

Descriptive Statement

This document has been developed to explain my beliefs about children and discipline. It also serves to explain my views about classroom management and how I intend to be proactive in dealing with students' behaviors. I have researched theorists and based my paper on what I have learned. I have developed some procedures which I would like to implement into my future classroom.

Philosophy of Classroom Management

"Top Ten Beliefs/Practices"

As I think about managing my students' behavior while still making my classroom a safe, secure learning environment for my students. I have been in classrooms where teachers were able to find this balance as well as classrooms where teachers have not found the balance. I used the theorists which we learned about during my Classroom and Behavior Management course as well as ideas I have picked up from various classrooms I have been in. I have developed a plan which I feel will be successful in finding the balance between managing my students' behavior and having a safe, secure environment.

1. **Students learn how to act responsibly when they do what is right and proper, regardless of outside influences.** Marvin Marshall created a discipline plan which focused on raising individual student's responsibility. He focused on internal motivation which is a stronger form than external motivation. When students learn to take responsibility for their own actions, inappropriate behaviors are reduced. Marshall recommends six steps to follow as interventions when students misbehave.
 - Unobtrusive tactic such as a hand signal or moving closer
 - Check for understanding

- Guided Choice (Students draw or write about their behavior. Students choose where to write)
- Self-diagnostic Referral (Addresses behavior, a more acceptable behavior, and 3 solutions that allow for acceptable behavior)
- Additional self-diagnostic referral (mail 1st and 2nd diagnostic referrals to parents)
- Final self-diagnostic referral (mail all three home and explain that any future problems will be referred to administration)

By following these steps, I will be helping my students develop responsibility without forcing them to change. I choose this belief because responsibility is a character trait which will benefit my students for the rest of their lives. No matter where my students go after they leave my classroom, if they will be expected to behave responsibly.

2. **Students should always be treated with dignity, even when they misbehave.**

Richard Curwin and Allen Medler developed a discipline plan which maximizes dignity and hope within students. This plan has been found to be especially helpful when working with students who are behaviorally at risk. Curwin and Medler claim that students are willing to protect their dignity at all costs. If I am working with a student who is acting inappropriately and I allow him/her to preserve their dignity, they will be more likely to correct their behaviors. For example, rather than yelling at a student in front of his/her peers, I can acknowledge their misbehavior and wait until I can speak with them in private about the issue.

Curwin and Medler also believed that when teachers give students opportunities to be successful, they regain hope. There are several ways to do this however; one way

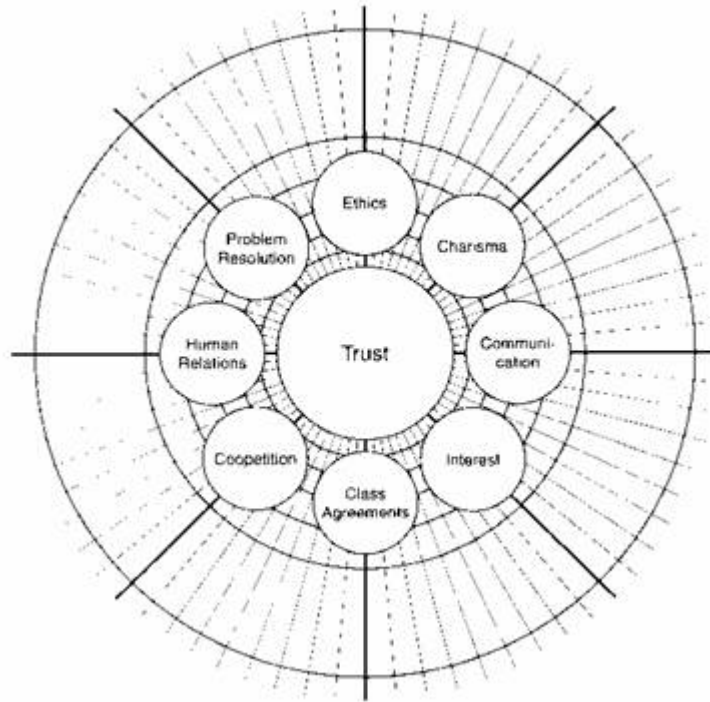
really helps students keep their dignity. When I grade papers, I need to be conscious of where I place the letter grade. I also need to give my students encouraging feedback, even when they were unsuccessful with the assignment. The more ways I can find to help my students regain hope and preserve their dignity, the less likely my students will be to misbehave.

I chose this belief because as a special education teacher, I will be working with students are considered "behaviorally at risk". I want to be able to manage their behaviors in ways that will not make them want to rebel further. I feel very passionately about treating my students like I want them to treat me. I would not appreciate it if a student confronted me in front of the whole class about an issue they were having; I would want them to speak with me privately about it.

3. **Misbehaviors can be reduced by interweaving behavior management**

throughout my teaching rather than using it solely as a corrective strategy. C. M.

Charles created an approach to discipline which he called synergetic discipline. He believed that behavior management techniques should be interwoven throughout everything that happened in the classroom. He created a sunburst which includes the areas that are crucial for successful classroom management. An example of the sunburst is below:



I chose this belief because when students see that discipline affects every aspect of their day in the classroom, it will help them understand that behavior affects all aspects of their lives. I also feel that students will be more likely to behave when they see that I place a high priority in classroom management. By interweaving classroom management techniques throughout everything I do in the classroom, I am showing my students that I feel their behavior is very important.

4. **Students have wants and needs that they need to have met before they are willing to behave appropriately.** Lee and Marlene Canter established a discipline plan which they called Assertive Discipline. They believed, as do I, that students needs and rights that they need to have met in order to learn. Students will come into my classroom with a wide range of needs and wants. The Canters put students' needs into three basic categories: extra attention, firmer limits, and motivation. They believed that teachers

need to provide the maximum amount of attention in the shortest amount of time when dealing with difficult students.

I chose this belief because I feel that in today's society teachers have to be aware of the home environment of their students. Maslow created a hierarchy of needs that goes along with what the Canter's believed. If I have students in my classroom who do not get any attention at home, they will likely misbehave to get my attention at school. I want to take a proactive step and spend time each day talking with my students, asking how things are going for them, etc. When my students see that I care about them and will give them attention without them having to misbehave, they will not feel the need to act out to get my attention.

5. **Parents should be informed and encouraged to become involved in their student's education.** Parents are vital to students' success in school. When students see that their parents value education, they are more likely to value education as well. As a teacher, I want to keep my students' parents informed on what is happening in the classroom, what to expect next, and any helpers I will need. I want to take the initiative to contact parents when their children do something really good so that when they see that I have called, they will not just assume it is bad news. Garland Hudson, a recent Manchester College graduate, explained during a conference that he takes an extra effort to call all of his students' parents during the first couple weeks of school. That let the parents know that he was willing to take the time to get to know their student.

Linda Albert created the "Five A's" strategy for working with parents during a conference. The five A's are:

1. Accept the parent without prejudice.

2. Attend carefully to what the parent says.
3. Appreciate the parent's efforts and support.
4. Affirm the child's strengths and qualities.
5. Affection for the child is made evident to the parent.

I chose this strategy because I firmly believe that parents are a key element in their students' success in school. I also realize that some parents do not value education but I want to make an effort to communicate often with my students' parents, ask for their input, and use their help as often as I can get it. As a special education teacher, I will have more contact with parents at case conferences. I believe that Linda Albert's "Five A's" strategy will be a great strategy for me to adopt when I am working with parents.

6. **It will benefit all students if I develop a positive community in my classroom.**

Nelson, Lott, and Glenn created a discipline style known as "Positive Discipline". One big aspect of their theory is classroom meetings. Classroom meetings are a chance for students to talk about any issue that might be having in the classroom. Students sit in a circle during the meeting so that everyone is viewed as an equal. They begin by complimenting each other then they move on to the agenda for the meeting.

I chose this belief because shows that I value communication with my students. I will have to spend a lot of time at the beginning of the year working with students so that they understand what I expect to happen during the meetings. It is important to me that my students feel the classroom is a safe place for them to be. Classroom meetings help establish the positive community because they allow students to be honest and work together with each other.

7. **My body language can positively influence students' behavior.** Fred Jones believes that teachers are most effective when they use their body language effectively. He feels that how teachers use their body language can be more effective than taking any other action. He believes there are five areas where teachers can effectively use their bodies. Proper breathing can convey strength and helps students maintain self-control. By taking deep breaths, teachers can calm themselves before dealing with misbehaving students. Eye contact is an effective way of letting the student know that you are aware of what they are doing and are committed to discipline. Physical proximity when the teacher moves closer to the misbehaving student. Often when teachers move closer, the misbehaving student automatically corrects their behaviors without any other interventions needed. Body carriage can communicate authority. When teachers use good posture and body carriage, it sends a message to the students that you are a good leader. Finally, facial expressions can encourage good behavior by showing enthusiasm, seriousness, enjoyment, and appreciation. Winking and smiling at students can show that the teacher has a sense of humor, which is the trait students most enjoy in their teachers.

I chose this belief because I have already found myself using body language when I have been working with students. Facial expressions are easy for me because I naturally show my feelings on my face. I have also found myself using physical proximity and eye contact with students who are misbehaving. I feel that body language works really well with students who are doing minor things like being off task or talking to a neighbor.

8. **Students should help create the rules for the classroom so they can feel ownership in the classroom.** Linda Albert believed in creating a Code of Conduct. The Code is an agreement between all the students and the teacher. Parent input is also

important in developing the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is developed by teachers, students, and parents envisioning their ideal classroom. A list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are listed on a chart, which is later signed and hung in the classroom.

I chose this belief because I want my students to feel ownership in their classroom. I feel like allowing the students a voice in the classroom Code of Conduct accomplishes two goals: Students will be more likely to obey the rules if they feel that the rules are appropriate and students are able to express how they envision the ideal classroom. I want my students to feel comfortable talking and being themselves. By me starting the year off by asking for their input, I am showing students that I value their thoughts and opinions.

9. **Students need to be taught how to be good problem-solvers.** One of the most important skills students can learn is how to be an effective problem solver. People encounter problems of all shapes and sizes every day, so students need to be taught how to handle those problems when they arise. Barbara Coloroso developed steps for students to follow in solving a problem:

1. Identify and define the problem.
2. List possible solutions. (At least 3)
3. Evaluate the options.
4. Select the option that seems most promising.
5. Make a plan and carry it out.
6. In retrospect, reevaluate the problem and solution.

These steps would be taught to students at the beginning of the year. The teacher would scaffold his/her instruction so that by the end of the year, students are able to work through this process by themselves.

I chose this belief because problem solving is not an easy skill to learn. It requires skills that students need to be taught how to develop however, the more students practice, the more natural it will feel for them. If students are able to learn how to effectively solve problems, they will be able to use the skill all throughout their lives.

10. **Consequences have to be consistent and understood to be effective.** Students should understand what consequences to expect, the progression of consequences, and why each consequence was chosen. If students do not understand why they are receiving a certain consequence, it becomes ineffective. Consequences must also be consistent. If a student gets in trouble on Monday for talking but does it again on Tuesday without getting in trouble, once again, the consequences become ineffective. Curwin and Medler offer several suggestions for how to use consequences effectively. Some of their suggestions are: select the most appropriate consequence from the list of alternatives, state the rule and consequence to the offending student, be private, do not get involved in a power struggle, control your anger, and sometimes it is best to let the student choose the consequence. The suggestion that I feel is the most important is that the professional teacher always looks for ways to help the student.

I chose this belief because I have been in several classrooms where teachers seem to have no control. I have often found that they do not have control because the consequences are either not understood or they are not consistently given out. When students learn that I am serious about them following the Code of Conduct, they will be less likely to

act out. Often students misbehave to simply see how far they can push the teacher before they give in. I want my students to enjoy being in my classroom but at the same time, I want to make sure they understand what I expect from their behavior and what will happen if they choose to not meet those expectations.

Procedures and Routines

1. Turning in Student Work

This procedure will be used when students are turning in either completed homework assignments or completed in class assignments. I will have a tray set up for each subject area, such as math. I will also include a checklist with the students' names down the side and the name of the assignment due across the top. If I had a primary class or several students who could not read, I would use pictures instead of words for the assignments due.

This is important for my classroom management because the students will know exactly what to do with their completed assignments. It will eliminate students asking me when to turn in assignments. It will also save me the class time to collect the assignments. The students will learn to be responsible for their assignments by using the checklist. They will also be able to see what is due by looking at the assignments across the top.

Students will be expected to turn in all of their assignments to the correctly marked tray when they complete them. They will then place a checkmark in the appropriate box next to their name and the assignment. Students will be expected to turn in their homework in the morning (see Beginning of Day procedure). They will also have various in class assignments and those should be turned in as soon as they are finished.

I will have to purchase trays for each subject area. I will then have to label them. If I am teaching students who are able to read, I will just use the subject name. If I am teaching students

who are not yet able to read, I will use pictures with the words so they are able to put assignments in appropriate trays. I will also need to have a clipboard with the checklist attached and a pencil. I will make a basic one with the students' names. Each day I will write the assignments in that will be due. If I assign something in class I will write it in while the students are working or I will select a student to fill it in.

2. Beginning of the Day

The beginning of day procedure will be what the students are expected to do when they get to school in the morning. Beginning of day refers to the time between when students arrive at school and when the teacher begins lessons. This procedure is important because it helps students get in the right frame of mind to begin school. According to Fred Jones, there is an average of five to eight minutes wasted during the beginning of the day. The amount of downtime during the beginning of the day lends itself to misbehavior. If the students have things to do, which they can do independently, they will be less likely to misbehave.

When students enter the room in the morning they will be expected to do several things. The first thing they should do is to unpack their backpacks and put their bags and coats in the appropriate place, like the coatroom. Secondly, they should give me any papers, notes, lunch money, etc. they have to turn in. Finally, students should sit in their seats and look at what I have listed on either the overhead projector or the chalkboard. These will be activities that students can complete without help from me. If a student has been absent, this will be the time when they begin working on their make-up work.

At the beginning of the year, I will create a poster to hang where students can easily see it that explains this procedure. I will take the poster down when the students no longer need it. Every morning, I will have to write what I want the students to work on. This will vary from day

to day, depending on what skills I feel the students need to work on. I will give the students choices about what they want to work on, as long as I feel the students can handle making appropriate choices. If I do not feel like they can, I will help them develop that skill during the year. I will also keep some trivia worksheets printed off that students could work on if they choose. An example of what I might write for students to complete on morning follows:

Good Morning!

1. Turn in anything to me that you might have.
2. Finish any homework you have from last night.
3. Write in your writer's notebook or begin silent reading.

3. Signaling for Quiet/Getting Attention

I will use this procedure when I want the students to be quiet and listen to directions. This will be a signal that I teach my students at the beginning of the year. I believe it is important to classroom management because I envision my classroom as a place where a lot of cooperative learning takes place. If my students are talking, even using inside voices, it would become a disturbance to other classrooms if I began shouting to get my students' attention. It also contributes to a negative feeling in my classroom which is the opposite kind of atmosphere that I want to create. Students will be taught what they are expected to do when I use the signal, turning off the lights, this will help them understand what I expect from them.

I will create a poster that says "When lights go off, voices go off" to help students remember what they should do when I turn the lights off. I will teach my students at the beginning of the year that I will turn the lights off when I want to get their attention or when I want them to be quiet for instructions. The students will be expected to get quiet immediately when I turn the lights off. I will then tell them whatever it is I need them to know.

4. Classroom Helpers

Classroom helpers will be students who are chosen for a particular job. I will rotate the jobs every week or every other week, depending on the age of my students. There will be a chart which displays the helpers' names and their job somewhere in the classroom where it is easy to see. If I am teaching in a primary grade classroom, I will have a job for every student. If I am teaching in an upper level classroom, I will have 5-10 jobs and have some students on "vacation".

This procedure is important to classroom management because it teaches the students responsibility. They will be responsible for their job, if they do not do it, it will not get finished. This procedure also gives the students ownership in the classroom, according to Fred Jones. I will choose jobs that are truly important to the classroom. When I allow students to have a part in taking care of the classroom; I am showing them that I value them as individuals.

I will train students at the beginning of the year in all of the classroom jobs. As the year progress, I will scaffold my help so that students are able to independently doing their jobs. They will be assigned a job on the first day of they week. It is their responsibility to make sure the job is completed. Students will place a checkmark in the appropriate box when they have finished their job. Some of the jobs will need to be completed every day while others might be every other day.

As the teacher, this procedure will require a lot of set-up work. I will laminate an index card with each students name on it. I have created a list of possible classroom jobs, see attachment, and will choose the jobs at the beginning of the year. I will also laminate a card with each of the classroom jobs on it. If I notice that one job does not require much work, or requires too much work, I will choose another job. I will either create or buy a Pocket Chart to hold the

index cards. Each Monday, or the first day of the week, I will switch the jobs. If I have students on "vacation" they will have jobs the next week. I will also rotate jobs so one person is not stuck with a job they do not enjoy for more than a week.

5. Dismissal

The dismissal procedure will begin about 10-15 minutes before the end of the school day. The time will vary depending on the grade level; primary grades will need more time than upper grades. Each student will have a MOOSE book at the beginning of the year. Each day, I will make sure students have the necessary things placed in their books. Students will then be dismissed individually to get their backpacks.

This procedure is important to classroom management because it gives the students closure to the day. If students know exactly what to expect at the end of the school day, they will be less likely to misbehave. The time will be structured so that students will understand that it is not a time to do whatever they want.

When I announce that it is time to clean up and get ready to go home. Students will clean up the area around their seat and place their homework on top of their table. Students will then get out their MOOSE books for me to check. Students will then put everything they need to take home into their backpacks when I dismiss them.

I will create the MOOSE book before school starts in the fall. MOOSE books are 3-ring binders that hold everything the students need to take home. The first folder will have important papers which are from the office or me. I will include a zipped pouch for students to carry pencils, lunch money, or other small items. The next folder is for work students have completed in class and can now take home. Next is a folder for homework which students have to turn in to me each morning. This section is a section of notebook paper for parents to write notes to me or

vise versa. Finally, I will include my newsletter, monthly calendar, and any important test results for parents.

6. Time Limits

Time limits will be given any time during the day when the students will have a specific amount of time before the next activity. I will use visual timers in my classroom. A visual timer is one that allows students to see the amount of time remaining before a change. Often this is indicated with a section of red that slowly disappears. When the red section is gone, students will be expected to listen for directions about what they should do next.

I feel that this procedure is important because it will help students see how much time they have left to complete an activity. Students tend to have a hard time understanding how long five minutes is but if they can see it, I believe it will help them. It will also help students who have a hard time handling unexpected change. Students will be able to understand that when the red is gone, it will be time to move on the next activity.

Students will be expected to look at the timer periodically. They will also be expected, after I have instructed them, to know that when the red is gone...their time is up. They will be expected to get ready for the next activity or listen for further instructions. As the teacher, I will have to purchase a visual timer. I will also have to teach the students what the timer is and when it will be used.

Implementation of Classroom Management Practices

- Classroom Rules/Expectations

I believe that students will be more likely to behave if they feel ownership over the classroom rules. On the first day of class, I will talk with the students about what they want to happen in the classroom. I will make three lists on the board: what the students expect

from me, what the students expect from each other, and what I expect from the students. I will write down every suggestion the students make. For the list, "what I expect from the students", I will ask the students what they feel is fair for me to expect. I will then add a couple suggestions of my own, depending on the list the students create. After they have finished with each list, I will then have them vote on what they feel are the most important. I will have them choose 3-5 items from each list. After school, I will make big posters to hang in the classroom. I will phrase all of the rules in positive language. I will have all of the students sign all three lists. I will explain that by signing they are agreeing to follow all of the rules on the list.

- Consequences

I believe in having consistent consequences but I realize that there will be situations where the chosen consequence will have no effect. I have chosen to create a basic list of consequences and then a list of alternative consequences which give me options. I will also talk with students about how I have the right to skip steps in the series of consequences if the misbehavior is severe. For example, if a student is harming someone else or themselves, I will remove them from the classroom. It would not be appropriate in that situation to issue a verbal warning first. My basic list of consequences is the following:

1. Verbal warning such as saying the student's name.
2. Written warning. I will write the rule which is being broken on a post-it note and place it on the student's desk.
3. Conference with the teacher. I will place a checkmark on the post-it note which lets the student know that we will have a conversation about the misbehavior sometime that day.

I will use this list if the student is not being disruptive. When I am able to talk with the student privately, I will make sure they understand what the rule is and why I felt like they were breaking it. I will then let the student decide (orally, drawing a picture, or writing) what they feel an appropriate consequence should be. This will help the student take ownership over their behavior.

When I have students who are being disruptive with their misbehavior I will use the following set of consequences.

1. Written warning, same as above
 2. Move the student's desk away from others.
 3. Conference with the teacher, same as above.
- Strategies to engage students
 1. I will plan hands-on lessons which allow the students to move around and be social.
 2. I will use various forms of assessment to allow for individual student's learning differences.
 3. I will use various different types of lessons (small group, whole group, and individual) during the school day.
 4. I will have built in time for students to be social and moving around to allow them time to be with their friends.
 - My classroom management plan is preventive because I have thought and addressed some of the issues I have already found in classrooms I have been involved in. I have implemented strategies that will provide support to students so that they will not feel the

urge to misbehave as much. For example, I will try to meet my students' wants and needs so they do not feel like they have to compete for my attention.

- My classroom management plan is supportive because I have planned ways for me to support my students wherever they need it. When I have discipline problems in my classroom, I will support my students by working with them to decide what an appropriate consequence will be.
- My classroom management plan is corrective because I will work with students to help them understand what a more appropriate behavior would be. I will also teach my students different character traits that will help them learn what appropriate behaviors are. When I am working with students on the Code of Conduct, I will ask students why the behavior is either appropriate or inappropriate to get them thinking deeper.

Conclusion

I have spent a lot of time thinking through how I want the students in my classroom to act. I want my students to be able to be children and have fun. I also want my students to learn both academics and skills that will help them become productive members of society. I believe that the plan which I have developed will lend itself to my goals and dreams for my future classroom.

References

<http://teacherweb.com/ca/sdsu/charles/image003.jpg>

This is where I found the picture of the Synergetic Discipline Sunburst.

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=7196>

This is the article which listed the classroom jobs which I included.

Charles, C.M. Building Classroom Discipline. 8th edition. 2005 Pearson Education, Inc.

27 November 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the new school year! I am writing to inform you of the way I am planning to manage my classroom this year. I believe in having a classroom where students learn responsibility so I will be developing classroom jobs. Your student will be responsible for finishing their job in the classroom. Jobs will be switched every week so that your student is not stuck with a job they do not enjoy all year long. I will also have various other procedures, included in this packet, in place in my classroom to assist your students in learning responsible behavior.

If this plan is going to be successful, I will need help for you. I am enclosing my email address and school phone number. I will be asking for some suggestions to add to our classroom Code of Conduct, see packet. I believe that you, as parents and guardians, can offer me great insight into your child, who is now one of my students. If you have any questions at all, feel free to contact me through either email or phone. I look forward to meeting all of you and having a great school year!

Sincerely,

Miss Dana Zehring

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