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Experience and Education

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Abstract: The aim of classroom management is twofold. The first is to establish a quiet and calm environment in the classroom so that the pupils can take part in meaningful learning in a subject. The second aim is that classroom management contributes to the pupils' social and moral development. During an early phase, classroom management focused on pupil behaviour and discipline, and was rooted in a behaviourist understanding.

Introduction

Universal Classroom Management Strategies

Model ideal behavior : Make a habit of demonstrating behavior you want to see, as many studies show that modeling effectively teaches students how to act in different situations. A straightforward way to model certain behaviors is holding a mock conversation with an admin, other teacher or student helper in front of the class. Talking about a test or other relatable topic, be sure to:

1. Use polite language
2. Maintain eye contact
3. Keep phones in your pockets
4. Let one another speak uninterrupted
5. Raise concerns about one another's statements in a respectful manner after, start a class discussion to list and expand upon the ideal behaviors you exemplified.

Let students help establish guidelines : Encourage all students to help you build classroom rules, as you'll generate more buy-in than just telling them what they're not allowed to do. Near the start of the year or semester, start a discussion by asking students what they believe should and shouldn't fly. At what points are phones okay and not okay? What are acceptable noise levels during lessons? This may seem like you're setting yourself up for failure, but — depending on the makeup of you class — you may be shocked at the strictness of some proposed rules. Regardless, having a discussion should lead to mutually-understood and -respected expectations.

Document rules : Don't let your mutually-respected guidelines go forgotten. Similar to handing out a syllabus, print and distribute the list of rules that the class discussion generated. Then, go through the list with your students. Doing this emphasizes the fact that you respect their ideas and intend to adhere to them. And when a student breaks a rule, it'll be easy for you to point to this document. If you're feeling creative, you can include the rule list in a student handbook with important dates, events and curriculum information.

Avoid punishing the class: Address isolated behavior issues instead of punishing an entire class, as the latter can hurt your relationships with students who are on-task and thereby jeopardize other classroom management efforts. Instead, call out specific students in a friendly manner. For example:

1. "Do you have a question?", not "Stop talking and disrupting other students"
2. "Do you need help focusing?", not "Pay attention and stop fooling around while I'm talking"
3. This basic approach will allow you to keep a friendly disposition, while immediately acknowledging poor behavior.

Encourage initiative : Promote growth mindset, and inject variety into your lessons, by allowing students to work ahead and deliver short presentations to share take-away points. Almost inevitably, you'll have some eager learners in your classroom. You can simply ask them if they'd like to get ahead from time-to-time. For example, if you're reading a specific chapter in a textbook, propose that they read the following one too. When they deliver their subsequent presentations to preview the next chapter on your behalf, you may find that other students want a bit more work as well.

Offer praise : Praise students for jobs well done, as doing so improves academic and behavioral performance, according to a recent research review and study. When it is sincere and references specific examples of effort or accomplishment, praise can:

1. Inspire the class
2. Improve a student's self-esteem
3. Reinforce rules and values you want to see

Perhaps more importantly, it encourages students to repeat positive behavior. Let's say a student exemplifies advanced

problem-solving skills when tackling a math word problem. Praising his or her use of specific tactics should go a long way in ensuring he or she continues to use these tactics. Not to mention, you'll motivate other students to do the same.

Use non-verbal communication : Complement words with actions and visual aids to improve content delivery, helping students focus and process lessons. Many differentiated instruction strategies and techniques are rooted in these communication methods. For example, running learning stations— divided sections of your classroom through which students rotate— allows you to deliver a range of non-spoken content types. These include videos, infographics and physical objects such as counting coins.

Give tangible rewards: Reward specific students at the end of each lesson, in front of the class, as another motivational and behavior-reinforcement technique. Let's say a few students are actively listening throughout the entire lesson, answering questions and asking their own. Before the class ends, walk over to their desks to give them raffle tickets. So others can learn, state aloud what each student did to earn the tickets. On Friday, they can submit their tickets for a shot at a prize that changes each week — from candy to being able to choose a game for the next class party.

Make positive letters and phone calls : Keep students happy in and out of class by pleasantly surprising their parents, making positive phone calls and sending complimentary letters home. When the occasion arises, from academic effort or behavioral progress, letting parents know has a trickle-down effect. They'll generally congratulate their kids; their kids will likely come to class eager to earn more positive feedback. This can also entice parents to grow more invested in a child's learning, opening the door to at-home lessons. Such lessons are a mainstay element of culturally-responsive teaching.

Build excitement for content : Start lessons by previewing particularly-exciting parts, hooking student interest from the get-go. As the bell rings and students settle, go through an agenda of the day's highlights. These could include group tasks, engaging bits of content and anything else to pique curiosity. For example, "Throughout the day, you'll learn about:"

1. How to talk like you're a teacher (sentence structure)
2. Why you don't know anyone who's won the lottery (probability)
3. What all the presidents of the United States have had in common (social analysis)

The goal of this classroom management technique is to immediately interest students in your agenda and thereby dissuade misbehavior.

Offer different types of free study time : Provide a range of activities during free study time to appeal to students who struggle to process content in silence, individually. You can do this by dividing your class into clearly-sectioned solo and team activities. In separate sections, consider:

1. Providing audio books, which can play material relevant to your lessons
2. Maintaining a designated quiet space for students to take notes and complete work
3. Creating a station for challenging group games that teach or reinforce curriculum-aligned skills
4. Allowing students to work in groups while taking notes and completing work, away from quiet zones

By running these sorts of activities, free study time will begin to benefit diverse learners. This should contribute to overall classroom engagement.

Write group contracts : Help student group work run smoothly and effectively by writing contracts that contain guidelines, having everyone sign. Group contracts should be based on expectations that students have for each other, and you have for them. You can gather the class's thoughts by holding a discussion about what the ideal group member does, and how he or she acts. Once you've written the contract, encourage students to come up with consequences for violating expectations. By having them sign a fresh version of the contract before each group task and project, you're empowering them to hold each other accountable.

Assign open-ended projects : Encourage students to tackle open-ended projects – projects that don't demand a specific product – to allow them to demonstrate knowledge in ways that inherently suit them. This starts by giving the class a list of broad project ideas, asking each student to choose one. Be sure to provide a rubric for each project that clearly defines expectations. By both enticing and challenging students, you should notice they'll:

1. Work and learn at their own paces
2. Engage actively with appropriate content
3. Demonstrate knowledge as effectively as possible

With these benefits, students may actually look forward to taking on new projects.

Give only two marks for informal assessments : Recall a time you saw a big "F" in red ink on your work. You were probably too upset to review mistakes and feedback, and so are your students when they see the same. So, consider avoiding standard marks on informal and formative assessments. Instead, just state if a student did or did not meet expectations. Then, provide struggling students with a clear path to improve. For example, pair classmates who didn't meet expectations with those who did, giving them a review and practice activity. When strugglers are confident they understand key concepts, encourage them to tell you. Provide a new assessment, allowing them to prove their competency.

Classroom Management Strategies For Individual Students

Use Ed Tech that adjusts to each student : Give students who struggle to process your content opportunities to try educational technology that adapts to their needs. There

are many games and platforms that use adaptive learning principles to detect a given student's skill deficits, serving him or her content to help overcome them. For example, Prodigy is a math video game that adjusts its content to help students address their trouble spots. It also offers feedback to help them solve specific mistakes, as they answer questions that use words, charts, pictures and numbers. More than 800,000 teachers currently use Prodigy, as it's aligned with curricula across the English-speaking world. Try the free platform by signing up below:

Interview students : Interview students who aren't academically engaged or displaying prosocial behavior to learn how to better manage them.

While running learning stations or a large-group activity, pull each student aside for a few minutes. Ask about:

1. What helps them focus
2. Who they work well with
3. Their favorite types of lessons
4. Their favorite in-class activities
5. Which kinds of exercises help them remember key lesson points

Note their answers to come up with activities and approaches that engage them, thereby limiting classroom disruptions.

Address bad behavior quickly: Avoid hesitation when you must address bad behavior, especially when a student breaks a documented rule.

Acting sooner than later will help ensure that negative feelings - whether between students or you and a student - won't fester. Failure to act can result in more poor behavior, leading to needlessly-difficult conversations.

But keep in mind: It's usually best to talk to the student in private. Emerging research shows that punishing students in front of peers has "limited value."

Consider peer teaching: Use peer teaching as a classroom management strategy if you feel your top performers can help engage and educate disruptive and struggling students.

Peer teaching activities, such as pairing students together as reading buddies, can be especially beneficial for students who suffer from low confidence and poor interpersonal skills.

Authoritative research states tutors improve self-esteem and interpersonal skills by giving feedback. Tutees realize these benefits by asking questions and receiving immediate clarification. A later study of at-risk students echoes these advantages. Although you should spend time teaching peer tutors how to properly communicate with tutees, you'll likely find the benefits are worth the work.

Gamify personal learning plans: Motivate students on personal learning plans by gamifying those plans, as studies indicate this will continuously engage and incentivize them.

If these strategies work especially well for individual students, you should see similar success by using them as class-wide student management techniques.

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