

Classroom Management

Learning can only take place in the classroom when there is consistency and discipline. The object is not to scare students into being obedient, but to teach them responsibility and how to follow rules like a respectful citizen. When everyone is following the rules and doing their job, learning is very successful.

I believe that it is very important for the teacher to stand in the doorway when the students are entering the classroom in the morning. It shows the students that you care and are excited to see them, but also shows the students that you expect them to do their jobs and behave correctly. While standing in the doorway I can greet each student and express how happy I am to have them in my class, as well as keep an eye on the hallway and in the classroom. They know that I am always watching. In order to minimize poor behavior in the morning, I plan to have morning work for the students. Morning is essential in teaching the students responsibility and independence. The morning work will keep the students busy while students are arriving and unpacking their things.

Classroom management is hard to master. Each set of students are different. One tactic that was used the year before may not be successful the following year. In my class I prefer to use positive consequences as much as possible. I would rather reward students for their behavior rather than take something away for misbehaving. For example, I plan to have chain links in my class. When the class as a whole is on task, working well, and doing what is right then the class may receive a chain link. This is to reinforce working together. One student cannot do this without the help of others. It takes the entire class working together and cooperating in order to gain a chain link. After a certain amount of chain links the students will receive some kind of

reward. It may be a popcorn party, or movie, or a special game they may want to play. Using this system is beneficial because the students are working together toward a goal. I will never take a chain link away; the students earned it and it is not fair to take it away.

Classroom rewards are great, but individual rewards are also important. Verbally rewarding a student is a great way to keep them on task and praise them for doing their job. That works well for students that need instant gratification. Another simple reward to keep students on task is giving them the freedom to go to the drinking fountain. Students love to get up and move around, so when I see a student doing their job I may say, "I am feeling thirsty, but since I cannot leave the room why don't you go get a drink for me?" This works well if the drinking fountain is nearby. Giving these rewards out throughout the day are great because the teacher does not have to purchase anything for the students, and the students do not have to wait an extended amount of time. I also like it because it is random. The students never know when the teacher might send someone to get a drink; because of the unpredictability they behave better in hope they might be the lucky one. In addition to praise, I plan to use a clip chart, or a card system. When a student misbehaves they will clip down or pull a card. If a student clips down or removes a card, then they will not be rewarded with a treat at the end of the day. This system seems to work really well because each student wants a treat at the end of the day.

Another tangible reward that I particularly enjoy is the Super Speller award. Most students like to be recognized for their hard work and good grades. Spelling is one subject in particular that can be stressful for students. When a student receives a 100 % on a test, they deserve some kind of reward. When this is achieved they are given a Super Speller symbol to display on the front of their desk. The symbol looks just like a Superman symbol, but it is made out of cardstock and it is laminated. After the tests are graded, I will stick the symbols on the

desk during a time when the students are not in the classroom. Receiving this reward boosts a student's ego and they are able to show off their hard work. This can be extended to a whole class reward as well. If each student is rewarded the Super Speller symbol they not only display the symbol on the desks, but the whole class is awarded popsicles at the end of the day. It is rare that the whole class gets a 100% on a test, but it is possible and this really motivates students to do well on a test and practice their spelling words.

Classroom management is not only about consequences and rewards. There are other ways to keep students from misbehaving rather than handing out punishments and rewards all the time. During transitions or activities when the students must be up out of their seats doing something or getting something, sing a song. For example, I do not like the students to sharpen pencils on their own in the electric pencil sharpener. They sharpen it way too long and sometimes the lead is broken off in the sharpener. At the beginning of class or at the beginning of an activity that the students might write a lot instruct them to line up at the pencil sharpener. While I am sharpening the pencil the students and I will sing a song. It is fun and it minimizes talking. With the students lined up at the pencil sharpener I am not only sharpening their pencils, but I am also given the chance to look over the students to see if they are properly dressed and to check their overall well being. Maybe some students are sick and will not tell the teacher, or a student might be hurt and not tell right away. This is a good excuse to visually inspect the students.

There are many ways to have a successful learning environment, and there are multiple classroom management plans. The goal is to find something that works for you. Every teacher is different and has a different way of managing their class. I intend on using rewards more so than punishments in my class. I always intend to handle situations myself before having to consult

with the principle. This builds respect and rapport with my students. By managing the class in a respectful manner, the students will then respect me and we will be able to effectively move forward and learn in an enjoyable learning environment.