arrange their room, creating proper relationships with their students and the parents, and the procedures that will be in the class for the year. If teachers address all of these concerns, their year will flow smoother than they ever could have imagined it.

My philosophy on classroom management is rooted in two major concepts: respect and achievement. I firmly believe that if everyone respects each other, there can be optimal success. By respecting everyone, this doesn't mean that all of my students have to be friends with each other, it simply means that we must be able to be considerate for the needs of others and collaborate with each other in order to maintain a successful and safe classroom environment. If each member of the classroom respects every other member, there will be safety within the learning environment and everyone will have a higher chance to achieve their goals. My class will not only respect the people within the school, but I will emphasize the importance of respecting the equipment and structure of the school as well. Finding good equipment in a school is a hard task to do. That is why it is highly important for students and staff alike to respect the materials available to us. If we can use these items in the proper way, they can last longer and help more students.

Achievement is something that everyone wants. We all want to achieve our goals, no matter what they are. I will highly stress this fact to my students that I will give each of them the specific tools they individually need to succeed and achieve their ultimate goals. This might be hard for students to realize that every single one of them is different and not everyone will get the same materials or help, but they will all have the same chances to succeed in life.

We often forget that there are good, positive things in this world. Often times, we are too focused on the negative and the fact that we can't achieve our goals, however I will continually instill optimism into my students and encouragement that if we try our hardest, we can reach many goals in life. Some of their goals might be unattainable, but I will still encourage them to try their hardest in life and most of their goals can be achieved.

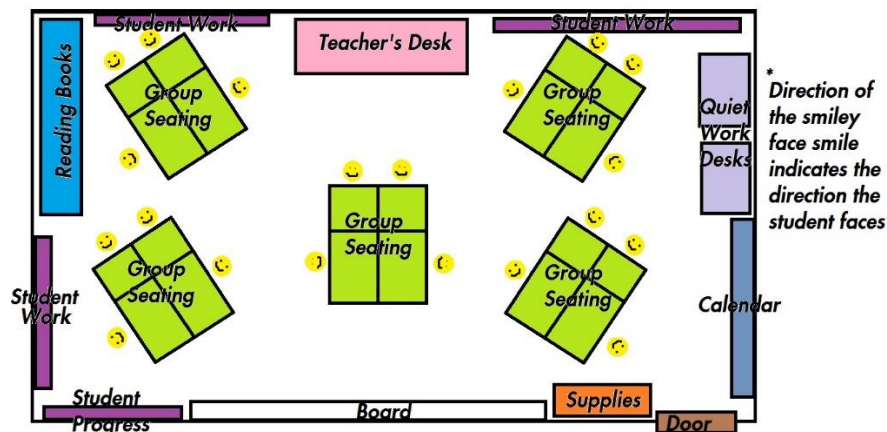
As I previously stated, my philosophy is based on respect and achievement. I believe if these two concepts are rooted into the minds of my students and myself, that together as a class, we can accomplish many difficult tasks that come to us during the school year.

As far as setup in my classroom, I would want the desks to be placed in one of these two fashions pictured below. Throughout the year I would switch up the arrangement and grouping of my students in order to have them work with all of the other students. I know for sure that I don't want my students to be in traditional rows for the entire year. There are some instances where traditional rows are beneficial, however if the class is set up in a semicircle formation, every student is able to see the board clearly and see each other (Marzano & Pickering, 2003), (Wong & Wong, 2014). This will allow for the ability for the kids to hear what every student is saying and also paying them the respect that they can because every student can see each other and create eye contact.

The second seating arrangement where the students are in “pods” is effective for students to have group discussions and call groups up for certain classroom activities. I could simply say “Can I have the blue pod come get their workbooks?” instead of having to pick certain people all the time. Not only is this seating arrangement an easy way for students to be grouped, it is also an effective way for group discussions and table talks to work while still maintaining the discipline necessary to teach effectively.



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Not only is the format of the classroom important, but so is the relationships built within the format of the classroom. I think having great relationships with my students is very important to having an effective school year (Marzano & Pickering, 2003), (Fay, 2011). However, it is just as important to have proper relationships with the parents of my students as well. By having a connection with the parents, I will be able to relay information about my students and be able to get proper help. One great way to start out with good relationships would be to have a parent letter. However, why stop at one letter? Throughout the year, I would plan to do a parent letter either every month, or possible every quarter just to let the parents know of events that may be coming up. Here would be a sample of a parent letter that I would type up:

Happy December everyone! Can you believe that we are almost halfway through an amazing school year? This first half has been an incredible journey for the students and myself as well. However, our adventure continues as we have more learning to do and more to have! Here are some things to keep in mind for this month:

- Weather is cooling down and snow has finally fallen. Students must have a winter jacket, snow pants, boots, hat, and gloves in order to go outside for recess.
- On certain days when the weather is poor, we will have to stay inside for recess and either watch movies, do homework, read books, or collaborate with other classes.
- The Winter Program will be held December 8<sup>th</sup> in the gym starting at 6:00 pm.
- Our school-wide holiday party will be held December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Activities will take place in the afternoon. The only thing required of the students is to have fun!
- Our last day of school before the winter break is December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Classes will resume on January 6<sup>th</sup> as we start out a new year!

Thank you all for such a great first half of the school year! I look forward to seeing all of the students back here in 2016! Please have a safe and fun winter break!

Sincerely, Miss Schmidt

As I previously said, I believe that having strong connections with parents is a great way to stay on top of each individual child's education. Another way to do this is at parent-teacher conferences. However, these conferences sometimes only talk about the problems instead of the greatness involved with each student. These conferences should not just address the "problem", but also show how there can be improvements and the opportunities to succeed. When parents come to me with questions and concerns about their child, I will emphasize the fact that I truly care about each individual child succeeding in my classroom. I think most people just want to "get to the point" when it comes to solving problems. However, it is also very important to point out what the causes may be and discuss the positive aspects of each student as a person, not just as a learner. If parents see that their child is truly appreciated within the learning environment, they will be more willing to cooperate and work out a solution that will benefit everyone.

As important as it is to have positive relationships, it is also highly beneficial to have proper procedures in place within the classroom. Having a clear set of procedures is another way to have success during the school year. One procedure I plan to do with my elementary students in order to get their attention is to clap out a rhythm, then have my students repeat the rhythm to me. I will do it as many times as necessary in order to have all of my students ready to learn. I also like the concept of raising a hand or making antlers and then having the students imitate the

action. Not only will it get their attention, but it will show my students that I'm not afraid to look foolish in order to accomplish the goals that must be met (Wong & Wong, 2014).

I also really like the idea of a "voice level" throughout the class. I will hold up a fist or any fingers between 1 and 5. This will let my students know what "level" they should be speaking at. A level zero (fist up) is absolutely silent, whereas a level 5 (five fingers up) is shouting and communicating as one would at recess. Not only does this show my students what I expect of them, but it also is a new way to have my students "be quiet" without telling them to be quiet. I can simply say "voices should be at a level 1 right now because we are doing a pair-and-share activity." Or I could simply just raise one finger and my students will know what that means.

Even veteran teachers can struggle with classroom management, but if they have a clear set of expectations set out for not only their classroom, but also themselves as educators, the year can go as efficiently as possible. It's no wonder why first year teachers struggle with managing their classroom, however it is possible with proper planning and determination. All it takes is a clearly laid out foundation to build from. So whether it's classroom philosophy or seating arrangements, these little steps can make the year a success.

References

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