

Classroom Management Culminating Signature Assignment:

Management Plan Applications

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Introduction

Classroom management at the high school level should be a responsibility equally shared between the teacher and students. At times there can be a large disconnect between the expectations that teachers hold for students' behavior and what they actually communicate to the students. Teachers need to be clear and reasonable in teaching what behaviors are acceptable and in what situations; students are not just self-regulating “mini-adults.” 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), students should also be held accountable for their actions. Students need to develop self-direction, self-control, and personal responsibility, and a punitive system—such as behaviorist or behavior modification theory—does not do this. In order to create a classroom management plan that fosters students' abilities to develop both academically and socially, multiple theories should be examined and combined such as those presented by Jerome H. Freiberg, Marvin Marshall, Harry and Rosemary Wong, and Spencer Kagan.

From Rules to Responsibilities

The goal of classroom management is to maintain an effective learning environment. Traditionally, this is accomplished through teaching compliance, such as to school rules. But Jerome H. Freiberg (2009)—a curriculum and instruction professor at the University of Houston that continues to adapt Dr. Carl Rogers' original work on the learner-centered model—raises a very valid point about this method: “Do we want to [only] raise compliant youth who have limited experiences with initiative and creativity, or would we rather raise our nation's youth to be caring, self-disciplined, independent thinkers?” (para. 3). The answer should be rhetorical. Marvin Marshall (2013)—a behavior management theorist with extensive experience as a

classroom teacher and administrator—agrees. He believes that systems that rely on rules and strict enforcement through coercive action only “promote power struggles” and they neither “inspire nor do they create desire” (para. 2-3). In addition, reliance on rules does not work for the “‘right-hemisphere’ dominant type of student who acts spontaneously and impulsively and whose brain processes randomly” (Marshall, 2013, para. 8). Students like this, such as Cambria and especially Monaco, would function best in a structured, person-centered classroom setting like the one that Freiberg and Marshall describe. In a classroom that follows Marvin Marshall’s tenets, there are no rules; instead, rules have been changed to five “responsibilities” for students.

These include:

HAVE MY MATERIALS

BE WHERE I BELONG

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

DO MY ASSIGNMENTS

BE KIND TO OTHERS (Marshall, 2013, para. 11)

The paradigm shift away from classroom rules encourages student responsibility, not just compliance. Also, it follows Marshall’s (2013) basic tenets that “positivity is more effective than negativity,” and that teachers should “empower rather than overpower” their students” (para. 10). Teachers should always try to stimulate students’ own internal motivation to act and behave in positive ways instead of coercing them to do so.

Classroom Procedures

Set classroom procedures are essential in creating a structured environment. Theorists Harry and Rosemary Wong (2005) detail how to establish procedures for everyday routines in their seminal text *The First Days of School*, explaining, “students must know from the very

beginning how they are expected to behave and work in a classroom work environment” (p. 170). Classroom procedures will be introduced, taught, modeled, and rehearsed during the first week, but explanation, rehearsal, and reinforcement may be necessary at various times throughout the year (Wong & Wong, 2005, pp. 174-175). These procedures—some of which are identified below—will remain the same throughout the whole year so students will always know how to function appropriately and effectively in the classroom:

- Voice level
- Raising hands
- Coming into class
- Tardiness
- Absence
- Grading
- Testing
- Group work
- Class discussion

Routine procedures would likely eradicate many of the observed classroom behaviors—particularly the outbursts and lack of participation during class discussions—that seem to stem from lack of structure and/or confusion about expectations. Students such as Roman, who appear to disregard expectations instead of misunderstanding them, may benefit more from specially designed classroom activities that promote equal student participation.

Structured Activities

In addition to clear expectations, the classroom environment and instructional activities should be designed to facilitate positive student interaction and behavior. Designing good

instruction is a critical part of pre-emptive classroom management: if students are involved in and enjoying their classwork, they will not be bored and seek out alternative (and disruptive) means of entertainment. When instruction is designed to give students specific, active roles in the classroom functions, they have more vested interest in the class's success. One theorist that has focused on designing sound, engaging instructional strategies is Spencer Kagan. Kagan has developed over two hundred "Kagan Structures" that provide specific roles and procedures for students' group work, such as Think-Pair-Share, Mix-Pair-Share, RoundRobin, and Team Interview (Kagan Publishing, 2012, para. 8). In this way, each student holds accountability for his/her participation because it specifically built into the structure of the activity. When used repeatedly in a classroom, students internalize the procedures and expectations for cooperative learning and "know" how to participate in class. At this point students become more self-directed and the teacher will have the ability to move around the classroom and observe students to better gauge their understanding and needs. Kagan claims that when these structures are implemented in instruction, the resulting "active student engagement gets straight to the root of the problem in many classrooms" (Kagan Publishing, 2012, para. 5). Roman would no longer be able to "fly under the radar" in the back of the classroom during every period and attention-seeking students like Cambria, Monaco, and Trebuchet would be able to receive the peer attention they need in a structured and productive way.

Conclusion

In order to best deal with the observed behaviors in tenth and twelfth grade English students (impulsive, attention-seeking actions, classroom dominating behaviors, and lack of participation) a management plan that centers on fostering student growth and engagement would be best. Creating engaging lessons that are structured specifically to make sure all

students are participating functions as a preventative measure for misbehavior, regardless of its type. The next step on the path to a student-centered classroom would be the shift from rules to responsibilities. This dramatically changes the classroom environment, creating an atmosphere where teachers and students have a good working relationship that activates students' internal motivation to behave positively. Students will understand that they are responsible for their behavior instead of feeling that they are being punished for breaking a rule they do not necessarily believe in. Teaching and reviewing classroom procedures from the beginning of the year, much like a teacher would teach a lesson, also elucidates the behavioral expectations that students must meet during class. Student misbehavior will significantly decrease across the board if students are actively engaged and working within a structured environment they understand and feel comfortable in.

References

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