

Classroom Management Philosophy

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Throughout my whole life, I had always been told that I have the makings of an excellent teacher. I was told that I had a way with kids, and that I was a good helper. However, I never asked myself, "How do they know?" I just went about my life knowing that somewhere within myself, it was my calling. It wasn't until the class, Classroom Management, where I was actually able to answer this question, or at least start to create an answer. This class has helped me come to realize my philosophy of management. It can be broken up in three key topics: 1) relationships, 2) organization, and 3) enthusiasm.

During last couple of summers, I have worked at a summer daycare with the same 50 kids every week for eleven weeks. Some of them were naughty, and some were very sweet. There was this boy, going into 5th grade, who was a behavioral hurricane. He had home problems and anger management issues, and he started seeing a therapist over the last school year. His parents said that they had yet to see any improvement. They also said that he was the definition of a problem child. When they would tell him to sit, he would stand, but when they took away privileges, he would like it. At times, he would even become violent. I will never forget the day that he ran away from the facility because he was so upset. After being suspended twice from daycare (which I didn't even know as possible), he returned and stayed for the rest of the summer. I would try to reach him every day, determined to find something that we could agree on and talk about. All he needed was someone who didn't see him as "the kid that ran away," "the kid who threatened the camp counselors," or "the kid who was suspended because he hurt people." But even when I reached out, he collapsed upon himself even more. I have never felt so

helpless. On the last day of work, as I was saying my goodbyes to my kids (and they really became my kids), some of the girls would climb on me and give me big hugs. The cool seventh grade boys would fist bump me, so I was feeling pretty good. I went to grab my stuff from the back room, and when I returned the boy was standing there in the hallway alone waiting for me. I remember giving him a grin and letting out a sigh. This was it. He looked to the floor, blushed, and said, "Thanks you for never giving up on me." A substantial amount of pride welled up within me. I squatted down so I was eye level to him and told him, "Of course, buddy." I gave him a fist bump and ruffled his hair, and left work for the summer. The book "Teaching with Love and Logic" focuses a lot on how relationships are necessary for any method of management to work. It says,

This intervention [that is, a personal and positive discussion between student and teacher] is based upon research that shows that a student's improved behavior or cooperation can be traced and linked to the personal connection he/she developed with a special adult. (Fay and Funk, 1995, 22)

I couldn't agree more. Relationships are the key to any success with students, because no matter how old they are, they still want to be loved. Even as a college student, I want my professors to like me and love my work. With regards to my management plan, a teacher-student relationship is crucial in learning the content and just enjoying school. This is so important in a science setting, a setting that most students dread. The only way students will learn in my classroom, is if they invest in the content. The only way they will invest in the content is through investing in the

personal relationships created with the teacher. Relationships are key to any success in the classroom.

The second key topic of my philosophy is organization. Wong and Wong emphasized that the summer before your first year teaching is very important to the success of your first year in class. If you plan your lessons and procedures before the first day of school, the stress and nerves will be significantly less.

Good classroom management does not just happen; effective teachers *plan* good classroom management... The effective teacher knows that student achievement will only occur when the students' work environment is organized and structured, so their potential can be nurtured." (Wong and Wong, 2009, 6).

Returning to my summer job experience, I was hired because I had a large background in science. Since it was a daycare, the employers were always looking for people to bring new life to the environment by adding interesting projects. Therefore, I was in charge of the science projects. We made homemade lava lamps, chalk, and many other interesting projects. However, the only reason as to why these projects were fun was due to the fact that they were well planned. I was not missing any ingredients, because I preordered them before camp started. I had all my rules and procedures for getting equipment pre-established to avoid a mad dash to the supplies table. I had the teams picked out if it was a group project. I even came up with several alternative methods just in case the experiment didn't work. It didn't surprise me whatsoever that whenever I got the kids for an hour or two to myself, everything ran smoothly and efficiently. This fact leads me to the conclusion

that students can tell if something is unorganized, and once they realize this, it is too late. They lose respect for the person in charge of them and act out. When the students see that their teacher has everything planned, they recognized that he/she is in control. This is why organization is key to classroom management. It brings about an air of respect. My students recognized that I worked hard on their lesson/project, and they saw that I wanted the project to go well. Therefore they respected my project and gave me the attention that I needed.

The final key category is enthusiasm. Student enthusiasm is essential for success in the classroom. When there is enthusiasm in a classroom, the students will not get bored and act out. Therefore it helps classroom management at its core. In order to increase enthusiasm, you have to present the information to them in an interesting way. I have heard from many education classes that making the engaging information is vital for facilitating learning. An easy way of doing that is to keep everyone on their toes. A teacher can do this by switching things up often. For example, since last week the students sat in circles and discussed in small groups, this week they will do a lot of work with their neighbor. Another example: today the teacher had the students come up to the board and take notes on the lecture, but tomorrow the teacher will have student led discussions. Little things like this can encourage engagement and enthusiasm in class. The article, "How to Keep Kids Engaged in Class," offers many interesting ideas that a teacher can integrate in their classroom in order to make the class more engaging. It has a top ten list of ideas to help teachers avoid dead time. Dead time is anything that interferes with student learning. This article is great, because it also gives information about grade level and

gives age appropriate modifications. (Frondeville, 2009). Another way that enthusiasm is important to classroom management is by making the information engaging for myself too. For example, when working on state changes in chemistry, I would have my student make homemade ice cream. Everyone love ice cream (even teachers)! Therefore, as a teacher, I am also able to look forward to end results. If I don't feel like lecturing one day, I can play a game, create a lab, or come up with a new activity that will give everyone a break from doing the same things. In this respect, project-based learning is so important, because it enables the students to deepen their knowledge on the topics discussed in class. Therefore, having a fun break from lecturing will not only deepen the understanding in the students, but increase the class enthusiasm as a whole was well. Now a day, teachers have so many resources at our fingertips. The site where I found the article above, *Edutopia*, is a prime example of and outlet for teachers today. Twenty years ago, sites like these didn't exist. It is important to take advantage of these resources in order to make the learning environment entertaining so that school doesn't seem like such as chore.

Classroom management it essential to the success of the class and will help ensure that everyone has a year of growth. Thinking about my personal classroom management plan has shown me that I have all the necessary components of an effective teacher, as long as I maintain a controlled and managed classroom. I will do this if I focus my philosophy on the three key topics: relationships, organization, and enthusiasm. With these key components, I believe that I will succeed in whatever class I teach.

References

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