

Classroom Management Philosophy

Haley Krueger

University of Mary

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When I use to think about classroom management, I use to think about how I am going to keep my classroom focused on the topic I am teaching and also control their behavior. I thought about how I have worked with children in an after school program for over five years, and have never had any problems getting them to listen and follow directions, that there should not be a difference when it comes to a classroom during the school day. After I started this class and getting some experience teaching in a classroom, I found out that classroom management is much easier said than it is done. My first day teaching in the classroom did not go smoothly at all, the children were out of control, they did not listen to me, and they did not respect me as a teacher. I had many second thoughts about becoming a teaching. I finally had a talk with my practicum teacher about what she thought would help and strategies to use. The one thing that she stressed to me was that classroom management was not easy, but it was something that had to be personal (Delparte, 2014). With this paper in mind I thought about things I would want to stress in my own classroom and was able to come up with my classroom philosophy. The three topics that I would like to focus on in my classroom philosophy would be student engagement, controlling the classroom, and connections with the students. Personally I think that these are the most important when it comes to classroom management.

Marzano talked about engaging the students, in chapter two of *Classroom Management that Works* (2003). Specifically Marzano talked about five strategies to help fully engage the students; effective pacing, using physical movement, demonstrating enthusiasm, humor, and positive student teacher relationships. Throughout my practicum I found myself trying to use all five of these strategies. I would apply them by transitioning from the student's desks to the carpet, using humor to make the students laugh and feel a connection with the teacher, and

demonstrating enthusiasm about teaching the students. For my practicum, I was in a first grade classroom and learned very quickly that the students could not sit still and pay attention for very long periods of time. The first thing that I found that worked out well was pacing the lesson so that it did not go too fast. I would make sure that the students were able to keep up with what I was teaching, by not moving the lesson along too fast. I would also make sure that the lesson did not go too slow, so that students did not lose interest in what was being taught. The second strategy, using physical movement, I found very useful to transition around the room during my lessons. When the students would move from one spot, to another spot it gave them time to refocus on the lesson, and also provided them with a short brain break. If I felt that the students were having a difficult time sitting still and paying attention I would try to do an activity to get them moving and a short break from learning. One strategy my practicum teacher taught me was to do *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* with them three times, each time getting faster as we went. This helped get the blood flowing, which allows more oxygen to flow to the brain. The third strategy, demonstrating enthusiasm, shows the students that the teacher is excited to be teaching. I would also try to start a lesson with a personal story about myself. This helped show the students that the lesson can be connected to real life and helped get them more engaged. Along with enthusiasm, using humor helps the students get engaged and laugh along with the teacher. I feel that Professor Lamb helped demonstrate this very well throughout the course. To provide us with a better understanding of certain strategies, Professor Lamb would play video clips, which related to current shows that we knew. This helped relate the strategies to real life and also provided humor throughout the lectures. Lastly, having a positive student teacher relationship I feel is one of the most important. I feel that students should see their teacher as a friend not an enemy. They are going to respect a friend more than they are going to respect someone that they

do not have a relationship with. By applying Marzano's five strategies I feel that I will be able to keep my classroom engaged and ready to learn.

My next major classroom philosophy, that I feel is very important to apply, is keeping control of the classroom. When the teacher is able to have control of the classroom, lesson flow more smoothly and the students are in an environment where they can learn better. Throughout this semester I have learned that controlling the classroom involves more than just creating rule for the students to follow. It is important to talk with the students about what they feel is important to do while in the classroom and provide them with an understanding of what the teacher feels is important procedures in the classroom. Once the students and the teachers have an understanding, together they can create a procedures chart with a few short, broad rules that the class should follow. In my own classroom, I would set up a point system. This would allow the students to receive points when they are following the procedures the way they should be. Once the students reach a certain point value they would have a reward, such as, a party, extra recess, or something of their choice.

Along with the procedures for the students to follow I think it is also important to set up a routine. By creating a routine for the students to follow, there will be in control of their actions in the classroom, and be able to show that they know what they are supposed to be doing. Every morning the students should know what they are expected to do and be able to follow through with doing it. In my practicum classroom, every morning the students would come in from outside, hang up their backpacks, hand their folders to the teacher, making their lunch selection and then finding their seats. Harry K. Wong (2009) talked about in his video about the importance of procedures. Welcome the students and have them repeat a welcome back to the

teacher. By providing your students with an understanding of the classroom procedures and repeating it with them every day, they are going to learn them.

Another important strategy that I feel that Harry Wong brought to our attention would be placing a hand in the air and waiting patiently for the entire class to have their own hand in the air and waiting for their instruction. All of the Bismarck Public schools that I have been in use a strategy similar to this. They all put a different spin on it, to go along with their school theme. One school, whose mascot was a tiger did a paw in the air, the teacher holds half open fist in the air and waits for the rest of the students. The school I did my practicum at did three fingers in the air, which represented their Roughrider Three; respectful, responsible, and safe. This is a great strategy for getting all of the student's attention quietly, so that the teacher does not have to shout and talk over students. Another very effective strategy that I have seen done is offering the students a reward for being the first pod, or group of desk, quiet and ready to do an activity. My favorite one I have seen was a teacher who had a chart in the front of the class with the pod numbers on them. Once the teacher picked a pod of desks that was quiet and ready to listen she would move a sock to that pod's spot on the chart. The students at the pod would then cheer because they rocked their teacher's socks off. Using these types of positive reinforcement give the students something to work towards.

My final part of my personal philosophy would be student teacher relationships. I think it is very important to develop good, strong student teacher relationships in order to have good classroom management. I think that the Love and Logic applies very well to having good student teacher relationships. The five steps for guiding student to solve their own problems (Love and Logic) is one I feel that I use very often. I like students to feel that they are independent and I also feel that it helps them change their behavior more when the ideas come from them

personally. At the after school program I work at, BLAST, I like to have talks with the student about their behavior and together we figure out a plan for improving it. Once we are able to come up with a plan we talk about when we are going to start it and how we are going to go about it if the student does not follow through with his or her plan.

The one approach that the author talks about in Love and Logic Experiment #6 I really thought connected well with how I would apply it in my own classroom. When the student enters class with a negative attitude and does not want to work. Instead of being it up in front of the entire class the teacher walks up the student and whispers so that just that student can hear them. The teacher calmly tells the student that she notices they are having a bad day and to take a minute before starting the assignment. When the student responds with a negative response, the teacher calmly asked the student to try and walk away. I feel that this is a great way to show the student that the teacher does care about his or her feelings and that it is not a bad thing when they are having a bad day. It shows the student that it is important to keep working through their bad days.

Throughout this course I have figured out many different strategies to achieve good classroom management. From applying some during practicum and working with children after school I have been able to find some that work very well for me and some that do not work well for me at all. I naturally have a very loud voice, so having to raise my voice louder than it already is, does not get me anywhere. I have seen it to intimidate the children more and have them shy away from communicating with me. So, rather than having to raise my voice I have found raise my hand to be much more useful. I feel that this has helped me with all three of my classroom management philosophy the most. I want my students to feel comfortable enough to be able to approach me and as ask me questions, I also want to have control over the classroom,

but allow them to feel that it is also their classroom and not just mine, and lastly I want them to feel engaged in my lessons, so that they can learn the most possible.

References

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