

Classroom Management Plan

Carol Cunningham

University of Mary

Classroom Management is extremely important to me. I believe that management is much more effective than discipline. Classroom management is about having a plan, and acting appropriately, rather than reacting. I know that it will be something that I have to grow in, but I have to push through with it for the sake of my future students. In this paper I will give my classroom management philosophy, a plan for my first week of school, the importance of connecting with students and their families, how I will establish a classroom family environment, and finally some ways in which I will handle “what if” situations.

Philosophy of Classroom Management

My Classroom Management Philosophy is based on the School Family from Dr. Becky Bailey (2014) and Love and Logic (2010). My classroom will be a safe and respectful environment where uniqueness is celebrated: students will be treated as individuals within a connected family. We will learn to not turn away when there are differences, and instead use our uniqueness as a way of learning and growing together. I will not make assumptions about my students or their work, because I want them to know that they have the ability to grow and change. Students who have this understanding will have more of an open mind to the content and lessons that I teach. I will encourage students to problem solve and self-regulate by asking the question, “what should we do about that?” or saying, “take a few minutes to breathe and then try and figure that out. If you still need help after that, then you can come ask me again”. In my classroom we will focus on second chances, honesty, and responsibility, giving students a chance to recognize their mistakes and fix them, rather than immediate punishment. I intend to foster a positive environment where ‘good’ is noticed and praised by both me and by student’s classmates. Ultimately, my philosophy is to radiate love and kindness in every aspect of my life as a teacher, especially for the sake of those who may not feel loved at home or in their daily life.

In this philosophy I mention that it is based on the School Family. Dr. Becky Bailey, in her book *Conscious Discipline*, includes the school family as a key aspect of successfully implementing conscious discipline. She says, “Conscious Discipline uses a healthy family as the template for creating an optimal school culture that answers the questions, “Am I safe?” and “Am I loved?” in the affirmative” (Bailey, 2014, 61). As shown in my philosophy, it is extremely important to me that my students feel safe and loved. Creating a connected school family environment can result in many positive outcomes. When children build relationships, they are not only gaining comfort, but they are also optimizing the development of their brain. Early relationships shape and form skills and abilities in communication, organization, focus, perception, and problem-solving. As mentioned in my philosophy, I want my students to be problem-solvers. Another result of a school family is often resilience towards problem-solving, or in other words adapting to any challenge that arises. A school family addresses feelings of loss or sadness when challenges do arise, but it provides opportunities to answer with out anger or rage, and instead answers with resolution skills. These are just some of the few positive outcomes that have come out of classrooms that have taken on the template of a healthy family, as opposed to the more traditional, “factory”, method of running a classroom. I hope that I am able to successfully implement a caring and safe environment through the idea of a classroom family.

Hand-in-hand with the school family, I also include aspects of “Love and Logic” in my philosophy. The most important aspect of Love and Logic is waiting (Fay, 2010). Instead of immediate, irrational, and emotion-backed punishments, Love and Logic calls for waiting until both parties are in an executive brain state. This means giving time and space for a student to realize and fix their mistakes. It also means that as a teacher, the consequences given must be

logical, pre-established, and be equal to the offense. As mentioned in my philosophy, I am a firm believer in change, and therefore second chances, and I think that Love and Logic would believe in this as well. Another aspect of Love and Logic that I have included in my philosophy is enhancing the self-concept of my students. So many students have a poor self-concept (Fay, 2010) and I hope that through problem solving and self-regulation strategies, I am able to help my students feel empowered. I do not want my students to see their shortcomings or struggles as failures. Rather, as a class, we will have an optimistic view by emphasizing growth and highlighting strengths instead. We all are human, and therefore we have struggles, and I want my students to know that that is ok. We will be there for each other with empathy, as Love and Logic highlights.

Plan for the First 5 Days

In order to establish the school family environment with the help of Love and Logic, a structured and specific first week of school is crucial. Spending time on procedures and class guidelines in this first week may seem to be unproductive, but it sets the tone for the rest of the school year. By focusing on these things in this first week, time will be saved later on in the year. More academic work will get done in the long run if students have a clear understanding of expectations. This week is when procedures are introduced and practiced over and over again. The goal is for procedures to become routine. Routine is only possible when students are given time to practice the procedures until they become habit.

On day one, I will start by introducing myself through a PowerPoint. I will include pictures of myself, my family, and things I like to do. This will help the students feel as though they can build trust with me, because they will see that although I am the adult in the position of authority, I am going to be real with them. I will then do an activity with them, allowing them to

create their desk name tag. They will write their name and draw a picture of something that they think represents them. The students will then each introduce themselves to the class, saying their name and showing their drawing. The next procedure that will be taught is the line up procedure. This will be used anytime more than two students are leaving the classroom. They will practice this procedure at least 3 times, before leaving the classroom for recess. After recess, we will go over the line up procedure for returning into the classroom. On this day, we will go over hand signals for asking a question, asking to use the restroom, and getting materials. We will also talk about the importance of keeping their cubby and desk space organized. At the end of the day, we will practice the procedure for passing out handouts by giving them the letters to be sent home to their parents/guardians.

For the sake of length in this essay I will not go through the next four days in detail, but Appendix A has a complete plan that can be referred to. Everyday for the first week, we will practice and reiterate the procedures. Some procedures and guidelines that will be added throughout the week are bathroom procedures, class jobs, homework guidelines including the heading that I would like on all their papers (Wong, 2014), agenda and bellwork, morning check-in, tardy policy, and taking care of materials. During this week it would be my goal to create a class contract with my students. I want to implement the idea of *choice* from Love and Logic (Fay, 2010) by allowing the students to come up with guidelines and possible consequences. I will be involved, but I want the students to feel as though they have a voice in my classroom.

Connection to Students and Families

As mentioned in my first day plan, I will be sending a letter home with the students on the first day. See appendix B for the letter example. In this letter I will introduce myself to the parents/guardians of my students. I will give my education background, as well as some family

and personal background. Just as it is important for my students to know that I will be real with them, it is important for their families to know who is taking care of their child during the day. I give an overview of my philosophy, and some of my expectations for the school year. I end the letter by asking the parents to respond with an email giving me some information such as their preferred method of contact, and any additional information that they may feel would help their child succeed in my classroom. Having a connection with parents is one of my biggest worries. I know that parents are very protective of how their children are raised and everyone has a different idea of discipline, so I hope that I can stand up for my guidelines while still remaining empathetic to them.

Although it does scare me, I will make my best effort to go out of my comfort zone and have frequent contact with parents and guardians. I would like to get to the point where I remember to contact them for little positive things that their child did, making the times when I have to contact them for behavior warnings less uncomfortable. I also want to keep the parents in the loop when students have projects that they are working on. I know that I sometimes forget instructions, so I can imagine that my students will as well. By contacting the parents with an explanation of the project, they will be able to help their child understand and succeed. If I ever know that a parent is unable to attend an event or presentation of their child, I will make an effort to note specific positive details about their child's presentation or part in the event. By doing this, I hope that the hurt of not being able to attend will lessen and that they will still feel involved in their child's life.

Establishing the Classroom Family

Keeping families connected is crucial to a successful classroom management plan. Just as most of the students will have a family that they live with, they will all have a second family in

the classroom. As mentioned in my philosophy, establishing a school family will create a positive and safe environment which will then foster growth and development. Among the procedures and guidelines practiced in the first week, the concept of empathy and uniqueness will be explained. I will encourage my students to include these concepts in their class contract, in order to establish them as crucial aspects of our classroom environment.

One aspect of creating a positive environment is the physical organization of the classroom. Appendix C shows a layout of a possible classroom setup. This setup is based on the soft skills of collaboration, communication, and self-regulation. I do not want to have students isolated in rows of desks, rather I would like them to be in pods of four. There will be some zones for independent, quiet work, for students who may need space and time to refocus. Within the classroom I will have indoor plants, soft lighting, and open windows. I believe that having a natural influence in a classroom creates a more inviting environment with a sense of safety and comfort. I will have a teacher zone that is off limits for the students, but the rest of the classroom will be available for them to use. Most materials will be available to them at all time (materials that need guidance will be stored in the teacher zone), with the expectation that they will take care of them and return them to their organized spot. During independent or group work time students will be free to move around the classroom, as long as they are meeting the volume expectations. This will encourage self-regulation as well as give my students a sense of having ownership in their classroom.

What If's

As much as a teacher prepares before the school year, there are always going to be curveballs thrown in. Just as I want my students to feel empowered to be resilient problem solvers, I too will work on adapting through challenges and unexpected changes. Perhaps most

importantly, I hope to always be honest with my students. If a procedure, guideline, strategy, consequence, etc. is not working for that specific class, I will tell my students honestly, and tell them that I will work on finding a new strategy that will fit them better. I will always give myself a day to think over making changes in my classroom. I do not want to make rash decisions, so I will implement a temporary strategy for the day, but tell the students that I will get back to them. This will also give them a warning that something will change. Some students need time to process changes, so a warning will give them some time.

One thing that I know I will have to deal with every year is behavior issues. As I said in my philosophy, I want to always allow for change. In the journal article “Why You Should Ignore Difficult Students the First Week of School”, Michael Linsin asks teachers to avoid getting the “lowdown” on their incoming students. It would be so easy to ask the teacher who had your students the previous year who the problem kids are, and who you should keep an eye on. Linin, however, also believes in change. He says that by having this preconceived idea of who will have behavior issues “it reinforces the false narrative difficult students already believe about themselves that “behavior problem is who they are” (Linsin, 2016). If I truly want kids to know that they can grow, I have to be willing to give them all a clean and even slate. Negative comments about students are going to be inevitable, but I hope that I can have the self-control to not let the comments effect the way that I treat certain students

Conclusion

Classroom management is something that I am not extremely confident in, but by having a plan established prior to the school year, I will feel more confident as begin teaching. By taking aspects of Conscious Discipline and the School Family and Love and Logic, I hope that I can create an environment, both physical and emotional, that is safe and loving. Most importantly, I

want to be real and honest with my students. As mentioned in my essay above, I will be working on fostering skills along with my students. We will create a family where we are all striving for growth in self-regulation, resilience, problem-solving, and remaining calm.

References

Bailey, B. (2014). *Conscious Discipline: Building resilient classrooms*. Loving Guidance, Inc.: Oviedo, FL.

Fay, J. and Funk, D. (2010). *Teaching With Love and Logic*.

Linsin, M. (2016). Why You Should Ignore Difficult Students the First Week of School. *Smart Classroom Management*. Retrieved 2020, from
<file:///C:/Users/cfcun/Downloads/Ignore%20Difficult%20Students%20First%20Week.pdf>
[f](#)

Wong, H. (2014). *THE Classroom Management Book: An Elementary First-Ten-Days Plan*.

APPENDIX A

<p>Day 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Name tags on desks • Exiting the classroom • Recess • Entering the classroom • Hand Signals • Bathroom procedure • Passing out handouts • Cubby and desk organization 	<p>Day 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice day 1 procedures • Morning Check-in • Bathroom policy • Homework policy • Explain empathy and uniqueness • Start developing contract • Sharing and secrets policy
<p>Day 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice all procedures • Agenda • Tardy procedure • Heading on Homework (first assignment) • Finish developing contract 	<p>Day 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice all procedures • Read and sign contract • Class jobs • Taking care of property (materials) • Voice levels • Group work policies
<p>Day 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice all procedures • Bell-work • Check out boxes (what I know, what I still have questions about) • Testing policy • Pink slip (unfinished work) • What to do when you think someone isn't safe 	

APPENDIX B

Welcome to the 20xx-20xx school year! My name is Miss Carol Cunningham, and I will be the 3rd grade teacher this school year. Since I will be getting to know your children so much this year, here are some things to get to know me a little bit! I grew up in San Diego, CA in a family of 11 kids. I have 8 older siblings, 2 younger siblings, and lots of nieces and nephews! I graduated from Saint Joseph Academy High School in 2018. I received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Catholic studies from the University of Mary in 2022. I love spending quality time with my family and friends, listening to music, going on picnics, traveling, and painting with watercolors!

This is my first year teaching at x Elementary School. I look forward to helping my students grow this school year. We will be working through an academic setting, but there is so much more to growth than academics. I hope to inspire my students to take initiative and learn to be problem solvers in real life experiences, as well as in school. I intend to foster an environment that will be about recognizing and fixing mistakes, rather than frequent punishment. In my classroom, I would love to see respect for all, even if differences arise. I will respect your children, and I hope to earn mutual respect from them.

I ask that you respond to this email with the following information: Your name and the name(s) of your child who will be in my class, your preferred way of contact (email and/or phone number), and any additional information that you think could be helpful for your child's success this school year (strengths, struggles, medical information, allergies, etc.) As we get closer to the start of the school year, and throughout the school year, I ask that you reach out to me with any questions or concerns. My email address is below.

I look forward to meeting you!

Miss Cunningham

cfcunningham1@umary.edu



APPENDIX C

(I was unable to find a whiteboard in this software, so the black screen will be a whiteboard)

