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Classroom Management Plan

Philosophy of Classroom Management

Learning is a lifelong process, and it is a strongly held belief of mine that students' curious minds are the most integral part in preparing one's classroom. While the teacher's role is to lay a foundation for the course, it is also her goal to adapt to students in order to make the year a meaningful experience for everyone. By building strong relationships with students and parents and emphasizing the importance of community, the classroom becomes a comfortable and safe place for students to learn and grow both academically and socially. School is not only a time for students to learn the material mandated by state standards and core curriculum, but also for adolescents to become young adults and get to identify and define themselves and learn about the world around them. As a human being who has already mastered some of these stepping stones of life, I feel that the teacher should always keep in mind the important responsibility of role model she demonstrates for her students.

My Expectations

As an educator, I believe my role in the classroom is to be the facilitator of learning and exploring for all students who come through my door. Holding high esteem for the value of community, I can better foresee students achieving these goals if they are capable of working together collectively for a greater goal. One way to achieve this type of classroom environment is to emulate in my own thoughts, behaviors, and actions the enthusiasm and joy I have for the material at hand. A great way to show my passion for the content is by sharing personal travels of my trips to different Spanish-speaking countries and other instances where I have used Spanish. At times this may be difficult, but that is why I would work hard as an educator to adapt my lessons to be

more relevant to my students. By being flexible with my actions, I may show for my students how I am willing to change for the greater good of reaching our overall ambitions as a class.

Further, I feel my duty as a teacher is to be available for my students, whether they present to me their academic or personal needs. If I want my students to see me as a credible and reliable source for answers to their questions or insight for their concerns, I need to be consistent, fair, and caring with my role as their teacher. I need to be someone who is trustworthy and supportive in order to better serve my students both during class time and after hours. One specific way I plan on making myself more available is by working heavily with social media in appropriate and professional ways to communicate well with my students. This strong line of communication could be in the form of a Twitter account, an email account, or a possible class blog keeping students up-to-date and informed.

An additional attribute that I feel I need to bring to the classroom as the teacher is my greatest effort given for the benefit of the class as a whole. I will strive to improve myself and what I can do for the class each day. I will seek resources and opportunities to further educate myself about teaching practices and better my own knowledge of the content I teach. I desire to remain involved with the Education and Spanish honor societies that I am in now, and I will look for conferences and other professional development opportunities to attend.

As a colleague, I readily recognize that while I may be responsible for my own classroom, I am also part of a bigger team that works together as a whole in order to create a space for students that is cohesive in its policies and goals. I will be both supportive and dependable in order to work effectively with other faculty members. Just as I am with my students, I will aim to be as available as possible for my colleagues. I look forward to collaborating with others and sharing ideas for the classroom because I feel that you can always learn more from talking with others. I also feel that working together may help create a more consistent and deliberate atmosphere where our students can thrive.

Preparing for the Year

Acquainting Myself with the Community

I may be a teacher responsible for only one room in a school building, but that in no way reflects the students I am teaching. My students are much more than the series of studious faces I see throughout the day. They come from the surrounding neighborhood and all have a place other than the school that they call home. In order to better relate with my students, I will make an effort to immerse myself in the community surrounding the school. It is one thing to look up a school's data on the state department of education's website, but only living and breathing in the same space your students come from may do justice in trying to better understand where these students live. I need to introduce myself to my students and colleagues. A great way to get in touch is to send out letters with a brief bio and possibly a photo to students before the school year starts. In addition, I like the idea of making phone calls to my colleagues and setting up times to meet with other members of my education team before the school year begins. It may also be helpful to start collecting information on future students, so a quick questionnaire to mail back or bring filled-in before school may be a good idea as well. Another friendly way to introduce myself is to hold an "open house" maybe during student registration. By being present to students before the year even starts, I am already giving the impression of being available and looking to build personal relationships with each student as an individual.

Organizing my Classroom

Another big step in preparing for the year to come is the set-up and organization of my classroom. Depending on the furniture and space provided, I desire to have a relatively open and flowing layout. I think it would be best to have students sit in a U-shaped formation, as this way would allow for students to easily see and hear one another during group discussions. This format also allows for the students to have a common focal point where I may stand and speak to the class. It's also a great way to remain within close proximity to all of my students as there is no "back" in this layout. In addition, wish to have my desk against a wall, possibly in the corner and out of the way. I do not see myself at my desk often during class time, as I would prefer to be up

and interacting with my students. While my desk may be out of the way I would like to have tape on the floor that would provide a visible barrier where students are not permitted to enter in order to allow for my own personal space.

While I may have my own personal space, I will also provide for my students their own personal areas where they may keep their belongings. I have decided that small cubby-like areas could serve as a space for students to have art supplies and store cell phones during class. I very much like the idea of having each desk numbered and having a corresponding cubby numbered so that for each desk a student sits, there is also a cubby for that student to go to and use during that particular class. By providing a space for students to keep a few things such as assignments, cell phones, and other small items they may possess, this can help eliminate the problem with distractions that may disrupt my time instructing or my students' time learning effectively.

The front board is another area that I will keep organized and consistent for the benefit of my students. In a designated area of the board, I plan on having the date, the daily agenda, homework, and the objectives of the day listed. The date is a helpful reminder for students who may need to ask before starting any worksheet or test. Before each class, I would leave this area empty, and that way I could begin each class by asking a volunteer to write the date out for the convenience of the class. The daily agenda lets the students know what is coming next and what they need to be prepared for. Providing structure and clear limits by having this set-up on the board is a procedure that allows students to feel comfortable with a routine and it helps meet one of the seven developmental needs of young adolescents (as written by the Center for Early Adolescence). By having the homework on the board for students to copy from the moment they come in the classroom, they may see what is expected of them after our time in class has ended. Finally, I feel that it is extremely important to have objectives listed on the board before each lesson. By explicitly stating what the purpose of the lesson is and what the expected outcome of the students is they may focus better on what they are supposed to get out of the day's activities. With these objectives, I could ask my students how they could use them outside of the classroom and in what ways they find the day's work to be useful.

One aspect of my room that will be left somewhat unfinished before my first day is that of decorating. I will try to provide many visual reminders of basic content knowledge such as days of the week, letters, numbers, and other useful information in the form of posters throughout the classroom. I will also designate areas of my room to maps, photos, and souvenirs from my own personal travels to Spanish-speaking countries. Even with both of these things, I will still leave space in my room to display student work. Because I believe projects are a great way to gauge student achievement, I will surely have plenty of posters and other visual representations created by my students that I can use to decorate my room walls. If some of my students have also traveled or had experiences where they used a foreign language, I would invite them to make a display for the classroom as well. Just because I am the teacher doesn't mean I am the only person to have had powerful experiences that relate well to the class's content. I would also have my windows open and clean to let in a lot of natural light. I really want my room to be open and colorful, with plenty of evidence that I share the space with my students and it is evident that my room is a space for students to express themselves personally and creatively, as these are important developmental needs for my future students.

The First Day

Introductions

The first day of school, I will be standing in the doorway to my room, ready and waiting to greet my students from each class with a smile on my face. After students have settled, I would like to focus on two main points for the day: introducing myself and understanding what the students want from the course. A fun way to share with my class the life I live is to have a slideshow with images that represent different things about my life, whether they are family members, hobbies, or other interests. I would also go around the room and ask that each student introduces him- or herself to me and maybe states a quick fact. If the students are already familiar with each other, it might be more reasonable to have an icebreaker to get the students participating. It would also be appropriate to collect the questionnaires sent out before the school year, or

maybe hand them out as the students' first assignment. Having lived in the residence halls as both a resident and a resident assistant, I have found that sending out a brief letter before the year starts and asking for students to fill out a questionnaire has led to a smooth introduction and easier transition.

Starting Off on the Right Foot

Another integral theme that should be addressed the first day of class is that of classroom expectations. As a way to provide structure, but still allow student voice in regards to student rules, I would like to have a "skeleton" syllabus. The syllabus would not yet be handed out on the first day, but we would read over the academic goals for the semester and possible projects that correlate with these goals. In terms of student behavior and policy, I would have a very basic list of rules for the class. They are as follows:

1. Please respect yourself, your peers, your teacher, and your learning.
2. Avoid distractions that may interfere with the learning of yourself and others.
3. Come to class prepared for the day and ready to learn.
4. Put forth your best effort in the class.
5. Strive to strengthen community in the classroom.

In addition to presenting these five rules, I would ask that the class collectively defined each underlined word. Allowing the students to decide what each term means they still having a say in their classroom environment and learning process, and it provides meaningful participation. In terms of policies that are more related to dress, behavior, hall passes, and other specific rules, I would have students refer to the student handbook that lists policies that applies to all students in the building. I would then turn the tables and ask my students what rules they have for me as their teacher. By asking this, I can open the floor to any pet peeves the students may have about classroom procedures and discover what personally works best for my students' learning.

Finally, I feel that the first class should have some time set aside to measure students' needs, interests, and expectations. With the remaining five to ten minutes, I would have my students fill out an exit slip answering the following questions: 1) What more do you want to know about Ms. Northrup? 2) What more do you want Ms. Northrup to know about you? And 3) What are some things you wish to learn in this class? Students commonly want to share more about themselves and learn more about their teacher, as human beings are social creatures at their core. Asking these personal questions allows students to open up and share about themselves while also feeling more comfortable in a classroom where their teacher takes a serious interest in each student. The final question is more about gauging what my students perceive the class to be about and what I can do to accomplish any goals they may have in learning a second language and exploring other cultures.

Building Community

Maintaining Foundations

After collecting and reviewing the student questionnaires, I will make it my mission to get to know each of my students on a more personal level. By knowing each student individually and taking the time to talk and interact with them, I can better understand their strengths, needs, and personal goals for the class. I imagine it could be difficult to differentiate instruction for different learning styles and background knowledge that students may have if I do not take the time to know who they are outside of my classroom. Although this idea seems like a lot of work, it wouldn't hurt to have a document on my computer where I could record personal data and background information for each student, just to make sure I am organized in my endeavors to know my students better. A fun way to get to know my students outside of the classroom is to interact with them outside of the classroom; one possibility is to maybe establish a weekly or bi-weekly lunch group where I can eat with students and chat about things other than learning a language.

Students' Expectations

The exit slips from the first day will help in creating a list of expectations that my students may have for the course. By seeing what my students want from the class, I could better tailor my lessons to meet the needs they may have in learning a second language. I anticipate students taking my class as an elective, but I also understand that students may be in the class to complete criteria for a particular diploma or other academic requirement. Throughout the year, I will have a running list of reasons why learning Spanish is relevant and important to my students. It would be a large piece of butcher paper on the wall and updated often by the students because the whole purpose of this is to acknowledge student contributions and focus on being relevant to them in my instruction. This poster would serve as a constant reminder to my students the benefits of learning a second language.

Knowing and understanding students' expectations of the class will be helpful, but it would also be useful to have students define what they expect from one another in the classroom. I will ask, in the form of open discussion, what my students want from one another when working on group projects or deciding what direction we should head in next in terms of curriculum and topics to explore. I want my students to be able to work easily among their peers. By creating a low affective filter, I hope to provide for my students a space where they feel comfortable to be themselves and express who they are more freely.

Procedure

After the Bell

Once the bell has rung to indicate the end of passing period, I will uphold the expectation that my students already be in their seats and prepared for the class. If students are still getting settled, I wouldn't mind waiting a few extra minutes, but I would at least anticipate that students have started to collect their things and get ready for class. If students are not prepared, I will have extra materials to lend to students, and I will allow collaboration with nearby peers to stay informed and on-track during

class. I will start each class by taking attendance of students. The school may have an electronic system of reporting attendance for each class, but I will also record that day's attendance on a laminated roster for each class. All rosters will be together with a ring and kept in a shelf near the door in case of fire drills or other emergencies. I will mark absent students with a wet-erase marker in order to know who to account for when we must leave the room as a group, or in case of any emergencies.

On the front board, I will have listed the agenda for the day. I will ask that students write in their notes the date, the items on the agenda, and any homework that may be assigned. I would also have my students write their homework in their agendas or other appropriate areas where they record such information. Something that will be optional for students to copy in their notes, but will be discussed explicitly at the beginning of instruction is the objectives for the day's class. I want to make sure I am very clear in the purpose of the day's activities and let students know what they should be aiming for in terms of mastery (either in whole or in part) by the end of the day. A meaningful quote from Rick Wormeli in his book Fair Isn't Always Equal is when he states "Students achieve more when they have a clear picture of the expectations...by identifying for or with students the intended outcomes..." (Wormeli 21) I strongly agree with this statement and hope to be as clear in my intentions with my students as possible.

Another regular occurrence in my future classroom that needs to be addressed is that of turning in assignments. When starting each assignment or any other works that will be turned in, I think having a pre-designed header would be helpful in organization of student work. I will ask that all students turn their assignments in with their name, the date, and the class period in the top right corner of their papers. In order to stay focused on our intent of learning Spanish, I will ask students to have their dates written out in Spanish, as this would provide more practice with days of the week, months, and numbers. When students come in, I will ask that they turn in any homework that is due that day in a basket on the corner of my desk before they take their seats.

Before Next Class

At the end of each class, I will have instructed new material or reviewed past concepts. I will work throughout the class to evaluate where my students stand in their comprehension of the material. I may have exit slips be a daily routine in order to ask students privately what they may not fully understand instead of calling them out or discussing it in front of peers. I will ask students if they were sure to copy their assignment for the next class, and I will introduce the next class's focus. As my students are dismissed, I will wish them a good day and remind them that I am happily available outside of class for any inquiries they may have.

Nuts and Bolts

Grading & Assessment

Formal grading and assessment is a very large indicator of how my students are performing in my classroom. School districts prefer numerical data and other ways to show growth in the content knowledge of students. While I must remember that my data in recording student mastery of different concepts should be comprehensible to those unfamiliar with my classroom, I will also make it a priority to look at my students' work through asset-based thinking. A worksheet may not be completed, but deducting points for incompleteness wouldn't accurately display a student's comprehension. It would also be incorrect to reward full points to a student who randomly fills in the blanks to fulfill the aesthetic appearance of having completed their work. I would hope that my students complete as much of their assignments as possible, but when grading, I would take into consideration the quality of their work over the quantity.

I see it perfectly reasonable to only select a few specific activities or areas of the assignment that cover the different concepts they are working on without having to grade everything that is turned in for each assignment. I would not tell my students what would and would not be graded, but by randomly grading only key points of their assignments, I could save myself both time and energy in looking to see where my students stand in their knowledge of the content. This is not to say that the ungraded

work is pointless, for this work provides further practice for students to really work with and understand what we are studying in class. I would also like to maybe periodically write little notes of encouragement on my students' work in order to show them that I'm truly interested in their achievements.

A large portion of assessing my students' mastery with different concepts will be in the form of projects. When I talk about projects, I am not only referring to the group projects that take days to put together and must incorporate multiple facets of the unit we are covering, but also smaller works that may take only a day to create. In my mind, a project is something that could be presented to the class (but doesn't have to be) and would be graded with a rubric. I understand that rubrics take a lot of thought and energy when putting them together, but I am willing to take the extra time to create rubrics for different visual, oral, or kinesthetic representations of material we have covered in class. I want to make sure my students are doing more than just regurgitating what they've learned in class in the form of fill-in-the-blank worksheets and multiple choice activities. I want my students to be working in all areas of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Another way to gauge my students' understanding is in the form of quizzes. I would not have pop quizzes because I feel that these discourage students from feeling that they can succeed in my classroom. I like the idea of having bi-weekly quizzes that briefly cover vocabulary and grammatical concepts. A specific example that I really admire from chapter 4 of Marzano's Classroom Instruction that Works is the idea of rewarding students with "symbolic tokens of recognition" if they receive a score between 90 and 100 percent, or scored 10 points higher than their previous exam (Marzano 59). As Marzano states, "Reinforcing effort can help teach students one of the most valuable lessons they can learn- the harder you try, the more successful you are." (Marzano 59) By having a very routine schedule of quizzes, students may have time to prepare for them. Having regular quizzes may also help prepare students for the bigger exams that come less periodically throughout the semester, but carry more weight.

I understand that I have previously stated three very concrete forms of assessing my students' progress: homework, projects, and quizzes. These three forms of

summative assessment will be very helpful in analyzing students' growth in their learning, but they will certainly not be the only form of assessment in my classroom. I think the most important way of looking into the minds of my students is through formative assessment and conversing with my pupils one-on-one. Summative assessment may numerically show where my students need to improve, but I feel strongly that formative assessment should be employed to understand *why* my students are having trouble understanding an idea or expanding on a concept. Some quick and fun ideas to assess students formatively is to have them converse with one another in Spanish, talk with me about their weekends in Spanish, asking follow-up questions to anything mentioned by my students, and allowing for fun activities in the classroom such as using finger puppets or allowing free reading time. By observing and interacting with my students on an individual and personal level, I may identify what works for them and what I could do to change my instruction and better meet all of my students' needs.

Discipline

Student behavior is very malleable and very strongly influenced by other factors in the environment. I hope to eliminate stress, anxiety, and frustration, among other instigators to bad behavior, by emphasizing a strong community and comfortable environment in my classroom. I will work my hardest to adapt to my students and learn what I could do best to make them feel most comfortable and receptive to learning. I believe that by holding high expectations for my students and creating engaging lessons, I can minimize the presence of poor behavior. In the instances that a student does act out or misbehave, I will indeed have a way to respond. I feel that the consequence should match the behavior of the student.

If a student has misbehaved in my classroom, I would have a series of responses to rely on. I would first verbally ask that a student stops the disruptive behavior. This could be quietly in passing his or her desk or slipped in between the words I am speaking in a lesson to the class as a whole. If the student persists, I would call him or her aside during class when other students were working independently or there was a transition in the lesson. If a student continued to have problems, or if there was not an

appropriate time to talk to the student in class, I would ask that he or she stays after class to discuss further whatever was happening during class. Depending on the severity of the behavior, I would call parents to inform them of their child's behavior in class. Whatever the case, I would try not to focus solely on the actions of the students, but also the reasoning behind such decisions. I do not see problems being solved effectively if I am not actively pursuing the root of the issue at hand.

I have stated previously that I will maintain high expectations for my students and I will try to eliminate the sources of distractions in my classroom, but there will be some things that I am more lenient with when handling. I must keep in mind that a few whispered words thrown back and forth between students during instruction doesn't automatically mean the students aren't paying attention because they could have just been clarifying something or expanding on a concept that was just taught. I will also trust that my students know when to appropriately leave their desk to sharpen their pencil or grab a tissue. If the noise level begins to get out of hand at any given time, I will have a system where I ring a bell if students are too loud. For any given situation, I will ask that my students work in one of the noise levels zero through three: zero would be defined as absolutely no noise, one would be quiet whispers among students, two would be talking at regular voices, and three would be a rare level where students could be heard from other nearby classrooms. I would try to avoid being in the noise level three. If students begin to abuse these privileges, I will take them away, but I feel that trusting and respecting my students in the classroom will help set a strong foundation for a respectful community.

Another aspect of discipline that I need to address is that of late work. I would like to set firm due dates for all assignments. I would only accept work one day late, but if this was abused, then I could refuse to accept late work, except for in the cases of illness or other legitimate excuses. Having said this, I would also allow my students to "pass" two eligible assignments per semester. I will try to assign homework often so that a student could "pass" an assignment that he or she either doesn't want do or they could save their passes in case they forgot to do an assignment. Having extra passes left at the end of the semester would not be carried over and they would not be translated into extra credit. Their purpose would be to allow some sort of leniency in the collection of

homework, but it would still provide stable guidelines for the students to follow in terms of completing and turning in their work. Projects and other big assignments would not be eligible for passes.

Goals

My goal in having set up this classroom management plan is to provide a stable, consistent and caring environment and basic structure in my future classroom. With the measures I have taken, I hope to create a strong community among my students in the classroom. I also wish to empower my students and have them feel that they are more than capable of succeeding in their studies under my supervision. Finally, I wish to create a comfortable environment where my students can work easily. Explicitly defining the purposes of assignments and goals of instruction will help set my students up for success as they work to learn a new language and new cultures.

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