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Classroom Management Plan

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### Classroom Management Plan

In the classroom, to guarantee that any type of order will be enforced, there needs to be some management. This is not to say that the students are meant to sit-up straight in their seats, hands folded in front of them on their desks, eagerly and quietly learning. No. Classroom management should consist of mutual respect between the teacher and the student: the teacher respecting the students enough to show them they are not thought of as children, and the students respecting the teacher enough to put in effort and thought. Effective classroom management plans are built off of consistency, preparation, respect, and procedures.

High school students, as much as they yearn to be adults, are still developing individuals. They need guidance, patience, and respect. At their core, they all have an internal drive to learn. This drive may not be to learn the particular content in classes, but it is a drive for knowledge nonetheless. Most students will learn the material presented just to pass the class and move on; however, in the process of doing so, they truly retain the information that is relevant to their lives or is simply interesting. While most adolescents would rather lie around and sleep, they also thrive off of learning something, a skill, a tidbit of information, a trivial fact – anything that piques their interest. Within the boundaries of school and the requirements necessary, they need motivation, they need consistency, they need instruction. But they should also be free to explore subjects and content, find a forgotten path within the realms of the Vietnam War, or a hidden

gem through the land of genetics. They need to be thinking critically, so that they will have those skill later on in life, in work or with their families. It is also seen that young individuals learn better when they are able to teach peers the material grasp, and when they are able to use many different senses to learn the material.

There are many different theorists who have delved into the world of classroom management and have come up with their own specific theories on how a student should be taught and managed. These theories range from constant positive reinforcement, discussions on personal feelings between peers, constant surveillance, etc. There were two individuals, specifically, that resonated fairly well with the philosophy that has been presented above. These two are Fred Jones and Alfie Kohn.

Fred Jones worked at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and at the University of Rochester. He was the head of the Child Experimental Ward at UCLA, where he worked specifically with children diagnosed with emotional disorder; however, he did not develop his classroom management plan until he started working for the University of Rochester. He wrote a few books about this particular plan, which then led him to continue his research on classrooms. His management procedure was based off of two different systems: PAT, or Preferred Activity Time, and positive reinforcement. PAT basically ensured that the students would have fun while being taught and the positive reinforcement was, well, just that. It contains simple techniques of rewarding the students for acceptable behaviors, in the form of extra points, letters home, or stickers (Brittanica, 2017).

The second theorist was Alfie Kohn. Compared to Fred Jones, Kohn's theory is pretty much the opposite. He does not believe that instruction has anything to do with external motivations: it is all intrinsic. He truly believes that the students should be given more autonomy

over the work that they do, that they need to learn for themselves because they simply want to learn. The one thing that Kohn stresses is respect for the student. That led into his belief that it is the students' curiosity which should ultimately build the curriculum for each subject. All of this motivation and learning should come from within the student. Kohn does not think very highly of positive reinforcement or standardized testing; this is because both cause the student to lose sight of the content presented, and to focus instead on the prize at the end (Milnes, 2011).

Going into the classroom, students are expected give their full focus to the content of that day, but not necessarily always to the teacher. This means if it is a day in which the teacher must lecture, the students are expected to listen respectfully, ask questions, and contribute thoughtfully to the class. If it is day in which they are doing individual research, they focus on their research. If it is a day in which they are conducting a lab, they focus on the instructions given and the content to be gained from doing the lab. Students are expected to come ready to learn, but if there is an issue that would prevent them from doing so, they need to be open with the teacher to let him/her know. They need to take responsibility for the outcome of their day, in that they work with the teacher to work around any issues that interfere with learning. Students are expected to respect each other and the instructor each and every day. Students are expected to remain within the classroom, except when a trip to the bathroom is necessary. They should not be constantly running in and out, however. They will be allowed to go when needed, by simply signing out and taking the bathroom pass, but it should be clear that they are to respect the educational time allotted for them; if the privilege granted is abused, then there will be consequences.

The classroom itself should feel open. The students should not have to feel as if they are being crammed into a room. There should be posters that are not too distracting, but educational and interesting: they can even be a part of a teaching piece at some point. The environment

should be one of learning; books of different content for intrinsic learning or piqued interest, interactive models or diagrams, labs for experimentation, showcased articles of the week pulled from a scientific journal or magazine. This showcased article could even be picked by the students. Because it is supposed to be a learning environment, this does not mean that it should be absolutely quiet at all times. There should be conversations between students about the material presented, debates over whether or not a particular method or process is the most correct, and discussions about controversial issues within the subject area.

These expectations should be clearly stated and displayed by the teacher at the beginning of the year. It can be done by writing it all out exactly in the syllabus, or simply discussed within the first week of classes. Teacher will proceed with these procedures patiently, allowing the students to learn what is accepted and what isn't. For example, students are allowed to sit in a desk, at a lab bench, or even on the floor when learning is taking place, but it is not accepted for them to run around the classroom fooling around and hurting fellow students. A binder with the syllabus in it could be located at the front of the room, and if at any point, a student is unsure of whether his/her action is acceptable, he/she is able to go and look it up.

In order to instructionally meet the academic goals of the students, it is imperative that the content is relatable and relevant; another strategy is to find ways to make the information interesting to learn or hands-on; anything to keep their focus. Allow the students to explore the topic, using outside sources to learn as much about the topic as possible. They can each take different routes within the learning: one takes a process and delves into everything to do with it, another examines technology that plays a role in a particular method and learns all about that. After they have exhausted their research, they gather in groups and teach each other all about their chosen area. The information will be presented in many different ways to accommodate

students with various learning styles, and students can either work individually or with partners, when necessary.

In order to prevent students from acting out within the classroom, they must be focused instructionally. To ensure this, the content must be presented in a way where all the student are involved and on-task, especially with adolescents. The more the teacher can get the students to move around while learning, the better. When working group projects, they are permitted to pick their own partners: this will alleviate any stress between students who are forced to work together. If a student prefers to work alone, they will be allowed, unless it is during a lab assignment.

Assessment wise, there will be a mixture of formative and summative assessments given through-out the year. Formative assessment will be observed as students are discovering the material for themselves. It will be seen as the students are discussing their topics, or debating an issue. It can be seen in the final product of their presentations or projects. It can be seen in their questions and comments. Summative assessment will obviously be given, as it is required, but the presence of an upcoming test will drive the students towards the instructional goals given. Thus, the students are focused, interested, and learning.

When approaching the diverse needs of the students, it is important to mix it up. A teacher should not be teaching one way, all the time, all year long. Different learning styles will be implemented, to allow for all students to learn the material equally. The material will be presented in different ways (visually, auditory, etc), and from different perspectives and cultures. By allowing the students to teach each other some of the material, they begin to draw on their own experiences, thus allowing for the material to be introduced from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Also, by allowing students to do research on different topics and processes, they are

able to pull upon many diverse sources that all bring the same information. There will be group work, individual work, research, presentation, projects – work that draws on the scientific mind and the artistic mind – a synthesis of the ways students think.

In today's society, many students are motivated by what they are given at the end of a task: money, grades, food, or acceptance. This can be described as short-term motivation. At the high school age, students sometimes fail to see a point of learning all of the information they are asked to retain. It is here that they have no long-term motivation. Some know exactly what they want to get out of their lives, what they want to accomplish and they work towards those goals every day. Achievement, high honors, and acceptance to a college – these are also some examples of long-term motivation that students have.

Within in my own classroom, I aim to help my students get through each day, and ultimately the year. I would like to think of my approach to this motivational management as a self-discipline approach.

On my board, whether it is a white board or a smart board, I will have a checklist of things that the students are to get out of the class each and every day. This will be a sort of short-term motivation to get through the class. Some students like to see that they have made progress and that they have accomplished something. Riddled within these tasks will be trivial or fun facts about the material presented; this will allow the students to see something of interest within the subject and the topic of the day. Students will be acting mostly by self-discovery, so there will be an intrinsic motivational piece within the classroom as well. There will be a weekly "Star Article," which the students will pick at various times through-out the year. Each student will have the opportunity to showcase an article written on a subject, within the class content, that

they are passionate about. They will also have the opportunity to teach their fellow classmates about this issue, if they so wish.

Addressing the long-term motivation, I will require each and every one of my students to build a portfolio on his/her own work. They will collect notes, graded quizzes, papers, tests, projects, etc. They will also include corrections to all of these items. At the end of the year, they will meet one-on-one with the teacher to discuss their year's work and argue a case over their grade. This will allow the student some control over their final grade, but it also keeps their motivation up throughout the year. They can look through their portfolio to see their improvement in the class. Or if there is no improvement seen, they know it is time to reach out to the teacher for help or supplementary materials. Their portfolios will also contain their bathroom log, discipline history with an explanation of each infraction, and any missed assignments. When the portfolio is brought before the teacher and the teacher gives a final grade, the student can agree or disagree and justify their class with the evidence provided within the portfolio.

My approach would be characterized as a self-disciplinary approach because the students are in charge of assessing their own behaviors, whether they are correct or not. There is also a trusting relationship between teacher and students with mutual respect. The students are thought to be responsible and mature, and they are treated accordingly. If a student, especially an adolescent, is treated like a child, he or she will act like a child. Allowing the student to think for his/her self creates a sense of autonomy and growth. I believe in an approach that benefits all parties and still nurtures a love and desire for learning.

### **My Vision**

The bell rings and the hallways explode with students leaving their classes, heading to their next one. I stand in the hallway greeting the students as they pass by. Those entering my classroom shout out a greeting or simply give me a high five. They enter, find their seats, and gather materials needed for that day. There is chatter between the students as they do this, but they can multi-task. They know what is needed by the checklist projected onto the front board. As the commotion dies down in the hallway, I join my students in the classroom. Some have already gotten into their groups and have begun the first task at hand. Other need a bit of prompting. And by prompting, I mean the act of me walking over to their desks and asking how they are faring. One student seems a bit frazzled and distracted, so I call him over to my desk while the other work. I ask him if everything is all right. He admits that he just received a test back in his last class and he failed. He mind is obviously focused on just that issue. I remind him that he is doing just excellent in this class. I also recommend that he find a classmate that could possibly study with him next time, or even tutor him. He agrees that might be the best. I remind him that he is always welcome to stop by and go over what went wrong on the test with me, if he felt comfortable. Another student yells out, making a remark that this particular student is “Oooooo, in trouble.” Said student blushes a bit, now being the center of attention. I immediately reply with a sarcastic statement, lightening the mood and getting the attention off the student. The class resumes their work. I quietly thank the student for being open and honest with me, and ask if he is able to get through some of the tasks listed. He nods, and goes off to grab the materials needed.

The group that had started the assignment first of course finish first. They show me their submitted assignments, and ask if they are done. I instruct them to do some quiet research on a



topic that they found most interesting. I walk around the room, checking group and individual progress on the assignments given. One group in the back struggles to get through the first task. They do not seem to have much motivation to get through it. I attempt to find relevance of the material to their lives, asking them to join in. I finally tell them that if they can get through the task and tell me how it relates to their lives by the end of the class, I would perform an interpretive dance for the class. They immediately laugh and attempt the first question.

As the class draws to an end, I focus the students' attention to the front board. As they quietly pack up their materials, I inform them about the Article of the Week. This week was about a drug being studied to help with Alzheimer's disease. A few students chime in about family members that suffer from this particular disease, and I ask if the student who handed in the article would like to expound more on what the article had to offer. She steps up and holds a class discussion until the bell rings. A chorus of farewells hit my ears as they head off to their next class.

## **Bibliography**

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