

DISCIPLINE PAPER

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Classroom Behavior Management

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Classroom management and discipline procedures and techniques are the most important decisions a teacher may have to make about her classroom. The styles used and the rules created will set the environment of the classroom for the entire year. It is important to think about the basic rules and procedures, how to develop the rules, and the consequences tied to the rules. Preventative strategies, supportive strategies, and corrective strategies should all be included in a complete classroom management plan. I subscribe to the teaching of Fred Jones, Kagan, Kyle, and Scott, and a little of the teachings of Nelson, Lott, and Glenn. Kagan, Kyle, and Scott describe a great philosophy of classroom management: “Discipline is not something you do to students,” (Charles 183). Discipline is something that a teacher helps the student learn. They advocate a win-win style to discipline. It should not be structured as the students against the teacher or vice versa.

It is important for a teacher to think about the age level of her students before creating the classroom management and discipline plan for her classroom. Different ages of students will require different strategies and rules. The developmental level of the child is an important decision making factor. This particular discipline plan will be designed for the upper elementary grades 4th-6th.

The basic classroom rules are a good starting point for beginning a management plan. According to Fred Jones, classroom rules should be both general and specific. Specific classroom rules are the actual guidelines, standards, and expectations for work and behavior in the classroom. (Charles 59). The basic general rules of my classroom will be broad concepts such as: be respectful to others, be respectful to property, treat others as you want to be treated, and do your personal best. These rules will be generated with the help of the whole class. It is important for the students to help brainstorm rules that fit into the general categories so they feel

ownership to the rules. Discussions that generate such rules will also help the students to think about the type of classroom they may want. This may also encourage them to be a positive force in creating the environment they picture.

Specific rules are also important. These rules will be generated in two ways. The students will help create some of the specific rules by brainstorming what they agree to do and not do as students of the classroom. They will list the things that they are willing to do as students. Such lists will be taken into account when creating the specific rules. Other specific rules will be teacher generated, but also discussed with the students. Specific rules will include: complete and turn in homework on time, follow hallway, bathroom, and classroom procedures, and complete classroom jobs. Some of the rules the students may brainstorm are: listen to the teacher, do your homework, and study for assessments.

The classroom procedures are as important as the rules. They should be explicitly taught to the students, and they should be practiced several times a day for the first several weeks of school. Practice makes the rules into routines for students. Students need procedures, so they are aware of the expectations. They tell the students what behavior is appropriate, and these “nonacademic routines...enable you to keep the classroom running smoothly, (Mignano Jr. & Weinstein 65). Procedures are important for the hallway, the bathroom, and the classroom.

Procedures for the hallway and bathroom are similar. The students will be expected to walk in two lines on the right side of the hallway. They will be quiet and respectful of the other classrooms in the building. They will keep their hands, feet, and objects to themselves at all times. The bathroom procedures are the same with some additions. They will enter the bathroom four students at a time. They are to do their business, wash their hands, and exit in a timely manner. They may get drinks, then line up in their lines and wait quietly. The students

will follow a 1-2-3 signal when they need to be reminded of the procedures by the teacher. The teacher will give visuals with her fingers. The first finger up signals the students to look at her and be quiet. The second finger reminds them to be in their proper place. By the time the teacher is at finger number three, the students should be ready to go. Any students still not following procedures on three will face a consequence.

Classroom procedures are also extremely important. Students need routines and familiar jobs. It is important to have procedures for the beginning of the day because students usually have several minutes to get settled. There are many things to do at the beginning of the day as far as housekeeping activities such as: turning in homework, attendance and lunch counts, and other transitional activities. Students need procedures for these morning activities because, “without clear, specific class-running routines, these activities can consume a significant part of the school day,” (Mignano Jr. & Weinstein 65). To solve this problem, the students will have procedures to follow as soon as they arrive at school. The first ten to fifteen minutes will be allotted for the students to put away their personal items, get settled, take care of jobs, turn in homework, and complete morning work.

The morning work will consist of different activities. It may be math review problems, a writing prompt or other thought for their journals, or a time for silent sustained reading with books of their choice. It could also be vocabulary work or spelling. It would always be work at an independent level so the students can complete it on their own. Other room procedures will include: raising your hand to address the large group and lining up by tables. All of the procedures need to be explicitly taught and practiced until they become second nature to the students.

Rules and procedures must have consequences for them to mean anything to the students. Both positive and negative consequences are important to the classroom environment. The students will be on a card system. The students will have a set of cards on a bulletin board. They all have green, yellow, orange, and red cards. They begin their day on green. The first offense against the rules causes them to flip their card to yellow. This is their warning card. It will be recorded by the teacher. The next offense causes the students to go to orange. This card signifies the loss of a privilege, such as recess. The next offense causes the students to move to the red card. This card causes a loss of a privilege and a note or call home to the parents. All changes in the cards will be noted by the teacher at the end of the day, and the cards go back to green at the beginning of each day. These records will be available to parents, and the tallies of their colors will be sent home every midterm and quarter. The records will also help with other consequences. If a student receives a total of six card flips in a week, the teacher automatically contacts the parents. Close contact with parents is very important. Most of the rules cause the cards to move in order, but a student can move directly to red if the action requires parent contact such as violence.

There will also be positive consequences attached to the card system. The students in the classroom will set goals for their own classroom behavior. The goals will be for the whole class. One goal might be that all of the students in the class have a green or yellow card for three days in a week. Meeting the goal will gain the students a positive consequence. They will earn Preferred Activity Time (PAT time), named and described by Fred Jones. PAT time refers to the minutes or seconds that students earn for good behavior. It allows them to gain time for the end of a day or week to do an activity of their choice. There may be games, group activities, or computer activities that could count for such time. (Charles 63). The PAT time could be earned

for reaching their behavior goals and at the teacher's discretion. The teacher may give PAT time for students following procedures well or going above and beyond the classroom expectations.

It is important for the teacher to address the rules, procedures, and consequences in careful ways. The students should be involved in the decision making process of the rules and procedures. They need to take ownership and responsibility for the rules and for their classroom. Student responsibility is reflected in the teachings of Fred Jones and Kagan, Kyle, and Scott. (Charles 61-62, 183). Students need to feel a connection to their classroom. This idea is greatly enhanced by the ideas of Nelson, Lott, and Glenn. Their discipline model emphasizes positive discipline. I can build positive discipline in my classroom by building relationships with students. They teach that, "Discipline problems become insignificant in classrooms where there is a climate of acceptance, dignity, respect, and encouragement," (Charles 113). Teachers need to show that they care about their students, and students will be more likely to attempt to please a teacher with whom they have a positive relationship. These ideas are important in all age levels of students, but it is extremely important for the upper grades. Those older students are striving for more independence, acceptance, and respect. Treating such students with respect will help them learn to respect others, and build the self confidence and independence they need.

My discipline plan also includes preventative strategies that occur in the way the classroom is run. Most of the preventative strategies come from Fred Jones, but there are also a few ideas from Jacob Kounin's "Improving Discipline through Lesson Management." Kounin's major focus to classroom discipline was on engaging the students in the lessons. When students are excited and involved in learning, there are fewer discipline problems, (Charles 25). Bored students act out as a way to relieve their boredom. A preventative strategy for classroom management that I will use is planning engaging, intriguing, student-centered lessons. I will

always strive to meet the needs of all of my students, and create successful opportunities for all. Jacob Kounin also stresses the importance of signal systems. Teachers give signals to students when they are teaching lessons. Giving signals instead of simply telling students what to do makes the lesson more intriguing and engaging, so the students are more likely to pay attention, (Kounin 3). They facilitate their students, and lead them to their own learning. The signal systems can help teachers with classroom management because as students learn the signals, they learn what to do. A teacher guides a lesson with signals.

Another preventative strategy for my management plan comes from Fred Jones. He stressed the importance of body language and room arrangement. Body language such as eye contact, proximity, and facial expressions all can help with classroom management. A teacher should arrange the room so they can “work the crowd,” (Charles 59). I will prevent some misbehavior by walking around the classroom during instruction, work time, and independent activities. This will allow me to see student work, look for problems, and diffuse them before they begin. The procedures of the classroom are also a good preventative strategy because they tell students how to behave. They know the expectations, so they are not questioning their roles and testing the limits. The limits are clearly defined and set.

The practice of procedures provides a supportive management strategy. The students may need to be reminded periodically about the procedures of a classroom. The consistency of the rules and enforcement also support the system that is already put into place. Another important supportive strategy is the involvement of the students in the discipline plan. When the students help create rules and procedures, they also decide to make an agreement. The students will create agreements with each other, themselves, and me to follow the rules so we can have the best class possible. One simple way to support the rules is to remind the students of their

pre-made agreement. The class will write a group agreement at the beginning of the year to hang in the classroom. Simply pointing to the signed poster will remind the students of the responsibilities they agreed to take on for the classroom.

The agreement reminders are also a corrective strategy depending on the situation. Other corrective strategies include earning PAT time, losing privileges, and contact of the parents. The students will have to keep their own records of their card flipping if they lose a recess. They will write what they did to deserve a card flipping to orange or red. These will also be kept with the records to be shown to parents at conferences, and they can be used in the parent contact if the cards are red. Another corrective strategy is going back to the procedures. Students who cannot follow procedures may need more practice. Practice can be done as a large or small group or individually.

All areas of the discipline and classroom management plan are important. The rules and procedures help the students know how to behave. It gives them the expectations. The consequences and strategies help the plan stay on track. Parental involvement is helpful, and I must have the right attitude as a teacher. This plan is built from the quote at the beginning, “discipline is not something you do to students,” (Charles 183). The students learn how to behave. When they make the choice not to follow the rules and procedures, then there are consequences they must face. Hopefully, the preventative strategies, teaching methods, and relationships within the classroom will prevent much of the misbehavior before it occurs. The plan is based on creating a good environment with structure and clear expectations, not punishment and corrections.

It will be important to share my plan with other people outside of my classroom. It is crucial that the parents of my students are aware of the plan. I will be sending a letter home at

the beginning of the year explaining the plan and rules that the class and I have devised. I will also be in contact with them about how their child is doing individually with the plan. I will also be sharing the plan with my administrator. It is important for the administration to support the plan. I will set up a meeting to discuss my plan with the principal, and they may come watch the plan in my classroom. While it is not crucial, I could share my plan with my fellow teachers. However, each teacher has a different style of classroom management, so they may not agree with my plan. It is always good to share ideas with other professionals, but not all of the ideas will be liked by everyone.

“Discipline is not something you do to kids”

Dear Parents,

I am so excited to begin this school year with a great start! The class has helped me devise rules and procedures for the year that we have all agreed to follow. Our classroom management plan is based on the quote above. I do not discipline your students. They will demonstrate their own discipline by following the rules and procedures. Our class has a card system, and they will be earning PAT time (both of which are explained below).

Classroom Rules:

- 1. Be respectful of others.**
- 2. Be respectful of property.**
- 3. Treat others as you want to be treated.**
- 4. Do your personal best.**
- 5. Complete and turn in homework on time.**
- 6. Follow the classroom procedures.**
- 7. Listen actively.**

Card System: Your child will have a set of cards. Each offense of the rules will cause a card to be flipped, and each colored card has a different consequence attached to it.

Green: Great Day, no problems!

Yellow: Warning card

Orange: Loss of privilege (usually recess)

Red: Loss of privilege and contact parents

Each time the student has a loss of a privilege, they will have to **write a record** of their activities that caused them to flip a card. I will also record the color of their cards at the end of each day. If your student has to flip more than **six total cards in a week**, I will be **contacting you with a report**. The record of their cards will be available at parent teacher conferences or anytime you call with a question.

PAT TIME: PAT time is preferred activity time. The student earn PAT time as a class for meeting behavior goals based on the number of cards flipped (they make the goals), and for going above and beyond the classroom procedures or expectations. They will use their total time at the end of the week for an activity they choose as a class such as a game.

It is important for the class to create a positive classroom environment in which all of the students can learn. I know your child will be on board with the program, and I promise to do my part as well. Your students have agreed to follow the rules, and I have agreed to several things as well.

1. I will plan engaging lessons so your children are not bored.
2. I will be aware of the students at all times, and I will be monitoring.
3. I will be open to suggestions from students and parents on ways to improve.
4. I will keep you as parents updated on progress or problems.

We will be practicing our classroom procedures daily for several weeks, and the students will have help remembering the classroom rules. Please feel free to contact me with **ANY** questions, concerns, or comments. I am open to suggestions!

Looking forward to a great year,

Miss Lange

Works Cited

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