CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Essential Question

- What is critical to ensure that our classrooms are effectively managed in ways consistent with student needs and maximum learning?

Procedures Need to Be Carefully Taught, Practiced and Reinforced

Coaches on the field and directors on the stage quickly become experts in teaching procedures they want followed. Without this, no team can win and no play lasts through the final curtain call. The same thing is true in the classroom.

Without carefully taught, practiced and reinforced procedures, classrooms turn to chaos.

This teaching, practicing and reinforcing of procedures is an involved, yet very straightforward, process. Once in place, effective procedures lay the foundation for a classroom in which more students learn well.

Teach Procedures to Improve Learning

Procedures are the step-by-step ways people do things. As teachers, we have procedures to take roll, enter grades, start class, give assignments, distribute materials, and prepare for a substitute. These tasks become easy for us because we repeatedly follow the same procedures.

There is a procedure for getting procedures working in a classroom.
1. Identify the procedures you want your kids to do correctly every time that will increase their success and make your classroom management easier. Important procedures to focus on include:

   a. What to do from the time the classroom is entered until the teaching begins
   b. How to obtain permission to sharpen a pencil
   c. How to turn in “work”
   d. How to get materials for an activity
   e. How to prepare for leaving the classroom and then how to leave the classroom
   f. How and when to begin an activity conducted by the teacher such as a small group discussion
   g. How to end an activity such as a small group discussion and return to being quiet and ready for what the teacher will say or do next

2. Pick the ONE procedure you will teach first. For example, preparing to leave and leaving class.

3. Determine exactly the “step-by-step” sequence you want followed by the students. Plan to explain, justify, model, teach, have students practice and consistently require and correct as needed. For example, if you are focusing on the procedure students will use to leave the classroom at the end of the period, you might have the students use the following steps:
   a. “Collect your... (whatever) and put them as you want them in your book bag or on your desk when I give the signal (ring a chime, say “go”, play a certain song, or whatever).” Make sure that you will always give this same signal with ample time for the students to collect their materials whether they are quick “grabbers” or neat organizers.
   b. “Throw away any trash while completing this process.” (Exercise care not to become too micro-managing while still maintaining a safe, orderly classroom.)
   c. “Have any desired quiet conversations during this time.”
   d. “Wait in your chair until I say it is okay to leave (or when the bell rings or other dismissal signal occurs).” Make sure you will always be ready to release them the instant the bell rings or appropriate time occurs.
   e. “When the signal for leaving happens, then you may get up and leave at a walking pace without bumping others.”

4. Test your procedure and make sure that it works without being overly controlling of individuals’ styles.

5. Determine a time to initially teach your procedure.

6. Initially teach the procedure before it is needed.
   a. Explain why the procedure is important to you and could be to them.
   b. Solicit or provide your own examples from the students outside of classroom experiences to support the procedure’s value.
c. Model and explain the procedure.
d. Ask the students to do the procedures, telling them it might feel awkward at first while reminding them of its importance.
e. Provide positive, supporting (not embarrassing) corrective instruction until the procedure is done correctly. Use lots of “thank you’s” and praise.
f. Practice the procedure several times.

7. Just before the procedure is actually needed, remind the students of it, its importance and its steps – make sure that you have planned enough time so if correction and restarting is necessary, there is time to do this without infringing on the kids’ time (for example, taking up their time between class).

8. Facilitate the procedure’s happening with corrective instruction, praise and lots of thanks.

Each and every procedure you want followed requires this same set of steps. Too often, we neglect taking the time to teach an expected procedure and then wonder why students don’t perform the way we would like.

A Quick Teaching Procedures Recap

Teaching new classroom procedures can happen at any time during the school year. What works best is to explain in advance that the class will be learning a new way to (fill in the blank) and why it is important. Then teach the new procedure apart from content, making sure there is plenty of time. For example, if you are asking students to talk in small groups, they need to practice talking in small groups without having to worry about content at the same time, and they need to be learning this without the learning taking up time they perceive as theirs. Have your students practice starting and stopping with your new procedure. As part of this teaching, also take time to explain your reasons for adding the procedure, your behavior expectations, and consequences for not meeting expectations. Make this initial learning fun and light-hearted. Practice several times. Remember it will take you and the class many times (maybe even 28 times) spread over a period of many class periods (probably at least three weeks) to really learn a procedure well!

By taking the time to truly teach the procedures, you will be far more likely to achieve the results you desire and have a classroom that is a pleasure for you to be in. Too often, as teachers, we give up too early or expect students to behave in ways that we haven’t thoroughly explained.

Be Consistent with Procedures

Be certain to follow your procedures exactly and consistently. If we deviate from our procedures, students will often become confused. If we don’t stop and supportively correct our procedures as they go awry, students will quickly learn to do what they want with chaotic and frustrating results for us. When procedures break down, students become at risk for “feeling stupid,” and the effectiveness and efficiency of our lessons significantly drops off.

Finally, if your students (or you) begin to become a little “sloppy” with any particular procedure, immediately remedy the situation before it becomes a major issue. By taking a few minutes to review the procedure, practicing it again in a fun, lighthearted way, you will save time later with an effective, smoothly working procedure.
Establish Expectations and Consequences

Take time to develop behavioral expectations with students and take time to also develop the expectations they can have if behaviors are not appropriate. Teach, follow, and model your expectations consistently and carefully.

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<td>Respect as Talkers</td>
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<td>Call Home</td>
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Our Futures are Worth It!

Class Logs

Purpose

To provide a daily student generated record of class objectives, activities and assignments.

Description

A Class Log is a loose-leaf notebook containing student generated records describing what happened during each class period. When students have missed class, they check the class log to see what happened during their absences. It is also a great aid for students who have trouble with important concepts even though they are present during the lesson.

Class Logs typically include the following:

- statements clarifying major lesson topics and objectives
- specific examples used as part of the instruction
- instructional activities that were used throughout the lesson
- important questions that were asked during class and the responses given
- important announcements that were made pertaining to the class or school in general
assignments and due dates
- copies of handouts given during class.

**Procedure**

1. Develop the Class Log entries yourself for the first week of school so students will have quality models to follow when they assume responsibility for the task.

2. After the first few days, distribute copies of the teacher generated Class Log entries. Allot time for reviewing and discussing them. It is very important that students understand the purpose for the Class Log and the significance of each section.

3. Teach the students that the job of the Class Log recorders involves:
   a. taking very accurate and complete notes about what happens in class
   b. using their notes and other support materials to create the Class Log entries
   c. adding their entries to the Class Log.

4. Ensure that students know that if they are absent on a day they are responsible for the Class Log, it is their responsibility to arrange for a substitute. One of the side benefits of this strategy is that it provides a context for responsible behavior. If a student fails to arrange for a substitute, arrange for a volunteer to swap days with the absent student.

5. Periodically evaluate the students’ entries. Their entries can count as a homework assignment and be graded accordingly.

6. Once the rotation through the class has been completed, create a new schedule and resume the process.

**Hint**

Create a pre-printed Class Log page that each student uses when it is his/her turn. Print large quantities and place them in a central location for easy student access.

Refer to Appendix for full size version.
Classroom Olympics

Purpose
To facilitate rapidly shifting, flexible seating arrangements for varying classroom purposes.

Quick PEAK
In this classroom management strategy, teachers use posters, transparencies or PowerPoint slides to facilitate directing the students on cue to rapidly rearrange the classroom desks/tables to produce seating appropriate for varying activities used in the classroom.

Setup Procedure
- Make posters, transparencies or PowerPoint slides that show several seating arrangements that you may wish to have your kids use for various classroom functions.
- Label each seating arrangement with a unique, descriptive name.

Preparation Procedure
1. Using the 7 Critical Direction Tools, teach your students to safely and quickly re-arrange the seating in your room to match the chosen arrangement. Have students prepare for rearranging by securing their belongings. Be sure to indicate how students are to perform this task – placing in desks, putting on cabinets, etc.
2. Practice directing the students in rearranging the classroom often to ensure speed and safety.
3. Make sure students know that a successful performance means that:
   a. the desks are in the exact configuration
   b. there has been no shouting or injuries
   c. all students are in their desks/seats at completion
   d. the entire process has taken between whatever minimum and maximum times you determine appropriate for your students.

Operational Procedure
1. Before launching students in Classroom Olympics to rearrange the room, use the 7 Critical Direction Tools to have students clean up their desks and surrounding areas.
2. When the students are ready, tell them which classroom arrangement you wish them to move into when the launch button is given.
3. To a neighbor or partner, have students give a general description of the new arrangement that you indicated.
4. Ask students to stand and prepare for action. Protect those who may not feel comfortable in this activity by having an alternative support job for them.
5. On your launch button, have students rearrange the desks/tables to match the diagram.
6. Celebrate the performance and continue with the plans for the day.

7. Lead your students in practicing re-arranging the seating regularly while using launch buttons and visuals. Keeping things safe, strive to get the time needed for the re-arranging process down to 20 to 45 seconds if developmentally appropriate. Use your judgment with speed and procedures to maintain a safe environment.

8. When it is time to switch seating arrangements, use the 7 Critical Direction Tools to have the students ensure the desks and floor are clear of belongings. Indicate the seating arrangement you wish and push the launch button.
Grouping by Appointment

Purpose
To group students and build a collaborative classroom.

Description
Having the opportunity to work and dialogue with people is a very important part of learning and successful functioning in an interpersonal work or social environment. “Real-life” context is simulated when students make appointments with each other in order to collaborate and share ideas.

Procedure
1. Give each student an appointment calendar that shows one week - Sunday through Saturday.
2. Have each student set up an appointment for each day of the week with a different classmate. This is normally done by having all the students move around the room at one time. It is very important to remind the students that they each need to sign each other’s calendar!
3. Help students by asking (after a few minutes) who still needs appointments and get these students together.
4. When it is appropriate to pair students, announce a day of the week and have the students meet with their scheduled appointment for that day.

Hint
Having the students do their appointment calendars on Monday for the entire week is a good way to manage this strategy.

Grouping by Silent Birthday Line-ups

Purpose
To put students into random groups in a fun and exciting way.

Description
In this strategy, the students are asked to line up by birthday without talking.

Procedure
1. Explain to the students that their task is to form a single line according to when they were born. The line is to begin with those students who were born on or close to January 1st and end with those born on or close to December 31st. Tell

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students that no oral or written communication is allowed. Any other form of communication is acceptable and encouraged. Tell them to be creative.

2. Ask students to line up in order according to their birthdays.

3. Once the line is complete, have students standing close to each other talk to verify birth dates and make any necessary adjustments.

4. Then, divide students into groups or pairs. Several suggestions for grouping are as follows:
   - Students count off one through four and become a four person team;
   - Fold the line - have the ends of each line come to the middle and count off the number necessary to form teams; or
   - Find the middle of the line and divide the line into two parts. Then have the two lines come together and form groups of four. (This looks like a Wedding Procession.)

Extension

Use this strategy to introduce the concept of probability. (Example: What are the chances of two students having the same birthday?)

Hands Up, Partner Up

Purpose

To facilitate students getting into groups of two without embarrassment.

Quick Peak

Students are asked to stand up, push their chairs in, gather what they will need, move about the room looking for partners while holding their hands in the air until they have partnered into groups of two. Once a partnership is formed, the partners put their hands down and wait appropriately for their next instructions.

Directions

1. Prepare students to get up and move about the room through a series of directions such as, “Take a deep breath. Let it out. Gather your materials you will need for what we are doing. Please stand up.” Remind students to keep their belongings safe, to keep themselves and classmates safe by pushing in chairs, pushing backpacks under desks, etc.

2. Ask students to begin moving around the room, when you “push the launch button,” with one hand in the air. Direct them to look for a partner as they move about the room. When they have established a partnership, they are to drop their hands to indicate they are not available. Note: you may want to suggest to students that they address their peers as they pass in whatever appropriate, safe and courteous manner the teacher or students decide. This may be, “Say good morning to those you pass,” or “Just nod to those you pass,” etc.
3. Push the launch button to begin the mixing and partnering

4. Assist students as they are mixing to find partners by talking over them to help students find possible partners – it is sometimes hard to see others’ hands in the air while all this is going on.

5. When all hands are down call for attention.

**Invitation Cards**

Use Invitation Cards as shown below. Duplicating masters of these cards are located in the Appendix.

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**You are Cordially Invited to Spend Time During Lunch with Me**

**After School Appointment**

You are cordially invited to report to my classroom for a special after school session with me to make up for the current situation. In the event that you do not report, appropriate procedures will be followed.

**Certificate of Last to Leave Class**

Please remain with me at the end of class until excused after everyone else has left.
CAUTION! Watch your step!

In a perfect world, we won’t see:

- Sarcasm and put downs
- Students called on before they know a correct response
- Students NOT being practiced in procedures
- Students NOT following procedures
- Teachers NOT following procedures
- Teachers talking while music is playing
- Music misused to cause distractions
- Inappropriate lyrics or music that is potentially emotionally disruptive such as some heavy metal and rap
- Teachers talking over students – even to get them to be quiet
- Students talking while the teacher or other students are talking
- Students talking or doing things such as sharpening pencils while instruction or directions are being given
- Embarrassment or fear
- Jokes that in any way might be hurtful to anyone
- Students with their heads down or disengaged in other ways
- Delays or interruptions that cause the class to have to wait for more than 2 to 3 seconds
- Needed supplies and materials NOT immediately at hand
- Students acting inappropriately or not disciplined
- Undue time and attempts required to get students’ attention
IN A PERFECT WORLD

Classroom Management

The classroom is safe, structured, interactive, energizing, well-managed and supported by procedures that have been taught and students coached to complete procedure correctly. Students are self-disciplined as a result of the established environment.

In a well managed classroom in a perfect world, we will typically see the following:

1. Students feel safe from physical harm.
2. Students feel safe from emotional harm, threat, humiliation, sarcasm, exposure to sarcasm, embarrassment or loss of dignity or respect.
3. Students feel respected by all.
4. Procedures are consistently taught, coached, and followed.
5. Students know what is expected and what to expect.
6. Students consistently know what to do, when to do it, why to do it and how to do it – and they do so almost without exception.
7. Teachers talk only after students are quiet.
8. Students and teachers do NOT talk over one another.
9. Teachers model, expect and follow through with clear expectations.
10. Teachers quickly and consistently, politely and quickly gain students attention for each event, shift, transition or activity.
11. Students behaving in appropriate and disciplined ways.
12. Behavioral expectations and consequences are clear, fair and consistently followed.
13. Students are taught to be self-disciplined.