Classroom Management Plan

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A. Introduction and Philosophy of Management

Of the several principles I adhere to and practice in my everyday life, there is one idea that seems to continually re-reveal itself to me in unique ways: everything is interconnected. What may seem like a harsh generalization is a simple truth; whether it be through relationships, similarities in procedure, or nearly obscure details, I believe that there are commonalities between every person, place, and/or thing. Naturally, it is no challenge to find the connections between the things that one finds joy in doing. I find that my future profession, teaching theatre, and my favorite hobby, cooking food, are much less further apart than I would have ever considered. Just as there are objectives in the lesson plans that you write as a teacher, in cooking, the main objective is to create a meal. There are several procedures to follow in the kitchen, and in that same manner, a classroom would not be able to maintain a structure without the implementation of procedures. Cooking for oneself is relatively easy, but growing up in a family of upwards of 40 people, I have discovered that preparing a meal for several to enjoy has the added challenges of catering to varying tastes, palettes, and of course, allergies. Similarly, the classroom is filled with a plethora of minds that all have varying learning styles and methods of processing information, so it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all of these must be catered to. While all these examples fit into the context of their respective activity, I believe that there is one thing that is shared between the two that extends beyond the boundaries that exist between cooking and teaching: love. Love is the secret ingredient that must be essential for every recipe and every classroom. As an educator, it is my responsibility to cultivate an environment that promotes collaboration, invites curiosity, and celebrates the things that make us unique.

B. First Days

In their book *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher,* Harry and Rosemary Wong describe the level of importance that the first days of school hold. “The purpose of classroom management is to organize the classroom so students know what to do to learn and succeed” (Wong & Wong, 2009). For the following semester or school year, the teacher is the person responsible for delivering the knowledge of their respective content area to the student. This process cannot be completed without a specific element of trust. Moreover, in the theatre classroom, this level of trust is at an even higher capacity because of the nature of the work that typically occurs in the theatre, such as performing in front of others and working in collaboration with one another. However, the challenges of being a theatre teacher are accompanied by several resources that allow for success on all fronts in the classroom. One example of this, and common practice in most theatre classrooms, is the use of theatre games. I believe that the presence of joy is essential in every classroom, and the best way to find joy is to have fun.

While theatre games are an efficient joy-producing tactic, they also will typically require working in groups which promotes bonding with one another, and ultimately the cultivation of interpersonal relationships. As a lead-by-example enthusiast, I will not only be a spectator but also a participant in these games and activities that the students in my classroom are engaging in. While I also want to have fun as a teacher, there is a bigger purpose for being a participant alongside my students. For instance, I believe that it is important for the students to understand that in my classroom, we work together as equals. Everyone will always have a seat at the table because we know that not everyone will bring the same thing to the table.

One of the main components of the theatre is performance, and to perform, one must be able to present themselves in front of a group of people. As the classroom is filled with performers of varying experience, ability, and style, this may not be at the same level of

difficulty for all. Being an educator, it is my responsibility to combat this challenge from the moment the students walk into my classroom. By utilizing games as an ice-breaker, the students are invited to be silly and have some "serious" fun, changing the labels of one another from stranger to collaborator, and ultimately through the course of the year, friend.

The theatre classroom is a prime example of a salad bowl classroom. Some students may enter the classroom hoping to be one of the next Broadway stars, while other students may register because they are required to take a Fine Art credit and there is only the Theatre I class available during that class period. Regardless of the reason that brought my students to my classroom, I must receive each student with the same goal in mind for the year: growth. On that first day, I plan to start getting to know my students and develop an understanding of the natural functions of the classroom.

First Day of Class Agenda

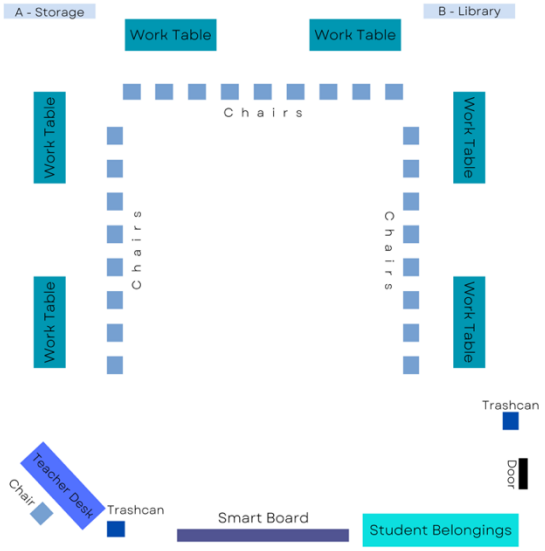
- The bell ringer for the students would be to respond to the word "theatre" with a Like and Look activity. Through this activity, students will write down something they enjoy or "like" about the theatre, based on the knowledge they already have. The students will then write down something that they want to "look" into. This activity will provide an easy opportunity for me to begin to gauge the level of the student's familiarity with the subject. (7 minutes)
- Once the class has written down their likes and looks, we will take a few minutes to allow some students to share their thoughts and responses to the activity. (5 minutes)
- The time has come to have some fun and start incorporating the theatre games. The first game that I would choose to play involves getting to know one another. The Silent Birthday is a game in which all the students must place themselves in order by their date

of birth; however, they are not allowed to speak throughout the entire game. Not only does this game challenge students to creatively work together, but it allows them to share a fact about themselves that is only the first stepping stone in getting to know one another. (5 minutes)

- The next game I would play is called Ultimate Rock-Paper-Scissors. As it is very similar to the standard game, this version offers a higher level of competition, as when one opponent loses, they must follow around the winner and chant their name. Once that person finds a different opponent, they will either continue chanting the same person's name if they win, or the new winner's name will be chanted. This game continues as the groups begin to grow, and ultimately should end in the chanting of one student's name by the whole class. This game familiarizes the students with each other's names while also getting them started on practicing projecting their voices in the theatre. (5 minutes)
- Following the games, I will continue with a presentation that consists of more information about myself and who I am, our classroom syllabus, classroom procedures and goals for the year, and finally, more information about the theatre program as a whole and opportunities for the students to get involved outside of the classroom. (10 minutes)
- For the next few minutes, I will introduce the concept of norms and how as a collective, we will create our own set of expectations that we will follow throughout the year. Once I have guided the students through creating our first norm, they will divide into groups of 4 to create at least 5 norms of their own. After 5 minutes, the class will discuss the norms that they have created, ultimately creating a list of 7 norms that will be on display in the classroom for the remainder of the school year. (13 minutes)

C. Classroom Environment

The maintenance and nourishment of the environment in the classroom rests in the hands of both the teacher and the students. Becton Loveless explains the importance of the design of the classroom and how the layout of the space should be reflective of that teacher's philosophy (Loveless, 2023). I base my classroom philosophy on the Three G's: growth, group work, and a good time. I believe that when the students walk into the classroom, they should walk into an environment that nourishes their experience as a student and as a human being, with the focus not being set on the product at the end, but on the process it takes to reach that goal. A major factor in this, specifically in the theatre, is working with one another. My classroom will be equipped to be adaptable and accommodating for whatever each day's lesson and activities may entail. Playing games will typically require maximum amounts of space to move around. Performing monologues in front of the class will call for an audience layout of seating. While most activities may not require a desk or area to write in a journal, there will be some



assignments that call for handouts and written work. As these are only three of the various ideas that must be kept in mind when designing the classroom layout, it is clear that fluidity, along with safety, are the key players in this game. Given that I plan to teach high school theatre, I believe that this layout would best suit the needs of my classroom. As students enter the classroom, they leave their belongings by the door and join the class in a large semi-circle in the center of the room. Creating a large open area in the center of the room allows for space to do warm-up activities and games. The chairs set out around the perimeter of the space provide a place for the

students to sit while the teacher may be delivering instruction, but it is also designed in the theatrical layout known as thrust seating. The students sit in a large semi-circle which designates where the audience will be but also allows for the students to see one another in the circle, ultimately promoting interaction between one another. The work tables are available outside of our central location of activity, which serves as workspaces for students to work individually and in groups. The teacher's desk will remain in the corner adjacent to the door and on the opposite side of the room will be a storage area in one corner and our classroom library in the other, containing various plays and resourceful literature that will be available to students.

D. Classroom Procedures

"Ultimately, the best thing we can do for our students is to be consistent" (Wong & Wong, 2009). It is of utmost importance to establish the procedures and routines for each day of class, especially if there is something new being introduced on that day. Moreover, maintaining consistency in these procedures and routines is the crux of the matter of classroom management. Wong and Wong explain how teachers who do not give their students clear procedures and expectations are met with students who will begin to develop their own routines and habits. From the first day of school, I will begin by instructing the students to leave their belongings in the designated area in the classroom. Should they need anything for the lesson that day, it will be posted on the SmartBoard. This not only ensures a clear, open space for the day's activities, but having the belongings set aside eliminates the possibility of distraction. There will be several in-class performances and presentations, so proper audience etiquette will also be established in the classroom. This includes visual focus and engagement with whomever is speaking, silence from the audience, and once a performance has ended, a round of applause delivered by the class. As a part of both classroom management and theatre etiquette, these practices emphasize the

principles of support and respect between the students. Cellular devices must be kept on silent and out of sight unless the classroom has become a “hot spot”; this means the class is now allowed to use phones, tablets, computers, etc. to complete the activities and assignments for the lesson. If a device is seen or heard while the class is not a hot spot, the entire class must do 20 push-ups. While working out is not a typical component of the theatre classroom, abiding by this policy will introduce students to the practices of interpersonal accountability. Students will not be kept under restrictions as to when and how many times they may use the restroom. However, exploitation of the policy will be met with limitations. There will be a small dry-erase board on the wall where students will write their name when they leave for a break. Not only will this let the teacher know who is currently outside of the classroom, but the students are aware that someone is out, so unless it is an emergency, they cannot leave until the other student has returned.

E. Discipline System/Response to Misbehavior

By the creation of norms at the beginning of the year, the students have a defined list of behavioral expectations in the classroom. While students may sometimes engage in mischief to cause a spectacle, there are often deeper reasons as to why their behavior is being carried out in a specific way. As human beings, we are motivated by our needs, according to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Cherry, 2022). Typically, when these needs are not being met, the response is evident in their behavior, which can sometimes flout the norms that were established. Once a verbal warning has been given to the student, if the behavior persists, it is my responsibility to assess the situation and respond accordingly; the student could be experiencing something outside of the walls of my room that holds enough weight that it impacts their behavior under my authority. This can only be understood through communication, so I must have a conversation with that

student to get a clearer picture of what is going on. I will try to provide as many solutions as possible, but ultimately, my goal is to redirect the student's misbehavior into positive behavior that also abides by the norms we have created together. This policy coincides with the self-accountability of the student's to make sure they are fulfilling their own responsibilities. Late work will not be accepted unless the student has requested an extension and had a discussion with the teacher. Contributing to the well-being of the overall classroom environment will not go un-rewarded, and students will be rewarded whether it be through leadership and/or performance opportunities, extra credit, and other incentives. The collaborative nature of the theatre is our focus to ensure that we are our best so we can do our best, together.

F. Student Motivation and G. Classroom Engagement

The theatre may not be everyone's cup of tea; however, it is still the student's responsibility to be engaged in the class. "Students succeed when what they're learning matters to them" (Sudderth, 2022). Motivating students to be engaged is no easy challenge, but the key to ensuring participation is to design the class around the students. Knowing your students and their interests is such a useful tactic in classroom engagement. The theatre content area is especially a resource in this matter because the root of theatre is storytelling, and every student that enters my class has a unique and special story to share. Creating activities and exercises that allow students to put themselves into the work they do will help turn the spark of interest into a wildfire that spreads across the entire classroom. I want for my classroom to be a place where my students know they can come to experience, create, and share joy with one another. The theatre classroom lends itself to playing games, stepping outside of one's comfort zone, and most of all, self-expression. I aim to create an environment that provides my students with exciting opportunities to not only learn more about theatre, but ultimately, become a better person.

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