Running Head: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. Shaffer's Classroom Management Plan

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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Abstract

In this classroom management plan, there will be five main aspects. The first is the classroom arrangement. The second aspect is the prevention of disruptions. The third part is about classroom expectations, how they are created and the importance of them. The fourth part of the classroom management plan revolves around group work while the last section of the plan is about individual behavior plans. Within each of these different sections, there will be information on how they will be implemented. This classroom management plan will go a long way in making classrooms run much more smoothly after everything in it has been put in place.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. Shaffer's Classroom Management Plan

An important part of teaching is classroom management. Many teachers know their content very well, but that is only half the battle. Teachers need to know how to control the classroom as well. I am creating a classroom management plan that has five major components to it. The first part will involve the arrangement of the classroom. Having the correct arrangement can instantly cut down on classroom problems if it goes well with your teaching style. The second part of the plan revolves around preventing student disruptions. A great way to diminish student misbehaviors is to stop them before they even begin. Third, I will look at classroom expectations. Having clear expectations that the entire class agrees upon can go along way with accountability of the students. The fourth part discusses group work. Having good activities for the students to do while in groups cuts down on certain members doing all the work. If everyone is working together, there is less time for disruptions. The last part of my classroom management plan is about individual behavior plans. Some students will need to have some extra help with their behavior, and that is what these plans do. The details in this classroom management plan will help cut down on misbehaviors and allow for my class to run very smooth.

When creating a plan for classroom management, the first place to start is the arrangement of the classroom. You want to create a space that helps foster the learning of your students. The way that the classroom is set up can play a large role in the behavior of the students as well. Having a well-designed space can cut down on many unnecessary behaviors in the classroom. The way that my classroom will be set up is by having the desks is rows from front to back. There are many great aspects to having a classroom designed this way, especially for the way I teach.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

I like to use a lot of whole class instruction. When modeling the work, it is important that the students are able to see what is going on. The textbook *CHAMPs: A Proactive & Positive Approach to Classroom Management* by Randy Sprick had a lot of great information on why the setup of the classroom in this way will be helpful. Pertaining to whole class discussion, the book said that this type of physical arrangement is "excellent when you schedule frequent whole-class instruction or when students must see the board for tasks." (Sprick, 2009, p. 71) Having students who are always facing the front will help ensure that they are looking at the material they are learning. I use the projector and document camera often in my room. If students have their backs to the front of the room, they obviously will not see what is taking place. Also, if students are always having to turn their heads to the front because they sit on the side of the room facing the other side, they will not be as engaged. It is much easier for students to look straight ahead, and having their desks face the front will make it much easier on them. This can help them increase their learning because I know they are looking at me when I am giving my instructions at the front of the classroom.

The next aspect of setting up the classroom in this format is that it has an idea of what the students are doing. This set up "implies that student attention should be directed to the front of the room." (Sprick, 2009, p. 72) Students understand that they should look straight ahead. With having their seats all facing the front, it is easy for them to have a good idea of where they need to focus. It becomes natural almost to have their full attention at the front of the room. This arrangement also makes it easy on the teacher to see who is not paying attention. If a student has their head or back turned, they can be easily spotted and redirected back to the area of focus, which is the front of the classroom.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

An important part of the arraignment for me is how easy I am able to circulate the room. By having these desks in rows, it makes it very easy for me to walk up and down them to check on my students. When there is material that is on the board and students are taking notes and other activities that involve the board, I don't just stand in the front of the room patiently waiting for everyone to finish. I walk around the room to actively see how far along my students are. That way, I know when it is time to move on. I want to make sure that I give them ample time to get their work done, but not too much time so they start to get bored and off task. It is okay if the students have a little bit of talking here and there when working but it is important that they don't do it when I am speaking or one of their classmates is. According to Sprick, the classroom arraignment I decided on "allows students to interact, but the space between desks helps to keep off-task conversation down." (Sprick, 2009, p. 71) I want students to be able to interact with each other when they are working, so if they have questions they can ask their classmates. Sometimes, students might understand a concept a little better when a classmate explains it to them. I want students to ask each other for help, and if they are still stuck, then they can ask me for help. I know that students will get stuck on questions or parts of an assignment at some point during the year, and it does not have to be complete silence for the entire hour when students are in my room. I also like how having this arraignment cuts down on off task conversations. I know that when I am teaching, I expect the students to be listening and not talking. By having these gaps in the desks so there is space, and me being able to freely move around the room, that will help a lot with cutting down on the misbehavior.

Part of what makes this arrangement great is the ease in which students can get into groups. In my class, even though there is a lot of individual work, I still like to have students get in groups for different activities. I don't want my room setup into groups at all times and the

desks being in rows from front to back "allows for occasional cooperative learning activities. Students can be trained to move quickly from the rows into groups of four and back to the rows when the cooperative activity is completed." (Sprick, 2009, p. 71) When I do have students work in groups, it is usually in groups of four, so this works perfectly. At the beginning of the year, we will practice how to quickly move the desks to get into the groups. That way, when it is time to do it for an activity, they will know what they are doing. The same can be said for having students put the desks back where they originally were. Having students do this quickly will also allow for me to maximize the amount of time that I have with them in my classroom.

A second aspect to my classroom management plan will deal with preventing student disruptions. According to *Best Practices in Classroom Management* by Dr. Christopher Dunbar, there are five ways to prevent classroom disruptions before they even begin. The first one is called withitness. This, according to Dr. Dunbar, is "communicating that you know what the students are doing and what is going on in the classroom." (Dunbar, 2004, p. 5) Teachers should know what goes on in their room because this is necessary to stop problems before they begin. I think that by letting the students know that you know what they are doing is very important. An example of that is a student texting under the table and them thinking you may not notice. Letting that student, and the rest of the class know right away that you saw what was happening can go a long way. This can deter it from happening again. This example may not be one that is about disruptions, but it is the general idea that you see what is going on. Additionally, when students know that you understand what takes place in the classroom, they become more aware of their behavior. They know that there is a better chance of getting caught and they do not want to get in trouble. That is why part of my plan is to make sure students understand I know what is taking place and what they are doing in my room from the beginning of the year.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

A second part to stopping disruptions before they even happen is having good lesson plans. You do not want lessons where the students are bored the entire time. You also do not want the lessons to feel very choppy. In fact, what you are looking for is some type of smoothness in the lessons. There needs to be a good flow to them while "maintaining a brisk pace and giving continuous activity signals or cues (such as standing near inattentive students or directing questions to potentially disruptive students)." (Dunbar, 2004, p. 5) When there is a good pace set to the lessons, there is less time to have disruptions. If the students are always doing something, it becomes much harder to get off task. I think that a great part of this is where it talks about the activity signals and cues. I know that standing near students when they are doing something they should not be can stop the issue right away. In past experiences, just walking around the room can stop a lot of problems. This goes with the physical arrangement of the classroom because it is easy for me to move around and see the students, I will easily be able to walk and stand by students to get their focus back on the lesson. Also, asking students questions when they may be about to cause some type of disruption can be very helpful. It makes them think about the question they were just asked and not whatever it is that they were just about to do. It gets their attention off of their disruptive behavior and thinking about the work. In addition, it lets them know that you know what they were doing and were not going to allow any misbehavior.

A great way to stop disruptions from happening is to have students doing work that they won't complete in half the time you give them. If the work is that easy, the students will become bored and problems can arise. I need to have work for the students that is stimulating. Dr. Dunbar stated that teachers should be "providing seatwork activities that offer variety and challenge." (Dunbar, 2004, p. 5) For this part, I will have different activities for the students to

do. It will not be where the students walk in and think that because it is Wednesday that they will be doing a vocab assignment. By mixing it up, it can keep things fresh for the students and keep them on their toes. Also, it will be work that will make them have to think. There will be times where students will struggle a little bit with the work and that is okay. They need to be challenged because it makes the students stay on task longer and avoids disruptions in the classroom.

A final part to preventing disruptions is called group alerting. This, according to Dr. Dunbar, is "involving all the children in recitation tasks and keeping all students "alerted" to the task at hand." (Dunbar, 2004, p. 5) It is very important to keep the students involved in the tasks that you are doing. To prevent the disruptions, students need to all be participating in whatever is going on. A way to do that is to keep all of the students alerted to whatever the task at hand is. If it is learning the different continents, and students start to do something they are not supposed to, then I will alert them that they need to stay with the class and keep working on what we are doing. The quicker I alert them, the better the chance that no problems are caused and class can continue to run smoothly.

A third part to my classroom management plan will be about classroom expectations or rules. For a class to run smoothly, there needs to be behavior standards put into place and every student needs to be on the same page. This allows for everyone to know what is expected of them when in the room and also help promote a better learning environment.

When reading through *Comprehensive Classroom Management: Creating Communities of Support and Solving Problems* by Vern Jones and Louise Jones, something that I found to be very important is to make sure that you actually have classroom expectations and the students know what they are. This is because teachers cannot just assume that students will know exactly

how to act if they are not told what is acceptable. In the text, it said "a study involving interviews with high school students serving detention for behavior problems suggested that students needed and benefited from classroom behavior standards and that these were most effective when they involved three to five positively and clearly stated rules." (Jones & Jones, 2014, p. 173) What this shows is that not every teacher has defined rules. For my classroom management plan, I will make sure that the expectations are defined. After seeing that these students benefited and needed the behavior standards, it makes it obvious that they are needed in my classroom. Now, I teach sixth grade instead of high school, so I may have five or a little more clearly stated rules, but it will have a great effect on the students regardless.

Now that I know I will have clearly defined expectations in my classroom, the next step comes with creating them. There are many different ways that I could go about it. I teach six different class periods a day, so I need to find a way to have all six of the periods to have the same behavior standards. What I really liked from the book is that it said, "some teachers prefer to present their own behavior expectations and ask students in each class to discuss and edit them" (Jones & Jones, 2014, p. 176) I will actually do this as well. I will come up with five behavior expectations that I think will be very useful in the class. However, that does not mean that they will all be used because the students could come up with different ones that they like better as a class. I want there to be student involvement in creating these expectations, or even the wording of them. When I show them the expectations I have created, as a class, we will talk about what each one means. If there is a lot of confusion on the wording, or if students have better expectations for the class than the ones I have, then we can use those. Students respond better when they help create the rules, so that is why I will be very open to what they think or what they feel should stay or go on my list of behavior standards. Additionally, when we discuss

these expectations that we have after we edit them, there will be a better understanding. There should be no reason that every student does not know what is expected of them after that activity. This is a time to ask questions if there is anything unclear or confusing on the students' end. The editing and discussion portion of this activity will make them more accountable because they are part of this process.

After the class behavior standards have been agreed upon, I will write them up and print out a copy for each student. Then, I will have my "students take the list of rules home (usually with an accompanying statement about how the teacher will handle persistent rule violations) for parents to sign and return." (Jones & Jones, 2014, p. 177) I want to do this because that allows for the parents and students to go over the rules at home. The students can explain the process of how we came up with these expectations. It also makes the parents of each student aware of what is expected out of their child's behavior when in my classroom. If there are any problems that arise from behavior with the students and a phone call is needed home, then it will be easy to explain what the issue is. The parents know the expectations, so if they get a phone call about something happening in class, I can easily point to one of the expectations that we came up with. The parents, students, and myself know they were all agreed upon and understood, so there should be no questions from either end on why or what rule was being broken. I think that by having the parents understand the expectations in my class as well as the students, it can help more at home because everyone knows the behavior that is expected in my classroom.

Now that I have the standards in place and they are agreed upon, it's time to make sure everyone knows how to do what they said they would. We have a had a great class discussion and everyone agreed that they will follow the expectations. They also said they understand what they are supposed to do, but there is one more thing I want to do to really make sure that we are

all on the same page. I will teach my students how to follow the classroom expectations

correctly. When doing the teaching, there will be acting taking place. I will have different

members of the classroom act out each behavior standard we talked about. We will show how we

should act, and how we should not act. That way there is a clear definition. Students learn better

doing hands on activities. When we are acting out what not to do, it makes it easier to see who is

following the expectations later in the year when they are doing these similar things that they

should not do. On the other side, there will be students acting out how to properly behave. By

doing this, it will be a clear visual on how they should act in my classroom. After doing this part

with the teaching and acting of the desired behaviors, there should be no confusion. Students will

have seen how they are supposed to act and behave, so they can do the same for the rest of the

year.

Once we have everything set in place and the classroom behavior standards set, then

there will be times that they need to be reviewed. The first few weeks of school I really need to

hammer home the points. I need to make sure that everyone doesn't forget about the expectations

that we created. After reading more of *Comprehensive Classroom Management: Creating

Communities of Support and Solving Problems*, I really like their idea for reviewing the

expectations. The authors said that "a good approach is to review them every day for the first

week, three times during the second week, and once a week thereafter. It is also helpful to

display the rules in a prominent place in the classroom." (Jones & Jones, 2014, p. 179) I really

like the idea of slowly fading out how often the expectations are reviewed. Hopefully, by that

third week when they are being reviewed only once a week, the behavior standards are

essentially engrained in their memory. Going over them every day the first week should really

get them use to hearing the rules. Then, the three times they hear it the second week it should

basically be memorized. Additionally, by doing it every week thereafter, it doesn't allow for slip ups. I think it would be a great way to start every week, by reviewing the expectations. That makes sure that students cannot just say they forgot them when they have been reviewed every week. It is also very important to have them visible in the room. I will have a large poster placed in the front of the room with the expectations we came up with so that they are easy for all to see at all time. I will make sure it is a place that people are always looking at, so there is a constant reminder. If a student starts to not follow the behavior standards, I can simply point to the poster to give them a little reminder of how they should behave. Just having them visible will do wonders because that way there are no excuses on what the expectations are, when they are clearly stated, being reviewed every week and visible.

A fourth part to my classroom management plan revolves around group work. In the past, in my classroom, there has been more misbehavior during this time then there should be. I know that I do not always have my students set in groups, but there are still things that I can do to help with the misbehavior when in groups. A lot of that starts with the assignments that are given to the groups. I need to give them work that can be done, but by more than one person. In the text *Designing Effective Group Activities: Lessons for Classroom Teaching and Faculty Development* by Larry K. Michaelsen, L. Dee Fink, and Arletta Knight, the reason is that "under certain conditions, a high percentage of group members would prefer to sit back and let "someone else" work on their behalf. This phenomenon, which has come to be known as "social loafing" can be a serious problem in classrooms." (Michaelsen, Fink, & Knight, 1997, p. 375) This is a common problem with group work, as only one or two of the people will do all of the work. The behavior problems start when there is no accountability in the group. When members of the group are not working, they are off task and at a much greater risk of doing something they should not. That is

where the misbehavior comes into play. Different members of groups will find their friends in other groups and cause distractions to the learning environment. That is why I need to put a stop to social loafing in my classroom, as it will cut down on the many different misbehaviors it can cause.

When looking at social loafing, or the amount of work that group members do on the behalf of the other members, there needs to be ways to put it to a stop. There are different reasons that social loafing can exist, but just like those reasons, there are ways to stop it. With that being said, "the forces that promote social loafing in learning groups, however, can largely be offset by assignments and practices that foster the development of cohesive learning groups." (Michaelsen et al., 1997, p. 376) This makes a lot of sense, because in order for learning groups to work, students need to feel comfortable and safe. They can gain this feeling by doing assignments that build on this. An example of that is jigsaw. When there are a few people in the group, and each have to master a certain topic, and teach the others, it allows the group to be more cohesive. They have to listen and learn from one another, and that can go a long way in making these groups work.

Another aspect of group learning is the tasks that are designed. To stop the social loafing, which would help stop the misbehaviors, there needs to be tasks that involve all group members and make the group members work together to accomplish a goal. In fact, "the tasks should be explicitly designed to: (1) require a high level of individual accountability for group members and/or workshop participants; (2) motivate a great deal of discussion among group members." (Michaelsen et al., 1997, p. 377) An example of a group activity is where the groups are split into four members. Each group is given an article to read. The group has to read the article aloud to make sure that everyone hears it and understands it so they can have a discussion on it if need be.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

After the reading of the article, each member has a specific task to complete. The tasks are illustrator, who draws the main idea and wordsmith, who finds key words to the article and locates the definitions. The last two tasks are the questionnaire, which asks questions that can be answered from reading the article, and fact finder, who finds key facts that are important from the article. Each student puts their section onto the poster board for a completed project. After reading through the assignment and looking at the quote above, it does something well, in that it requires a lot of accountability between each person. I did this assignment toward the end of the year, and it worked out really well. There was not much misbehaving going on for the first time when I had them in groups. After looking and seeing that it helped stop social loafing, these are the types of tasks that need to be used more often when I have my students doing group work. They do really well in helping with keeping students on task, and not doing things they should not be.

The final part to my classroom management plan is behavior intervention plans (BIP). Even with all of my other aspects of classroom management put in place, there may be a few students who need extra help. It may be very difficult for these students to follow along with everything I have going on in my room. That is to be expected, as I have had these types of students in my classroom in the past. When creating these particular behavior plans, there are aspects that I need to make sure I cover and understand when writing them and putting them in place.

Before writing and implementing any behavior interventions plans, there will need to be a target behavior that is identified. That means there is a certain behavior that is the main problem. According to Sprick, once you "have identified the target behavior or category of behavior, plan to immediately start collecting data on the frequency, duration, and intensity of the behavior."

(Sprick, 2009, p. 373) The reason for collecting data is there is something to back up your ideas in the intervention plan. You are not just looking at or watching the student and assuming something. You have clear data that allows for educated decisions to help correct the misbehavior. The first part is looking at the frequency of the behavior. This means I will look and see how many times the target behavior takes place. I will record the data over a few class periods so that I can see if there is consistency in the data. I will be able to throw away any outliers if I happen to come across them. To collect the frequency data, I will use a golf counter. Every time the target behavior occurs, I can just reach into my pocket and use the counter. It will be easy to use without disrupting any part of my lesson. (Sprick, 2009, p. 375)

The next two data sections that I will be recording are duration and latency. Duration data is when I will be looking at how long the behavior lasts. What I think is the most important part about this type of data is how useful it can be. This is because it is useful "when a student engages in a behavior for extended periods of time. A student may technically be off-task only one time during the class, but it may be for the entire length of the class." (Sprick, 2009, p. 376) This type of data collection needs to be done, especially if I am recording frequency. If on the frequency data it only shows up that the misbehavior happened once or twice, it might not seem so bad. However, when I look at how long it lasts, and each time was about a quarter of the class period, it can show that there is a serious problem that needs to be taken care of. This will be especially helpful when showing administrators and parents. When looking at the latency data, this will be helpful for students who are noncompliant. I have had these types of students in the past, and knowing just how long it takes for them to comply with a request or directions from me would be useful. Before even writing out an intervention plan, I would show all involved the data that I have. Just making everyone aware of the problem, and how long it goes on and how

frequent it is can be a good start for change. It makes sure the student is aware of what they are doing so they can become more conscious of their behavior.

Now that I have collected data to help me write a plan, I need to fully understand what a behavior intervention plan is. According to *Positive Behavior Support for ALL Michigan Students: Creating Environments That Assure Learning* from the Michigan Department of Education, it is a "written, individualized, behavior support plan based on a functional assessment of a student's behavior. BIPs incorporate Positive Behavior Support to address identified academic and behavior concerns." (Positive Behavior, 2000, Section 5-1) I have already discussed how I will gain the data for the functional assessment, so now I need to determine what it is I will exactly do for each child with a plan. Additionally, the data that was collected will help me target if I am looking at academic or behavioral concerns for the student. What is important with these plans is that they are positive. That will be a big focus, as I want the child with these plans coming away with a positive attitude and experience.

It clearly states that each plan is to be individualized, at that is very important. There are different interventions that should be used on different children. In the text, it states that "we may all be equal, but we are not the same. Intervention strategies are developed to fit the child, not the problem. Therefore, "time out" is not the solution for all children. Necessary incentives or accommodations for one student may appear unfair to others." (Positive Behavior, 2000, Section 5-4) This is very important to remember when writing the behavior plans. What works for one student may completely fail for another. I know that when wring these plans, they will have to be fluid, because there will be things that need to be changed as I see what works well for the student. There also may need to be some additional extrinsic support as part of the behavior plans. Even if it is something small, if there is a reward at the end of a week for them following

the plan and it working, that can lead to success down the road. Always keeping it positive on the task the student is doing rather than the reward will eventually lead to taking away the reward.

When looking at the main behavior problem in the plan, there are going to be different ways that it can be solved. One thing that I would find useful is giving the student a choice on a personalized task. In the text, *Positive Behavior Support for ALL Michigan Students: Creating Environments That Assure Learning,* it said that two ways for "increasing student response could be to provide incentives, teach the skill in a personalized context for that student. "(Positive Behavior, 2000, Section 5-2) I am looking to do whatever I can to help increase student response, and I have already touched on incentives, but I really like the personalized context part of that quote. I will make sure that I do teach the student with the behavior plan a skill just for them. Maybe he or she has a very hard time of wanting to raise their hand and not shout out, so I could teach them to put a folder up on their desk in an upright manner and that will alert me that they have something to contribute. It will still have the same effect as raising a hand, yet will be unique just for the student.

When creating these behavior intervention plans, it will not just be me doing everything. I want input from others who know the student well, and even the student themselves. This is because an "individualized written behavior support plan is maximized when the plan is designed by a team that includes parents and the student." (Positive Behavior, 2000, Section 4-6) In my classroom, I want parent involvement. When writing behavior plans, this is a time when I especially want it. I want input from parents on how their child acts at home. They know their child better than me, so there could be some tips or pointers that can help me when writing the plan. When I get the student and parents there for a meeting, it will help for us to be together so we can discuss what the issue is as well and why there is a need for the behavior plan. When

letting the parents and students know what the problem is, then that can help them think more about their behavior in class. Lastly, it will help when we are all on the same page, and there can be extra support at home as there is in the classroom.

This plan for classroom management will be very successful. Having all these different elements allows for it to cover just about everything in my classroom. It starts off with having the students in rows from front to back. This works great with my teaching style and cuts down on off task conversations instantly. Then, preventing disruptions before they even begin is essential to maintaining a well-run classroom. Knowing these different prevention methods in this plan helps eliminate problems before they can even begin. Additionally, having clear expectations is a must for my classroom. Every student needs to know what is expected of them and their behavior. When I have students working in groups, I need to make sure there is no loafing going on. Just by having all the members working together will help stop disruptions. The last part of the classroom management plan is very important in getting certain students with behavior and academic problems the specific help they need. By implementing this classroom management plan, my room will have much less behavior problems for many years.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

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