Classroom Management Plan for Secondary English Class

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# Introduction

English is one of those subjects that students either love or dread. It is also one of those subjects vital to success outside of secondary education. Without solid English skills—both reading and writing—students will continue to struggle as they slog through pages and websites of dry context reading for research, a dilemma compounded by a substandard grasp of good writing habits. Motivating those with an aversion to English is already difficult enough. Adding in a lackluster, dysfunctional, or otherwise hectic classroom due to discipline issues and poor planning, is sure to make passing the loving torch of English to younger minds a nearly impossible task. This is why it is crucial that the Secondary English classroom have a Classroom Management (CM) plan built on strong rules and procedures with student buy-in, a good teacher-student relationship built on trust, a sense of safety both physical and emotional for students as well their parents, differentiated lessons designed to allow for maximum learning opportunity by capitalizing on interests and learning styles, and a culturally responsive environment tailored for diversity in the classroom.

<<<NSERT PHOTOS>>>

<<<X3 MIN. SOURCES>>>

# Preparation

Preparation begins well before the class starts with an inviting class layout and décor created to activate imagination and connect readers with ideas they would not normally associate with English class. For instance, there are some quite graphic *Moby Dick* posters available that put a new coat of paint on a stuffy old account of the Nantucket fishing industry. Decorations are not restricted to simple posters, but also include such items a cavalry Stetson and sabre, Star Wars models, Frankenstein diorama, and Iron Maiden poster connected to the "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner."

<<<INSERT PHOTOS HERE>>>

The physical layout of the classroom contributes much to the learning environment. One of the most frustrating experiences an avid reader can think of is to try and read a difficult text on a crowded MAX train in Portland, OR, while passengers are jostling one another, playing music, and arguing. Not to mention hyperdrive takeoffs and slam-stops. For students to feel comfortable, they need space. The classroom layout is based loosely on the Greek amphitheater design with an empty front space "stage" which holds the projector screen and a place for the television cart. The teacher sits to front left of the room facing the class, while the desks are arranged in a circular pattern. One of the benefits of this arrangement is that the desks are not directly connected, leaving a naturally angled gap for "breathing room." After all, reading is really an individual activity and best done with as little contact as possible.

<<<DIAGRAM>>>

The next step starts with the first day of school, greeting each student and repeating their name. As this is going on, it is vital to make a visual association with the student and his or her name so that I can establish an immediate relationship. The idea is to be as approachable as possible. Students need to be comfortable talking to me, not afraid to ask questions or come forward when they have a concern whether academic or life outside of class.

This relationship is the foundation for the class. Throughout the year, I will assess each student to better understand their preferred learning method, as well as individual conversational calendars (Tovani, p.110) turned in daily based on desk assignment; returned either the next day or by the end of class with my responses.

As part of positive encouragement, we have a Wall of Fame featuring each student's accomplishments throughout the year. While students are encouraged to turn in English accomplishments, they are welcome to turn in written reviews, accounts of live events, or other articles/ photos showcasing their accomplishments. This wall is then photographed and reduced in high resolution with a short account of each student's work and given to students as they graduate class.

Because of the diverse and often conflicted culture here in Fairbanks, it is important to give each student voice and squash bias from the beginning. Part of this is enabling students to communicate effectively while observing culture differences, but it works best in small groups. Within the first week, we have our first classroom meeting, teacher-moderated, to open the air and allow students time to discuss social issues within the class. Whether it is a problem with students wandering around during class, or a combined concern over the new lesson, this not only helps the students build a community, but it builds responsibility and cohesion. It also will help those shyer students have the courage to open up when they don’t feel singled out.

Finally, there will be those students who fall to the Dark Side of the Force and cause disciplinary disruptions. It is important to recognize that just as not all little Sith Lords are created equally, neither are their diversions. By using the step-up method of engaging, starting with eye contact and graduating to direct, open reprimand (this is also a strike), students can often be shifted back to focusing on the lesson. In the instance that students continue to disrupt, they will gather strikes against them until they hit three and are referred to higher discipline, whether sent to the hallway or the principal.

# Rules, Policies, and Routines

## Rules

Student ages for Ninth and Tenth grade generally range from 13 years of age to 16 years of age, with exceptions based on early start and withholding. However, just as no child is alike, no teenager develops at the same rate, meaning that there will be a spectrum of maturity levels within any given lower tier secondary class. Because of this, students need hard boundaries and absolute consequences, yet they also need to feel in control of their ever-changing and sometimes scary world.

Below are the given rules of the classroom.

SERGEANT NELSON'S 3 Bs

1. BE POLITE- Raise your hand, don't interrupt, treat others with kindness and respect at all times.
2. BE PROFESSIONAL- We are here to learn together in an environment we create that fosters our growth. When in this classroom, all other class homework and personal interests come second to our profession as English students.
3. BE PREPARED- This means being on time to class with all appropriate materials, ready to start the lesson.

(CLASSROOM NAME/MASCOT-student vote) RULES

1. …
2. …
3. …

Each class period will come up with three additional rules for behavior which will be voted on by all periods to select the top three. This allows the students to contribute to the management of their English classroom. It also gives them a unique insight into the thoughts and values of their peers from other periods.

## Policies

Classroom rules are established and tuned more specifically to the class itself, with everything designed to point each student's mental compass toward the goal of the lesson objective. Policies are a much broader category of rules, much like traffic laws, in which there is no differentiation between classrooms of any subject. These policies are put in place by the school administration and keep overall discipline amongst the student body.

Dress codes will be strictly enforced in this classroom. If a student managed to wear and offensive tee shirt or provocative outfit outside the student handbook policies for dress code, and he or she made it all the way to my class the last period of the day, they will be dealt with according to the policies and consequences set forth in the student handbook. Likewise, behavior issues will be handled in similar fashion.

Hall passes are at the teacher's discretion, and differentiated from the singular bathroom pass. Hall passes are within the school policy, consistent across all classes as instituted by the administrative office. We have one bathroom pass for the class and it is a Bathroom Buddy. Everyone needs a good friend and no one should ever be alone. Students will carry Bathroom Buddy with them to the bathroom.

<<<PIC of carboard US ARMY RECUITING SOLDIER CUTOUT-STANDUP>>>

## Routines

Routine is the invisible mechanism that will keep this classroom focused on the objective even during times of disruption such as fire drills, spirit rallies, and indiscipline issues with other students. We have a very simple routine designed around our 75-minute classroom period.

1. From the start of class and for the first 15 minutes, students will read from one of the offered books of their choice. These will be novels of different genres and slightly varied reading levels, and will be rotated each semester. At the end each semester, students will turn in a book report that may be substituted for their lowest grade or missing assignment, or as extra credit.
2. For the next 25 minutes, the class engages in teacher-led instruction on the lesson plan, followed by group exercises as a class.
3. Students will be given a 5-minute break to stretch, use the restroom, etc.
4. The remaining 25 minutes will generally be for student independent or small group exercises.
5. The last 5 minutes of class is for cleanup and transition preparation.

All tests and quizzes will be held on the last day of the week in order to allow students ample time for preparation and questions. Every first day of the week will be reading journal turn-in, returned to students by the end of class on the last day of the week. Finally, each student will fill out a Conversation Calendar during the first semester, which will be turned in each week on a rotational basis according to the seating chart.

<<<CC T/I diagram>>>

# Safety and Legal Requirements

"SAFETY FIRST" and "EVERYONE IS A SAFETY OFFICER."

Safety is number one priority in every class, staring with fire safety. The fire extinguisher is a TYPE ABC and mounted next to the door, along with the P-A-S-S visual aid poster. Also beside the door is our fire evacuation route. We will conduct at least one drill during the beginning of the first semester as a class, then continue to improve our discipline and accountability practices with each school fire drill/ evacuation drill.

There are very few items within the English world which can cause injury beyond superficial paper cuts; however, because students come to class from outside environments, there is always the danger of having some object that could potential injure someone. The biggest threat to a student's safety falls under two categories: slips, trips, and falls; and airborne artillery.

## Slips, trips, and falls are easily contained by a three-way approach.

Teenagers do not all come with a sense of safety and organization…or personal space. Because of this, something as small as a notebook sticking out in the walkway can cause a dangerous mishap resulting serious injury. This is remedied by enabling students to help themselves and each other:

1. Student's take responsibility for their areas of operation (desk).
2. Students politely and professionally police each other—EVERYONE IS A SAFETY OFFICER!
3. Teacher (me) makes the correction. This is the last and least favored action. By relying on the other two, the class will self-correct and create a safe environment for all of us.

## Airborne Artillery and Little Light Fighters

<<<WARHAMMER 40K cartoon of Cadian Inf>>>

One thing that has not changed since the very first classroom: kids throw things.

This is a direct teacher-student relationship issue and results in immediate intervention. Throwing objects is an automatic third strike and a trip to the office. I consider this a potential assault and will not tolerate such behavior. Likewise, any form of violence will occur in immediate Third Strike protocol. The student will report to the assistant principal for disciplinary consequences.

<<<PHOTO of police officer>>>

## Legal Requirements

NOT SURE WHAT TO PUT HERE< WILL BE USNG THE LHS STUDENT HANDBOOK AS A REFERENCE>

Note: I have had an encounter with a student on house arrest who had to wear and ankle bracelet and report periodically so an officer on campus.

# Planning and Conducting Instructions with Engagement and Differentiation

English lesson plans are unique in that they synthesize left and right brain function, but engage the imagination throughout… if they are presented in an engaging fashion. Because it is important to frontload the basics, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Shelley, and so on, it can be a huge challenge to hook a student on submersing into the study. These texts were written in different languages and translated in some instances, centuries ago and as part of much different cultures. By using differentiated lesson plans and giving options for learning based on learning styles and interests, it is easier for students grasp the material and then apply it to the modern texts later on in the course.

Some of the methods of teaching include large group activities in which the plays are read by students—in character with voice if they choose. Films of classics such as *Scarlet Letter* are a great ice-breaker or end of module celebration. Using settings to bring in outside affects such as period clothing and accessories that relate to the reading turn the classroom into a museum and add tactile elements to literature and another way to reach those students who are more hands on.

# Diversity, Cultural Responsivity, and Special Needs

Because of the multicultural nature of the Northstar Borough School District, Cultural Responsive Classroom Management is paramount for success and sanity, both teachers and students. The district is made up of students from many backgrounds, but three primary divers areas are Native American, military children, and homeless students.

To take on such a challenging situation, overcoming bias and stereotypes as a teacher. Continuous self-assessment becomes an internal dashboard for honing objectivity. But this doesn't mean a teacher has to become an automaton, but rather develops objectivity for *each individual student*, and this must still be combined with empathy developed by understanding each child's background, culture, and current situation.

Special needs students must be offered the same opportunities as the rest of the class with equity, meaning while a lesson plan may have to be altered in delivery to meet the needs of a student with a visual challenge, the criteria and overall objective will be the same. It is also important to treat special needs students as part of the class.

# Working with Administration and Parents

I will send every parent to the office if they argue with me. Unacceptable!

# Summary

Oh boy

# References

Tovani, C. (2004). *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?: Content Comprehension*, *Grades 6-12*.

Portland, Me.: Stenhouse.