Classroom Management Philosophy

Throughout this course I have realized the importance of classroom management and what this truly means. Wong & Wong (2018) said it best, "Classroom management refers to what teachers do to organize students, space, time, and materials so that learning takes place" (p. 92). Students thrive in a well-structured environment where there are rules and expectations, but the students still have freedom and a voice. Classroom management, like many other things, is something that can always be improved upon.

Policies

Within the classroom teachers must enforce and follow specific policies. All educators have a code of ethics. The Model Code of Ethics for Educators, or the MCEE, "Serves as a guide for future and current educators faced with the complexities of P-12 education. This code of ethics honors the public trust and upholds the dignity of the profession" (National Council for the Advancement of Educators Ethics [NCAEE], 2017). The MCEE covers a wide range of topics: responsibility to the profession, professional competence, responsibility to students, responsibility to the school community, and ethical use of technology (Appendix A). Professionalism, as well as responsibility, are of great importance within the educational profession.

Policies within the classroom can also be directed at the students. These include phone policies, plagiarism, cheating, attendance, participation, and classroom rules. These policies often given to students at the beginning of the year in a syllabus. It is important to talk about these policies throughout the year and remind students of their importance.

The phone/technology policy will look something like this. There are pockets on the wall, each numbered, students are expected to drop off phones in their designated pocket and can pick them up on their way out of the classroom (Appendix B). While technology can, and should, be incorporated into learning, there must be rules and limitations. For example, computers can only be used when the teacher allows it, phones may only be used in cases of emergency, or if playing a specific game in class, like Kahoot. Setting these simple rules shows students what is expected of them.

When it comes to plagiarism and cheating, there are honor codes within the school usually. Educate students about this honor code. Teach students how to cite sources, build a relationship with the students so that if they are struggling with content, they can ask for help rather than feel like their only option is to cheat.

For attendance and participation, make this extremely clear. When students are absent there needs to be resources available to them in order to not fall behind. For example, pre-recording video lectures and posting them online for students to access allows them to stay on top of their schoolwork. Have an extra tray that holds worksheets, notes, or even an overview of the day that students can pick up once they return. Make sure to label this tray clearly and have it accessible to the students.

Classroom rules should be explained thoroughly at the beginning of the year and should be posted within the classroom. This way, students can refer back to it and know what is expected of them at all times (Appendix C).

Teachers should set up classroom routines that students can rely on. This is especially helpful for the beginning of the year. This way the teacher's intentions and expectations are

made clear from the beginning. During the younger years of students' lives, having those routines is a great way to encourage/improve habits in and outside the classroom. Having routines creates/fosters order, predictability, productivity, independence, etc. within the classroom. According to Galloway, as cited in Wong (2018), "Give an elementary student three days, and the student will mirror you" (p. 72). If teachers put in place these routines their students will catch on quickly and be able to apply them themselves within three days. It is also so important to note that, as Wong (2018) states, "The most effective way to make connections with students is to have a well-managed classroom where students are on task, allowing you to spend one-on-onetime with them" (p. 82). When routines are put in place for students to follow more time is allotted for teaching and learning. Teachers then have more time/freedom to interact with their students one-on-one, create those positive relationships, cultivate good habits, etc.

The first day introductions and getting to know students is one of the most important parts of the school year. This will set the tone for how students treat the teacher, treat each other, and treat the classroom and the materials (Appendix D). Routines and consistency, especially at the beginning of the year, creates a culture within the classroom where students know what is expected of them, no one is singled out or put down in any way, responsibility is given to the students, a positive professional relationship can blossom rather than students shutting down. As stated by Wong (2018), "Truly effective teachers are kind, caring, and loving people" (p. 80). This should be shown from the start.

Procedures

According to Wong (2018), "Classroom management consists of the procedures that a teacher establishes to create and maintain an optimum teaching and learning environment" (p.

139). Procedures are actively showing, teaching, and applying the policies; especially when it comes to classroom rules.

Greeting procedure

This procedure can be relatively simple or can be more personal and intricate, depending on the teacher and the students' preferences. Whichever way the teacher prefers, there needs to be consistency. Teachers can stand at the door and greet each student by name and smile. Or teachers can do individual check-ins with each student at the door. The greeting procedure can also be related to dismissal. When students leave for the day it can be especially beneficial to have students turn in an exit slip to formatively assess students for the day. Or have students copy down their homework for the day right before the bell rings. Greeting and dismissal procedures are flexible and vary greatly depending on the teacher and students.

Bell Work

Bell work is something that is very familiar to countless former and current students. Bell work is a great way to get students engaged as soon as they enter the classroom. Bell work can also vary depending on what the subject is or the teacher's preference. Bell work can also depend on what the students need the most practice in. For example, if a teacher notices the students need to work on penmanship or their writing skills, the teacher can have the students use personal journals and respond to a quote, image, prompt, etc. every morning as bell work. It can be beneficial to switch up the type of bell work every month or so. This allows for some variety while still touching on every subject. Teachers can switch from writing a reflection each morning to solving a math problem and going over the answer. Bell work is an incredible way to allow teachers to formatively assess students and learn where improvements need to be made.

Seating Procedure

Seating should vary throughout the school year. It is good to keep seating as flexible as possible, movement within the classroom is essential. At the beginning of the year students will be seated in alphabetical order, by first name. This will last for about one month before it switches. This allows the teacher to learn names and students to get acquainted with their peers. It may be beneficial to use name stands. Students will switch seating about every month by picking a stick from the jar. Each stick has a number, the desks have their own numbers (on the seating chart paper). According to what number is chosen these are the students' new seats. This process eliminates students feeling left out.

Zone seating differs from everyday seating. These zones can be used by individuals or as groups when doing rotations. Within the Quiet Zone, students must respect the space, their classmates, and the teacher (these rules will be posted in the space where students can see). The rules include, putting materials back where they found them, treating materials with care, using the space quietly, so the rest of the class is not disrupted, ask the teacher first (by raising your hand with the *sign*). The sign is when a student raises their hand with a pinky finger extended. Students can use this space for a maximum of 5 minutes, a quiet timer is set, and the student must return once it goes off. The space includes items like music (with headphones), a yoga mat for stretching, a glitter jar, pinwheels, sensory buckets, and comfy chairs. The Quiet Zone can only be used by one person at a time. Students should not ask to use it if someone is already there, but there are other options. Reading, art, discovery, writing, technology, and math zones will be used during rotations and the normal classroom rules apply.

Circle Time

Circle time will be a routine implemented within the classroom. As soon as students return from recess, physical education class, or lunch they will immediately go to the circle rug and stand at their assigned seats. Once the students are all standing in the correct order, there should be some quick stretched, then a story, before returning back to content learning. This gives students time to refocus themselves, self-regulate, and not miss out on any information due to adrenaline/lack of attention.

Line Up Procedure

Students will line up daily to go to lunch, recess, other classes, etc. This will also be a routine that is implemented. At the beginning of the year, students are assigned numbers, these numbers represent where they stand in line. The teacher can decide if there is a line leader, or any other classroom jobs. Students will be expected to keep volume levels at a 1 or 2.

Planner Procedure

The teacher will write the outline for what will be accomplished each day, on the board. This will allow the students to be aware of where they are going and stay on track. There will also be a list of homework written on the board that students must copy into their planners before leaving for the day. By allotting time for the students to do so, homework assignments are not so easily forgotten about.

Homework Procedure

Students should have set expectations when it comes to homework. The teacher should have turn-in trays, students should be expected to turn in homework upon entering the classroom. If students were missing there should be separate turn in stations and pick up station to collect notes, worksheets, etc. from missed days. Each station/tray should be labeled clearly.

Transition Procedure

The projector will need to be on at all times. This will display the digital timer so that students can look up and see how much time they have left in an activity. The teacher will need to keep an eye on all the students. This can be done by walking to each group and checking in on students, answering questions, giving input/ideas, etc. The classical music will be playing throughout the activity. Once each group begins working they will have a set time at each station. The timer is set and the students work. Classical music will play so that students keep their voices quieter than however loud the music is playing. Once the upbeat song starts, this signifies that the students should start cleaning their area and get ready to move to the next station. This will help for the smooth and quiet transitions. By having the timer displayed and a change in music, the students can monitor when they should be done working and begin cleaning their station without being told.

Discipline

PBIS

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or PBIS, is an incredible concept that can and should be incorporated into every school and classroom. The best way to implement these systems is by introducing them at the beginning of the school year and by having visual aids/reminders. PBIS can cover a wide range of points, from behavior in the classroom/school, respecting others, to even just teaching students how to treat materials. The goal of PBIS is to, "Improve and integrate all the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day" (PBIS, 2019).

By explaining the PBIS system to students from day one, students are aware of their expectations and the focus can be on learning and individual growth. Systems that use extrinsic motivation like having school bucks to use at the "store," pulling a card, a treasure box, etc. Are ineffective when looking at it long-term. This is because students are motivated by the rewards rather than for their own personal good and there is no growth. To foster this growth, PBIS systems must focus on specific praise rather than bribing students to behave, there will be progress and growth seen within students. When these systems force students to reflect on their own behaviors for their own personal improvement, rather than only doing something to be rewarded, that is when PBIS will work. By setting these expectations for each student, there can be personal and wholistic growth. When students hear something long enough, it starts to become a part of them (Pierson, 2013). Set high goals/expectations for students, then provide the support they need to get there. Building up a student's self-confidence helps them to grow and want to be better.

Putting up reminders throughout the classroom and school of these expectations are a great way to reinforce PBIS systems. Visual reminders like posters or even signs within the classroom are great ways to reinforce the system throughout time. Signs can be as simple as a tap on the desk to refocus. These gentle reminders help students to remember what is expected without calling them out in front of peers. Again, this goes back to fostering that level of trust and respect between teacher and student. PBIS is something that has to be constantly worked toward. There is always room for growth and improvement because systems, data, and practices are ever changing. Schools and educators need to be committed to PBIS, what is stands for, and strive for their goal even through every change.

Interventions/Signs

Using red, yellow, and green cups or even pieces of paper are great ways to monitor students' progress/emotions. If a student is doing well with an assignment, the green paper can be put out, if a student is struggling or needs some direction from the teacher, the yellow paper can be put out, if the student is completely stuck, the red paper can be put out. If multiple red and/or yellow papers are put out, this shows the teacher that the lesson may need to be retaught or better explained.

Teachers can redirect students with a whisper to remind student to pay attention and refocus. Students almost immediately follow these directions. This is the case because students are being corrected in a gentle way. Students are not being called out or embarrassed in front of their classmates. By whispering to students to help them refocus, they are able to feel safer in their environment, trust the teacher more and refocus themselves. The same goes for the non-verbal cues. Having a secret signal with an individual student or with the whole class encourages the students to be observant, pay attention, and refocus themselves. This can be a double tap on a student's desk, placing a flat palm on the desk, etc. These one-on-one strategies ensure that the students know what is expected of them, by gently reminding students when they need to redirect themselves. One of the most important characteristics of a well-managed classroom, according to Wong (2018), is that "Students need to know what is expected of them and are generally successful" (p. 97).

Another amazing intervention is verbal, positive reinforcement. This strategy is also known as positive narration. By pointing out the positive things that other students are doing, the students that are not behaving in the right way will want to follow. This creates a more positive light in the classroom, rather than calling out students by name and embarrassing others. This

strategy just praises students who are focused, participating, etc. Wong (2018), "When you affirm the deed, the student knows exactly what he or she did that was worthy of praise" (p. 151).

Conclusion

Classroom management covers a wide range of topics. Following and enforcing policies is a great first step in creating a good classroom environment. Then, implementing procedures within the classroom allows for clear expectations and allows the students to focus on the content, learning, and growing. As Wong (2018) states, "How you manage your classroom determines how well your students will learn" (p. 93). Classroom management is truly the first step to being an effective teacher and ensuring the success of all students.

References

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2018). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher* (K. Sturak, Ed.). Harry K Wong Publications, Inc.

National Council for the Advancement of Educator Ethics. (2017). *Model code of ethics for educators* [Portable document format]. Retrieved from https://www.nasdtec.net/page/MCEE_Doc MCEE_Ethics.pdf

Getting Started. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.pbis.org/pbis/getting-started

Pierson, R. (2013, May 3). Retrieved June 17, 2020, from https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion/transcript?language=en

60 minutes. (2018, December 9). *What is "Brain Hacking"? -Tech Insiders on Why You Should Care* [Video]. YouTube. URL https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ML55uumQgzA

Appendix A

"The **MCEE** establishes principles for ethical best practices, mindfulness, self-reflection and decision making, setting the groundwork for self-regulation and self-accountability" (NCAEE, 2017).

Appendix B

Technology in this day and age is extremely advanced and the technological industry has become very good at their job. Their job being, pull in the attention of their users. There is a term called "Brain Hacking" that has been more frequently talked about. Our technology is no longer neutral. Our phones and the apps on there are programed to hook people. It preys on addiction. In a sense, everyone is addicted to their phones. When we are away from our devices, we become anxious. As soon as a notification goes off, our brains react and the need to check our phones is triggered. These tech companies use rewards, likes, emojis, followers, scrolling features, etc. that are addictive properties and keep customers coming back. Unless phones are physically out of reach and earshot, students have increasing difficulty focusing on school (60 Minutes, 2017). These pockets help remove this distraction from students in order for learning to take place. Although this is not a perfect solution, it is a start.

Appendix C

Visual aids are the best way to remind students of the rules stated at the beginning of the year. If students are aware of their expectations, can visibly see and be reminded of these expectations, they will succeed. Students will not have to worry about the rules because they will know them, and learning can persist.

Appendix D
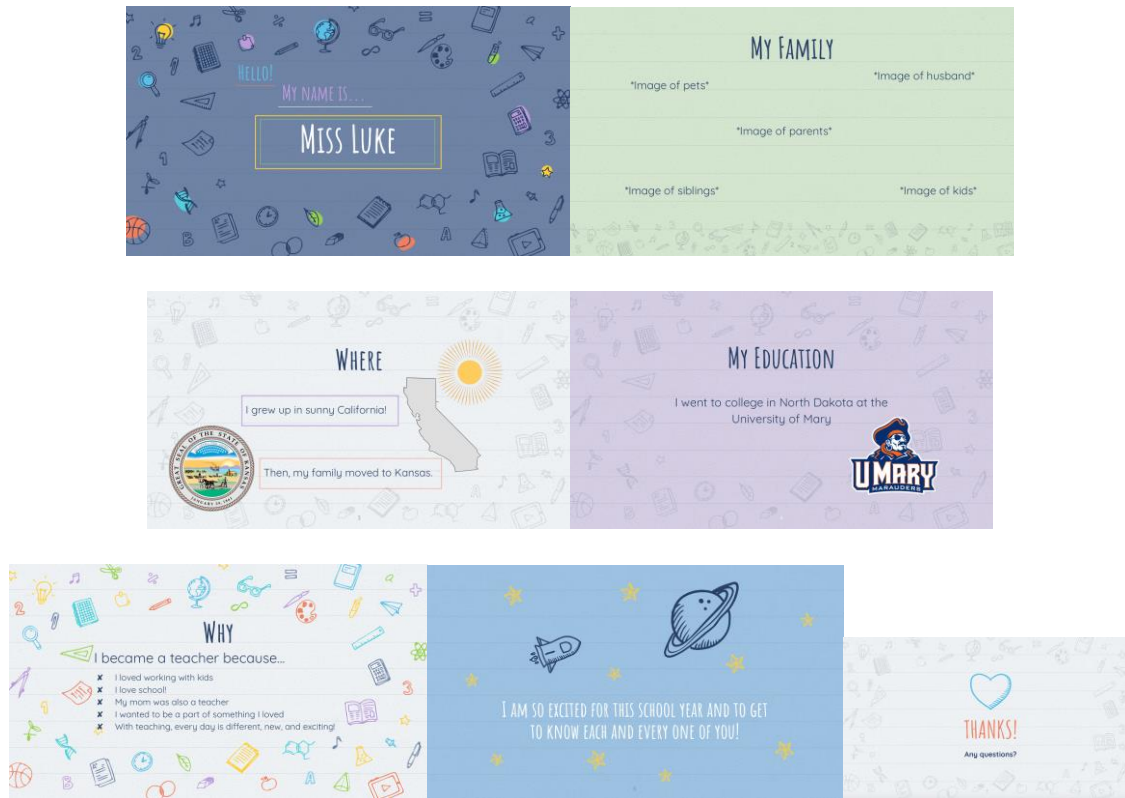
The importance of first day introductions is that it is the first step in creating a relationship with the students. Like any relationship, there is a get-to-know-you phase. At the beginning of the schoolyear, teachers should introduce themselves, let students get to know them, be vulnerable, be open, and ask the students questions as well. Begin laying that foundation for a healthy teacher/student relationship. This is vital if learning is to take place within the classroom or any sort of discipline, because that calls for respect for the teacher and their rules.