CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Adam Chaussee

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 Classroom management is quite possibly the most important part of being a teacher. So much goes into managing the classroom, and it is extremely important to have every part of it planned out carefully. My philosophy includes many different aspects of teaching and classroom management, the first part of my philosophy focuses on the parts of classroom management that I feel are the most important. The next part is a daily plan that I plan to implement in my classroom. Next, the environment of my future classroom will be discussed, and I will explain how the setting will help me teach. Finally, I will give my views on rules and procedures.

 There are many important parts to managing a classroom but there is one thing that stands above the rest when it comes to building a healthy learning environment. This is, of course, building relationships with the students. When you build a good relationship with your students, great things happen. A lot comes down to a matter of respect. If you, as a teacher, respect the students like people, they are more likely to respect you back. For example, If you have a very authoritative teacher who makes the decision at an early point in the year, that it is either his or her way, or the highway, the students are more likely going to act out in class and demand the attention of the teacher. Where as if a teacher treats the students as people, and gives them a voice in the classroom, they are more inclined to follow directions and be more civil in the classroom.

This type of classroom is known as a love and logic classroom, and exactly how I want to run my classroom. Jim Fey’s book, Creating a Love and Logic School Culture, provides great examples of how to create a classroom full of respect.

Another extremely important part of managing a classroom is having a daily plan to keep everything in order, and also keep the students busy. If the students are kept busy, there are less opportunities for them to become bored and feel the need to act out and be disruptive. In this portion of the paper, I will set out a plan for what a period would generally look like in my classroom.

 I plan to have a bell work assignment at the beginning of class every day just to get the wheels turning, and to keep everybody busy while their classmates are still flowing into the classroom and finding their seats. An example of something I would do is to write out some questions about a current event and ask the students to relate it to what we have been discussing in class. For example, we could look at the similarities and differences of the Syrian refugees and the Jewish refugees during WWII. We will use these answers later on during the class as we begin the lesson part of the class so the students have material written down in front of them that they can bring up during a class discussion. I believe that this will help the students be more active and involved in the classroom.

 I think that in teaching government and or history, it is important for the students to be knowledgeable about what is happening in the world around them. Having the students present on current events is a great way to do this. My teachers in the past have gone about this in several different ways. Some have just given bonus point opportunities for students who will bring in an article and present it to the class. Others have made them an assignment. The best way I have seen it done is a combination of the two. My 12th grade US government teacher gave me the idea of what I am going to do in my class. What he did was assigned each row of students a day of the week to give a quick summary on an article that they found in front of the class. The students were required to do 10 of them throughout the semester and after that, they got a bonus point for every other one that they did after that. It ended up being about 8 extra points at the end of the semester, which isn’t a ton, but it does give some incentive for the students to keep looking into what is going on in the world.

 I understand that this process does take some time out of the class period, but I feel that 10 minutes or so is definitely worth it to keep the students thinking about what is going on outside of their lives. Now for how this will fit into the class period, I think that it would be best right after the students complete their bellwork.

 After the students are done with the current events it would be my turn to go onto the lesson. Depending on the lesson plan and what we are covering I will probably be in front of the classroom for the rest of the period. I plan to combine traditional lectures with a lot of prompting questions to keep the students involved, and classroom discussions.

 The setting of the classroom is an area that I feel is often overlooked when talking about classroom management. I think it is very important in impacting how well a student will learn in the classroom. I want my classroom to be very open. I want every student to feel comfortable with his or her classmates and me. To make this happen, it all starts with what I said earlier about building a relationship with the students. I also plan to use a lot of small group discussions while I’m teaching so having the students talk with each other on a regular basis will increase how comfortable they are with their peers as well.

 This transitions into how I want to set up the desks in my classroom. With all of the discussions I plan on doing, I think it would be best suited if I had the desks set in pods of 4-5 depending on the space and how many students were in the class. For the first few weeks I would use a seating chart just so the students become more comfortable with the other people in the class, not just their friends. I plan to change up the seating chart on a regular basis so that they are sitting with different people. After a while of being in the seating charts and getting to know everybody, I will eventually allow them to sit where they would like. This would only happen of course if the students can handle sitting with their friends. If it gets out of control and it starts to be a disruption for the rest of the class, then I will assign another seating chart.

 With the rest of the classroom, I want to display a lot of different things. I think it is really important to display student work. This is a good way to show examples of good work so the students see what is expected of them. It also builds the confidence of the students when they see their work displayed for the rest of the class to see. A former teacher of mine had a fantastic idea that I would like to build on. He somehow acquired a door from a refrigerator that had stopped working in one of the teacher offices and he propped it up in the corner of the room. When he got a project or a paper that he thought was really well done he would hang it up on the fridge for a week, he would of course ask the student if he or she wanted on there before he did so. I just found that this was a great way to display exceptional student work. And a good example of the ripple effect as well.

 Developing a comfortable classroom setting will definitely help me teach because the students will want to learn more, and lets be honest it all boils down to how they feel. If they want to act out they are going to, but if I can impose a setting that allows them to be interactive, and build up a mutual respect in the classroom the odds of that happening goes way down.

 Rules and procedures are a huge part of classroom management but also one of the toughest to get right. Every single class is going to act differently. Some classes will be able to handle certain situations much better than others so it makes it challenging to have just one set of rules to use universally between classes. With that being the case, I plan to give each class the opportunity to write their own rules, with some guidelines of course. I believe that giving the students a voice and a choice in how the classroom is being run, it once again builds that respect that I am searching for. It also makes it easier to enforce these rules if the students are the ones who come up with them. It is a lot easier for me to remind them of the rules that they wrote, than it is for me to try and enforce my own onto them. on the other hand, if it was I making the rules, I would key in on one word and that one word covers just about every situation that could happen in the classroom. The word is respect. Being respectful covers such a wide range of topics, whether it is using a phone, talking while I am, having a disagreement with another student, or cheating on a test.

 As far as enforcing the rules, it all depends on the circumstance and how often the situation is taking place. Many situations especially first time offences can be solved with a simple conversation before or after class. For those students that need more attention to fix the disruptive behavior, it may come down to having the student come in and spend some extra time with me after school so we can talk it out and figure out how we can change the behavior. If the behavior continues we may need to make contact with the parents but only as a last resort.

 Overall my Classroom management philosophy focuses on building a healthy learning environment with an emphasis on building relationships, and giving mutual respect to each and every person in the classroom. These things will run my classroom and I will constantly be reinforcing these ideas.

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