Classroom Management and Discipline Plan

A great philosopher once said, “Education is not simply the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.” I agree whole-heartedly with this statement that the goal of educators is not simply to fill minds with knowledge, but also to spark students’ interest in lifelong learning. I simply love the depiction that can be seen in Mr. Holland’s Opus, one of the most inspiring films about a career spent in the profession of educating young minds. As the young Mr. Holland (Richard Dreyfuss) grew passionate about teaching, he was challenged by his long-time friend and principal to go beyond just teaching music. She insisted that young minds not only need to be filled with knowledge, but more importantly they must be given direction; she then hands Mr. Holland a compass. By the end of the movie, Mr. Holland had transformed a career which he once hated into a life calling that he loved so much that reluctantly and emotionally struggled to give up.

As an educator, there are so many opportunities to touch the lives of students in such powerful ways; however without proper structure and planning the learning process will become futile, lacking knowledge and direction. Throughout this brief reflection, I desire to lay forth my plan for managing a structured classroom for the purpose of filling: the minds of my students with knowledge, the heart of my students with an unquenchable fire for learning throughout their life, and, last of all, to give them direction in how to apply their learning and experiences into the life they choose to live. Without good management and strong, disciplined planning there can be little effective-
ness in the classroom. Therefore I seek to put forth this plan with a great deal of flexibility that I may learn and grow as my students do so that I may become a more passionate and effective educator who is willing and able to adapt to the circumstances at hand.

**Procedures:**

A major component in classroom management is recognizing and seeking to prepare the classroom for instruction. A list of guidelines should be given to the students and be fully explained in order for the expectations to be met. Another crucial component is proper preventative measures that limit distractions and misbehavior.

**Guidelines:**

As far as classroom guidelines go, I do not believe that too many are necessary. For, if an educator has too many rules, the students will most likely become confused and forgetful, and feel a great deal of legalistic confinement. Yet, the basic issues of respect for others, respect for self, and respect for school policy are a must. Here are my brief, yet concise guidelines for structure:

- Be *respectful* to everyone and everything
- Be *prepared* and on time; I dismiss you not the bell
- Do *your own* work; work must be completely for full points
- Raise hand to be called on before speaking; don’t interrupt others
- Obey *all* school rules; and use time wisely as given
**Student Involvement:**

In an effort to include my students in finalizing a list of rules and expectations for them, I will allow them to suggest any pertinent rules that they feel have either been left out or to challenge any rules that seem to be excessive and overbearing. Then I will assess the list and compile a final list of rules that I feel are necessary, trying to include any rules that I feel are appropriate additions from the students’ lists. Once a final copy is completed, I will have each student sign the rule sheet as a contract that he or she has agreed that the rules are appropriate, fair, and “do-able”; and that each student will strive to follow all rules that they and I have compiled. By allowing them to be a part of the decision-making process, I will most likely see the level of accountability rise as students will often suggest high expectations for their own behavior as well as that of their classmates. I will then post these in the room as well as distribute a copy to each student.¹

**Enforcement:**

I will enforce the rules of the classroom in several basic ways by using different philosophies of discipline. First off, I do not believe that yelling at students, using negativity, or being sarcastic in the classroom is ever effective or positive. Such behavior will only cause dissension or fear while stifling the self-esteem of that student as well as possibly hindering his or her ability to learn. One of the most important pieces of advice that many of my cooperating teachers gave me was that consistency is the key to discipline and management. “One must not show favoritism, and must always ‘stick to their guns’ when enforcing policies of the classroom,” said Kelley Miles of Pioneer Jr. Sr.

¹ This form of cooperative rule-making between the teacher and the students is an example from CM Charles’ theories of Synergetic Teaching and Synergetic Discipline, as well as the preferred practice of several teachers whom I was in observation under. (Charles 230)
High School. I couldn’t agree more with her advice, because I’ve experienced being a pupil in classrooms where educators are anything but consistent. This affects everyone in the room. Policies must be fair, and it is quite important that the teacher does not over-react to issues and make “mountains out of molehills.” Simply using systems of warnings, positive reinforcement, and consequences will ensure guidelines are followed.

**Techniques:**

Charles sets forth three techniques for dealing with misbehavior: **preventive, supportive, and corrective.** Preventive means making lessons that are enjoyable and worthwhile, being respectful and approachable, and considering student needs. Supportive discipline includes providing light challenges, making eye contact, reaffirming words, and giving nods, hand shakes, or high-fives. Corrective discipline deals with occurring misbehaviors that need to be handled more deeply, yet sensitively than a supportive gesture. This corrective approach requires meeting with the student, showing the student you want to help them abide by the rules, and remain consistent in administering consequences.

**A). Prevention:**

A successful educator must use **preventative discipline strategies.** This includes removing barriers in the classroom that either provoke student misbehavior or hinder a student’s ability to learn. One preventative structure of classroom management is the **room setup.** The room should be set up in a manner that allows the teacher freedom to move about in order to reach the proximity of each desk. Having desks facing forward in

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2 C.M. Charles, 230
3 C.M Charles, Synergetic Discipline: removing barriers and being energetic and interesting
single file rows will allow the students the best ability to have limited distractions. This will prevent excessive peering out of windows, talking to neighbors, etc. by not having desks in a group set up or facing the windows. This does not mean that desks cannot be re-arranged temporarily for group-work. Having the door shut can also prevent students from the distractions of individuals out in the hallway, but the issue of comfort of room temperature should be considered. C.M. Charles suggested that the teacher consult the students to find out what they consider to be distracting and attempt to remove as many barriers as possible. Ultimately, the teacher should make the decision but consider student input is a valuable asset. Charles also suggested seeking to be passionate and interesting, as this will motivate the students to work hard and not misbehave.\footnote{Charles, 219}

Using \textit{modeling} will prevent a lack of understand and provide a visual representation of expectations. Also using motion of arms and non-verbal language will enhance lessons. Using technology, personal/practical examples, and concrete examples will make abstract ideas more relevant and easier to imagine and visual. Music and “class chants” can be used to keep the student energized and active. Having a one minute brain-break where the students get up and stretch, move about to an energetic song, or say something to a neighbor will often re-energize students. Also, breaking up the period into different activities (2-4 different tasks) can prevent monotony.

Having an introductory chant will get the students started. I’ve incorporated what I like to call the \textit{“Celebration of Life”}, where each day a student’s name is drawn and the whole class stands up and claps for that student as they come up to the front of the room. Then, we all chant their name and say, “Hoorah”. That is a way to get the students ener-
gized and also make each student feel that they are appreciated and that life is a gift to be celebrated. (Handshakes and high-fives are also good ways to show support!)

**B). Supportive:**

In dealing with a misbehaving student, the most effective approach is often to meet with the student one-on-one after class, unless the situation demands immediate attention. In such cases, eye contact and posture are extremely important, as well as tone of voice. Teachers must appear confident and at the same time carry themselves in a manner that is not threatening. A teacher must remain calm and make sure that the tone of voice does not escalate, because often an argumentative student will follow the voice tone cues of the teacher. Also, once a teacher has become flustered and raises their voice or argues with a student, they often have lost control and the situation has caused them to lose **credibility**. In such cases where the teacher has “messed up” in this area, being willing to admit such failure will be one of the only means to remedy the situation, but will also show a great deal of humility that will serve to model to students how one should handle failure. Yet, the teacher should strive not to fall in this area.

A helpful approach is for the teacher to address misbehavior by either making **eye contact** with the students causing the problems, to **move in their direction**, and/or **gentle call their name** to ask them to stop their inappropriate action. If a student is talking or not paying attention, gently saying something like “did you catch what I just said,” “can you repeat to me what a classmate just shared,” or “what is your opinion on this matter” will often remedy this. **The goal is not to embarrass the student but to redirect their**

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5 Some theories of Fred Jones as described in Charles, 60
attention. After pausing briefly for the student to answer, the teacher should move on with the lesson rather than “planting” the attention on that student for any length of time.

Location of the teacher to student is a useful tactic as the teacher “works the room” or moves about the room during a lecture or discussion. If a student is found to be off task, then a slight movement and acknowledgement may cause the misbehavior to cease. If not, then the teacher should either verbally call the student to cease or move closer to the student in order to instruct them to get back to work. This sometimes includes getting in the near proximity of the student, and even pointing to the work to which he or she is to be doing. The teacher should, in no circumstance, lay a hand on the student to get them back to work.

When there seems to be apparent dozing off, lack of effort on homework, etc. the teacher may simply ask the students what could be more effective or why such things are happening. This approach will not only show genuine concern for the student’s opinion, but may allow the teacher to find an acceptable solution for the problem. Also, the student may have a reasonable answer that leads to a larger issue to be dealt with.

C). Corrective:

If a student breaks the rules, then he or she will face the consequences of those actions. Beyond those set consequences within the school handbook, I will set forth my own standard for those not detailed in the school policy or freedom of discernment given therein. The first offense shall be a verbal or written warning. The second offense will be conferencing, where I meet with the student one-on-one and give a possible detention with homework pertinent to our chapter of study. The third offense, I will send to the

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6 Some theories from Fred Jones, although adapted slightly
principal if absolutely necessary, but otherwise will seek to deal with on my own. Issuing a Saturday school and more, useful homework will be another option for a third offense. Final discretion of consequences is left up to the teacher concerning whether an offense more severe than one meriting a verbal or written warning only. Some situations may merit a visit to the principal upon the first offense. Such offenses are limited but possible, and are left up to the discretion of the teacher, pending school approval.

**Positive Reinforcement**

As far as positive reinforcement for behavior, I believe that students can and should be rewarded, randomly and arbitrarily as a class and as individuals. Such rewards might include some extra “work-time” for homework “in class”, listening to soft (conducive to learning) music while doing homework, having donuts, snacks, or candy provided to them, or receiving bonus points for participation in class activities and school spirit. I also am a firm believer in giving students personal encouragement, sincerely and positive and to each student. This encouragement will be in different forms at different times for different students, yet all students need this. These forms of encouragement might include a kind note to the student and/or parents, kind words on the top of a test or homework, verbal words of appreciation, etc. Giving students freedom and responsibilities can show them sincere trust, and often motivates them to behave more appropriately rather than in a way that breaks trust. The teacher should be prudent about how much freedom should be given.

**Student Achievement**
**Time on Time and Bell-work:**

Using some of the ideas of Fred Jones, I will require my students to do bell-work. I will have the students copy down the agenda for the day (written on the board) or I will pose a certain question to them that will be written on the board. They will also be required to take out their books and other materials. Jones suggests developing a routine for the students and giving them responsibilities, which I agree with; however varying that routine slightly will prevent monotony.

**Excellence in Work Standards:**

As far as homework policies, I will set this forth at the beginning of the school year. All homework must be done legibly and completely to receive a grade. I will not accept incomplete homework or homework that I cannot read. I will allow students to turn in late homework on the following day for five points less than full credit. This will ensure that the students complete the work properly as often as possible. I will allow students to bring me assignments left in their locker either after class without penalty, unless it becomes a habitual practice or I find out the student has lied about having the assignment completed. In these cases, a penalty of half credit will be enforced.

*I would rather the student do the assignment right and complete than half done without much effort* that way I ensure that they are “learning the material”. I will allow students to “revise” homework that they have done poorly or incorrectly in order to get a better grade, and more importantly to learn things that they might have missed. Using the ideas of Langford, I the homework is “all or nothing”. Students must have the correct
and complete answers to receive full credit on homework. If they fall short, then they must revise the homework. Incomplete is an automatic five points less as well as a “re-vise”. *It is more important to me that they master the material than simply “get a grade.”* Therefore, I want to give them the most opportunities to learn the correct material and be able to use it, so that they can retain it for their assessment and future use.

**Examinations:**

For examinations, I will expect the students to use full and complete sentences when answering short answer and essay questions (in paragraph format); this must be done legibly. Anyone caught cheating or attempting to cheat will receive an automatic zero on the assignment or examination without any chance of making up that particular grade.

**Retake:**

Once the examinations have been returned to the students, I will allow any student to come in the following morning an hour early to retake the examination. The test given will be the exact same material, and I will accept the higher of the two grades. This, I feel will allow every student the best opportunity to learn the material. It is much more important the student learn the content than simply “make the grade.” *(The students will also be given a pre-test which will allow them to know what they will be assessed upon before the unit is even covered in class. The pre-tests will be collected as a participation grade and kept by the teacher so that students cannot simply “memorize the pre-test”. The students will also get preview work-guides, in class coverage, in class review, study guides, review activities, and study sessions in order to be fully submersed with the material before ever assessed for it. Small daily assessments will be used as often as possible.)*
**Ideas for Homework Policy:**

The homework policies that I’ve described are influenced deeply by two teachers that I observed; Kelly Miles and Erik Riise who both used the Langford practices. The only major difference is that Ms. Miles had a policy of stamping completed homework each day, but not actually grading it until the end of each week or two weeks. That is not a bad idea, however if the student loses the assignment or the load builds up to quickly, this might not be a very efficient means except when using a workbook format.

**Collaboration:**

**Importance and Growth:**

I plan to share my ideas with student teachers, other faculty, and my administrators (as I seek their approval for my policies and ideas for improvement), as well as desire for others to share ideas with me. *Team-teaching or collaborative teaching is often the most effective way to gain new insights and stay up on the latest researched practices.* Acknowledging that not all educators will have the same philosophy and even as I gain experience myself over time, I will most likely see a change and adaptation to different ideas.

**Means:**

I will share these ideas through verbal discussions as I bounce ideas off of others, and if I find new techniques that are really effective in the classroom, then I might design a framework on paper so as to assist others in their effort to strengthen the learning environment of their classroom. I definitely plan to share my plans of discipline with my stu-
dents both verbally, through documented rules, and through modeling it in the classroom.

*I feel that modeling is crucial!*

**Bibliography**


Beginning of the Year Letter to Parents

Dear Parent(s):

My name is Gabriel Tribbett, and I will be your child’s social studies teacher during the course of this school year. I look forward to not only working with your child, but also working with you. I just wanted to put forth some expectations that I have of your child for this class, and hope that you will lend your full support in the effort that your child might learn to their full potential.

I don’t have many classroom rules, and feel that beyond the school rules, I’ve only included basic forms of courtesy and respect that each child should have learned by now. I hope to make this year’s classes both entertaining and engaging as I challenge the students to learn and expand their minds. I believe in the potential of every student and will work to give my complete effort in assisting every student in reaching the highest they possibly can. I ask that the students give me their best effort and that they might be willing to work toward becoming more knowledgeable and better prepared for life through the learning of relevant material in my classroom.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any issues concerning your student, whether it is an issue of the classroom or of personal hardship that may have an impact on your student’s well-being or ability to learn. I want to be a resource in helping you to prepare your child to be a life-long learner and to become a leader in the next generation of workers and citizens in our society.

Thanks so much. I look forward to meeting each of you and working with you.

Mr. Gabriel Tribbett

Homework Policy:
• All work must be fully completed and legible to receive any credit
• Late homework may be turned in next day for five points less
• Students will be allowed to redo assignments or retake tests the day following it being returned in an effort to receive a higher grade and better comprehension of material.
• Cheating will result in zero on assignment, and be subject to school policy

Classroom Rules:
• Be respectful to everyone and everything
• Be prepared and on time; I dismiss you not the bell
• Do your own work; work must be complete for full points
• Raise hand to be called on before speaking; don’t interrupt others
• Obey all school rules; use time wisely

Consequences
• Verbal or written warning
• Conferencing: 1 on 1; possible detention and extra work
• Send to Principal/Counselor if necessary; Saturday school/extra work

Grading Scale:
100%-A+ 89-88%-B+ 79-78% C+ 69-68% D+ 59% or below: F
99-95%-A 87-85%-B 77-75% C 67-65% D
94-90%-A- 84-80%-B- 74-70 % C- 64-60% D-

Student Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Parent Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________