

## Classroom Management Plan

I believe Classroom Management is the key component in any educational setting. I believe that if students are in a safe environment, then learning can take place. This doesn't necessarily mean punishing behavior problems but rather a combination of setting the tone in a class, preventing behavior problems with interesting and engaging curriculums and effectively including all students in the classroom so that their needs are met. Having the right environment for all students to learn is my major goal of implementing good classroom management--without it the students would not be able to learn.

## Philosophical Statement

I am committed to making my classroom a safe and challenging environment and engaging my students through the curriculum as well as getting to know them and interacting with them one-on-one. I believe that meeting the needs of my students is a very crucial part of my classroom. I want them to be comfortable with the other students, as well as me, so that there can be meaningful discussions and interactions. Talking will be common place in my classroom, along with group work. I want to encourage all students to participate in class so that they can learn from each other as well as me. I want to have a democratic and equitable classroom so that students can learn. I want to be a fair as I can be, so the students trust me.

I feel that I have a very patient and calm attitude with my class. I ask students about their life outside of class and feel that they respond in class even more, knowing that someone is paying attention to them. I want them to feel comfortable asking questions of me. I think my attitude towards the students is not overbearing or authoritative. I do not believe in forcing the students to do anything. I want to work with them in all circumstances so that we can achieve together and they don't feel like I am spoon-feeding them information. I want students to be a part of their learning. I want to motivate students to learn and keep their interest by using engaging curriculum. I want to involve students in rules about the classroom as well as what curriculum they would like to study. I believe if students feel they are involved in the workings of the classroom, they will be more motivated to engage in the class and in turn, learn.

## Room Arrangement

Walking through the door, students are hit with vibrant colors on the walls, natural lighting from the windows and an inviting sensation as they glide along the carpeting. They feel safe and welcome wandering to their seats in a big circle of tables. They can see their classmates as they face each other and glance from wall to wall looking at maps, art, famous people, different cultures and student work all depicted in colorful posters around the room. There is not a drop of white paint to be seen. The carpet on the floor is comforting to the student and yields a form of tranquility amidst the invigorating walls. As I start the lesson from my desk, which is also included in the circle, the students get out their journals and colorful pens to record today's lesson and their personal thoughts, questions or even art. I believe the set up of a classroom has a big effect on student learning and I hope that my classroom will be an environment that will engage my students in critical thinking, discussions and reflection.

Having the tables in a circle will create an environment rich in discussions. I think it is very important to engage students in discussion to try to draw out and challenge ideas and let the class learn from each other. No one is sitting behind the circle or on the sides of the room; the class enjoys the eye contact and facial expressions of everyone as they share ideas. Students can "create knowledge, not simply absorb it from higher authorities," (p. 439, Bigelow) in the classroom where personal experiences are shared and learned. I believe the circle of tables encourages discussion and in turn, students learn from each other.

I believe that students should be constantly challenged and provoked to think critically. I put an array of posters on the walls to show an outline of the year ahead. The posters cover the walls from floor to ceiling--there is not a speck of blank white wall--just as I don't want my students to engage their minds on blank white walls for fear that their minds might become the same--blank. I will use all the posters throughout the year and hope that they will engage the student's minds while sitting in class. Even if the students are not paying full attention and their mind is wandering, I hope to catch a few of them thinking about the posters inquisitively. I want to have thought-provoking pictures to invoke interest in the students whether it be artwork of different times, or pictures of people (men, women and all races and ethnicities) or landmarks throughout the world or just a black and white photo of the dust bowl.

I want supplemental materials for students to have access to for studying, writing or researching. I will have bookshelves in the corner where students can research and use resources supplemental to the textbooks. There will be a few computers for projects, reports and research, as well as use of applications to present reports to the class (i.e. PowerPoint). Students will also have access to the computer lab in the school where they can learn social studies as well as technology by integrating the lessons. This will foster a holistic-learning approach that I will strive to teach to my students. We will not be solely learning the facts of history, but will be integrating art, math, geography, science and psychology to deepen our understanding of our units.

I want to create an environment in my classroom that is conducive to discussions and groupwork. By arranging the students where they are facing each other, I believe this leads to a more intimate environment as well as a space where I can get to every student easily. I like to walk around the room while teaching, rather than staying in one stationary place in the front. If the tables are arranged as so, I can walk around, engage more students, and hopefully create an environment where students can talk and share ideas freely and comfortably. I am also a big advocate of groupwork and I show in my second map how the desks will "magically" change to accommodate groupwork. I would have all students sitting together with all the desks facing into the group. This will lead to discussions and will not let anyone feel left out of the group physically. I intend to use groupwork as a different instructional technique to include as many learners as I can--using multiple-ability tasks so that every level of learner can be an active participant and they can learn from each other.

My desk will be in the corner of the room, but used mostly for my administrative tasks. I will have a computer in which to keep grades and will have lesson plans, attendance sheets and miscellaneous paperwork organized there. I will take a seat in the "circle" to conduct lessons as well as moving around the room. I would like to have resources available for the students such as

dictionaries, atlases, and books pertaining to the unit. These resources could be additional materials that students can look through out of curiosity or of obtaining extra information on a subject. Of course, I would love to have a few computers in the classroom so that we could use them to enhance the curriculum—whether looking on my homepage for assignments to using them for new research or using them to type essays into Word. I also will have butcher paper and plenty of markers, colored pencils and crafts items in which the students can create presentations. I intend to involve the students in drawing, making, singing, rapping or making mobiles of the lessons and I want to be equipped in having materials for them to use and be creative. I would love to have maps around my room as well as posters of different cultures and peoples as well as different places. I will frequently put student work on the wall so students feel a "part" of the room.

### Classroom Rules

The best rule that I have heard and I would believe to be my attitude towards classroom rules is that I need a classroom where learning takes place, and if we can respect each other then we don't need any other "rules." I absolutely believe in keeping a safe environment where put-downs and name calling is not allowed—this also falls under respect. If I can have respect for my students as well as having them respecting each other, I believe this leads to a safe environment where learning can take place. I am not a stickler for gum chewing or eating and drinking as long as it does not interfere with learning and doesn't make a mess. I would like to give my kids the freedom to eat or drink as long as they are responsible for their trash and mess. If it gets out of control, I will let them know that the privilege will be taken away, right from the beginning. I also do not mind if students wear hats in class. To me this is an ancient rule and as long as the hat does not interfere with learning, then I will let them wear them.

I may try to create a class constitution if behaviors in the class are inconsistently out of control. I really like the idea of having the students involved in making their own rules and negotiating with each other which ones to put in the constitution. If the students are involved in making the rules, I believe they will be more inclined to obey them and the consequences that will be implemented will not be fought against. I would have the students write the final constitution on a poster board and hang it in the room. I would also send the constitution home to have the parents sign it and return it to me so that I can include them in what we are trying to accomplish in the classroom.

In terms of creating a safe environment for all to learn, I want to create an environment with positive and numerous student-teacher relationships. Especially in diverse classrooms where many students are from different backgrounds, I want to create an environment where students are not and do not feel that they are being treated unfairly. I do not want to label students or assume their academic ability on the way they look or act. I do not want the diverse settings to lead to situations where communication is not happening. I feel this is where behavior problems may arise. I want to create an environment where "teachers accept them [students] as individuals with unique and cultural difference; to respect, relate and like them; to listen and communicate openly; and the understand and honor their family, culture, language, and race." (Sheets and Gay, 1996) I believe to succeed in having a classroom like this it is necessary to have great interpersonal skills even more than classroom management skills. I want to create an

environment where I can weave the curriculum into m students' different lives and experiences. I want them to be able to share these experiences and relate them to the material we are working with. This is a major plus of a diverse classroom. Where we can celebrate differences and learn from each other.

I would also like to implement some class meetings where we can discuss what is working and not working with the class. I would like these to be like an open forum where ideas and suggestions can be discussed and hopefully implemented. I am very interested in learning what the students are thinking about and making the learning environment as much to their liking as possible. I think this dialogue is crucial in creating an environment where the students feel autonomous and in control of their learning.

I would also use class meetings to discuss whole-school rules. I would hope that the school in general takes some time during the year to discuss policies with the students to get student feedback. In my high school this year, there was class time assigned to discussing the issue of homework. The administration is taking the feedback of the students to decide how to solve the issue of students having too much homework. I believe that it is imperative to adhere to whole-school rules in order to have an effective policy in the school. I will try my best to follow the whole-school rules where they make sense for the safety of the students or for order in the school. If I do not agree with the school rules, I will be talking to administration to see if there may be alternative possibilities.

In addition to making a class constitution, I would like to send out a monthly newsletter or post one on the web so parents can see what is going on in the classroom. I believe if parents are involved in their child's school, the child will have more support at home and the parent can help with any issues that arise. I believe in involving the parents as much as possible.

If there is a consistent misbehavior problem, I will initially ask the student to talk to me after class. I will talk to him/her about the positive things they are doing in class and how I appreciate something they are doing, as in participating in class for example. I will tell them why their behavior is interfering in the class and have them meet with me later to make a plan of how they will be able to stop the behavior. In class, I will give them a warning and then ask them to move to the back of the room to work by themselves. I always want to keep consequences in line with the misbehavior. If the misbehavior continues, I will talk to the student and make a phone call home. I might also ask the parent to come into school for a meeting with the student. I think it is very important to involve the parents. I do not believe in throwing a student out of the room unless they are being harmful to others or me in the class—either physically or verbally. I believe that misbehavior should be addressed with the teacher and student communicating as much as possible. I feel that sending students to the "office" is overused.

### Classroom Procedures

I want to be consistent with my students in terms of Classroom Procedures. I always want to have the agenda on the board so they can copy it down in their notebook everyday as they walk in. On some days I hope to have a free-writing assignment so I can take role and they can be engaged and working on their writing. I will use interactive notebooks so students can do all

homework assignments in the notebook as well as take class notes in the notebook and staple in any handouts. The purpose of this notebook is to keep all class materials in one place so when they go to study for a test, they are not looking all over for loose papers. In these notebooks, students can show their creativity in designing a cover page for each unit as well as doing free-writes or reflections to the lessons and central questions right in the notebook. I will go around the room and stamp the homework each day it is due and will collect the notebooks every two or three weeks to grade. Even if the student did not get the homework done, they may lose a point because they did not have a stamp, but still has time to get the assignment done by collection time. By stamping the homework and not grading it, it adds consistency to the classroom but does not lead to negative feelings every day of having the homework graded.

In terms of wrapping up, I want to also have an essential question that the lesson is revolving around. I believe the students will understand where we are going and it leads to an effective wrap-up at the end of class. I want to make sure I leave at least five minutes to wrap up the lesson and reiterate the important points brought up that day. I will use different forms of assessment to make sure students understand the information. Whether by passing out a half-sheet and asking for "three points they learned today" to having a discussion around the main points. I may give out an unannounced quiz but not have it graded so I can find out where students are at. I would like to grade more on final essays that have drafts attached rather than standard tests. I want to make sure my students understand the material as well as using higher-order thinking skills to analyze, interpret or evaluate the material. I believe essays are more equipped to let the students express their learning. I would also like to give out assignments where the students can choose a medium to demonstrate their knowledge of a given subject or unit. By letting them choose their way of showing competence, the students have another way to express their learning and it will allow students that aren't a high level of reading or writing a chance to use other methods of creativity.

I would grade on class participation including attendance, homework, groupwork and tests and quizzes. I would love to have the students create a portfolio of their work in alignment with their notebooks so they can be graded on their improvement and competency with the material so it is not solely graded on traditional tests and quizzes. I would probably put homework at only 10% of the grade tests/presentations at 25% and group work at 25% of their grade. Group work is graded both at a group level but also at an individual level. I would like to grade as holistically as possible and I do not want students who are successful on tests, presentations or group work assignments to be penalized too much if they are not completing all assignments. My policy on late work will be that it is accepted but at a lower grade. I want students to learn, first. I do not want them to forget an assignment just because they missed the deadline. I want them to do the assignment and learn from it and if it is handed in late, their grade on the assignment will automatically go down.

### Positive Reinforcement

Instead of focusing solely on the misbehavior in the classroom, I want to focus on the good behavior and attitudes in my classroom. I will have the students fill out postcards at the beginning of the year with their address on them. I will use these postcards throughout the year to send positive feedback to the parents at home every week. I will focus on sending a few

postcards home each week. I want to acknowledge and encourage good behavior and academic success in my classroom. I think that letting parents know at home is another way to involve parents in the classroom as well as reinforce good behavior and learning by the students. I will make sure that positive post cards home will be given out for all students no matter how big or how small the accomplishment. I will also make some positive phone calls home as these have worked well for me this year. I think parents really appreciate positive phone calls home and it also sets up a dialogue between parents and teachers.

I do believe, however, in using rewards like stickers or stars, A's or praise in moderation. To quote Alphonse Kohn, "When rewards stop, people usually return to the way they acted before." I want my students to be intrinsically motivated and giving out rewards inhibits intrinsic motivation. "Students who are encouraged to think about grades, stickers, or other "goodies" become less inclined to explore ideas, think creatively, and take chances." (Kohn, 1994) I want my students to know it is okay to make mistakes and take risks in the classroom. I want to encourage my students by telling them specific feedback on an assignment rather than a star and a "good job." I don't want them to become dependent on my praise. I want them to be successful learners. As Dreikurs (1982) argues, "Encouragement, refers to a positive acknowledgment response to focuses on student efforts of specific attributes or work completed... Unlike praise, encouragement does not place judgment on student work or give information regarding its value or implications of student status. I want to focus on improvement and effort not just a final product.