

### **Introduction**

An important aspect of any successful learning environment is a community of learners. My goal is to create a classroom in which students can learn together and from one another; an environment in which all students feel safe and a sense of trust pervades the room. The environment of my classroom will be a comfortable one in which children want to explore and are exposed to opportunities to do so in the physical space both through independent work and through teacher-led lessons. It will be an environment where all children are confident and comfortable enough to share their ideas, questions, concerns, and disagreements with each other while being respectful when listening to and learning from one another. The most important thing I have learned throughout my experiences is that there is no tried and true method to classroom management that works 100% of the time. I have put together what I believe my classroom management plan will look like, but I am suspecting that it will need to be tweaked as I see what works well in practice.

There are three major types of classroom management methods: preventative, supportive, and corrective. To have a smooth running and engaged classroom, I believe that one needs to have preventative procedures so that students know what the rules and expectations of them are on a daily basis. Supportive management strategies are important because students sometimes need a reward or praise to show them that they are appreciated and that their good behavior does not go unnoticed. The final classroom management technique that I hope to have to use only sparingly is corrective. Corrective management techniques are used when students are not doing what is expected of them and the preventative and supportive methods did not deter the behavior.

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**Preventative**

As a teacher, I want to focus on the students and getting them engaged and excited about learning without constantly having to “crack the whip.” To do this, I will use numerous strategies that I have learned in my theory courses as well as during my student teaching and substitute teaching assignments. I believe that the preventative stage of classroom management is the most important as it is where doing just a little bit goes a long way. Dr. Kagan, Dr. Kyle, and Ms. Scott called it “ounces and pounds of prevention” in their Win-Win Discipline Management technique.

One technique I have seen used a lot and that seems to work well is using “I statements” when a student is not doing what is expected. According to Thomas Gordon, by utilizing “I-statements”, you are not directly attacking the student and his/her behavior. I-statements are often used with the intent of being assertive without putting the listener on the defensive. This works well when dealing with students.

Another technique I plan on using is giving the students critical voice. Now, this doesn't mean that the students make all the rules or that they govern the classroom, but it does mean they have a say in the process. As a teacher, I will have my “concrete rules” which will allow the students and I to build off of and develop other classroom rules. Having an open and honest dialogue during this process is essential so that the students have a sense of ownership. Linda Albert explained that it is essential to have the students be part of the process when creating the classroom code of conduct. Albert continues by saying that she also believes that the parents should have a role in the creation process so that they too would have an understanding of what was going to be expected of their son or daughter in the classroom. The sense of ownership within the class will help decrease the amount of time I will have to spend being a disciplinarian as that takes away from time better spent engaged in learning. The most important rule of my

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class will be that we all must respect each other, their space, and their ideas. If I show students what respect looks like, they will know how I expect them to treat their fellow classmates and me. All of the members of the class must create this community together. The list of rules will be the “constitution” that guides our community. It will be displayed in the classroom as a constant reminder and facilitator of the rules. It will be referred to throughout the year and amended as necessary. Rules and expectations must also be created for specific routines and activities as they are introduced. I will model many of these myself, and then students will practice the rules using role-playing to learn them. Students will be given jobs that help them govern the class as this gives students direct responsibility within their classroom community.

Something I learned about from my cooperating teacher during my student teaching experience, which I am in the process of learning more about, is the concept of “Whole Brain Teaching.” This is a technique that establishes rules and routines while also providing the students and teacher an environment that is ever changing, developing, and growing so that the classroom doesn’t become stagnant.

Preventative strategies are vital in having classroom management from the word “Go.” However, just stating that you have procedures in place is NOT enough. When developing the classroom management plan that will work best for you, Fredric Jones believes that one of the most critical and often forgotten steps is that not only must you state the procedures but you must also TEACH the students why the procedures are in place and their importance while modeling what is expected.

**Supportive**

Being from a business management background, there was nothing more important in the course of a week than our staff meetings. Staff meetings helped ensure that everyone was on the

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same page and working towards a common goal. I plan on implementing class meetings that will take place at least bi-weekly if not weekly. Prior to the meeting with the class, I will meet with my teaching team to see if there is anything that they have noticed with my students or anything else that they feel needs to be addressed. The primary purpose of these meetings will be so that I can ensure that all my students know what my continued expectations are and what will be coming up next for them as far as work like projects and tests. This will also be when I can address any other issues that have been brought to my attention and I can address any suggestions or concerns that the students may have. This will work well with my open door policy. The students need to know that not only am I there for them to assist with their learning but that I am also there for them as people. I want my students to be their very best in all aspects of life, and I can help influence a student into making good decisions or help them through a difficult time.

As much as I love the idea of classroom “staff meetings”, it is not a new concept. Alfie Kohn says that having classroom discussions is one of the most important supportive techniques that a teacher can implement as it allows the teacher to discuss the positive behaviors and the behaviors that need tweaking. It also allows the students to have a critical voice to ensure that they are getting what they require from the teacher.

The other theory I can see implementing as a supportive technique is “Win-Win Discipline” by Dr. Kagan, Dr. Kyle, and Ms. Scott. Kagan explains that Win-Win Discipline is an effective approach to classroom discipline because it is designed to handle problems at the moment of the disruption with powerful and proven discipline strategies. In this stage, it is important that the teacher be willing to work hand-in-hand with the students to help provide them with what they are lacking. It is the teacher’s responsibility to teach mature, responsible

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coping mechanisms for the students to meet needs associated with the seven possible positions that they could be in (Attention-Seeking, Avoiding Embarrassment, Anger Venting, Control-Seeking, Energetic, Bored, Uninformed).

The supportive process is what I consider the second most important technique in classroom management as it is my last chance to alter and fix the behavior without “cracking the whip” and the student suffering the consequences of his/her behavior.

**Corrective**

Though I have my preferred methods and theories that I could interchange if need be for the preventative and supportive stages, that is not the case for the corrective stage. I currently believe that the Win-Win Discipline model is the best and only model for me when it comes to addressing behavior once the corrective stage has been reached.

I like the Win-Win Discipline technique because everything is “fresh” for the teacher and the student. By handling it immediately, the student doesn’t get the impression that the behavior is acceptable or being ignored. The other aspect I really like about the technique is that the teacher and the student work together to develop the best course of action. When it comes to corrective action, the Win-Win Discipline model utilizes a four-step process.

The four steps are:

- Identify the behavior
- Identify the Position
- Respond in moment of disruption
- Structure Win-Win follow-ups to ensure three pillars are in place

The first thing the teacher needs to do when using this model is that he/she needs to identify the behavior. Is the student’s behavior aggression, rule breaking, confrontation, or disengagement. Once the teacher knows this, he/she can move on to step two, which is identifying the student’s position and trying to understand why the student’s behavior is not up to

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expectations. What I believe is the most important step is responding in the moment of disruption. It is critical that the teacher put an end to the disruptive behavior quickly and refocuses the other students. The teacher then needs to communicate that the disruptive behavior is unacceptable. The teacher should acknowledge the student's position and not minimize his/her feelings. The teacher should work with the student(s) to find (a) carefully selected Win-Win structure(s) to match behavior & their position. By taking these steps, it helps to create long-term learning of responsible behavior and life skills for the student.

The final step is critical as it is here that the teacher and the student ensure that the three pillars of Win-Win Discipline are in place. The student needs to understand that the teacher is actually an advocate and that they are on the same side working toward a common goal. Through the use of collaborative solutions the student hopefully realizes that the teacher is actually working in his/her corner whether or not they recognize that fact initially. Making the student part of the corrective discipline process allows him/her to further develop personally through learned responsibility.

### **Conclusion**

The most important aspect of my classroom management plan is the preventative technique, as I truly believe I can prevent most common classroom disruptions from occurring with a solid foundation. For those students who may need a helping hand as they become more comfortable with the routines of the class, I will support and applaud their efforts and encourage them to continue to grow. Utilizing a little bit of scaffolding will allow me to slowly remove myself from the situation, and the students who need extra guidance will soon find they are performing to the expectation by themselves. Even though I don't want to have to use corrective discipline, I know that it comes with the territory. I will "crack the whip" when required but my

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goal is to work with the student to resolve the conflict and to use the conflict as a learning experience.

There are many aspects that will be important in fine-tuning my classroom, but the most important thing I need to keep in mind is that every student and every class is different. There is no “cookie cutter” method to assembling an effective classroom management plan. If you do not instill the control, respect, and expectations from the very beginning, it will only get harder to regain control as time progresses. One of the things I learned very quickly is that teachers are never done learning, and, because of this, I will constantly be looking for new techniques while tailoring my existing preventative techniques to ensure I always have the best possible classroom management plan for both the students and me.

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