

In a perfect world, classroom management would be easy. Teachers would enter the schools armed with the weapons of perfect lesson plans, and students would arrive ready to soak up information like sponges in a sea of knowledge. Both the educators and the children would exchange ideas and learn from each other, all while making school the most fun place in the community. Unfortunately, this educational utopia is not often a reality: it is a destination whose roads are consistently under construction with various detours along the way.

My view of the ideal classroom climate would follow the constructivist views of theorists such as Piaget, Dewey, and Vygotsky. A classroom should be a place where students are not afraid to speak, and answer questions. If there is an inquiry, students should not be intimidated to ask questions. Of course, there should be some element of control that is conducive to the learning environment.

The Ideal Classroom Climate

The ideal classroom climate would have a routine and a clear set of rules. The discussion of rules and related consequences would take place on the first day of school. It is the teacher's responsibility to come to class prepared with lesson plans and daily activities that will help the students learn the subject of the day. It is also a part of the teacher's job to keep momentum going and to keep the lesson flowing. If something does not work, a reflective teacher will take action to change whatever is an ineffective practice.

The classroom should be neat, organized, and attractive, as it will be the first thing a student notices when he walks into the door. The desks should be arranged in a cooperative fashion to allow students to collaborate with each other when group interaction is needed. Although students should be allowed to see each other, it is also important for them to be able to see the instructional areas (i.e. projection screens, white boards, displays, etc.) and the teacher.

Likewise it is important for the teacher to see each of her students. The contents of the room should allow people to move around and not cause congestion in highly used areas.

Appropriate Student Behavior and the Classroom Community

Students should come to classroom with their assignments completed. They should respect the teacher and follow established rules and procedures which should have been clearly articulated on the first day of class. Students should actively participate in classroom discussions and in return teachers should use supportive language to encourage this behavior.

Personal Philosophy of Classroom Management

Because they are expected to follow them, students should be able to participate in the making of the rules and procedures. The classroom should reflect society's roles. The teacher should not be viewed as a dictator, but as a leader to guide her students to good decision-making. When the rules are broken, the teacher should try her hardest to not break the lesson's momentum. To achieve this, a teacher should first try one of the following tactics:

- Ignore the disruption: many times the student is just trying to get attention;
- Make eye contact with the misbehaving student;
- Increase physical proximity to the problem at hand; or
- Involve the student by asking him a question about the lesson.

If the broken rule requires a break in the lesson's flow, a teacher should use one of the following actions:

- Remind the child of the class rules;
- Request proper behavior; or
- Ask the student why he is acting in this manner.

Punishment should be used only as a last resort. Many times students misbehave as a means to overtake control, so a teacher should remain in command of her emotions at all times and think carefully before she speaks. If a child is constantly ridiculed at home, he should have at least one safe haven. School should be that place.

Support of Classroom Management

Teachers should help each other in exchanging ideas on what works, and what does not work in the area of classroom management. Teachers should share information that they have on students, for example: “Beth told me her parents are getting a divorce, and she is acting differently lately. Please use grace when approaching her.”

The beginning for the school day should have an established routine. It is the teacher’s responsibility to see that it is executed efficiently to allow students to prepare themselves for class. Roll call, the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence, and announcements are examples of what could be a part of the daily regimen. The rest of the day should follow a set pattern unless exceptions, such as school assemblies and fire drills, occur. Students should know what to expect each day.

Students should behave themselves and as mentioned before, come to class with three things: positive attitudes, completed assignments, and anticipations to participate in the daily activities. They should trust and respect the teacher by knowing when it is appropriate to talk,

and when it is desired to be silent and listen. Because time is limited in each subject, students should remain in their seats, unless it is necessary for them to move around the room. They should be kind to their classmates and should not use foul language.

The best thing parents can do to help their children academically is to be involved with the school and communicate with the teachers when needed. An ideal situation is for a child to have breakfast before coming to class, and to have help with his homework when he goes home in the afternoon. A loving, supportive home environment that includes proper discipline would help teachers tremendously in classroom management because children need positive role models to learn how to act in public. Sadly, this is not always the case. In the real world, students are raised by people other than their parents, live in poverty, and have tragic home lives.

The school's administration should be there for teachers when things get out of control. Sometimes students do not respond to traditional disciplinary actions, and may sometimes need to be sent to the principal's office. The school's leader should also be supportive of his teachers by giving advice and being present when meetings are requested.

Teacher Needs

Above all, a teacher needs the respect of her students. To gain this respect, she should mind her own behavior not only in the classroom, but also in the community. It is also important for her to be considerate of the various cultural, economic, social, and religious barriers in the school. She should provide lessons that are free from bias and that are customized to each student's learning needs.

A teacher also needs access to information about her individual students, not to invade their privacy, but to be aware of why some of them act the ways they do. Many students

misbehave because of abusive home situations, or because something in their lives is missing. Proactive teachers can prepare by treating these students with compassion and grace as they enter the classroom.

Educators should also have good communication with the parents and guardians of their students. If a child is failing academically, socially, or behaviorally, a teacher should be comfortable in contacting the family without fear of reprisal. In return, a parent should easily be able to approach the teacher when they have concerns.

Student Needs

According to the textbook, *Comprehensive Classroom Management*, “A large percentage of classroom problems can be prevented by creating positive, safe classroom environments” (Jones & Jones, 2007, page 71.) Students need to feel safe, students need to feel significant, and students need to be supported socially and academically.

A child should feel comfortable answering a question, even if the response is incorrect. There is no need to ridicule a student if he is not grasping a concept of the lesson. An effective teacher should help him arrive at the answer and allow him to keep his dignity.

Students need to know that they matter. If a child is having a problem whether at school or at home, he should feel at ease when approaching his teacher to talk about it. Teachers should support their students by attending sporting events, music performances, and dance recitals. Children should be greeted warmly as they enter the classroom. Sometimes the simplest of gestures have the largest impact on a student’s life.

If a child has a disability that prevents him from learning in a traditional manner, a teacher should accommodate that student’s needs. Many students disrupt the classroom

environment because they are frustrated by not being able to learn what is being taught. Some students have the opposite problem: they act out because they are bored and not challenged academically. Because immigration is on the rise, many students have cultural barriers that keep them from learning. Teachers should educate themselves on different cultures by asking questions, reading articles, and attending classes that pertain to this matter.

Conclusion

Because there are many different kinds of people in this world, individuals react differently to various situations. The educational setting is no exception. Teachers should be prepared to manage their classrooms to keep order, to provide a safe environment, and to give their students a climate that is conducive to learning.

To be effective classroom managers, teachers should have carefully thought out plans before the academic year begins; they should implement those plans on the first day of school; and they should maintain those same plans throughout the academic year. Good classroom managers will also have clearly communicated rules and consistent procedures. They should be positive role models, and respect their students in regard to cultural and individual learning needs.

In return, students should be respectful to their teachers and to their classmates. They should come to class with completed assignments and a willingness to participate in daily activities. Students are an important part to the process, because the road to classroom management is a two-way street.

References

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