

# Classroom Management and Procedures

In an effective classroom students should not only know what they are doing, they should also know why and how.

-- Harry Wong

Step into my classroom and one should feel and sense that the environment and climate is functional, energetic, safe and inviting! One should sense as though he/she has been welcomed into an supportive, encouraging, and passionate community. The students should be engaged, active and my relationship with the students should be bridged by respect, fairness, and consistency. These elements and components are viable through the following conditions:

## ➤ *Maximized and Practical Organization:*

The physical environment and layout of my classroom is critical to safe, effective teaching, and learning! Each space in my classroom has a purpose and is student-learning focused. In other words, the design, plan and arrangement of my classroom is centered around the needs and conditions of my students. I sit in a desk and picture myself as a student and how the environment should be set-up in order to maximize learning opportunities. I ask myself a variety of questions (including some of the following)-What should go where? How should the desks be arranged? What needs to be labeled? How do I prevent any conditions/situations that may disrupt teaching and learning? The following are a sampling of my techniques and choices:

- Clearly identified with bright labels and easily accessible places for homework, lunch choices, student mailboxes, centers, and library books. (homework bin is on my desk, lunch choices, student mailboxes and library book drop is immediately to the right and left of my classroom door)
- Materials on shelves are identified and easily obtainable to all students and the shelves are organized to use efficiently use space
- Areas-centers are in the classroom are matched to the flow of the classroom (art shelf (with all students art materials labeled and in bins, math center items labeled on math shelves, reading area at students' eye level-reading level labeled)
- Clearly marked bathroom passes for male and female students that are on the front board
- Clear path to each area of the classroom-including centers, pencil sharpener, library area
- Maximized and premium seating arrangements which allow all students to see the board, hear me, view the overhead and any presentations, allow for optimal learning conditions (pods, triads)and the opportunity for me to have collective and individual contact with all students
- My desk is positioned in the back of the classroom to optimize space for student projects, group work, and floor work.

➤ *Posted: Schedules, Agendas, Activities:*

If students know what is expected for each day, can depend upon a consistent daily-weekly schedule, and can see or have access to "what will come next," disruptions, anxieties and nonconstructive learning time is minimized. The following are examples of what I utilize and post in my classroom:

- Day to day schedule (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday's events)
- Morning work schedule is on the front white board-a listing of what needs to be done for morning activities
- Change of notice postings (if there are any special activities/changes in plans-they are listed on the front white board)
- My weekly teaching schedule is highly visible on my desk for Substitutes and staff
- Checklist-order of what needs to be done is wrote on the white board after each instruction period (1. English 2. Finish spelling 3. Read)
- During morning meeting we also discuss what our specials are for the day, what our plans our, and if there will be any changes

➤ *Rules/Expectations:*

Without a doubt, rules or expectations need to be formed/established so my classroom understands what behaviors are acceptable, what they have the "right" to choose to do, and what they will required to uphold (be responsible) to keep all safe in our community. Furthermore, I believe my students should be able to help me decide what our classroom rules are and then sign their initials once they rules are finalized (I believe students are far more invested in following the rules when they help form and sign them). With this opportunity they able to begin to understand that I am giving them the chance to become more responsible, learn self-control, and requiring them be accountable for their choices and the related outcomes. The deepest impact, however, may be that they feel respected, a sense of ownership and valued (have a voice). The following are key guidelines I utilize when forming our classroom expectations:

- Start with the overlying Love and Logic Theory of Choice: "You are free to choose to do what you want as long as your choice does not hurt or harm you or anyone else."
- Keep the number of rules/expectations limited (around) 5.
- Keep the rules/expectations positive, easy to understand, and promote safety.
- Be fair to each individual when forming the rules/expectations.
- Make sure that the rules/expectations are unique-one is not a rewording of a prior one- and specific.
- Make sure the rules/expectations are enforceable and reviewed periodically.
- Make sure rules/expectations are formulated on the first day of school.
- Make sure there is a set of logical consequences if needed.

➤ *Being Fair and Establishing a Trusting Relationship:*

I strive each day to reflect what I am teaching and choose actions that define what I am expecting of my students. Undoubtedly, students are impressionable, vulnerable, and see teachers as their set up wings...I push myself and am determined that the bridge I form between myself and each student is built with dignity, pride, and self-worth. In other words, a honest, respectful, and caring relationship. If my students feel they are supported, treated as individuals with unique characteristics, and are valued, then my environment will be safe and comfortable for them. The following aids in being fair and forming a trusting relationship with each of my students:

- giving each student what is appropriate for him and her

- being just and impartial in each situation
- having an open mind and heart with each situation
- role playing-acting out situations that are fair and unfair and then discussing the results of each
- discuss how we are unique yet are human and similar needs
- being consistent and reliable

➤ *Being Energetic/Passionate:*

Energy and passion must flow in my classroom each day. In fact, as I stand outside my door to greet each student before they enter our classroom, I make sure to have a huge smile on my face and acknowledge each student...thus from the start invigorating each other and our learning environment. A few high fives may be given, a joke or two, or even a simple "What's for lunch?" can spark a student and create a ripple of enthusiasm. I believe if students feel motivated, are captivated, and know that their school day will be interesting, challenging and stimulating, the opportunities for disruptions and off-task behaviors are minimal. The following are some of the techniques/practices I have used/currently use:

- Periodical "brain breaks"-we play learning games to get our juices flowing and increase oxygen intake- "Four Corners, Highest and Lowest Number, What's Missing, Change Something, Guess the Word, etc."
- Setting high expectations by providing challenges-extensions: Problem of the Day, Stump Ms. Wenzel, etc.
- Over plan-if students are continuously learning and educational and alluring materials are available boredom and behavior issues are reduced.
- Connecting the material/lessons to the lives of my students-making the content relevant- using a local phone book for a math lesson, utilizing the map of their town for cardinal directions, using their names in story problems, etc.
- Goals-each month we write personal goals. Before displaying the goals, we share them, each week review them, and at the end of the month evaluate our progress towards the goal-did we reach them; was the goal appropriate for the month; how do we feel about our progress/accomplishments?

Instruction begins when you, the teacher, learn from the learner; put yourself in his place so that you may understand... what he learns and the way he understands it.

-- Soren Kierkegaard