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Classroom Management Plan

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Because of their dynamic role in the school community, school counselors have the opportunity to influence the lives of their students in multiple ways. Through a guidance curriculum, school counselors have the opportunity to address the academic, career and personal/social needs of students. In addition, it allows school counselors to embrace the role of teachers. In order to foster learning in the classroom environment, all educators, including school counselors, must execute an effective classroom management plan to foster an enriching learning environment. Classroom management plans include rules and procedures, disciplinary interventions, teacher/student relationship dynamics and mental set, all of which contribute to student achievement. Because I believe in creating an inclusive learning environment, my classroom management plan will help me foster student’s individual growth in a positive manner. By establishing clear rules and procedures, students will be able to get the most out of the class experience. I believe it is important to establish rapport with students to develop trust in the teacher/student relationship. However, disciplinary interventions help school counselors exude dominance and cooperation within the classroom environment. Attention to mental set allows school counselors to engage in the learning process with students and to be aware of the classroom atmosphere and behaviors. Overall, these factors are necessary for school counselors to consider in their teaching role. Combined with my personal teaching philosophy, my classroom management plan allows me to fulfill my obligation to contribute to my students’ overall achievement as an educator. The following classroom management plan is to be utilized at the secondary level.

**Classroom Environment**

***Preparedness***

In order to run an effective classroom, teachers should be prepared for different aspects of the class. First, as a school counselor, I realize I will be a mobile teacher, not having my own classroom space. Because I will be moving around the school building, it will be important for me to remain organized for class. Before class, I will make sure I have all the necessary material for my class period. For different guidance units, I will use different storage units to separate various course materials. Second, lessons are to be prepared in advance. However, I will review the class content at the beginning of each day to assure proper preparedness and knowledge. Class material, such as worksheets, will be prepared and stored the day before the class. Lastly, a class structure will be followed in each class to assure material is covered. This routine should be consistently followed. The following routine will be present during each class period:

* Move desks into circle/U-shape formation
* Attendance
* Passing out of name tags (One student will be assigned this task)
* Icebreaker Activity
* Review of rules and procedures
* Review of previous class content
* Guidance Activity
* Discussion/Process of Activity
* Distribution and collection of important forms
* Move desks to original formation

***Classroom Seating Arrangement***

At the secondary level, it is important to establish a clear seating arrangement. Because I will be a mobile teacher, students will be tasked with arranging the classroom into the proper seating arrangement. Desks will be arranged in circle/ U-shape facing the board to encourage discussion and participation from students. Also, this allows me to have a direct view of the whole room, and I will make sure to have my own seat within the circle. Students will also have a direct view of the board. Students will be placed in assigned seats to assist me in learning the students’ names. This arrangement will help me be able to stay present in the classroom, maintain eye contact, and actively engage my students in activities and discussion. At the end of the class period, students will move the desks back to original formation.

**Rules and Procedures**

In order to establish an enriching learning environment and implement a classroom management plan, rules and procedures must be in place. While similar, rules and procedures have distinct differences. Rules identify the general standards in the classroom, while procedures helps educators communicate expectations for specific behaviors. Rules and procedures must be established early on and set a foundation for the duration of the class. In addition, rules and procedures should be the result of collaboration between the educator and students. Overall, student input contributes to a positive classroom environment. Rules should not be imposed on students, but they should be thoroughly explained in contract form. By involving students in creating, implementing and monitoring the rules and procedures, they will be more likely to uphold these standards and invest interest in course content (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).

***Action Step: Identify specific rules and procedures for your classroom.***

While I believe it is important to collaboratively establish a set of rules and procedures with my students, there are a few classroom rules that I will implement to assure proper classroom procedures. Because I will not be working in my own classroom space, it is essential to set certain procedures to assure adequate flow of the class period. These rules will aid students in keeping on task during the class period.

* The following ***standards*** will be established in the classroom setting and be added to the overall class rules and procedures during the first classroom meeting:
* Be in your assigned seat at the beginning of the class period.
* Have any assigned homework out on desk at beginning of class period.
* Students should be prepared with a writing utensil for class work.
* Foster a positive and respectful environment.
* Express opinions and/or statements when given the opportunity by the instructor.
* Be respectful of other students’ belongings.
* One student at a time may be permitted to leave the room, unless there is an emergency.

These standards are considered very general, and but I find it important to implement them into the classroom rules and procedures. In order for these rules to be included without forcing them upon students, I will incorporate them when designing the overall rules and procedures with all students during the first class period (See next Action Step).

***Action Step: Involve students in the design of rules and procedures.***

By involving students in the creation of overall classroom rule and procedures, students are more likely to follow rules, stay on task, and be responsible for their actions. These rules are to be established during the first class period, and students are to be reminded of these rules continually, especially in the beginning of the guidance unit. The rules and procedures collectively established by the instructor and students form a contract between these two parties. This will hold the instructor accountable to consistently implement these standards, and the students will be responsible to uphold class rules and procedures throughout the classroom unit (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). The following is the class activity to be held during the first class period to jointly create overall rules and procedures.

The first class period of a guidance unit will be partially dedicated to the creation of rules and procedures of the classroom. This activity will allow students to be involved in the creation of classroom standards, while also allowing the instructor to provide input.

* During the first class period, I will bring a large writing pad and a marker to write down the final list of rules and procedures.
  + To begin, students will break into groups and be given a standard sheet of paper.
  + In their groups, students will be given 5-10 minutes to discuss and record suggestions for rules and procedures for their class. The instructor will provide oral directions, but an instruction sheet will also be provided to each group with suggestions.
* After the allotted time, students will share their top three rules with the class group by group.
  + The suggestions will be written on the blackboard/whiteboard by the instructor.
  + If not already included, the instructor will also share her predetermined classroom rules with the class to be included in the overall standards (See previous Action Step).
* Once all groups have shared, the instructor will lead a class discussion. The discussion will allow students to voice which rules and procedures they like best and why.
  + Once the class has decided which rules to include, they will be written on the large pad of paper. This pad will be stored with my class materials to be transported to the classroom for each period. It will serve as a reminder during all class periods.
* Before the second class setting, the instructor will type up a contract with the rules and procedures collectively established by the instructor and students during the first class period. During the second class period, the instructor will distribute this document at the beginning of the class and review the rules and procedures with the class. After review is complete, students will sign the contract and hand back to the instructor. The instructor will keep this contract on file to be used in the event of a breach of contract.

**Disciplinary Interventions**

In order to properly manage a classroom and provide students with a positive classroom experience, instructors must exercise their responsibility to implement discipline within the classroom. First and foremost, I believe students should be awarded for acceptable and positive behaviors through positive reinforcement and focus on strengths. However, to maintain an enriching classroom environment, I believe the disciplinary process should include disciplinary actions that build on one another with the frequency of unacceptable behaviors.

***Action Step: Employ specific techniques that acknowledge and reinforce acceptable behavior***

In order to be aware of the behaviors of my students, I believe it is important to utilize specific techniques to consistently monitor students’ behaviors. These techniques are to be used when both acceptable and unacceptable behaviors occur. To have a direct view of student behaviors, I will arrange their seating for optimal view in the classroom (See Classroom Seating Arrangement). In addition, my use of key techniques will help me to be aware and keep students on task. I will use the following techniques to be aware of student behavior and acknowledge these behaviors.

* Repetition of class rules and procedures—In order to stay on task and move fluidly throughout a lesson, students must be aware of the classroom rules and procedures. Furthermore, I intend to dedicate time for students to practice proper behaviors and routines to get the most out of the class period. The rules and procedures are to be established the first day of class (See above), and they will be repeated and practiced throughout the duration of the guidance unit. Because students continued to the creation of these standards, they will be more likely to follow the rules, especially if they are practiced. Students also sign a contract, which serves as an agreement between the instructor and the student, and this contract will be reviewed periodically through the unit, especially early on.
* Teacher Reaction—By using varied physical and verbal reactions during the class period, I will be aware of student behaviors and monitor them appropriately. At the secondary level, I believe it is most useful to use eye contact and proximity to establish distinct presence in the classroom. If students are not on task, *making eye contact* will get their attention. Also, if I move closer to a student, my *presence* will help the students I am closer to stay on task. *Simple verbal remainders* are also a simple way to acknowledge both positive and negative behaviors. In order to provide positive reinforcement, I believe these reminders should be observed by all class members to influence behaviors. Yet, negative behaviors should render a more discreet reminder to not put a student on the spot (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). My reactions will also determine further disciplinary actions in the event of negative behaviors.

***Action Step: Establish limits for acceptable and unacceptable behavior***

Through the establishment and repetition of rules and procedures, students should be aware of limits in the classroom environment. I believe much time should be dedicated to this process to assure students’ knowledge of rules and consequences, which can be done by established a system of routines (See above). It is necessary to utilize positive reinforcement to increase acceptable behaviors, while disciplinary actions decrease the occurrence of unacceptable behaviors. I find it important for students to be aware of the consequences of their actions, and they will be provided with my personal guidelines on reinforcement and disciplinary actions, which may be outlined in the rules and procedures contract and discussed during class.

* Positive Reinforcement—Positive reinforcement plays an important role in increasing appropriate behaviors in the classroom. I believe students should be acknowledged for good behaviors, respecting the others’ values, opinions, and achievement. When acknowledging these behaviors, I hope for students to not only increase the behaviors, but also for all students to strive for maintaining positive behaviors in the classroom environment.
* Disciplinary Actions—The presence of negative behaviors in the classroom can result in the hindrance of learning and growth in the classroom environment. While I do not wish to single out and embarrass students for not following rules and procedures, I believe it is appropriate to progressively address the behaviors. As a student continues or increases the frequency of the behavior, I will take certain steps to implementing disciplinary action.
  + **Step 1**: Acknowledge the behavior discreetly through eye contact and proximity to make student aware of disapproval of current behavior.
  + **Step 2**: Provide student with a private reminder at the student’s seat. This reminder will include acknowledging the behavior and reorientation to class work. I will attempt to include a simple, positive message by focusing on a student’s strengths and abilities.
  + **Step 3:** Request for the student to meet with me after the class period. This brief meeting will include an acknowledgement of the negative behavior and review of the student’s strengths and abilities with mention of student achievement within the class. I will remind the student of the contract signed at the beginning of the guidance unit and ask if they have any questions about moving forward and improving behavior.
  + **Step 4:** If the behavior persists, I will schedule a meeting outside of the class with the student to meet in the school counseling office. During this meeting, we will discuss classroom behaviors and learning strategies to engage the student’s abilities to utilize during the class period. If necessary, students may benefit from other school counseling programs, such as individual or groups counseling. Depending on the severity of the behaviors and student compliance, parents may be contacted during this meeting.

**Teacher/Student Relationships**

As an educator, I believe it is highly important to foster the relationship between student and teachers to assure academic achievement. Overall, I believe all students have the ability to be high achievers, and I find it is important to communicate this to students. Communication is very important to this dynamic, especially when establishing expectations, enforcing class rules, and giving thorough feedback. In order to form positive teacher/student relationships, I intend to dedicate time to building rapport with my students and understanding their perspective. Through my teaching, I hope to foster the individual learning styles of my students to maintain their interest in learning and class content. Overall, I believe it is essential to establish a healthy balance between dominance and cooperation to create the best teacher/student relationships (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). In addition to my teacher role, I will encourage my students that, as their school counselor, I am also available to meet their personal needs outside of the classroom environment.

***Action Step: Use specific techniques to establish an appropriate level of dominance.***

To assure that I maintain an adequate level of dominance in the classroom, I plan to *exhibit assertive behaviors* and *create learning goals* for my students. As a school counselor, I find assertiveness to be important to all school counselor roles, especially teaching. The following behaviors will allow me to exhibit assertiveness in the classroom:

* Maintain eye contact to keep students on task, while also communicating approval or disapproval of class behaviors.
* Presence and proximity assists in monitoring student behaviors and keeps students on task. In addition, moving around the room provides individual attention and shows students you care about their individual performance.
* Clear communication and tone of voice exhibits competence for the teacher, and normal classroom speech should be maintained.
* Consistency and persistence is key, especially when acknowledging acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

Learning goals help teachers be clear about class expectations and what students will learn as a result of the class content. Depending on the topic of the classroom guidance unit, these objectives may vary from unit to unit. However, it is important that they are prepared and communicated to students. Learning goals can be communicated through rubrics, which will help me provide feedback to students on class performance and behaviors. In addition to overall guidance unit learning goals, I believe goals should be established for each lesson to assure students benefit from the class content.

***Action Step: Use specific techniques to establish an appropriate level of cooperation.***

Through cooperation, teachers are able to focus on the needs of their students in the classroom. Cooperation involves a concern for the needs and opinions of others and a desire to function as a member of a team as opposed to an individual. For all students to grow in the class, a teacher should strive to maintain high cooperation, which gives attention to individual learning, personal interests of students, using positive learning behaviors and appropriate responses to student’s incorrect responses (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). In order to appeal to these aspects of cooperation, I will uphold the following teaching behaviors:

* *Providing flexible learning goals:* Upon evaluating the varied learning styles of my students, I will attempt to appeal to how individual students learn. For example, after reading or role playing an example behavior as a part of class, I will ask individual students what they learned from the example. Or, asking students to provide a personal story of where they have seen this example used.
* *Taking a personal interest in students*: First off, I will make it a priority to know the names of all my students. At the beginning if the unit, students will have name tags on their desks. When I address students, I will use their name. Also, I will use a seating chart. Overall, I will get to know more about my students through various interactions. In class, I will greet them as they arrive. I may ask for students to share personal examples from their lives. In addition, I can talk to them informally outside of the class period and ask about important events in the students’ lives.
* *Using equitable and positive classroom behaviors*: I want to encourage all students to be active participants in the class environment. To do this, I will communicate the value of their stories and opinion through a respectful classroom environment. This can be done by moving around the whole classroom, providing ownership to student ideas and giving student appropriate “wait time” to participate.
* *Responding Appropriately to Student’s Incorrect Response*: To avoid embarrassing a student for an incorrect response, I will focus on the strengths of student and emphasize the correct aspects of their answers. Also, I think students benefit from working together through collaborating questions. Overall, I will make sure students are respectful of other students, which is also enforced in the class rules.

**Teacher/Parent Relationships**

When parents are involved in their sons or daughters education, students are more likely to succeed academically. Therefore, I find it important to include the Teacher/Parent Relationship in my classroom management plan. I believe it is important for parents to know what students are learning, and I intend to regularly communicate with my students’ parents. At the beginning on the guidance unit, I will provide students with a letter to bring home stating what the students are learning and communicating my intention to provide information about how the students is performing. Also, my contact information will be included for them to communicate any questions or concerns. In addition, I plan to provide parents with a progress report focused on the student’s strengths, abilities and accomplishments. These progress reports will be issued at the half way point and end point of the guidance unit. Through this communication, parents will be able to focus on the success of their son or daughter and be aware of students’ growth in the classroom.

**Mental Set**

In order to foster students’ growth within the classroom, I believe it is important for the instructor to have the right frame of mind, or mental set, when interacting with and teaching students. By having a mental set, teachers are more aware of the classroom environment and can properly engage in the learning process with students. Mental set involves both “withitness” and emotional objectivity. “Withitness” can be described as being aware of what is happening in all parts of the classroom at all times, which can be done by scanning the whole classroom. Emotional objectivity relates to a teacher’s ability to implement and enforce rules and procedures, execute disciplinary actions and cultivate effective relationships (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). In order to develop a personal and appropriate mental set, I will incorporate my own personal beliefs and competencies to be present with my students.

***Action Step: Employ specific techniques to maintain or heighten your awareness of the actions of students in your class (“withitness”).***

In order to remain “with it” while teaching at the secondary level, I must address three actions to be utilized in the classroom: react immediately, forecast problems, and observe a master teacher.

* *React Immediately*: To maintain dominance and cooperation in the classroom, it is important to react when students exhibit unacceptable behaviors. I intend to remain consistent in disciplinary actions (See above). To assure I am able to react immediately to unwanted behaviors, I will walk around the classroom to observe students while teaching. I will maintain eye contact with students as I move around the room, and make sure to remain in close proximity to students who misbehave.
* *Forecast Problems*: Predictability often helps teachers prepare how they will react to a specific situation. By knowing how students will react during class activities or to a certain topic, I will be able to plan ahead for how I will handle the situation. In addition, I will work to see how I can avoid these problems by engaging students in other ways.
* *Observing a Master Teacher*: In order to engage in professional development for my teaching role, I plan to observe other teachers who exhibit exemplary classroom management skills. I believe teachers and school counselors can learn valuable information and skills from one another. As a school counselor, it will help me become a better teacher.

***Action Step: Employ specific techniques to maintain a healthy emotional objectivity with students.***

To maintain emotional objectivity in the classroom environment, teachers need to be aware of themselves when interacting with their students. When teaching, it is best to avoid emotional extremes when dealing with students (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). To best avoid these situations, teachers should focus on reframing, monitoring one’s own thoughts, and taking care of oneself.

* *Reframing*: Overall, it is very important to not personalize students’ behaviors, which can be done by trying to understand why the behavior occurs. I intend to practice this skill in order to adopt it as a natural practice.
* *Monitoring Your Own Thoughts*: By monitoring my own views of my students, I will better understand my own positive or negative thoughts. I find it is easier to focus on the negative thoughts, but it is much more beneficial for me and my students when I focus on the positive. To avoid this negative thinking, I will engage in a mental review to anticipate problems and personal anxiety. Also, when interacting with the student, I will do my best to remain in a positive state of mind.
* *Taking Care of Yourself*: As a school counselor and educator, I understand the importance of commitment to wellness. To effectively educate and perform, teachers and counselors must monitor emotional health, which should be addressed regularly. This can be done through guided imagery, laughter and treating oneself to rewards. Personally, I have a burnout prevention plan that helps me monitor my emotional health, and I find it important to update the plan frequently.

**References**

Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. J. (2003). Classroom management that works:

Research-based strategies for every teacher. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Education/ASCD College Textbook Series