*Classroom Organization and Management Plan*

"The secret in education lies in respecting the student."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

As I have moved from a substitute teacher to long-term substitute to student teacher, I have come to define and refine my thoughts on teaching. And while my classroom organization and management plan has been adapted from an elementary categorical ADS classroom to a gen ed 1st grade to a middle school resource room, my underlying philosophy has become more focused. My concept of classroom management is an amalgamation of several of the leading researchers on classroom management. Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler’s *Discipline with Dignity: A Classroom Behavioral Model* strikes a chord with me because it is centered on mutually respect between both students and adults. Curwin and Mendler’s thoughts are based on the twelve processes that form its foundation:

1. Let students know what you need.
2. Provide instruction at levels that match the student’s ability.
3. Listen to what students are thinking and feeling.
4. Use humor.
5. Very your style of presentation.
6. Offer choices.
7. Refuse to accept excuses.
8. Legitimize misbehavior.
9. Use hugs and touching in communicating with kids.
10. Be responsible for yourself and allow kids to take responsibility for themselves.
11. Realize and accept that you will not reach every kid.
12. Start fresh every day. (Curwin and Mendler, pg. 13-16)

The more I delve into the concept of Discipline with Dignity; I find that it is reflective of my overall teaching philosophy: “The secret in education lies in respecting the student. “ (Emerson)

From a classroom discipline perspective, there are far fewer behavioral problems when students are interested and engaged in learning. Cognitivism, at its core says that if work and learning are meaningful then students will be too busy in the process of learning to be disruptive and behavior problems in the classroom. Fred Jones’s *Positive Classroom Discipline Model* stresses that the correct ways to implement and use an incentive system in the classroom called Preferred Activity Time (PAT). By providing meaningful work, the students are engaged and responsible for earning their reward. PAT incorporates both behavioral and cognitivism in classroom management. Jones also suggests that the teacher should be “positive, be brief and be gone” by providing quick and effective help in the classroom when the students have problems even with meaningful work. It is important that all students are able to engage in learning in a way that is meaningful and effective for them. As a special education teacher, one the biggest components of my job is modifying and adapting learning instruction to the individual to make it appropriate and meaningful to that individual or group of learners. As such, I am always on the lookout to find better ways to teach a topic and reach a student.

Creating a community of learners is very important. My vision is that this community encompasses learners of all ages and abilities. It should be a safe place were all feel welcomed and a part of a larger family. To do this requires the following:

* Both teachers and students are active participants in the classroom
* Students need to contribute to and build on one another’s efforts to construct their knowledge.
* Discussion and collaboration between students and teachers is needed and necessary.
* Diversity in students interests and rates of learning is expected and respected
* No one has the exclusive responsibility of teaching. This is shared between the students and the teacher.
* All learners are potential resources for others.
* The teacher as well as other students offer guidance and direction for classroom activities
* Students regularly share and critique each other’s work. This can be done utilizing the computer.
* The process of learning is as important and sometimes more so than the product.
* Humor is an essential component.

While the teacher is the adult in the classroom and must ultimately be the responsible party, the role of teacher and learners is fluid with both learning from each other. Peer relationships are also important for creating a sense of community in the classroom. This community “values the contributions of all students, using everyone’s individual backgrounds, cultural perspectives and unique abilities to enhance the overall performance of the class.”(Ormrod, pg. 90-91)

Harry and Rosemary Wong also offer some very practical suggestions in their booksfor teachers, whether they are just starting out or veterans. In their new book, *The Classroom Management Book,* they write that “that the basis of classroom management lies in the procedures that form a management plan to produce the successful achievement of learning goals.” (pg. 6) Using this thought process; I have identified and defined rules and procedures for my classroom.

There are just three rules in my classroom:

* Be respectful – of each other and yourself.
  + Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself
  + Follow directions the first time
* Be ready to learn – attitude, books, notebooks, pencils, etc.
* Be ready to make mistakes – that’s how you learn.

Positive reinforcements of preferred behaviors and attitudes include the following: praise, smile, high five, preferred activity, candy/granola bar or a hug. I am a firm believer in grace and redemption. I offer students a second chance to change their behavior and/or attitude. By giving grace, the students have an incentive to improve their behavior and make better choices. Inappropriate behavior is handled in the following manner:

MINOR INFRACTIONS- Talking in class, throwing things around the class, not being seated, etc...

1. Non-verbal Warning – Positive Redirection
2. Verbal Warning – Positive Redirection
3. Verbal Warning – signature
4. Call home to parent/guardian
5. Parent/Teacher/Student conference
6. Discipline referral to the office

MAJOR INFRACTIONS- Disrespect, Fighting, Obscene language, etc...

1. These merit automatic referral to the office
2. I will telephone parents to inform them of the write up that afternoon.

The school has a Positive Behavior Intervention Support PBIS with clear expectations of behavior. Reward coupons are given for the weekly drawing. If a student receives less than six signatures for the quarter, they may attend the PBIS celebration at the end of the quarter.

In *The Classroom Management book*, the Wongs point out that “When students do something because no procedures have been taught, they are erroneously accused of being "discipline problems" in the class. If fact, students can only be responsible for their behavior when they know what the procedures they are accountable for.” (pg. 9) It is therefore incumbent on me, as the teacher, to establish and consistently use classroom procedures. Here is a list of some of my policies:

* ENTERING CLASS-
  + Come into class prepared to learn and with a good attitude.
  + Sharpen all pencils and throw away all trash before class begins.
  + Sit down quietly.
  + Get out planner to be checked
* DURING CLASS-
  + Raise your hand to be addressed or to ask a question
  + Do not get up to sharpen pencils or to go to the trashcan. These things should be handled before or can be handled after class.
  + Show respect for yourself and others.
* DISMISSAL-
  + The teacher dismisses the class.
  + Clean up your area.
  + Throw away all trash when lining up.
  + Be quiet when lining up.
  + Walk into the hallway in an orderly fashion.

Each class has their own routine depending on

what we have to do before/during/after their class.

* TARDIES/ABSENCES/MAKE-UP WORK-
  + If you are tardy to class, come in, and place your note on the teacher's desk. Be seated quickly and quietly.
  + If you are absent from class, you are responsible for obtaining assignments and notes when you return. Check for assignments on the assignment board. Worksheets and any additional handouts can be obtained from the make-up folder. (You have five school days after an excused absence to make up any missed work.)
* TURNING IN WORK-
  + All tests or other gen ed. assignments will be turned in to the bin on the teacher’s desk.
  + Your name, the date, and the title of the assignment will need to be on the right-hand corner of every paper. If the work is for another teacher, please use their procedure for name and date.
* EMERGENCY DRILLS-
  + Students are to follow the instructions given to them at the beginning of school.
  + FIRE DRILL- Students are to line up calmly, walk down the stairs, and exit the building. They are to face the road with their backs to the building.
  + TORNADO DRILL- Students are to line up calmly, enter the hallway outside the room. Students are to get down on the floor and cover their heads.
  + TRESPASSER ON CAMPUS- We will address this policy in class.
* GOING TO LOCKERS/LIBRARY/RESTROOM/OFFICE/ETC.-
  + Students are only allowed at lockers at specific times which constitute their restroom breaks.
  + After completing classwork, students may ask to have free time.
  + Bathroom requests will be handled as they are requested. Please do not interrupt my class to ask to use the restroom, wait until I have finished the lesson and have assigned the work for the class.
  + Office visits are at my discretion. Everything should be taken care of prior to coming to school.
* CLASS DISCUSSIONS-
  + Discussions only work if we respect one another and allow each person to talk without interruptions.
  + The teacher is the discussion leader unless otherwise noted.
* TESTING-
  + Absolutely no talking to other students during a test.
  + All tests will be put directly to the correct bin.
  + Any materials needed for the test will be provided by Mrs. Archinal prior to testing.
* CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS-
  + The door is to only be answered by Mrs. Archinal unless otherwise directed.
  + Students are to remain working while a visitor is in the classroom.
  + Students are not to speak with other students who come into the classroom.

Communication between home and school is another important component of a teacher’s job. One primary communication device is the teacher website. Assignments and other information need to be updated and maintained on a timely basis – anywhere from daily to weekly depending on the context. Emails and phone calls to parents are also very effective ways to connect with each other. If parents or guardians do not have access to email or phone, notes sent home is another time-honored communication device to utilize. Open dialogue is crucial to relationship between teachers and other stakeholders – students, parents, guardians, administrators and other community members. If language or mode of communication is an issue, alternative ways and forms of communication will be adapted.

The resource room setting also requires extensive communication between special ed teachers and gen ed teachers. As a resource room teacher, I need to not only know the gen ed curriculum, tests and project but also how to modify and adapt them for the individual student. I can gather this information from other teacher websites, emails and face-to-face conversations. I also need to monitor how well my students are progressing with short and long-term gen ed assignments. One way to handle this is to establish an assignment wall in the classroom that has both long and short-term assignments listed on it. This could also be done on the teacher website and projected on a smart board. An on-line presence gives students, parents and fellow teachers a one-stop place to find all of the assignments that are due.

My classroom is a reflection of my philosophy. There are different areas that allow for a variety of types and styles of learning. Each student has an individual work space that can be grouped for small group activities or separated for private study. There is a whole group learning area that includes a rug and access to the smart board. The quiet reading area is for the necessary down times. Head phones, stability balls for chairs and other sensory tools will also be incorporated. The room has four desk-top student computers and iPads with keyboards for each student that are used for learning. The computers on the teacher’s desk are for the primary use of the teacher. There is also a smart board that is easily accessible to the students and staff. Apple TV also allows for the incorporation of iPad apps and more teacher mobility in presenting lessons. The walls have the PBS charts, learning aids/posters and student art work.

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Student Desk

Teacher Desk

Group Table

Book Shelves

Teacher Curriculum Resources

Computer

Sofa

Beanbag chair

Windows

Smart board

Doors

Small book case

Student lockers are located in the hallway outside of the classroom.

Floor Lamp

Rug



Group Lesson Area

Technology Area

Teacher Area

Student Work/Personal Spaces

Quiet Area