Philosophy of Classroom Management

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Anyone can become a teacher, but it takes a lot of determination and dedication for a teacher to go from just being a mediocre teacher to becoming a great teacher. In the education profession, it is important for teachers to make sure they are constantly adapting to new styles of teaching, getting to know their students, and overall creating a comfortable learning environment. There are many ways to approach different teaching styles and being able to manage a classroom. Each teacher has their own styles of teaching, and each teacher is going to get a different set of students in their classroom. The reality of teaching is that teachers should be able to adapt to given situations and be able to modify what it is they are teaching in order to maintain good classroom management as well as creating a positive environment to allow students to succeed.

It is important as a teacher to show students that they are interested in what interests them. When students see teachers caring about what is going on in their life, it makes them appreciate teachers so much more. “Therefore, virtually anything you do to show interest in students as individuals has a positive impact on their learning,” (R. Marzano, J. Marzano & Pickering, 2003).Teachers can easily show interest in students by talking informally with students before, during, or after class about specific interests, and meeting students at the door to greet them for the day, or even being approachable outside of school. It is always something so unheard of to see a teacher outside of school, as if teachers were supposed to live in another world outside of school. For example, if a teacher makes it a point to go shopping at a grocery store located near the school, it is more likely that the teacher will run into a student on their trip. By doing this, the teacher is allowing themselves to be approachable in public. This shows students that teachers are human beings too, and it is okay to run into each other on the weekends or evenings. It also helps build that relationship with the student and let the student know that teachers can do the same things as students even outside of school. Seeing teachers outside of school should not be a scary thing, though it is always portrayed as seeing a teacher outside of school is like seeing a dog walk on its hind legs.

In the “Harry Wong, Effective Teacher” video, he talked about the steps of becoming an effective teacher in a great perspective. He helps teachers understand how to go from being a good teacher to a great teacher. Though a teacher is professional, it is important to let students know that teachers are human, too. It is important to manage a classroom, and not to just use discipline. Also, having a personality bulletin board in the class helps students get to know their teacher on a personal level. It allows students to get to know their teachers’ hobbies and interests. After they see interests of their teachers, they too are encouraged to bring in medals, ribbons, certificates, and much more of their own to show that they are all winners. This is a great approach because it makes students feel good about their accomplishments, and it makes them feel like they matter.

Creating relationships with students can either be very easy or very difficult for teachers. It is more of a difficult task for secondary teachers because it is more often than not that teachers have more than a hundred students. It makes it very difficult for teachers to build relationships with students when they see that many students a day for only an hour at a time. Though it is a difficult task, teachers tend to naturally build relationships with students. Now, it is important that teachers build positive relationships with students because teachers can easily have a negative relationship with students, and it can happen often. It is the job of the teacher to be able to build that sense of relationships with students because it allows students to feel safe and welcome in the classroom environment. Teachers do not need to be a students’ best friend, but it is important to find some commonality and be able to pick out some interests of a student. Building positive relationships with students can take the learning environment into a great direction. When teachers take the time to get to know their students, students cherish that and they begin to trust the teacher more. They begin to feel a sense of value. Students want to feel like they matter in the classroom, and it is the job of the teacher to make sure that they matter. Along with creating great relationships with students, it is also important to build a good relationship with parents and families. This goes more for early childhood and elementary teachers. These teachers see the same 20-25 students a day, and it is easier to build that communication with parents. Especially with the younger ages, teachers need to build that relationship with parents and families because it helps with communication and trust. Teachers and parents are working together to teach their student and child. If teachers have the students for 6-8 hours a day and then parents take over for the rest of the time, both parents and teachers need to be on the same page in terms of their education. Teachers cannot be with students all hours of the day each day to make sure they are doing their reading and math homework, so parents need to team up with teachers to make sure students are doing what they need to be doing.

Along with getting to know the students in the classroom, it is also important to understand how each student learns, and what their preferred learning styles may be. A few students may be visual learners, while others can be auditory learners. This should be something the teacher works on understanding because it will help with the overall classroom flow. It is important to be able to give different ways of learning material to make sure all types of students’ interests are being hit. Sometimes a student may start to act out because they become frustrated with the way the teacher is providing the material. For example, if one student is a visual learner, but gets lectured to all class period with no PowerPoint presentation or anything to actually look at to help them learn, they will withdraw and not want to learn. If teachers get to know their students learning styles and preferences, it will help their classroom become more successful. This can also go hand in hand with giving students choice within a given topic. “Specifically, when assigning a task, a teacher might provide students with options from which they can choose, or they can guide students in designating their own tasks.” (Marzano & Pickering, 2011). This is important because it gives students the freedom to approach tasks that interest them, and they are more likely to want to give that task their full attention and effort. Also, giving choice will help students choose which method of learning is best for them, and how they want to go about doing a specific project.

When it comes to the actual classroom environment itself, teachers need to make sure that they are providing the same tools and materials for all students. Everything should be accessible for all students in the classroom, and all students need to be treated equally. There cannot be ‘favorites’ of the classroom, and there cannot be special treatment for any specific students. If one gets the opportunity, then all should have the same opportunity. Students can tell when someone gets special treatment, or there are a few students that can get away with certain things. This creates resentment from other students, and they begin to rebel. They do not feel like they are treated being fair, and this can be problematic. Instead, teachers should provide rules, consequences, and rewards for students so that way expectations are set and stone right in the beginning. Everyone will follow those rules.

In the Harry Wong video, he states “The beautiful thing about procedures is, it makes the class comfortable, it makes the class secure, because they all know what is going to happen in the classroom. If they know and you know, then we can all move on with learning as opposed to surprises all the time in the classroom.” It is important that teachers lay everything out for the students so there are no surprises. If teachers right off the bat tells students what is expected of them, more often than not, students are going to work toward fulfilling those expectations. There should be basic rules of the classroom, and consequences if those rules are not followed. If students make the wrong decisions, then they have to accept the consequences that come with that choice. It is all laid out on the table for students to understand, so there are no surprises when a rule is broken or behavior is unacceptable. Along with rules and consequences, Harry Wong talks about giving rewards for good behavior. This is not like give them a piece of candy for getting the right answer. It is acknowledging the fact that the particular student is doing a great job in working on what they need to. It is positive reinforcement, and that is strongly needed in order to have a successful classroom.

Teachers need to be positive influences, and not to focus on all the negative things students do in a class. It goes back to students craving for attention. Students seek attention from anyone who will give it to them, and if teachers focus on bad behavior, students will see that attention being given to them and they will continue to act up. If teachers acknowledge positive behavior more often than what the students are doing wrong, they will more likely want to do those positive things in order to get that attention and feedback.

Having great classroom management means that teachers have to be able to adapt in given situations. What works for teachers one year may not work another year. One year a teacher might have an easy going classroom with no issues, and the next may be a disaster. The techniques and strategies that teachers use may not always work, and that is the reality of teaching. That is why it is important for teachers to be able to adapt to situations, and to be able to change what it is they are teaching, or how they teach it. It goes along with continuing their own education and making sure that they are getting the training and tools for proper classroom management. Education is constantly changing, and each group of children is going to be different from the last.

Ultimately, there is no perfect way of having effective classroom management. Some strategies work for some teachers, while it does not necessarily work for others. Students will vary each year, and there will never be a time that one group of students is exactly like the other. In the teaching profession, teachers always have to be on their toes, because they can never expect things to go the same way constantly. As long as teachers create positive relationships with students, it will help them get to know them better and it will show them how they can teach so their students can succeed. As long as teachers are constantly striving to do better in their classrooms, they will succeed. It is all about getting to know students and being able to adapt in each situation. Treating all students equally and setting out expectations right at the start will take the class a long way. Overall, dedication and determination in teachers separate them from being good teachers to becoming effective teachers. If one does not have a plan, then they will plan to fail.

References

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