

Classroom Management Philosophy

EDU 300

Morgan Pandolfo

University of Mary

Abstract:

This paper discusses various classroom management strategies discovered through research based textbooks and personal experience. A variety of ideas and strategies to improve the overall management of a classroom are discussed as well as preparing for the first day of school, daily lessons, and certain behavioral issues.

A teacher's worst nightmare is a classroom full of confused, disengaged students or a classroom full of destructive behaviors. Making good instructional strategy choices, properly designing curriculum to maximize student learning, and using effective management techniques will provide effective classroom management right from the start (Marzano, 2003). Management can be classified into three different categories: preparing for the first day of school, each day of school, and specific behavior challenges.

Walking into my empty, barren classroom for the first time will be overwhelming but also very exciting. Through my practicum experience and reading information on classroom management, I have learned that so much more goes into managing a classroom than simply just controlling a student's behavior. A simple factor that contributes to classroom management that should be considered before students arrive on the first day of school is how the desks are arranged. If I am given desks instead of tables, I will arrange the students in pods because it not only gives a more relaxed feel to the classroom, but calling on tables during transitions instead of individuals takes much less time and allows me to move more quickly to the next task. For daily rotation activities like Daily Five and Daily Math, each student will be assigned a number. For example, I'll say, "Numbers 1,2,3,4 are on word work, 5,6,7,8 are on read to self." This information will also be displayed on the board so students can see which station they are supposed to be at. Each student will also have a math journal, writing journal, and a learning folder. Considering organization, I would like each student to have a mail box as well as a folder that goes to and from school every day. This helps parents keep track of their child's school work and provides a simple communication line between teacher and parent. The downside of the folders is that not all students remember to bring them back to school.

I am strong believer in visually representing information in order to have a constant reminder as well as quick reference. I will have my classroom beliefs and procedures posted on the walls for all students to read every day. Fay and Funk (1995) discussed the idea of providing students with choices in order to maximize learning and cooperation, so I would hold a class meeting at the beginning of the school year and allow the students to provide input on what a positive learning environment looks like to them. Ultimately, the teacher decides the rules of the classroom, but having students develop their own rules with teacher guidance not only increases accountability, but lessens the power struggle that may appear in the classroom. Along with classroom procedures and beliefs, I would like to have the agenda of each day posted on the wall. This lessens the anxiety that some students may feel about the upcoming activities and may ease transitions because the students know what is coming next.

Each day presents its own challenges in managing a classroom effectively. A few everyday ideas that I would like my students to get into the habit of using are raising hands, not blurting out answers, and keeping their hands to themselves. These simple strategies will be taught on the first day of school and reminded throughout the year. Specific ways to combat talking out of turn is to use tongue depressors to call on students. I saw this in my practicum classroom as well as in Marzano's text. Another strategy that I saw in my practicum classroom was a method of formative assessment that checked for understanding of all students by a simple statement of "give me a thumbs up if you understand, sideways thumb if you need more practice, or a thumbs down if you do not understand." A strategy for getting student's attention was a simple flick of the light switch. This was very effective in my practicum classroom. Another interest strategy that I would like to implement is the concept of a learning buddy. Each student was previously assigned a classmate to converse with so whenever my supervising teacher would

say, “Ask your learning buddy,” the students knew exactly who they were supposed to talk with. I liked this because no student was left out of the grand conversation and it allows for different points of view to be shared.

Certain behaviors will arise in my classroom that distract from student learning. A few of these include disruptive, defiant, aggressive, bullying, inattentive/hyperactive, and anxious behavior (Zerpoli, Melloy, 1993). These behavior problems could benefit from early intervention strategies. From my practicum experience, my teacher used “fix-it plans.” These consisted of meeting with the teacher to discuss the problem behavior, talk about why the behavior was occurring, and what can be done to fix it. The student would then take the paper home for his or her parents to sign and return it to school the next day. I thought these plans were useful because it made the student think deeper about why he or she behaved a certain way. For example, it could have been for power, fitting in with peers, revenge, etc. I am a big proponent of bullying awareness so whatever I can do to make students more aware of bullying behaviors, the better. I feel that all problem behaviors can be lessened through establishing a genuine relationship with the student. Using strategies from Love and Logic such as giving students choices and simply listening to them could increase the level of respect within the student-teacher relationship.

Inattention and hyperactivity are a common occurrence and something I can do combat these would be to provide students with brain breaks. This means that I give them breaks during the school day to release some of that built up energy. A strategy I learned in my practicum classroom that can carry over throughout any behavior issue would be putting the consequences in the student’s quality world. For first grade, a simple 5 minutes of no recess was enough to make the student rethink his or her behavior.

On the other hand, what I decide to teach as well as how I decide to teach the material can influence the attention of my students. Marzano and Pickering (2011) state their text that student engagement is related to interest, enthusiasm, zest, vitality, satisfaction, and pride. All I need to do to increase student's interest is make connections to their interests. Standards only tell me what I must teach; they do not tell me how I must teach. I can use student interests to fuel my lessons and still have the lessons aligned to the standards. When I see the students losing interest, I either need to increase my enthusiasm or, again, give them a brain break. A simple stretching activity or a song could bring them back into the lesson.

Overall, my classroom management ideas will focus on making sure every student feels valued and safe. A learning environment where safety and value are lacking is not a learning environment at all. Implementing strategies from Love and Logic (1995), Marzano and Pickering (2011), as well as personal experience will give me a great start to learning what works and what does not within my first years of teaching.

References

Fay, J., & Funk, D. (1995). *Teaching with love & logic: Taking control of the classroom.*

Golden, CO: Love and Logic Press.

Marzano, R., & Marzano, J. (2003). *Classroom management that works research-based strategies for every teacher.* Alexandria, Va: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R., & Pickering, D. (2011). *The highly engaged classroom.* Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.

Zirpoli, T., & Melloy, K. (1993). *Behavior management: Applications for teachers and parents.* New York: Macmillan.