Classroom Management Plan for the Secondary Classroom
Malachi Swagerty
December 7th, 2018
EDSC 658

Table of Contents:

Introduction:

Students are unable to learn in an environment that is not well managed, and because of this fact it is critically important that every teacher enter their classroom with a plan for classroom management. Classroom management is more than just correcting negative behaviors, but also includes deterring disruptions, providing a safe environment, and building strong relationships with students (Strother, 1985). Due to the many different aspects that classroom management consists of, teachers need to be able to adapt management skills to the needs of different students (Weinstein, Curran, Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). This need for flexibility can make classroom management one of the most difficult skills to learn for a new teacher, and is the cause for many beginning teachers to give up on the profession (Manning, Bucher, 2005). However, with enough preparation and a willingness to work with students, it is possible for teachers to acquire the skills needed to successfully manage a classroom.

Classroom management is incredibly important to me as I find that it is impossible to teach the materials the students must learn if I have to constantly pause class in order to correct the behavior of my students. One thing that my mentor teacher says that has stuck with me is, "It is not fair for twenty-four students to not get their education because of the actions of one." This has helped me to realize that it is my duty as a teacher to make the most fair classroom setting possible, and allowing a handful of students to act up is a negligence on my part. This aligns directly with my philosophy of education, as I believe that it is my duty as a teacher to give each and every one of my students the skills they need to be a successful and critically thinking adult. I am unable to do this duty if I'm spending so much of my time constantly correcting negative

behaviors.

Preparation Before the School Year Starts

     I begin the school year by ensuring the classroom is set up in such a way that best facilitates classroom discussion without promoting distractions to students. I find that the best way to do this is by setting up the desks in rows, while ensuring that the desks can move easily for group work, or setting the classroom into a circle for full class discussion (fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Classroom set with desks in a row.

Having the desks move easily also means that students can turn their desks around when working on computers, so that I am able to monitor their work at all times and ensure they are on task. I also make sure to allow for plenty of space between the desks, in order to avoid making the classroom feel cramped or claustrophobic. Many students at the middle school and high school age have a desire for as much personal space as possible, and by putting as much room between desks as reasonably possible, I try to meet this desire. This space between desks also allows me

to walk around the classroom to work with students individually as needed.

I also find it helpful to post the classroom expectations at the front of the classroom, where it is always visible. At my current school we are on the CHAMPS system (fig. 2), which demonstrates the expectations for behavior depending on the type of work the students are doing. This system is helpful, as I am able to tell the students what type of work we will be doing that day, and the can refer to the chart to see the behaviors that are expected of them. This also allows the students to self correct their behavior, as I can take the time to have a short discussion with a disruptive student, asking them if their behavior matches the expectations set forth at the beginning of class.

	Independent Seat Work	Teacher Lecture	Group Activity	Tests and Quizzes
C Conversation	*Voice Level = 0-1	*Voice Level = 0 *NO Side Conversations	*Voice Level = 2 *Dialogue Between Students/Teacher	*Voice Level = 0 *No Conversations
H Help	*Ask partner *Raise Hand for Teacher Help	*Raise Hand for Teacher Help	*Ask Group Members *Raise Hand for Teacher Help *Self-Solve Problem	*Raise hand and Teacher will walk over to you. *Teacher motions for student to come to them.
A Activity	*Partners Work Together to Complete Task/Assignment	*Teacher-led tasks *Verbal and Written Responses to Teacher	* Students will participate according to posted Rules *Use Time Wisely to Complete Activity * Use Extra Time to Complete Unfinished Work	*Complete Test Work silently after test
M Movement	Leave Seat to: *Sharpen Pencil *Collect Supplies	Leave Seat **Before** instruction begins to: *Sharpen pencil	Leave Seat to: * Sharpen Pencil * Hand in/Pick-up Materials *Stay in Group	Leave Seat **Before** Quiz to: *Sharpen Pencil *Hand in/Pick-Up Materials
P Participation	*Focus on Task at Hand	*Look towards Teacher *Raise Hand to Answer or Ask Questions *Take Notes	*Focus on Task at Hand *Participation Within Group *Respect others' opinions	*Quiet *Eyes on your own work *Respect others who have not finished
S Success!	*Students complete task *Students make good progress toward task completion	*Students use classroom time wisely *Positive Behaviors Exhibited	*Completion of Task *Everyone in Group Contributed Equally	*Students have opportunity to succeed

Fig 2:
CHAMPS Poster

I find that one of the best tools to use at the beginning of the school year is to treat the students with respect. This does not mean allowing them to do whatever they want, instead it is acting in such a way that you enter a sort of business relationship with one another. By setting forth your expectations early in the school year, and setting your bar for student behavior high you are treating your students as the young adults you want them to become. I am not so naive as to think that this attitude of respect will keep students from ever acting up, but I do find that treating students with respect does make behavior correction easier.

Routines, Policies, Procedures, and Rules

I set a routine early in the school year that gets students in the mindset to learn from the moment they enter the classroom. Each student has a writer's notebook that lives in the classroom, and when entering the classroom they grab their writer's notebook and begin doing a free write based on a prompt I write on the board. The reason for this is two fold; first it makes beginning the class easier, as students are already actively writing when the bell rings to begin class. This also gets students in the habit of writing, as it is impossible to improve a skill without practice. While I do grade these writer's notebooks, I grade on completion rather than on content. I do make the occasional note to make sure the students know that I am reading their writing, but for the most part, if the students are writing they get full credit.

As my classes mainly revolve around group discussion and reading texts, my policies are based on creating an environment of respect. It is important that every student feels comfortable enough to contribute to the discussion, and in order to do so there must be no jeering or demeaning comments whenever a student adds to the discussion. In order to do this I have policies in place that ensure that every student is treated with respect when speaking. If something is unclear or seems off topic, students are asked to elaborate on their ideas in order to more fully flesh them out. This environment of respect must also hold true when reading in class. At times students will take turns reading texts out loud, and I attempt to demonstrate proper behavior by allowing students to work through pronouncing difficult words. I understand that all students are at different reading levels, and while my students may find it unfair that I require all students to read aloud with only one pass allowed per class period, I find that allowing students to hear their peers struggle with complex words allows them to understand that it is

okay to find reading difficult at times.

      I try to make my procedures as clear as possible from the first day of class. Students are expected to arrive at class on time with all the materials needed to have a productive class period. In the event that students do not bring needed materials, such as a pencil or their writer's notebook, they are able to borrow a pencil or paper from me. As paper is fairly inexpensive I don't ask for anything in return for borrowing paper, especially since as the writer's notebooks are meant to live in the class, the students should almost always have them on hand. However, I do not want my pencils disappearing on me, so one tactic I've used is having my pencils pushed into a piece of cardboard in a mug. By doing this there are noticeable holes where a pencil is missing, and I am able to make sure that all holes are filled by the time the ending bell rings. I also make sure that the bathroom policy is understood by all students. Since classes can be seventy minutes long, it is understandable that a bathroom break may be necessary. However, students are only allowed to use the restroom during independent work time, so as not to disrupt lectures or instructions.

      I try to make transitions go as smoothly as possible by making sure that students are still thinking about the lesson while the next part of class begins. One way I do this is by having students hand out materials needed, so that I am free to continue teaching the class. This keeps my students engaged, and I tend to choose students that might otherwise be disruptive to hand out materials. By doing this, all students are engaged with learning during transitional periods with little to no interruption.

      Finally, I find that procedures and policies are more helpful in the classroom rather than

hard set rules. By setting expectations for how students are meant to act, this negates the need

for written rules in the classroom. Rather than taking the time to create a set of written rules, I

ensure that my students have an understanding of the procedures and policies in the classroom by

taking time to go over them at the beginning of the year.

Safety and Legal Requirements

While I do hope that my students will rise to the occasion every year, and flawlessly meet

the expectations I set in the classroom, I do understand that disruptions do occur. When a

student is behaving negatively I find that most students are responsive to a one-on-one

conversation about their behavior outside of the classroom. This goes hand-in-hand with my

belief of treating students with respect. By having a conversation in a non-confrontational

manner with a disruptive student, the student has a chance to reflect on his behavior and adjust

accordingly. In the event that this does not work, the school that I am at has a step program

defining disciplinary measures to be taken (fig 3 and fig 4). This program raises in severity from

a signed plan of behavior modification, to detention, to parent conferences, to office referrals.

Fig 3: Ryan Middle School Step Plan

Fig 4: Ryan Middle School Lunch Detention Form

Planning Instruction

One of the best ways to curb disruptive behaviors is to make sure that students always have something to work on. Due to this, I try to plan extra activities into every lesson that I create. If some students finish faster than others, they can move on to other activities so that they do not get bored. This also frees up my time to work with students individually as needed. One thing I have discovered is that students are less likely to be disruptive when they receive they attention they desire. If I redirect this attention towards taking the time to help them with their work, they tend to cease the negative behavior and begin working constructively in the class.

I perform most of my differentiation based on student need. When giving directions to students, I make sure to tell them orally, have the instructions written on the board, and also give the instructions in writing to the students in the form of a prompt. While this can seem redundant, I have found that students often need instructions repeated multiple times even after doing this. When choosing a text I like to make sure that an audio version of the text is available, so that students that struggle with reading can listen to the novel instead. By offering different ways for students to absorb a text, I am able to meet their various learning needs. I do believe that students leaving my classroom need to have an understanding of how to write properly, so I do require all students to write assignments. However, I do allow students to use text to speech programs provided the perform edits on their assignment to ensure quality writing.

Last of all, one of the most important aspects of lesson planning is flexibility. It is important for me to be aware of my student's reactions to a lesson, and adjust accordingly. If something we are working on is seen as too boring, this doesn't mean that my students aren't trying, but instead that I should reflect on my teaching methods and how I can make the topic

more interesting to them. One way I am continuously aware of my students is by doing constant

formative assessments. When students are working independently I am rotating around the

classroom, checking in with each of my students, and ensuring that they understand the concepts

and assignment.

Collaborating with Educational Stakeholders

I keep an open line of communication with the parents of my students. I try to make sure

to email parents whenever a student makes a difficult achievement in my class, in order to build

with a relationship with the parents. By doing this, parents are more receptive when I contact

them about disciplinary concerns. I also try to meet parents halfway, offering times where I can

stay after school with struggling students for one-on-one learning opportunities. I try to ensure

that parents understand that I am here to help their children succeed, and the last thing I want is

for any student to fail.

One of the most interesting way to apply English to the lives of my students is to get local

writers to speak to the class. I have found the local writers are normally receptive to scheduling

a time to talk with a class, so long as the class is prepared for discussion. I find an interesting

way to use local resources is to have students read the writings of a local author, and then let

them know that the author will be attending our class the next lesson, and the students are

required to come up with three or four questions each they would like to ask.

Summary

I plan on putting this classroom management plan in place by keeping it as a reference

tool for how to react to my students. In the moment it is easy to get heated and frustrated with

students when they act up, but by looking back at my classroom management plan I will be able to see that I want to always treat my students with respect. By refusing to get worked up and always trying to remain collected around my students I can properly manage my classroom.

During the year I think it is important to get to know students individually, and understand what sorts of rewards work for each one. For example, if there are two mature students that get along with one another and can sit by each other without disrupting class, I can adjust the seating chart to allow that. As I said before, one of the most important personality traits a teacher must have is flexibility. As a teacher you must be able to see when your classroom management style isn't working, and have the flexibility to adjust it to your students needs.

Works Cited:

Forseid, M. C., Forseid, M. P., Gaddy, B.B., Marzano, J.S., Marzano, R. J. (2005). A Handbook for Classroom Management that Works. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Manning, M., & Bucher, K. (2005). Classroom Management for Middle and Secondary Schools. *The Clearing House*, 79(1), 5-6. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/30182097

Snyder, D. (1998). Classroom Management for Student Teachers. *Music Educators Journal,* 84(4), 37-40. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3399115

Strother, D. (1985). Classroom Management. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 66(10), 725-728. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20387499

Weinstein, C., Curran, M., & Tomlinson-Clarke, S. (2003). Culturally Responsive Classroom Management: Awareness into Action. *Theory Into Practice*, 42(4), 269-276. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1477388