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Classroom Management Philosophy and  
Action Plan for Procedures, Behavior, and Discipline

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### Classroom Management Philosophy and Action Plan for Procedures, Behavior, and Discipline

A well-managed classroom is the key to creating a safe and productive learning environment. Proactive teachers plan months in advance as to how their classroom will be organized, what rules and procedures should be established, what the classroom guidelines will be and how will they supplement the school's core beliefs, how to engage the students in the classroom, and how behavioral issues will be handled. Teachers need to have a plan for the first few days of schools regarding instruction for procedures and classroom expectations so students know what is expected of them and to set a standard of organization and focus for the rest of the year. In addition to normal classroom practices, music teachers have added responsibilities pertaining to the many expensive instruments, concert preparation, unique classroom settings, and community collaboration. Prior planning is necessary in order to ensure smooth management and transitions in the classroom.

My philosophy of classroom management focuses on relationships, student engagement, organization, and a plan of disciplinary action. I believe that it is my job to be a caring and supportive person in each of my students' lives and to treat them as individuals. Students should feel safe in my class, be accepted, and receive encouragement. I believe that it is important to use humor in my classroom in order to make class fun and to engage my students. Student engagement is an important part of classroom management because it keeps students on task and reduces the chance of behavioral issues. My classroom will also be organized spatially and procedurally to promote the smoothness of lessons and rehearsals. There will be a multitude of procedures in place to prepare for any situation that may arise. There will be students who will not respond to ordinary management skills and I plan to create a disciplinary plan that will help give students what they need to be successful.

The relationship between a teacher and a student is an important part of learning and growing in a classroom. A developing child needs to have proper guidance and positive reinforcement in order to develop a healthy self-concept (Fay, 2011). For a child, especially one that comes from a dysfunctional home, it is necessary that teachers show care and help create a sense of dignity and importance in his or her life. I will encourage my students to succeed while being sure not to give meaningless praise and to I will make an effort to know my students and relate my instruction to their quality world. Students should own their own accomplishments and emotions and be able to handle to consequences of poor decisions. I will focus my praise on the students' feelings, rather than on my own, about their accomplishments.

My verbal instructions will consist of enforceable statements (gold) rather than unenforceable statements (garbage). Unenforceable statements offer an opportunity for students to object, creating the possibility of argument and frustration. Gold statements such as, "I give full credit for papers turned in on time" are one-sided and offer students a choice in their behavior (Fay, 2011).

A principles-based disciplinary system will used in my classroom. I will have a short list of classroom guidelines regarding behavior and consequences. I will handle disciplinary action on an individual basis and not immediately forcing consequences. This will give my students time to reflect on what they have done, allow me a chance to show empathy, and allow me to decide on a set of consequences that the student can select from. I will be sure to check my colleagues' disciplinary plans to find a pattern of consistency in discipline while still allowing students to have a choice.

I will engage my students through the use of interests, friendly controversy, unusual facts, and questioning strategies (Marzano, 2011). Knowing my students' interests is the first step in

engagement. My students will come from different backgrounds and be involved in different extracurricular activities, but they will all be in my music class. I will make an effort to show my students why music is important and find out what drew them to my band or choir class. Reminding my students of these things will help engage them in classroom participation.

Music ensembles typically have an element of friendly controversy. Whether it is a rivalry between sopranos and altos or brass and woodwinds, I believe that it will be effective to manipulate the friendly rivalry so my students will find motivation. I am also a collector of random factoids on virtually every subject and I love sharing them with people. The surplus of unusual facts that I know about music, history, and philosophy will be a useful tool in engaging my students. I plan on asking many questions to my ensembles every day; effective questioning strategies are needed in order to promote student engagement. Questions that require higher order thinking such as analyzing data or synthesizing facts combined with questioning strategies that engage the whole class will keep students alert and engaged. Cold-calling, though it may create anxiety, keeps students on their toes; a randomized selection system would work as well and eliminate a teacher-student bias.

Procedures are necessary in creating a productive environment. Marzano (2011), says that “classrooms with an organized set of guidelines and procedures have twenty-eight percent less disruptions.” In my classroom, I will have a variety of procedures in place to keep my classroom running smoothly. Before class starts, I will have the daily agenda on the board, have organized the chairs and stands (I will do this myself before my first class and, if I do not have time to prepare for the next class, create a routine at the end of each class to set up for the next one), have a respond-to on the board, and have music playing (if part of the respond-to) (Wong, 2014).

At the beginning of class, my students will get their instruments and music ready after I greet them at the door. Students will be in their seats five minutes after the start of the class hour and be ready to write about or answer a respond-to related to musical knowledge that has been discussed in previous classes. Small slips of paper will be on each student's chair, they will use the paper to write the respond-to, pass them to the left or right edge of the row (whichever is closer to my office space), and I will use the paper to take attendance and to see if I need to reteach material.

In addition to emergency situations, tardiness, and other schoolwide procedures, I will also have procedures for things unique to the band or choir classroom such as: administration of lockers and folders, warmup activities, marching band rehearsal, concerts, and trips. I will leave five minutes at the end of each class period for students to organize their section for the next class, put their instruments away, and to prepare for class dismissal. If students finish putting their instruments away before the end of class, they may mingle around with other students, but may not crowd the door.

Secondary band and choir classrooms should be set up so resources are easily accessible. This can be difficult to plan without knowing what the design of the room is in advance because many band and choir rooms are different. Generally, a band room will have a locker area surrounding the walls of the room or in a separate area. The teacher will have an office that is in a separate room connected to the rehearsal space. If space is available, I would like to dedicate an area for jazz rehearsals. This space will neatly house a drum set, amps, and jazz fronts that can easily be accessed for jazz rehearsal. Percussion instruments will be in the back of the ensemble space, properly protected by instrument covers, cases, or mallet bags. The auxiliary percussion instruments will be stored either on a well-protected shelf or in a percussion cabinet.

Chairs and music stands will be neatly stored away from the ensemble space. Full band scores will be organized in the music library, if one is available, and chamber music and solos will be in separate filing cabinets in the my office.

There are several personal features I wish to include in my classroom. A sound system will be available for me to use with the class. Over the course of the semester I will be sharing music with the students via ensemble literature and listening activities at the beginning of class each day. It is fair that I allow my students to share their music with me; therefore, I will have a deposit available where students can write the name of a song or artist that they would like to share with me (this will also help me relate to my students). This deposit box will be near my office where students can easily access it. I am a subscriber to a number of music journals and plan on allowing my students to access them with my permission. I will keep the periodicals on a shelf in my office. If I am teaching in a middle school setting, I will have a noise level chart created out of musical dynamics posted at the front of the room. I will reference the chart when necessary to maintain noise levels. I will have my classroom guidelines and expectations publically posted so that students may constantly refer to them. Posters relevant to music history and theory will be displayed on the walls of my classroom as well.

The guidelines in my classroom will be few but broad in definition. This way, students lose the ability to find loopholes in the system. “You can do anything, but do not cause a problem. If you cause a problem, I will do something.” is a great example of a general rule because it allows students to have freedom. The word “problem” covers a large spectrum of classroom offenses and disruptions. Another good example is “respect persons and their property” because it is not tied to a specific scenario (Marzano, 2011).

Issues such as, noncompliance, aggression, and disruptive behaviors detract from learning in the classroom (Zirpoli, 2012). I plan on being in close contact with parents so that I may better know my students and be better able to involve parents with their child's behavior. Oppositional behavior can be handled in a several ways, but it is important to keep a calm demeanor and to maintain authority. Through the use of procedures, organization, and disciplinary consistency, my classroom should have few problems with noncompliance. However, I plan on teaching compliance to my students through the use of positive reinforcement by requesting different students to perform daily tasks. These tasks may include: distribution and collection of sheet music, leading warmups, setup and tear down of the concert venue, and organization of materials or activities. The shifting responsibility puts the weight on every student over the course of the semester, making these responsibilities a team effort. I will be sure to let the student and parents know that I appreciate the hard work that he or she has done.

Aggression and bullying will not be allowed in my class. Having been a victim of bullying, I am aware of the effects that bullies have on students and the means by which they execute them. If I suspect malicious behavior among students, I will make myself present in the situation by patrolling the hallway or rehearsal room at the beginning and of classes. I will talk with the individuals responsible outside of class if the bullying persists. If the behavior continues, I will call the parents.

I plan on modeling and teaching strategies to manage behavioral issues such as inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness (Zirpoli, 2012). Many times, these behaviors arise because of the home environment. In these homes, parents may not be teaching self-monitoring strategies or social skills such as delayed gratification or self-reflection (Wong,

2014). As a music teacher, I can have some fun teaching these concepts. One such example would be knowingly ending rehearsal right before reaching the climax of a piece.

As a person with depression and anxiety, I can relate to students who may be suffering from such ailments. I plan on personally and respectfully communicating with a student whom I suspect is suffering. Middle school and high school put many stresses on a developing individual and can arouse depressive and anxious behaviors. Letting my students know that I care about their well-being on a regular basis and communicating with counselors and parents about my students will better help me to understand and help.

A teacher is a magic person in a child's life and it is important to approach teaching with love and reason. Through the use of organization, procedures, engagement techniques, communication, and, above all, love I plan on teaching my students about the importance of music and community to the best of my ability.



## References

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