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Classroom Management Plan

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Abstract/Introduction

Classroom management is something that can often times go overlooked in a modern classroom but remove it, and you remove the foundation that the teaching process is built upon. Research shows that instead of investing in superior facilities for students, the dollars would be better spent on more qualified teachers, specifically in the realm of teaching classification.

Darling-Hammond's (2000) study found that:

Of the teacher qualifications variables, the strongest relationship was found for scores on the state licensing examination, a test that measures both basic skills and teaching knowledge. The effects were so strong, and the variations in teacher expertise so great, that after controlling for socioeconomic status, the large disparities in achievement between black and white students were almost entirely accounted for by differences in the qualifications of their teachers. Ferguson also found that every additional dollar spent on more highly qualified teachers netted greater increases in student achievement than did less instructionally focused uses of school resources. (p. 9)

This evidence shows that across the board the most effective way to teach students is with well qualified teachers as they are able to create the desired learning environment where students allow themselves to become vulnerable in exchange for the ability to learn with much more efficacy.

In my own classroom which will in all likelihood be a social studies classroom with a focus on history and geography the classroom management policy will need to be able to account for the

possibility that students are not correct when they attempt to answer certain queries. I envision my classroom running in an open format where during lectures as well as group discussions the floor is always open for questions that the students believes would be beneficial, this even includes the occasional joke (especially when topical) if that allows the class to feel more comfortable and thus commit even more to their learning. This will require a specific classroom management policy that will surely take time and experience to complete but I truly believe can be extremely rewarding for the right types of students. Because of the fact that history and geography can be such grandiose subjects it is important to facilitate this kind of warm learning environment as it should not be in the realm of possibility that a student should be judged for their misconjuncture or misinterpretation. That goal here being to facilitate the students curiosity and allow them to find certain aspects of the subject at hand that they can relate and connect with, which will even further endear the students to the subject as well as my classroom.

Preparing the classroom for the new year is one of the most vital steps of the pre-teaching process. Without a proper classroom layout and environment even the best classroom management policy and implementation will struggle to achieve the same success someone with the proper layout and environment will. The layout being used for seating can eliminate a plethora of issues that could be encountered and detract from the students time to learn. These possibilities are; being too far from the teaching materials such as whiteboard/document camera etc., being at an improper angle, facing the opposite direction, facing peers that will influence chatter (if group work is an emphasis this can be a plus), being out of the view of the educator as well as many more. Using a proper layout which means using what is proper for your own classroom, in itself means that there is not one ultimate way to arrange a classroom.

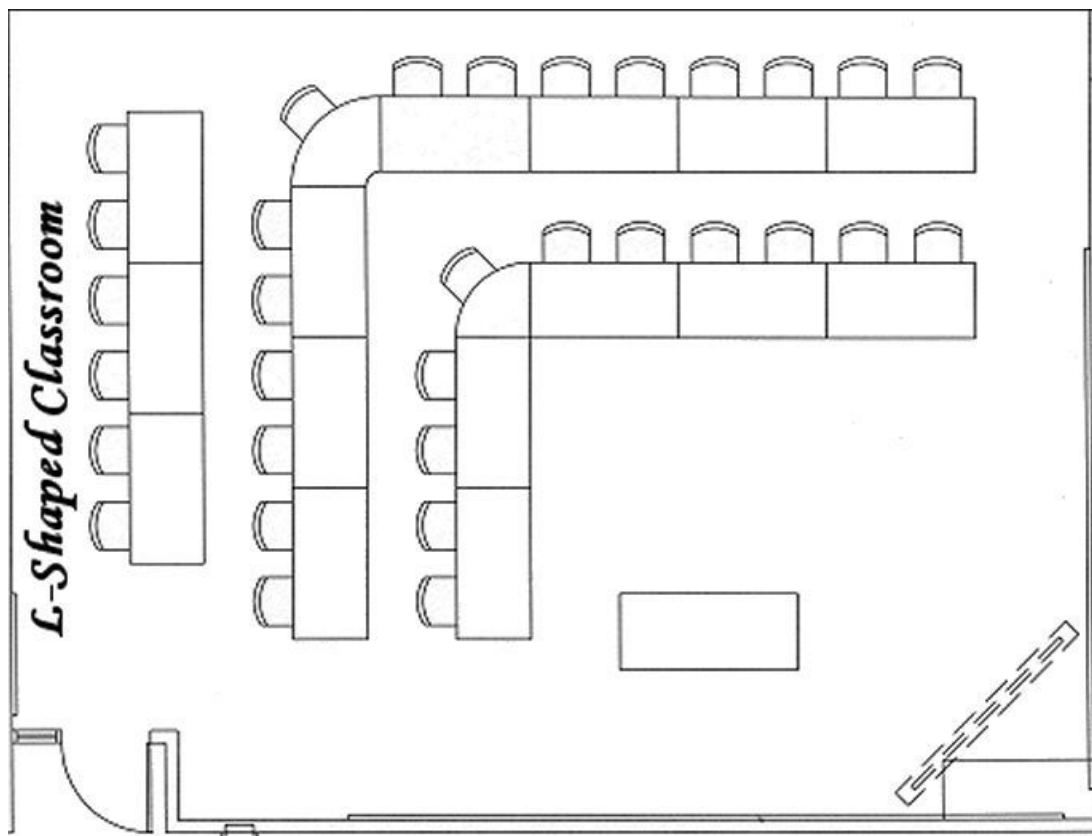


Figure 1. An example of an l-shaped classroom that could be modified to be quite effective.

The above image is an example of an l-shaped classroom that I could see myself basing a potential layout off of. The cone shape allows for essentially an equitable seat for each student in the classroom minus distance of course. I also would like to promote peer inquiry in my classroom, where single desks which are isolated do not afford the student the ability to ask their peer a quick question to gauge whether or not they are understanding the topic at hand or not.

One change I would make is to increase the distance between the rows slightly to allow for myself to maneuver around the classroom and between the rows if so necessary. Possibly helping a student or making my presence felt to eliminate electronic device usage. My desk is also at the forefront of the room so that I can model appropriate behavior as well as proper communication skills to my students. It also offers me the ability to teach from my desk if I am under the weather on a certain day or not quite feeling up to it. Other pros include the fact that I can have either a whiteboard or chalkboard on either side of the smartboard in the middle of the room, this will allow for groups of students to access and see each whiteboard when working in groups. That smartboard is also mobile which would allow for me to move it in situations such as an out of class meeting or a smaller class.

Getting off on the right foot is also quite important, this means establishing a positive relationship with both the students as well as the parents. I will attempt to always greet my students one by one as they enter class on the first day as well as start with their names right then and there as I am terrible with them and will need to put forth the effort required to remember names, as that can immediately sour a relationship. I will also do what I can do to contact each parent to allow for my first point of contact to be positive, one of my guest speakers in my education classes lent that tidbit of knowledge to me and I can definitely see the importance. I

will also likely be a little more strict with my classroom rules to stress the importance of the rules in creating an effective classroom. Especially the style of classroom I would like to run.

In addition to the school rules the rules established in my classroom will be the general rules of life that I abide by and I feel are important qualities to strive towards to be positive members of society. These tenets include respect, positivity, the ability to be wrong, as well as many others. I feel imparting these lessons upon my students are nearly as important as any lesson my content area may cover. As stressed previously the importance of these rules is quite straightforward. As I want to run a free flowing classroom where ideas no matter how abstract are embraced and dissected by the class as a whole as we can often learn more from different ideas and perspectives even if they are not traditionally correct. This means that the rules will be of utmost importance and must be followed to allow for this. I will of course use the general rules of respect of person, property as well as ideas as one of the foundational rules in my room. I will also not tolerate any form of hate speech and negative speech should be kept to a minimum as well, this would encompass actions as negative energy is definitely a thing and can cause the entire class to head off kilter. These rules will need to be constantly reinforced and apply equitably to each and every member of the classroom. Only then will the class be fully able to trust that the rules will actually be enforced, and are not just ideas for the class to consider.

As far as beginning and ending each school day I believe it is important to be organized. As someone who has taken quite some time to force oneself to become organized it is a skill that is very important, and to prod your students in that direction could reap rewards in class as well as in the student's future. Starting the day with administrivia where we begin with a brief amount of small talk while students notate the assignments for the day which will be waiting for them on

the weekly schedule. During this time I will highlight no name papers as well as missing assignments as well as missed tests. Not to single anybody out but to explain that you are not alone in being behind but these things must be done. At the end of the day we would again touch on assignments, with a possible reminder of upcoming exams or major projects that the students should be aware of. One such activity that will often be employed in my classroom will be pair and share at the end of the day. In the book it is outlined as, "One common approach is to ask students to do a reflection writing activity (in a journal, for example) about what they learned that day, then pair up and share what they wrote. One way to extend this process is to ask the pair to write key points they learned that day on a note card and turn it in to you" (p. 17). Not only will this reinforce the days learning with the students but it will also allow for me to peek into what they are actually learning when asked to work amongst themselves.

Discipline as well as consequences in my classroom will be designed to be preventative rather than retributive. I do not want to punish students who have a desire to learn and remove them from my class, that would only make it harder for them to learn and thus less likely to succeed and enjoy the class that I am striving to create. It would not be fair to myself to undermine all of the hard work I am doing only to send students to the office after a few warnings. I truly believe that discipline is subjective, as every situation is going to have different inputs and outputs, but ultimately without some sort of increasing consequences the students who do not have a desire to learn will take advantage and detract from the experience of those who are. It will take much fine tuning but I am sure I will employ some sort of plan where the first step would be eye contact, moving towards a verbal warning, after a second or third verbal warning depending on the offense we would move towards actia; consequences. Again, being so

situational it is hard to nail down exactly in what manner I would deal with every situation. But the important distinction to make would be are they harming/distracting their surrounding students or are they just having a bad or off day and needing to let off some steam. In the former situation they would likely be removed from the classroom situation either by being moved into the hall or a space in the room where they cannot bother others. In the latter situation I may ask the student if they need to get some water or take a little break from the classroom setting. In both situations I would ask the students to stay late and get to the root of the issue and possibly try to prevent it from happening at all in the future.

As a new educator I believe one of my biggest difficulties would be not being too friendly with the students. Of course I would love to be the teacher that they feel they can speak about anything with and come to for support or whatever help they may need, one issue I may see is that I can be extremely casual in somewhat professional environments, which when coupled with my young age could lead to me getting into situations a young teacher may not know how to navigate. The importance here would be to stress to my students although I want to have an extremely personal and casual relationship, I am your teacher and I do have a responsibility to report certain things to the proper authorities whether it be the school administration or the actual authorities. It will also take a deliberate effort for myself to ensure that I am not employing favoritism with my students as I am human and will automatically be predisposed to enjoy certain students in class more than others. Being objective is not difficult to do as long as a conscious effort is made and that is what I shall do.

I will work together closely with the staff of the special education department of my school whether it is the actual teacher in charge of the class or the aide who spends most of their

time with the student or even the school psychologist. With the help of the entire support staff I will be able to much more easily tailor my lessons to suit the needs of the students with disabilities by isolating exactly which subjects and facets of learning they have issues with and finding a way to circumnavigate those issues or provide assistance to when it may become necessary. On top of that I will have a firm grasp on the contents of students with IEP and speak with their previous teachers and see what methods they found successful.

Differentiation in the classroom is necessary and something that I will need to improve upon in order for myself to become a fully competent teacher. One such issue could be the over personalization of the activities for the students, which is not what differentiation truly is.

Koeze's (2007) paper suggests:

Practitioners need to understand the components of differentiation in order to design lessons around students' needs. Although some educational consultants are trying to coin differentiation as strategy in itself, it is not. Differentiation is a framework used to implement the best practices in teaching and learning that already exist and have been researched to be effective. (p. 110)

This means using choice, interest as well as learning style to pick from pre-existing practices to apply to the students lessons, and not creating things from out of the blue which is what some teachers believe this means.

My classroom will also be one that embraces cultural diversity and desires to welcome it when at all possible. I would not want to make someone uncomfortable by asking too much about their cultural background. Although a part of my classroom policy would be to create an environment where each and every member of my class is a proud of their cultural heritage and

also have a desire to use their heritage to teach as well as open the horizons of their peers.

Culture is ‘...the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from arts, beliefs, customs, language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and other products of human work and thought considered as a unit’ (2016)



Figure 2. Aspects of culture.

Cultural heritage is an important window into the life of someone who represents that culture whether or not it encompasses their entire life or just their manners, the more you know about cultures the better equipped one becomes to handle any encounter with that culture at a later point in their life. In addition to this in a culture that remains so caught up in the race or ethnicity of each person this could do wonders to let people realize that although other cultures may conduct their lives differently from yourself you likely have a lot more in common than you

previously thought. Familiarization with foreign cultures will also likely remove many of the racial tensions that plague our society today.

One area in which our current school model is lacking is teacher to parent communication, often times the medium through which this is done is the student. If the student does not want certain information passed on s/he simply would not pass it on. This is starting to change in the here and now with the emergence of email and other methods of communication but it is still far less prevalent than it could and should be. One study found that, “[Teacher-to-parent communication] reduced the percentage of students who failed summer courses from 16% to 9%.” (2015) This is improvement could potentially keep half of the students who are currently being enrolled in summer classes, the benefit of this would cascade and permeate much further than just elimination of summer school classes.

To incorporate parental interaction into my classroom I would send an email to the parent contact for each student in my class, if no email is present I will call at a reasonable hour and if neither of those avenues are successful I shall request a contact slip be sent home with the student in order to determine the best avenue of communication for the two parties. Once contact has been established I will ensure that I have the students best interest in mind and that I am there for them to contact if they have any concerns or requests that I could possibly address. I will also present them with an outline of our plans for the semester and highlight the important days for them to remember, quarter and semester end, parent teacher conference dates and any other related deadlines. Hopefully this will give the parents a look into the educational life of their child and facilitate discussion between the parent and student.

Students will have access to the location of the public library attached to the school system, as well as youth centers in the area where activities are held, location of museums in the area, peer tutor programs where available as well as clubs in the area that promote learning and education.

As far as updating and revising my classroom management plan goes I will employ recalibration, which will involve both my skills as an educator and also the skills of my classes as they are likely to vary in a great way over the course of a couple year period. I will also compare and contrast student's scores based on any potential changes I make to my classroom management policy to look for general trends but will also take into consideration the variance mentioned earlier and understand that some classes just may not be as gifted as others and that does not reflect my ability as a teacher. Although it could reflect my ability to find the correct method of instruction.

All in all classroom management is an all encompassing aspect of education that like teaching itself will take a preponderance of hands on experience to perfect and at this point I have very little. Over time many changes will be made and hopefully they will lead to consistent improvement over my time as an educator in the realm of classroom management.

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