Philosophy of Classroom Management

Some teachers excel at teaching students, while others excel at managing a classroom; but the good ones excel at both. Many teachers more or less neglect the managing part as they place such a high emphasis on the actual teaching part. In all reality, though, how well a teacher manages a classroom correlates to how much learning will take place in that classroom. With this in mind, it is very important that teachers establish and enforce rules, procedures and expectations that will allow learning to occur in their classrooms. The rules, procedures, expectations and consequences should be established and enforced in a way that treats the students with respect and allows a positive learning environment to take place.

As a person, I want to be treated with respect and therefore, I treat everyone in the same manner that I would like to be treated. According a personality test, I am an introvert, a sensate, a feeler and a judger. When combining these elements, I am basically an individual who lives by structure and order and enjoys building personal relationships. As a teacher, my philosophy of discipline reflects my personality as it promotes structure and order. I want my students to behave properly and complete tasks in a timely manner. My personality is also portrayed in my teaching style, which is based highly on student-teacher interaction. I place much importance on interacting with the students because I fully believe positive student-teacher relationships correlate to better academic success for the students.

At a young age, my parents instilled in me obedience and hard work. In school, I never experienced any discipline-related problems because I simply did what I was asked to do and to the best of my ability. Now, I realize that not all students live by these values; however, I still expect them to portray these values while they are in my classroom. Unless deemed necessary, I will not demand the students to behave appropriately and work hard; instead, I will respect them
in a way that promotes them to exhibit these behaviors. Although some classroom management theorists do not believe in consequences for poor behavior, I learned from my father—who also coached me in three sports—that there does need to be consequences. For example, if one of his athletes demonstrated poor sportsmanship, then he would receive some sort of consequence to go along with an earful. I feel that if there are not consequences, then students will have no reason to stop displaying the unacceptable behavior. As a wrestling coach, I have learned that some kids do not understand how to behave appropriately or work hard. With this in mind, I will have to first teach some students how to behave before I can expect them to act in this way.

I will not teach behavior through obedience—such as my parents did with me—rather, I will teach behavior through responsibility, such as in Curwin and Mendler’s Discipline with Dignity Theory. Obedience is not a bad teaching tool as it instills in students desired behaviors and actions. However, some students are not going to behave appropriately simply because their teachers told them to do so. Curwin and Mendler felt that obedience is works will in manners of health and safety, but when applied to most misbehavior, it is a short-term solution that students rebel. With this in mind, I am not going to tell my students to sit down, be quiet and pay attention as I know this approach is not the best way to prevent misbehavior. Rather, I will explain my rules for how I expect the students to behave and state the consequences for breaking these rules. I will not demand the students to follow my rules, but I will enforce them. If a student breaks a rule, he or she will receive a consequence and hopefully, the student will learn to follow the rule. I want the students to learn from their mistakes and then make better decisions. This approach relates to promoting the students to be responsible for their own behavior. The students will not behave appropriately because I told them to do so; instead, they will behave well because they know it is the right thing to do.
In order to help minimize misbehavior and maximize learning simultaneously, I will use Fred Jones’ principal of “Say, See, Do” teaching. Many teachers tend do lecture or explain their lessons for most of a class period, and then with the remaining time left they give the students an activity or some form of assessment to do. This type of approach gives the students cognitive overload, causes the students to sit passively too long and lacks student-teacher interaction. Not only are the students not learning as much, they also become abrupt to misbehave. With these issues in mind, I will use the Say, See, Do teaching strategy. This strategy focuses much on teachers interacting with students. It is exemplified in the sequence of teaching a point, giving the students an activity, teaching another point, giving the students another activity and so forth. As a math teacher, this exact style may be difficult to incorporate for each lesson, but using a variety of Bloom’s questions can be used as a substitute. Either style will keep the students engaged into the lesson and therefore, minimize misbehavior and maximize learning.

To go along with using Jones’ style of teaching, I also plan on utilizing his incentive system as a way to motivate students to perform well. I feel that it is alright to give students an incentive to behave well as long as the incentive has an educational value. Jones’ incentive system focuses around the concept of Preferred Activity Time (PAT)—time allotted for activities such as learning games and enrichment activities. In order to receive PAT, the students must first earn it. With these factors in mind, the concept of PAT definitely has an educational value and provides the students with an incentive to behave well. Also, if the students misbehave, the PAT they had previously earned can be taken away—which gives the students even more of an incentive to properly behave. I feel that middle school or junior high students will really enjoy this type of incentive system, and high school students will to as long the right activities are
chosen. I will definitely make sure the activities have an educational value as this incentive system will not work, otherwise.

In circumstances where these strategies fail to prevent misbehavior—such as mild and moderate misbehavior—I will implement Kagan, Kyle and Scott’s Win-Win Discipline approach into my own. A main aspect of their approach deals with identifying intervention strategies for certain types of disruption. The forms of disruption come from the following student positions: attention-seeking, avoiding failure, being angry, control seeking, being energetic, being bored and being uniformed. Kagan, Kyle and Scott provide symptoms of these positions and explain how to deal with each one. This definitely gives me an understanding of how to handle each situation. For example, if a student seems bored in class, I will not get upset with the student. Instead, I will try to get the student more involved in the lesson or assign the student a role within the class, such as a recorder or helper. With having an understanding of the different forms of disruptions, I will be prepared to properly handle each situation.

In regards to handling students who tend to display more severe misbehavior, I will mix Linda Albert’s cooperation approach with Curwin and Mendler’s Discipline through Dignity approach and work to provide these students with a sense of dignity. I will not only give these more behaviorally at-risk students dignity and respect, but rather all my students. If a student displays very alarming misbehavior, I will handle the situation as soon as it occurs. I may have a private conversation with the student, point the misbehavior out in front of the class, or send the student to the principal’s office—depending on the extent of the misbehavior. During the situation, I will do my best to keep calm and handle the situation in a positive manner—which is suggested by Linda Albert. She advocates that teachers be calm, not let negative emotions take over and handle this type of situation in a cooperative manner. In any situation of severe
misbehavior, I will not humiliate or provoke the student; rather, I will give the student dignity and handle the situation in a proper and cooperative manner.

The underlying theme of my classroom management plan is to respect the students and provide them with a sense of self-worth. My goal is to help them become responsible for their own actions—which produce good behavior and a positive learning environment in the classroom. One way that I can ensure this sense of responsibility in my students is to provide them with clear expectations and guidelines—which is achieved in my classroom rules and procedures.
Classroom Rules

I feel that respect is one of the most important life skills that a person should exhibit and therefore, it is the underlying theme of my classroom rules. With respect, a positive learning environment can emerge; however, without respect, chaos is more likely to occur. My rules also promote structure and discipline as I feel adolescents need to receive and develop both intangibles. The students will be expected to behave in ways suitable for school at all times. If students are unable to exemplify this type of behavior, then consequences will be issued. I expect my students to be prepared for class as I know that being well prepared can correlate to being successful in life. I feel that any student input is valuable, and that is why I expect them to participate in classroom discussions and/or activities. Lastly, I wrote these rules in a positive tone to reflect my willingness to be there for the students as a positive mentor. I want them to know that I will do anything to help them succeed not only in the classroom, but also in life.
RULES AND PROCEDURES

Rules:

1. Respect your peers, faculty and any guests of the school.
   - Demonstrate active listening skills when someone is speaking.
   - Be polite and considerate of others—bullying and vulgar language will be unacceptable.
2. Respect the materials of others.
   - Ask before using someone else’s belongings.
   - Return any used materials to their original owners or locations.
3. Be prepared for class.
   - Bring all assigned materials—unless, stated otherwise.
   - Be in the classroom prior to the bell—if not, a tardy will be issued.
   - Must receive permission from teacher in order to go to locker or restroom prior to or during class
4. Participate in classroom activities.
   - Contribute to any discussions, lessons, activities, etc.
   - A participation score will be added into your final grade at the end of the grading period.
5. Obey and follow all school rules.

What happens if a rule is broken?

1. 1st Violation: verbal warning from teacher
2. 2nd Violation: a write-up is issued and student receives detention
3. 3rd Violation: parent is notified and student is referred to an administrator

Homework Policies:

1. Should be done individually—unless, group work has been assigned.
2. Follow instructions and show all work.
3. Work must be organized, legible to read, and done in pencil—if not, the student will be required to redo the entire assignment.
4. Hand in assignments when due. Late assignments will receive a 10% grade reduction for each day late. After five days from the issued due date, if the assignment has yet to be handed in, then the student will receive a zero for the assignment.
**What happens if a student is absent?**

1. Anytime you are absent to a class you **must** come and see me upon your return. We will discuss any items that you may have missed and what you will need to do in order to make up these items.
   - If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, then the assignment will be due on the day you return.
   - If you are absent on the day an assignment was issued, you will have one day per missed class to turn in missing work for full credit. For example, if you are absent for two days, you will have two days from the day you return to turn in missing work. Additional late days will result in a 10% grade reduction.
   - If you are absent on the day of a test, we will discuss a time for when you can make it up. (If you know in advance that you are going to be absent for the test, see me and we will set up the test for an earlier date.)

**Grading System:**

- Grades will be accumulated based on the following assessments: Exams (40%), Quizzes (15%), Homework (20%), Project (15%), Participation and Attendance (10%)

- Grading scale:

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<td>C+</td>
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Classroom Arrangement

On the aspect of classroom arrangement, I am going to place the desks in rows to promote structure and order. This not only reflects my teaching style, as it will also allow the students and I to easily flow throughout the room. To promote learning and to reduce distractions, the desks are facing the main blackboard and away from the door. An overhead projector will be set in front of this blackboard as it will be highly used. A bulletin board is arranged on each side of the main blackboard. One board will contain classroom rules and procedures, emergency procedures, the grading scale and so forth. The other board will contain items related to math. The bulletin boards will give important information and also get the students focused on math. A round table is located on the left side of the room, and it will be used as a work station. If I see a few students struggling with a lesson, I will take them to this table and help them better understand the material while the other students work on the assignment at their desks. Another blackboard sets in front of this table, in case I want the students to work at the board. On the opposite side of the room stands a bookshelf, and it will contain books and magazines related to math. A computer station will be placed in the back corner of the room and therefore, the computers will not distract the other students. At the computers, students will use math programs to receive extra help in areas that they are struggling. My desk is located in the back of the room—which allows me to oversee the students, monitor the computers and keep an eye on the door. On my desk, will be a tray for students to hand in their assignments.
Procedures and Routines

1. **Beginning of the period**: Students will be in the room when the bell rings. If you were absent the day before, hand in any missing work and check to see what you have missed. Once you have sat down, take out the materials needed for class—agenda, homework, notebook and a pencil. Then, write down the daily agenda and in your notebook, start solving the bellwork problems. If you finish the bellwork before your classmates, please be patient and sit quietly in your seat.

   This procedure is important because it immediately gets the students ready for class. It gives them a task to do, while allowing me to take attendance and gather materials for the lesson. It also provides structure to the class as it is a daily routine. Lastly, it minimizes any *beginning of the period* distractions as the students have been issued a specific task to complete.

2. **Expectations for how work will look**: All work **must** be shown. This helps you and me both as if an answer is incorrect, we can go back and find out where the mistake was made. To go along with this, all work needs to be legible, organized and done in pencil. If it is illegible or disorganized, you will be expected to redo the work. It needs to be done in pencil because when you make mistakes, you can easily erase and correct them. All assignments must be labeled with your first and last name, period number, date and the title of the assignment.
This procedure is important because it lets the students know exactly how their work will be expected to look. It tells the students that mistakes are not only expected, but are also acceptable as long as the students are willing to correct them. It also develops organizational skills that will help not only in school, but more importantly, in life.

3. **Expected behavior during seatwork:** When seatwork is issued, you will be expected to sit quietly and do your own work. If you have a question, raise your hand and I will help you answer it. You will not be allowed to copy your neighbors’ answers. If this occurs, a write-up will be issued and you will receive a detention. If you finish the given assignment or task early, find a book from the shelf and read it for the rest of time allotted for seatwork.

   This procedure is important because students need to be able to solve problems on their own. They simply cannot always rely on someone else to solve their problems. It allows them to develop better critical-thinking skills—which they will definitely need to live successful lives. It also minimizes distractions and poor behavior and therefore, a positive learning environment can emerge.

4. **Late or make-up work:** If an assignment was due on the day that you were absent, it is due the day you return. If an assignment was issued on the day you were absent, you have one day per missed class to turn it in for full credit. For example, if you were absent for two days, you will have two days from the day you return to turn in the assignment(s). Each additional day late will result in a 10% grade reduction. All late work will receive
this same 10% grade reduction until five days have passed. At this point, if the assignment has yet to be handed in, the student will receive a zero for the assignment. Late or make-up work should be turned into the tray—according to your class period—that is on my desk. To find out what you missed if you were absent, come and see me upon your return. We will discuss any items that you may have missed and what you will need to do in order to make up these items.

This procedure is important because it makes the students responsible for their own work. They need to develop responsibility skills, so they can become competent and responsible adults. It also explains to the students that assignments need to be done in a prompt and timely manner.
Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Kyler Kearby and I am very excited about being your child’s math teacher this school year. I plan on making math class a very enjoyable learning experience for your child.

As a teacher, one of my main goals is to make my classroom a stimulating learning environment. In order for this to happen, I need the cooperation of your son or daughter. With this in mind, I have composed a set of rules and procedures that I will expect your child to follow throughout the school year. The main theme behind these rules and procedures is respect. I would like for your child to not only show respect to me, but also to his/her peers and the materials of others. It will be required for child to be prepared for class each day and to be active members of the classroom. I have previously discussed these rules and procedures with your son or daughter during class, and attached is a copy for you to look over.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by calling the school office or via email: klkearby@school.k12.in.us. In order for this to be a great year, I will need your input as much as your child’s. I look forward to working with you and your child.

Please detach and have both you and your child sign the bottom portion of this letter, so that I know you have read and understand my classroom rules and policies. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter!

Sincerely,

Kyler Kearby

I have read and understand Mr. Kearby’s classroom rules with my child.

Student’s name (signed) ____________________

Parent’s or Guardian’s name (signed) ____________________ Date ________

Best time and way to contact you: