

Final Paper

Alexandra Nearing

University of Mary Department of Education

## Philosophy of Classroom Management:

As a hopeful elementary teacher, I have decided to base my philosophy on ordered chaos as well as unconditional love. When I say this, I mean two things. The first is that it is impossible for me to think that at every moment of my teaching, all will go as planned. The second is that I want my students to understand that they can come to me for anything they are struggling with and I will still love them. The idea of unconditional love also applies to the times when I have to be harsh with my students. I never want them to doubt that everything I do is for their good. With both of these things in mind, I understand that children are unpredictable and change is a very large part of a children's classroom. So my philosophy is to structure a classroom around disciplined, ordered chaos while still always being the head of the classroom. I want to develop the whole child. I believe that a child should be well rounded in all aspects of the world. I think that this can best happen by allowing the students to just be kids.

Far too often, children think that the only learning they do in school is in the subjects that are taught from the teacher. While learning does happen there, school is also a place to learn how to be a friend, learn how to be respectful, and learn many other social skills. Through this, students should be socially adept with a love for knowledge. I believe that this comes from allowing ordered chaos in the classroom. The children need time to interact with their peers to discuss a new set of information. They need to be allowed time to just be kids. It is in times of slight chaos where a unique kind of learning happens. I truly believe that if a child is able to live out their childhood to its very fullest, it will lead to a more well developed adult.

I also understand that children have rough home lives and sometimes need a little bit of an escape. This is where the unconditional love comes in. No matter what a child is experiencing

at home, I want them to know that it can all be gone while they are in my class. I want to always have food or snacks for students who don't have access to that at home. I want to offer student a chance to earn a "Lunch with the Teacher" once a month so they can build a relationship with me and talk to me about anything they want. I want to create the safest environment for my students as I possibly can.

In the mindset of realizing that I won't be able to control everything that goes on in the classroom and all moments of the day aren't going to go perfectly all the time, I also need to realize that there are plenty of things that I can control. "Effective teachers had procedures that governed students with regard to talking, participation in oral lessons and discussions, getting out of their seats, checking or turning in homework, what to do when work was finished early, and ending the class" (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 5). I firmly believe that this all comes on the very first day of class. Students should understand exactly where I stand as a teacher from the very beginning of school. I want my students to always realize and never doubt that no matter how firm I have to get with them, I love them always and will always be there for them.

I plan on always having an agenda for the daily activities for the students to see placed in the same spot every single day. This will eliminate students constantly asking question of what is next to come throughout the day. Posting a daily agenda will also "enable students to be self-starters who are on task the moment they enter the classroom" (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 65). I think that having an agenda will give my classroom a sense of consistency. My classroom management philosophy really begins on the first days of school, though.

### Plan for the First Days:

The first few days of school can be the deciding factor as to whether or not the year goes smoothly or not. It is my chance to allow my students to see me as an authoritative figure, lay out classroom procedures, begin building a healthy relationship with my students, and go over important classroom procedures. These are all things I plan to do in the first week or so of class.

On the very first day of school I want to “cheerfully and enthusiastically greet students at the door, making eye contact with each” (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 22). This allows students to know that I am friendly, I care about them, and I am excited to be there. This is the beginning of forming a good relationship with my students because it is something that I plan on doing every single day from the first day of school to the very last. Greeting my students at the door in the morning will allow for me to see where each student is emotionally standing each morning so I can accommodate them accordingly.

I want my students to know who Ms. Nearing (if name has not changed by then) is on a personal level from the start. I would like to have a fun PowerPoint prepared to share pictures of me and some trivia about me for the students to gain a better understanding of where I come from. This PowerPoint will allow me to “share personal information, expectations, and educational philosophy” with the students (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 22). It will serve as a great first day of school ice breaker.

Following the introduction of myself and the background for how I expect the class to be run, I would like to be able to have the students write me a little bit about themselves. This can also help me gauge where they are in the writing, spelling, and fluency department as well as get a feel for each student and begin learning names.

Once the students have each completed a letter to me, I would envision myself walking them through each of the procedures I have set up for the room. This would include talking the students through each item and then actually having them get up and act it out so they can ask questions and have no excuse for not knowing how everything works. This is something that will have to be done several times over so that each and every student fully understands what I expect from them. Having the students walk through the procedures will also allow me to get a feel for how everyone interacts with each other.

After I have explained classroom rules and procedures I would like to walk the students through the room and show them where everything is supposed to go. I will point out how everything has been properly labeled so there shouldn't be any confusion or questions. I will also make sure to explain to the students that everything is required to go back exactly where they found it because that is the only way to ensure that the next student will be able to find it. This will hopefully eliminate most of the confusion about room set up, however, it is going to take some trial and error from the students so that is something I can give them time to figure out.

### Connections to Students and Families:

I have seen a few ways of teachers connecting to parents and students on a weekly basis and I have found that a weekly newsletter is a very effective way of informing the parents of the weekly happenings. "The newsletter is a one-page, easy to read synopsis of the week that includes material that will be covered the following week in each subject area; important upcoming dates; and quick reminders of things parents need to know" (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 265). Students have folders that they take home anyway, so slipping in a one-page newsletter into it would be a simple way of making sure the parents receive the weekly happenings.

I fully understand that each home situation is unique. Some children live with grandparents, some are in foster care, and still some bounce back and forth between mom and dad depending on the weeks. So with this in mind, I plan on contacting each legal guardian the weekend before the start of school each year—whether it be by email or phone call—to introduce myself and get a feel for each student’s living situation. This will help me for the months to come when I need to get in contact with a guardian. In contacting them I will ask for the best way to make sure they receive all the information I will have to send them over the course of the year. I will also make sure that the parents know that everything I do for their child over the course of the year will be for the student’s good. In saying this, I will ask the parents to come to me immediately if they ever have any problems with something I am doing. That way, the issue gets handled immediately and we can move on to continuing to educate their child.

In contacting the parents before the start of school, I will also explain the importance of parents doing homework with their child throughout the year. Teacher and parent are a team when it comes to educating the child and in some ways, a parent is equally important in educating a student. I want to explain that to parents as well.

I will finish up the email or phone call by saying that parents are welcome to volunteer any time and the same goes for contacting me. I never want to be out of reach so I will provide the parent or guardian with an active email that they can always reach me at. This will be for questions and comments from parents. This allows parents and guardians a sense of familiarity and comfortability with me. This can also help to diffuse any resistance I might have with parents.

## What ifs:

I know from past experience that it is so easy to say that I will do all these strategies and techniques now because I am not out in the field yet. Many times in the past I have said I planned on doing something and then I got into the activity and did something almost completely opposite. Now that may or may not be the case when it comes to my teaching strategy for the future. In the case that I don't actually follow out on everything that I have planned out now, I have a few things that I would consider doing instead.

Wong talks about closing messages every day for the students to fill out. He mentions that they can be introduced in this manner: "at the end of the first day of school, give a copy of the daily closing message to every student. Explain that the daily closing message will be read every day" (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 164). This kind of an activity allows students to reflect on their day and all the things that they learned. It is also a good gauge for me as a teacher to see how much the students actually learned that day. This is not something that I would start out with initially, but if I felt the need for it later on in the year, I would introduce it to the class.

Another technique or strategy I would be willing to pick up on is the concept of having students have classroom jobs. "Jobs give students a sense of responsibility and ownership of their home away from home—the classroom" (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 122). I have seen fully functioning classrooms both with and without classroom jobs. This is something that I would have to ask my principal about before the start of school to see how most of the teachers choose to deal with jobs so that I can adapt to the school.

The other "what if" I need to focus on is the incorporation of steps to prevent inappropriate behaviors and the steps I need to take when that situation arises. Wong has a good procedure set up for the instances when an infraction does occur by the usage of a guideline

infraction notice. “With a guideline infraction notice, you can deal with potentially disruptive behavior without embarrassing the student in front of the class. You are able to meet privately with the student, express genuine concern, and work out a solution with the student” (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 166). This is perfect to me because it doesn’t distract from instructional time, is private, and allows you to talk to the student one on one after they have hopefully calmed down.

I also think that if I use a specific colored guideline infraction notice, then I could also use a different specific colored paper for other things such as late work, tardiness, unfinished work, and any other infraction of the sort. This would help me keep organized as well as continuing to keep things private for the student.



Appendix A:

Seating Chart Idea as Seen in Practicum Experience



Appendix B:

Guideline Infraction Notice

**Guideline Infraction Notice**

**Please: Correct your behavior and/or return to task.**

**See me after class!**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference result: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Copyright © 2002 by [illegible]

## References

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2014). *The Classroom Management Book*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications, Inc.