

Classroom Management Plan:

Signature Assessment

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### **Philosophy of Education**

Above all, I'm becoming a teacher because I know from experience that teachers touch lives. I want to instill in my students the same thing my teachers instilled in me: you can do whatever you set your mind to do, but you better love what you are doing.

### **Purpose of Education**

When the concept of public education was first introduced in America after the Revolutionary War, its intent was to teach children what it meant to be "American." On some level I believe this idea still has relevance today in that we are shaping our students to be intelligent, functioning members of society. But more than that, I believe teachers should guide their students on their way to becoming compassionate and creative problem-solvers that have a love for learning which will guide them through meeting the demands of modern life which we – as teachers now – cannot even predict.

As specifically a Language Arts teacher, my goal is for students to walk away with a sense that the classic pieces of literature we have them read are not just dusty, old, and boring books. I want students to be able to "de-dustify" these works and make them personal. I hope that to varying degrees, students can see a part of themselves in their reading. Although some novels and poems may be harder than others, writing is a human product and therefore reflects human concerns. I will never ask my students to like every piece we read, but instead to respect its place in the canon.

I feel to best accomplish this goal, especially in a multicultural setting, a teacher should always be able to provide relevance. Students always want to know why they must complete a task, and I want to always be able to answer them with more than just the usual "because the syllabus says so." As a teacher I always want to provide some connection between our readings to current events because this is a very clear (and sometimes powerful) way to get students

involved in the themes we explore in literature. I believe all students need strategies to help them read for meaning, and I would not be doing my students justice if I did not provide them these tools for success. All students can learn, and it is my job to be the "super sleuth" to figure out the right method for each.

### **Classroom Management**

When it comes to classroom management, especially at the secondary level, I believe that both the students and the teacher equally share responsibility when it comes to managing behaviors. I am a proponent of social education (i.e. teaching social responsibility) to students, and behavior management is part of that. I feel that at times there is a large disconnect between the expectations we hold for students' behavior and what we actually communicate about our expectations to them. We need to be clear and reasonable in teaching what behaviors are acceptable and in what situations. Our students are not just self-regulating mini-adults; they are still learning social cues and trying to determine who they are. So while the teacher is responsible for setting up a stable environment for students to be able to develop these social roles, and teaching and modeling expectations (an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!), the student is also held accountable for their actions and development.

The goal of classroom management is to maintain an effective learning environment. At every stage in the classroom, I feel we should always be fostering "caring, self-disciplined, independent thinkers" (Freiburg & Lamb, 2009, para. 3). I feel that a punitive system, such as behaviorist or behavior modification theory, does not do this. I agree fundamentally with the tenets of Dr. Carl Rogers's person-centered principles and Jerome Freiburg's adaptations of his work into the realm of classroom management (para. 7). I like that it is both student-centered and pro-social. As a large-scale school behavior management system, I like Edward E. Ford's Responsible Thinking Program (RTP). It has an established program (i.e. stable

environment) in which the student can make choices about their behavior, reflect on their actions, and develop a plan to reach their personal goals (*Responsible Thinking*, n.d.). The way it is designed allows students to make connections to their actions and consequences through questioning, which I think is critical in helping students learn from their mistakes. It also offers a structured environment for students outside of the classroom (Responsible Thinking Classroom, "RTC") to complete their reflections and learning plans that is not the principal's office.

I want to be able to give my students choice in my classroom management model, but I also think that an infinite amount of choices can cripple the ease and effectiveness of implementing any behavior plan. That being said, consequences should take into account individual differences and also students' ideas (i.e. "What do you think is an appropriate consequence for your actions?). This way, students begin learning self-discipline and the teacher is viewed as a guide, and not as a disciplinarian or overlord. I want students to be able to understand why their misbehavior does not help us reach our ultimate goal as a class (to maintain an effective learning environment), and I think the Responsible Thinking Program's use of questioning, reflecting, and planning does a good job providing scaffolding for students to reach this understanding. Ultimately, behavioral intervention should decrease and [and ideally eventually stop] negative student behaviors in the classroom.

#### **Andersen Junior High's Management Plan**

According to Andersen Junior High School's website (2012), the school believes that "students have the right to learn and teachers have the right to teach in safety. No one has the right to disrupt at school regardless of who they are, nor do they have the right to prevent other students from learning or to threaten the safety and rights of others" (Responsible Thinking section, para. 1).

### **Responsible Thinking Program**

To reach these goals, the school uses Edward E. Ford's Responsible Thinking Process (RTP) school-wide. RTP utilizes questioning – versus lecturing – to help students reflect on their actions and develop responsibility while following rules and respecting others' rights. With consistent guided questions, students are given the opportunity to identify and change their actions to avoid consequences, or if they continue to make poor choices they choose to go to the Responsible Thinking Classroom (*Responsible Thinking*, n.d.). The Responsible Thinking Classroom (RTC) is similar in essence to in-school detention, but the students are in control of how long they spend in RTC. They must first fill out a plan that asks targeted questions about their behavior and how they plan to change it. When the plan is complete and the RTC teacher approves it, the student may return to class to re-join instructional activities and, when possible, review his/her plan with the classroom teacher. The school believes that with RTP, students "are taught to think for themselves, deal with their problems through effective plan-making, and develop self-discipline" (Andersen, 2012, Responsible Thinking section, para. 1). When used consistently in all the classrooms, this plan appears highly structured and effective in managing classroom behaviors and supporting a strong learning environment.

### **Personal Classroom Management Plan**

My classroom will follow the school's management plan, the Responsible Thinking Process (RTP). I will have the questions posted on the front wall in the classroom so that the students and I can reference it whenever necessary. On the first day we will role-play situations that demonstrate how RTP is implemented in the classroom so students will know what to expect and how to respond when it is used. RTP will be put in place for every infraction of school and/or classroom rules (see "Posted Responsibilities/Rules and Consequences: Classroom Rules").

**Classroom Procedures**

Classroom procedures will be included in my syllabus for students to refer to. These will be reviewed during the first week. Specific procedures, such as the one for students leaving their seats, will be role-played in class.

**Voice level.** Students will be taught a voice level scale where “level zero” is silent, “level one” is whispering, “level two” is a voice level that can be heard only while talking at your table, and “level three” is a voice level that can be heard during full-class time (lessons, discussions, etc.). Yelling is unacceptable, unless specifically directed by the teacher during an activity.

**Raising hands.** Always raise your hand if you have a question, would like to contribute a comment, or need to leave your seat. If you need to leave your seat, please use the following hand signs to signal what you need: hold up a “one” (your index finger) if you need to use the bathroom; hold up a “two” (index finger and middle finger) if you need to get a drink; hold up a “three” (index, middle, and ring finger) if you need to sharpen your pencil; and hold up a “four” (index, middle, ring, and little finger) to leave the classroom for a different location, such as the nurse, library, office, etc. When it comes to leaving the classroom I will allow only one student out of the room at a time.

**Coming into class.** Students will come into class quickly and quietly (level zero or level one voice). Students will find their seats and begin working on the journal prompt or PQP right away. If there was any homework, students will pull it out and place it at the front of their desk so it can be collected. Unless otherwise noted, students will assume the journal work is to be completed silently and independently.

**Tardiness.** If students are tardy they must come in with a level zero voice so as to not interrupt the rest of the class. If the student is unsure of what we are working on, he/she must

come ask me discreetly. At the end of class, the student must check with me to turn in any homework I may have already collected as well as to make sure I have not marked the student absent.

**Absence.** If students are absent, they come see me on their own time (i.e. before school, during lunch, after school, or through email) to find out what they missed. The student is one hundred percent responsible for managing his/her own work! I will gladly provide the student with a rundown of what we talked about and any handouts or assignments from that day. Due dates for missed work will be assigned on a case-by-case basis.

**Grades.** If students have any questions regarding their grade on an assignment or in general, they may come talk to me on their own time so we have time to discuss it. Please do not hold all these questions or concerns for the end of the quarter as it will be much more difficult to adjust a grade weeks after the fact. No grade should ever come as a surprise! Students are always more than welcome to ask me for a grade check for "peace of mind."

**Testing.** If a student finishes an in-class quiz or test early, he/she must turn in work to me. Then he/she may read silently or work on any homework until the allotted time has passed or everyone else is done.

**Group work.** If students have problems working with someone in an assigned group, they can come talk to me after class. The last thing we need is any drama! After listening to students' reasoning I will decide whether or not to reassign them to a new group. If the rationale consists mainly of, "But I want to work in a group with my friend," please expect that the request to switch groups will be respectfully denied.

### **Managing Student Behavior**

My management plan creates a structured, comfortable environment for my students. The goal is that my students will always know what to expect and how to function in my

classroom effectively. We will spend significant time during the first week of class establishing basic procedures and role-playing, and these basic classroom procedures (such as turning in homework, going to the bathroom, etc.) will remain the same throughout the whole year.

In addition to clear expectations, the classroom environment and instructional activities will be designed to facilitate positive student interaction and behavior. Students will have specific roles in the classroom functions and in the frequent cooperative learning activities so that they have more interest invested in the class's success. If there are behavior issues, they will be dealt with in accordance to classroom policy. Disruptions will be dealt with quickly, discreetly, and on an individual level so that they do not become an even larger disruption to the classroom.

### **Posted Responsibilities/Rules and Consequences**

Classroom responsibility and rules posters will be personalized each year for my students. I will have classroom rules, classroom rights, and the Responsible Thinking Process questions posted in my room where all students can see them at all times.

#### **Classroom Rules**

Since my classroom is part of the school, all school rules do apply in my classroom. Complementary to those rules, I have four rules in my classroom: (1) Respect others, (2) Do your best, (3) Be prepared to learn, and (4) Follow instructions. On the first day, we will go over the rules and develop specific examples of what these mean during every day class procedures. Once we have completed this activity, I will compile the answers from all classes and create personalized posters.

**RESPECT OTHERS**

- >>Use respectful words and tone of voice when talking to anyone.
- >>Leave other people's property alone.
- >>Work to solve problems constructively, without violence or abuse.
- >>Keep hands, feet and objects to self.

**DO YOUR BEST**

- >>Participate positively in class.
- >>Stay on task.
- >>Learn all you can.

**BE PREPARED  
TO LEARN**

- >>Be in your seat and ready when class begins.
- >>Have appropriate materials.
- >>Have any homework completed.

**FOLLOW  
INSTRUCTIONS**

- >>Follow reasonable instructions from Ms. Fullerton the **FIRST** time given.
- >>Always raise your hand if you'd like to contribute to a discussion or have a question.

**Classroom Rights**

Most schools' discipline plans mention responsibilities versus rights. On the first day of class we will discuss what these mean and what the differences are. As a class, we will come up with a list of classroom rights and these will be posted.

## CLASSROOM RIGHTS

1. The right to be respected by your teachers and your peers.
2. The right to have clear and complete directions every time.
3. The right to learning without disruption from other students.
4. The right to never be judged, and to be treated equally and fairly.
5. The right to not be interrupted.
6. The right to be supported by your teacher and your peers.
7. The right to be safe and feel safe in this classroom and the school.
8. The right to earn privileges, both individually and as a whole class.
9. The right to use and to contribute to class supplies.
10. The right to be *amazing!*

***"With rights come responsibilities."***

**Responsible Thinking Process Questions**

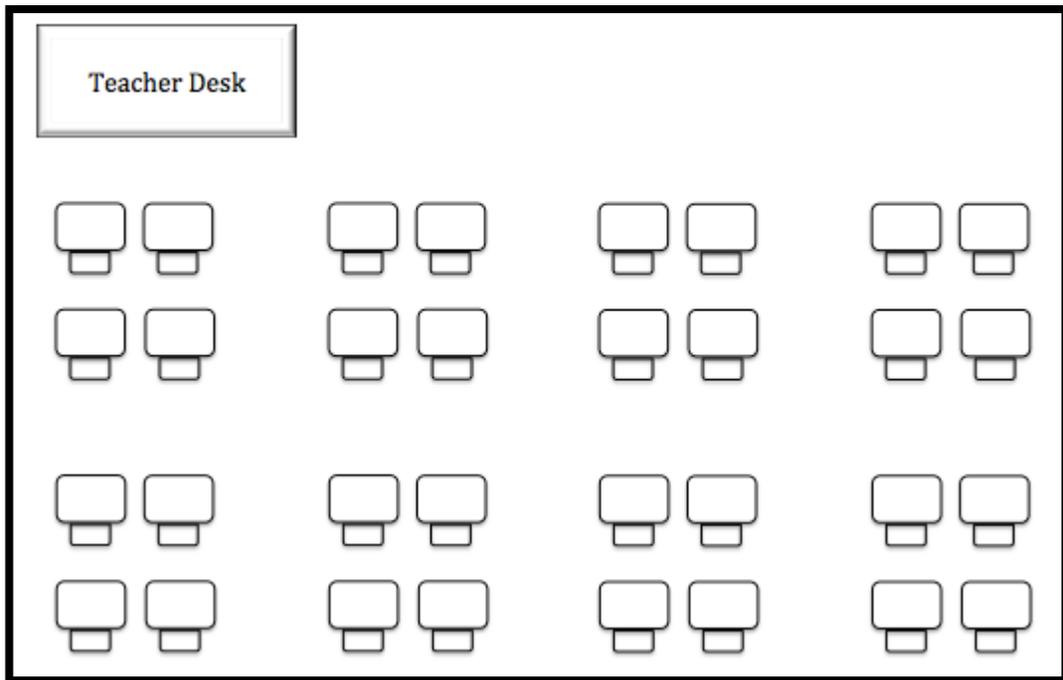
Per school procedure, the Responsible Thinking Process (RTP) questions must be posted in order for students and teachers to see. They will be placed above the front board in a large enough format to be easily read throughout the room.

1. What are you doing?	2. What are the rules?	3. What happens when you break the rules?
4. Is this what you want to happen?	5. Where do you want to be?	6. What will happen if you disrupt again?

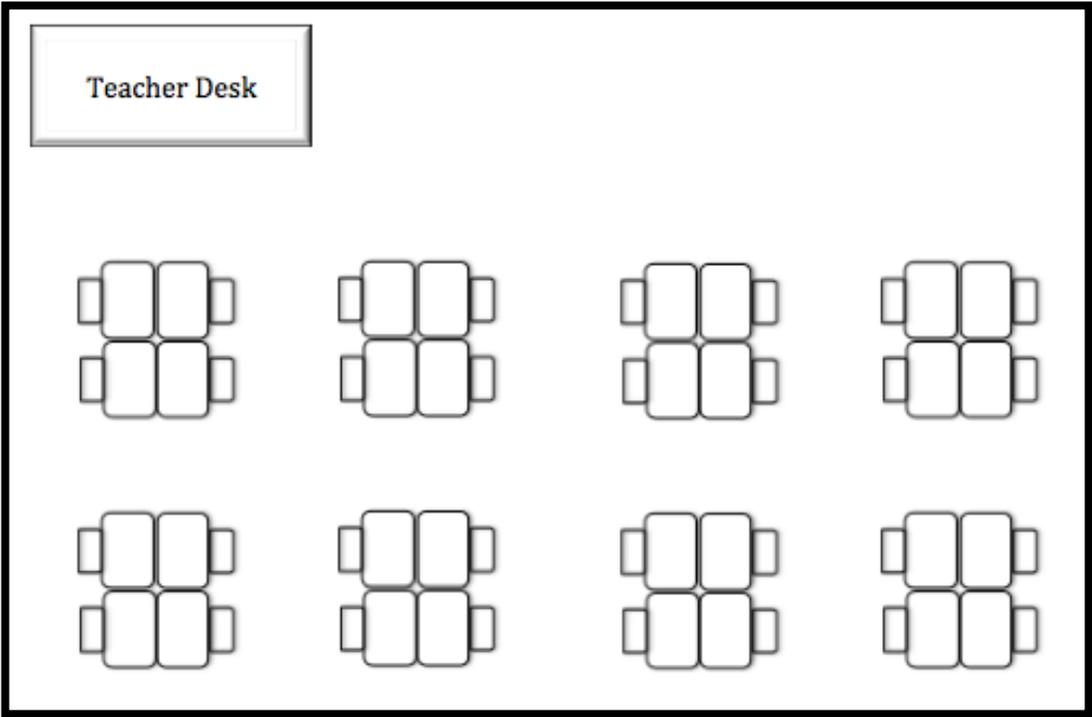
### Classroom Layout

The desks in my classroom will be organized with enough space between them for me to access every student at all times, but also so students can use a shoulder partner or easily be moved into cluster formations for the cooperative learning and group work that will be prevalent. A classroom procedure will be established and practiced for rotating the desks into whatever position best meets the demands of the time. Depending on the size of the classroom and front board, desks may be angled to have a better view of what is going on at the front of the room.

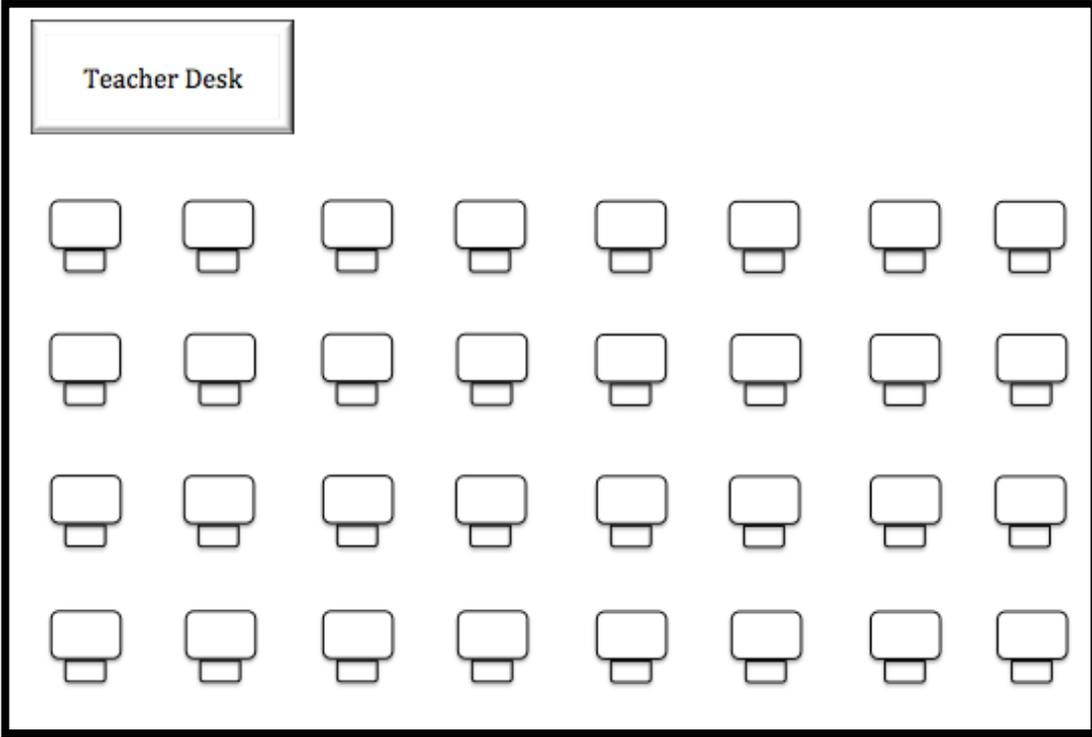
### Instructional Time Layout



Cooperative Learning/Group Work Layout



Testing Layout



### **Communication**

Communication with parents is key, especially at the middle school level. Middle school is a big change from an elementary school for both students and parents, and open communication will help make the transition easier for everyone involved. I will maintain a teacher's website and update it regularly with what we are working on in class, additional web resources for parents and students, etc. Email will be the best way to contact me, and I will include my email address on the syllabus, have students write it in their agendas at the beginning of the year, and also post it on my website. If parents have concerns that need to be addressed right away, they can always contact me by calling the school phone.

### **Class Syllabus**

At the beginning of the school year I will spend approximately the first week reviewing the class syllabus, which will include going over rules, modeling and practicing class procedures, and demonstrating classroom expectations. Each syllabus will have a detachable portion on the back page that requires a signature. At the end of the week I will send two slightly different copies home with each student: one for parents to sign, and one for the student to sign. This way, I am making a contract with parents and students individually. Parents may keep their copy of the syllabus at home and students will be required to keep theirs in the front of their class binder. Both signed copies will be due in class for a grade. On the parent portion there will be a section for contact information and a way for parents to specify what form of communication works best for them. This way I know how to most effectively contact parents if there are any issues. I think it is important to establish a good relationship with the students and their parents, and part of this means contacting parents regularly with updates on their student, especially positive ones!

### Sample Student Syllabus Detachable

✂ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Fill out this portion and return to Ms. Fullerton.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the classroom  
Student Name  
rules and procedures and understand them. I agree to follow them  
 while in Ms. Fullerton's classroom. I understand that my behavior is my  
 responsibility, and I will always have a chance to discuss my behavior  
 with Ms. Fullerton.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Reflection

One of the most crucial points of the "Managing Student Behavior" TAP rubric indicator (2010) is the bullet regarding establishing clear rules for learning and behavior (Exemplary section, para. 2). Like the idiom goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. When students understand the rules and procedures – and also the consequences for not following them – they are more likely to be "consistently well-behaved, and on task" (para. 1). My management plan includes spending a significant amount of time teaching rules and procedures for everything students may need in the classroom (and can grow to accommodate more as necessary), and I feel strongly that the time spent at the beginning of the year delineating these will save us much time during the rest of the year dealing with disruptions. Should disruptions occur, my management plan utilizes the RTP program to deal with students "quickly and firmly," and one-on-one instead of as a whole class (para. 5–6). Following all the guidelines on the TAP rubric will help my classroom run smoothly and therefore allow students to learn to the best of their ability. In terms of instruction, when students are well-behaved and on task due to the highly-structured environment I have created, I will be able to implement a wide variety of activities and projects to help keep them interested in learning. This in turn

helps promote good behavior and high student achievement. Most importantly, my classroom management plan will always be growing and evolving to meet my needs and the needs of my students in order to ensure their success.

## Reference List

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