

Classroom Management Plan
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Introduction

According to Aldrup, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, students in well-run classrooms have overall higher levels of achievement (2018). This is because effective learning can only occur in a classroom where students feel safe, supported, and have clearly defined expectations. In order to achieve this type of classroom environment, a teacher must create and implement a plan for how they will manage their classroom. A comprehensive classroom management plan focuses on student behaviors and the consequences, both positive and disciplinary, of those behaviors to create an environment where students feel safe and supported. The importance of clear expectations when assigning work cannot be understated. When students know what to expect and what is expected of them, they will excel. Palumbo and Sanacore say that effective teachers avoid wasting instructional time by identifying potential problems and planning to avoid them (2007). A good classroom management plan will outline procedures for implementing classroom routines and policies in order to avoid wasting instructional time on dealing with problems.

Houff states that the most effective way to manage your classroom can depend upon the situation, the students, classroom factors, and your beliefs (2009). According to Houff, every class of students has a different dynamic, and will require a different set of classroom management strategies (2009). Additionally, Scarlett, Ponte, & Singh tell us that with today's increased diversity in the classroom it is more essential than ever that classroom management be flexible and take into account individual student's backgrounds and needs (2009). Classrooms may have an array of students with learning barriers which must be addressed. These barriers can be cognitive, personal, cultural, or language related (Chiappetta and Koballa,

2015). A good classroom management plan will take into account these barriers and have a plan to adapt or accommodate them.

Finally, according to Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson, it is essential that good classroom management begin at the very start of the school year (1980). Beginning the school year with explaining the rules and procedures will allow students to become acclimated to the classroom expectations early on. It is much easier to start the correct way than it is to fix a bad habit later. Thus, more effective managers will begin the school year with outlining procedures when the students need them and will not overwhelm students with too many rules at once (Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson, 1980). However, it is not enough simply to create the rules and tell students what they are. You must reinforce those rules on a regular basis (Barbetta, Norona, and Bocard, 2005). Additionally, Barbetta, Norona, and Bocard explain that rules must be simple, specific, clear, and measurable.

Overall, classroom management is essential to a well-run classroom. I believe that when we take into account diversity and individual needs when creating a management plan, our students will feel more included and secure. Additionally, my philosophy is that classes should be fun and engaging, but also have structure and appropriate amounts of discipline. Therefore, it is essential to me that there are not so many rules that students feel shackled by them. If a student is going to have an exciting and engaging experience in my classroom, the rules and procedures I set forth must be clear and simple, and I must uphold them consistently to encourage structure and positive behavior.

Preparation before the School Year starts, Discipline Management, Student Behavior

Beginning the school year right is essential. Preparation starts with a practical classroom layout. I will begin by ensuring I have enough room to move around the class and engage with all the students. By arranging desks in small groups of four, I can facilitate group work and the ability to reach each student. Additionally, I feel it is important to have alternative seating arrangements for students who need to move around or who have difficulty sitting at a desk. I plan to have wobble chairs, such as the one pictured in Figure 1, as well as an area where students can sit on the floor and use clipboards to work on. In addition to providing alternative seating, while arranging my classroom I want to ensure all students can see the board or projector screen, so I will try to angle desk groupings in such a way that this is possible.



Figure 1. Wobble chair from Target©, (2018).

Throughout the classroom, I intend to post the important information in clear, easy to read ways. First, I will have the classroom rules and consequences posted in both the front and back of the room. This allows students to refer to them whenever necessary. Second, I intend to have homework posted in a summary form in at least two places. Current assignments will

be written on the white board for each week, and all assignments for the quarter will be on a calendar where students can go back and check in if they are missing something. In this way, I hope that it will be clear what students are expected to accomplish each day.

In order to begin the school year well, I will briefly discuss my expectations for my students with them on the first day of class. I will then reinforce and repeat those expectations as necessary for the first week or two. I intend to outline my procedures, which will be discussed below, as those procedures become relevant, so that I do not inundate my students with more information than they can process.

Routines/Policies /Procedures/Rules

The first thing I will discuss with my students are my classroom rules. Figure 2 is an example of the rules I intend to post in my classroom. These rules are simple, clear, and can encompass most negative behaviors that will likely occur in my class. For example, Rule 4: “Respect the teacher, the classroom, and other students” addresses problems such as disrupting class, distracting other students, breaking classroom tools, vandalizing, and a host of other potential problems. The advantage of concise, broadly worded rules is that you can apply them to a variety of situations. A potential disadvantage of these broadly worded rules is that students may try to nitpick or push the boundaries of the rules. However, I expect that will be the case no matter how specific my rules are, so instead I intend to clearly define the rule when a student has broken it and reinforce my ability to uphold the rules as necessary. I believe that if I am firm, fair, and practical when applying the rules to situations, students will learn where my boundaries are and what I expect of them.



Figure 2. Example of classroom rules, (West Valley Middle School, 2018).

The next thing I will discuss are procedures and routines. Each day students will enter the class and complete a sponge activity. This activity will be found at the front of the room, and students will be expected to pick it up on their way into the classroom, sit down, and spend the next 5-10 minutes working on it. During this time, I will take roll and check in with any students I need to speak with. Students will be expected to come to class with a pencil, not a pen, paper or notebook, and the class folder or binder. I intend to have homework due on Fridays, so I will not need to establish turn-in procedures until the end of the week. However, my plan for turning in homework will be a drawer bin labeled with each class period, where students will hand in their work at the beginning of the class period on Fridays. Additionally, each Friday will be a quiz day which summarizes all the material learned over the course of the week. As appropriate, I intend to align my test days to the same schedule, so that students will always know which day to expect an exam over the entire unit of instruction. At the end of a class period, I will remind students to wrap up any work they are doing and clean their areas

five minutes before the bell rings. This will allow sufficient time for them to transition out of my class, so they are not rushing to put their things away right when the bell rings.

Additionally, by having the students clean up their areas before the bell rings, I will have less classroom maintenance to do myself throughout the day. I believe that a good routine sets students up for success by giving them a sense of security in knowing what to expect each day. When they know what to expect, they will in turn know what is expected of them.

Throughout a class period, there may be times when we are transitioning between activities. During these times, I will give clear instructions on what I want them to do or where they should be going, and then I will say “Ready? BREAK!” to signify that it is time to move to their next task. I hope that this will be a fun way to transition, which will kind of take the monotony out of the classroom. When students enjoy what their teachers are saying and how they are interacting with them, it improves student-teacher relationships. I try to be fun and on the same “level” with student as much as possible, so that they will enjoy my class and not have reason to act out. Additionally, by having a signal phrase, students know *when* they can move, and are less likely to jump the gun or get confused during a transition.

One of the most important things in my classroom is respect. I want the students to feel like my classroom is a safe and supporting place to be. To achieve this end, I will have firm boundaries related to teasing, inappropriate language, and negative self-talk. I will encourage students to think positively about their abilities and avoid negative statements such as “I can’t” or “I’m stupid.” Self-respect is just as important as respect of others, and I want my students to be nurtured in the classroom. Additionally, I intend to encourage a “growth mind set,” where

students feel empowered to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. To reinforce this, I intend to post encouraging and motivating posters, such as Figure 3, around the classroom.



Figure 3. Mistakes poster, (Quotemaster, 2018).

During group work, I expect my students to stay on task and work respectfully with each other. Group work is not play time, and I expect my students to understand this and behave accordingly. To facilitate group work and encourage appropriate behavior, I intend to walk around the room and check in on students. This will both facilitate answering student questions and display teacher “withitness”, so students know they will not be able to get away with being off task. When I find a student chatting or distracting their peers, I like to be a little light-hearted about it by saying things such as “Oh, we are all finished?” or “That is *really, really* interesting, but can we talk about it outside of class please.” Rather than being confrontational, it allows the students to laugh a little and diffuses a potentially negative situation. If that does not work, I would try reminding the student of the rule by asking them “are you being insert rule here?” Usually, the student knows they are not following the rules, and corrects their actions. Unfortunately, these strategies do not always work. Further discipline strategies in these situations will be discussed later in my management plan.

During teacher led activities, such as lecture, students should be quiet and attentive. To facilitate this, I try to stop inappropriate behavior quickly. Gaining student attention, waiting

for all students to get quiet, and giving the “teacher stare” to those who do not settle down are a good starting point. In the middle of lecture or a discussion, I like to walk around the room and address problems individually whenever possible.

Safety and legal requirements

Discipline and Consequences

I prefer to be straightforward with my students. Additionally, I take a “firm, but fair” approach to the classroom. I explain to students that any rules I set are intended to support learning and prevent disruption to the learning process. If a student is disruptive or breaking the rule I set forth, I use a reasonable consequence to remind the students of what the rule is. Additionally, I take a warning, reprimand, consequence approach. Upon first violation of a rule, students receive a verbal reminder of the rule. Upon second violation of a rule, they receive a quiet reproach and an explanation of the behavior I expect to see. I prefer to have a discussion with the student when a situation arises, rather than move straight to negative consequences. Talking to the student about their behavior and asking about what might be causing that behavior develops student-teacher relationships and shows that I care and am concerned about their well-being. However, when this is not successful, a third violation of the rule will lead to an appropriate consequence. Standard consequences begin with a call home to inform parents/guardians of the misconduct. If further action needs to be taken, the next step would be lunch time detention and final step will be a visit to the office.

In order to avoid purely negative consequences, I prefer to accentuate the positive by recognizing when a student is behaving appropriately and pointing it out. Sometimes I will call out in class to a student “thank you, so-and-so, for being on task.” Other times, I will walk by

and give them encouraging words or a thumbs up while they are working. Through positive reinforcement, many negative situations can be prevented.

Safety Rules and Procedures

Students will be expected to follow all school- and district-wide rules. For example, my internship school requires students to leave all cell phones in their lockers. Although I personally do not mind if students have cell phones, as long as they are not using them during certain parts of class, I will enforce this rule within my classroom. It is important that my classroom upholds the same standards as the school and district. Students in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District have a standardized handbook which outlines the expectations for the whole district, so there is little reason to expect that my students are not aware of what is expected of them.

Safety is an important aspect of managing a science classroom. Although I am currently in a math classroom, where there are very few possible safety issues, eventually I intend to teach science. Science classrooms need to have a strong foundation in hands-on laboratory activities. As such, it is important that students be aware of and follow basic lab safety standards. In order to ensure that students are aware of lab safety requirements, the first week of each semester will be reviewing lab safety protocols and will include a lab safety agreement. If a student fails to follow appropriate lab safety procedures, this is a no tolerance issue. It will immediately result in removal from the classroom until such point that the student agrees to adhere to lab safety protocols. Lab safety, especially when using chemicals, glassware, and sources of heat or flame are about more than the safety of one single student.

They can affect the whole class. I take lab safety very seriously and expect my students to do so as well. Figure 4 is an example of a lab safety poster I will hang in my classroom.



Figure 4. Lab Safety Poster, (Teachers Pay Teachers, 2018)

Planning and Conducting Instruction, Student Diversity, Engagement, and Differentiation

I plan instruction to allow as much interaction as possible. While there will certainly be times where I need to provide direct instruction, I prefer to create an environment of discovery and discussion, rather than simple lecture. In order to support this, I like to provide hands on activities where students must experiment and try new things in order to make discoveries about concepts. I believe that when students engage in the higher order thinking required to accomplish these tasks, they tend to be more excited, challenged, and engaged. Additionally, material learned in this manner has more meaning, and therefore “sticks” better. When instruction is simply lecture based, it can often go “in one ear and out the other,” creating student boredom and disengaging students from the learning process.

Teacher student relationships, Maintaining Appropriate Student Behavior

When you have positive relationships with your students, it builds trust and respect. Fostering positive relationships with students creates an environment where students are less likely to become disengaged from your lessons and, therefore, will be less disruptive during class. This can keep a class on task and running smoothly. Effective classroom management requires that your students trust in your ability to manage the class. By gaining the trust of your students, through a positive relationship with them, they will listen to you when you deliver instruction and engage them in educational activities.

Personal interest in students, Engagement strategies

In order to encourage positive relationships with my students, one of my favorite things to do is to have informal conversations with them. When everyone is working, I enjoy going from student to student and checking on how their work is coming along, and then briefly check in with how they are doing as a person. During the few minutes before class, when students are filtering in, I sometimes bring up something I have watched on TV or heard on the radio, to gauge my students' interest in things. Or I ask them what they have watched, read, or listened to lately. I also try to make myself approachable, so if they are struggling with something, they know they can come to me. If I notice a student acting out of the ordinary, I make it a point to engage them in a quiet discussion to make sure everything is ok with them.

Additionally, I tend to be the type of teacher who moves around the room a lot. I prefer not to simply stand at the front of the classroom during instruction. The benefit of this is that I can check in with students throughout the lesson and refocus students who become distracted. Moving around the classroom keeps my students more engaged and on task. It allows them to

see that I am watching everyone, and it removes the barrier that occurs when a teacher is only at the front of the room.

Differentiation strategies, Special Needs students

In order to address different learning needs, my first step is always to read any Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans. Being aware of specific student needs is essential in appropriate planning to meet those needs. Additionally, through observation and informal formative assessment, I can begin to assess the needs of other students who may not have specific education plans and address those needs accordingly. Some students require quiet working environments in order to complete their individual assignments, I provide the opportunity to work quietly in the hallway if this is the case. However, I make it clear to students that working in the hallway is a privilege that requires they stay on task.

Additionally, I provide information in multiple formats for those students who remember things in different ways or need reinforcement of concepts. I display notes on the projector during lecture, provide lecture notes for students to copy at their desks when necessary, and list objectives and coursework on the white board. Additionally, a consolidated calendar of assignments is provided on the bulletin board at the front of the classroom. This provides multiple ways in which the student can access organizational information. Instructions for assignments are delivered verbally when I hand out the assignments, and instructions are listed on the assignment paper itself whenever possible, to ensure students can reference the instructions when needed.

If I have a student who needs the assistance of a paraprofessional or Special Education teacher, I work with the appropriate person(s) to ensure assignments are modified to meet

their individual needs. Having been a paraprofessional, I recognize the need for collaboration with the Special Education staff when designing instruction for students with exceptionalities. Open communication with the Special Education department is essential to the success of exceptional learners in the mainstream classroom.

To address cultural diversity in my classroom, I try to learn about my individual students' cultures and values. I will be enrolling in a Native Alaskan cultural studies course this fall to learn about the different Native Alaskan cultures. I feel this will expand my understanding of Native Alaskan culture. It is common for teachers in Fairbanks to wear the traditional Yupik dress, called a Kuspuk (Figure 5), at least once a week. I hope to get a Kuspuk of my own, soon, to wear. In this small way, I can connect with some of my Alaska Native students.



Figure 5. Kuspuk, (Northern Threads, 2018).

Additionally, I am always interested in learning from students of other nationalities about what they hold dear. Including their cultures in my lessons provides an opportunity for those students to feel included as well as for their peers to learn something new. By embracing the differences in my classroom, all students can learn about tolerance and diversity.

Collaborating and communicating parents and educational stakeholders

Collaborating with educational stakeholders is integral to success with students. In order to facilitate open communication between myself and parents, I intend to send weekly e-

mail or paper communications informing parents of what their student will learn during the week. This will allow parents to stay informed and gives them the information necessary to help their students follow through with assigned work. Additionally, by making myself available through regular communication, I am fostering a collaborative relationship with parents. This will ensure that parents feel comfortable contacting me about any concerns.

I also intend to invite parents to come into the classroom to share their knowledge and experiences with the class. I believe all parents and community members have something they can offer to my students, even if it is as simple as showing their support for my students. By encouraging community and parent involvement in my class, I hope to create an environment where all students feel like they have a support system to encourage their learning.

Cultural and Community Resources/Connections

The following are some local community resources I feel I can use to the benefit of my class:

- University of Alaska, Fairbanks. For science classes, the science departments can be a great source of community volunteers to present in my classes.
- Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks. TCC is a good place to contact if I would like Native Alaskan Elders to come in as classroom speakers.
- The University of Alaska Museum of the North has some excellent resources for educators. This would be a great place to go on a field trip.
- The University of Alaska Large Animal Research Station would be a great place to take middle school science students during a life science unit.

- Alaska Public Lands Information Center has ecology related guided field trips.

These would be good for a middle school ecology unit.

Summary

This classroom management plan will be my jumping off point for classroom management. However, I expect that I will need to adjust and refine my plan based on student need and my experiences in the classroom. I intend to keep regular notes about what is working or not working, so that I can refine and adapt my plan. Student feedback will also be helpful in improving my classroom management plan. I intend to seek student feedback when necessary to ensure that I tailor my plan to what is appropriate and realistic in my classroom. By reflecting upon my classroom management and seeking feedback from others, I hope that my plan will improve and adapt over time and become better year after year!

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