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Classroom Organization and Management Plan

Research and Theories:

My philosophy for classroom organization and management is based primarily in the belief that when teachers approach students in an authoritative manner and provide for students reasonable limits and achievable expectations, they will provide for students the opportunity to achieve academic success, independent thought, self-reliance and socially competent behavior. Educational experts and authors of Love and Logic, Jim Fay, child psychiatrist, Foster W. Cline, M.D. and Charles Fay, Ph.D., offer many tools for educators that not only promote healthy parent/teacher and teacher/student relationships but also encourage positive classroom management. Love and Logic encourages educators to:

- Set limits in the classroom without anger
- Provide hope and encouragement for underachieving students
- Build strong connections between home and school
- Make teaching and learning more fun and productive
- Immediately handle disruptive students
- Get and keep students' attention
- Build positive student-teacher relationships
- Help students own and solve their own problems
- Bully proof children, diffuse power struggles, and handle difficult people

The belief is that when educators establish these safe, loving and logical parameters and limitations for themselves (and their students), it provides an ideal circumstance in which educators are able to guide students through their thought patterns, encourage them to think independently and rationally about their actions, and consider the consequences of their actions *before* they act. When students learn to think before they act, they not only learn self-control but also learn *how* to solve future situations or problems.

In addition to the behavioral philosophy encouraged by Love and Logic, my philosophy for classroom organization and management is also based in the belief that an authoritative approach to students will not only build strong student/teacher relationships but will also encourage strong peer relationships. The authoritative teacher places reasonable limits and controls on the students but often explains the reasons behind his/her rules, expectations and decisions. If a student is disruptive, the teacher is able to respond with a polite, but firm, reprimand. The authoritative teacher is also open to considerable verbal interaction, including critical debates. When students know that they can interrupt the teacher if they have a relevant question or comment, the students receive the opportunity to learn and practice communication skills in an environment that

encourages open dialogs and communication (especially to solve problems). Authoritative teachers also exhibit a warm and nurturing attitude toward the students and expresses genuine interest and affection. By encouraging students and praising them for good decisions, academic achievement and socially acceptable behavior, students are reminded and encouraged to abide by the expectations and limitations established for their classroom. Such limitations, modeling and behavior on the part of the (authoritative) teacher encourages academic success, self-reliance and socially competent behavior on the part of the students.

These elements, both individually and collectively, work together to support the philosophies that comprise my Teaching and Learning Statement. It is my belief that learning is an active process that occurs within the learner and which can be influenced by the learner (Cognitivism). Love and Logic encourage students to be actively engaged in their thought processes in order to take responsibility for their actions and their learning. It simultaneously encourages teachers to create engaging lesson plans that will captivate students minds and promote high-order learning and thinking thus influencing each students' learning experience. It is also my belief that learners can build personal interpretations of the world based on experiences and interactions (Constructivism). Love and Logic encourages teachers to establish boundaries and limitations for students that encourage open communication, positive student/teacher and student/student relationship, work towards bully proof students, and provides hope for struggling students. The establishment of positive interactions within the classroom will influence each student's experience and over all interpretation of the world. Finally, it is my belief that a specific environmental stimulus can induce a correct response (Behaviorism). Love and Logic encourages teachers to immediately handle disruptive students and to teach students to consider the consequences of their actions before they act. Consequences (positive or negative) can be a useful external stimulus that when applied to a specific situation, will produce a correct response. Students need to learn that in life, as in the classroom, there are consequences to their decisions and actions.

Elements of the Plan:

It is my belief that students, when given reasonable limitations and achievable expectations, can and will experience academic success, independent thought, self-reliance and socially competent behavior. Building a community of learners, however, does not begin with the students; it begins with the teacher. Teachers can structure and organize their classrooms to prompt responsible student behavior and promote student achievement. Through modeling the desired behavior, teachers can overtly and consciously teach students how to behave responsibly in every classroom/school situation. Students will not inherently know how to act responsibly, treat other respectfully, and take an active interest in their academic success. It is the job of the classroom teacher to consistently model and reinforce these principals and expectations in the classroom. Additionally, teachers can build a community of learners by focusing more time, attention, and energy on the acknowledgment of responsible behavior than their response(s) to misbehavior. When misbehavior does occur, however, teachers should have their responses preplanned in order to ensure that they will respond in a

brief, calm, and consistent manner. As teachers begin to establish for their students the expectations and limitations of their classroom and simultaneously model the appropriate and expected classroom behaviors, teachers will begin to build a community of students who may have entered as individuals, but will leave as learners apart of a community within their classroom.

My classroom organization and management plan, though influenced by the philosophies of Love and Logic, are in large part based on the positive approaches to classroom management as described by CHAMPS. CHAMPs is a proactive approach to classroom management that focuses on expectations for Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, and Participation. It can be used within a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework to further promote positive student attitudes and behavior. By establishing the overall classroom expectations for my students, I am able to individually and specifically create necessary accommodations for a diverse groups of learners. CHAMPs specifically focuses on the expectations for Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, and Participation. Within each of the categories, students will be directed to maintain and operate within a specific and pre-established expectation.

Conversation refers to the talking/volume/noise level within the classroom. This section receives a range of 0-5 (zero being silent and five being screaming). For each activity, an assigned conversation level will be given depending on what it requires students to do. Establishing a conversation level of ONE for a practice sheet allows me to accommodate students who may need to have directions read to them or may need to ask frequent questions to ensure comprehension. Additionally, establishing this expected conversations level places the responsibility on each student and thus the consequences of *not* maintaining this expectation are theirs as well.

Help refers to the methods and ways in which students may seek additional help when needed. For this section, a myriad of possibilities exist like "raise your hand," "ask a friend," "use your book," "look in a dictionary," etc. Whatever the established expectation is, there is room to specifically assist those students who might not be able to successfully complete the classroom expectation. If I had assigned for my classroom "refer to your notes/book" as the method by which each student would seek additional help, and there was a student who was visually impaired, I might establish for that student that their specific expectation for seeking additional help might be to "look on the computer" where I had typed up notes for him/her and that could be enlarged to a degree that the student would be able to comfortably read the information.

Activity refers to the activity in which the class is actively engaged. This could be a worksheet, independent reading, partner reading, whole group lessons, etc. Since the activity assigned to the class (should be) based on a standard, there is room within this category to provide differentiated instruction for those students who may not be able to perform the classroom activity as assigned. For example, under Activity it assigns students to "read section and look for inferences." However, there is a student who has enrolled late and is two grades below reading level and struggles in overall comprehension. Because the assignment for Activity can be adjusted for each student, I can assign to this student a book with a lower reading level that will allow him to complete the assignment of looking for inferences.

Movement refers to the amount of movement students are allowed to do while performing a specific activity. This could include "stay in your seats," "work with a partner at an assigned area," "walk around and ask," ect. For students, however, with severe ADD or ADHD, this section can be adjusted to suit their specific needs. The class may be assigned to complete an assignment while "staying in their seats." One student, however, struggles to stay focused while sitting due to lack of proper medication for his ADHD. For this student, however, "staying in your seat" may be adjusted to "standing at your desk" or "staying in your assigned work area" in order to provide for that student the necessary work conditions and environment to ensure his academic success.

Participation refers to *how* a student will participate in the previously assigned activity. For this section, expectations may read, "work independently," "work on the internet," "work with a partner," etc. An ELL student, however, with few English language skills, may not be able to perform the expectations of this section if they were set to "work independently." *What if she/he didn't understand most of the words? Can she/he read? How will she ask for help?* For this student, the required expectation for him/her may read "work with the teacher," "use a dictionary," "ask a friend." By accommodating the needs of this student, the overall success of the class is ensured because each student is receiving what he/she needs in order to succeed and perform the required expectations.

Success refers to just that—SUCCESS! The goal of each expectation (Conversation, Activity, Movement, Participation) is to ensure the overall success of the class and the individual, academic success of each student. When each of these expectations is explained, described and adjusted for specific needs, each student is then able to assume the personal responsibility for his/her academic success as well as his/her ability to uphold and adhere to the classroom expectations. It is my belief that students, when given reasonable limitations and achievable expectations, can and will experience academic success, independent thought, self-reliance and socially competent behavior.

The beauty of working with CHAMPs is that the rules, consequences, routines, transitions and procedures are able to be individualized and adjusted to ensure that the needs of each student are met and also to ensure that the classroom agenda is able to run as smoothly as possible. It is advised, however, that teachers structure and organize their classrooms in a way that promotes responsible student behavior and also promotes student achievement. Additionally, it is advised that when misbehavior does occur, teachers have their responses preplanned in order to ensure that they will respond in a brief, calm, and consistent manner. Establishing for their students the expectations and limitations of their classroom using the CHAMPs model and simultaneously modeling the appropriate and expected classroom behaviors will begin to build a community of learners.

Though I do not believe that establishing a list of classroom rules will assist in encouraging student success or help with CHAMPs, I do believe that establishing a few main classroom rules can go far in creating positive student and classroom morale. For example, a few good classroom rules could be:
1. Follow directions.
2. Show respect for teachers and students.
3. Safety first! Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself

Additionally, with the establishment of classroom rules and expectations, it is important to have previously established consequences both negative and positive. A few examples of positive and negative consequences could be:

1. If students are not maintaining the Conversation level, students lose the privilege of talking during that assignment.
2. Rewarding students with a pizza party or a movie for good behavior.
3. Additional free time or computer time for good behavior or, alternatively, less time on computers for poor behavior.
4. Good behavior all week could result in the elimination of Friday homework.
5. More talking time or less talking time depending on behavior.
6. Star Student of the Week

And thus remains the appealing aspect of working with CHAMPs is that it provides for each classroom teacher the ability to craft for their students appropriate consequences for good and bad behavior.

It is my belief that as a teacher it is my role to both model and facilitate the learning, both behaviorally and educationally, of my students. I do believe that students will copy the behavior displayed by the classroom teacher. Therefore, I do believe it is my responsibility to also uphold our classroom rules and expectations. Additionally, I believe it is my responsibility to guide students in their learning rather than telling them exactly what should be done and when. As a teacher, I would encourage my students to think, to ask questions, to probe and to explore different concepts. It is of no benefit to my students if they leave my classroom unable to think critically, honestly and with an open mind about all topics and discussions. Additionally, I believe it is my responsibility to maintain open and consistent communication with all parents/caregivers even if their child isn't a problem child. Building good relationship with each student's parent/caregiver will go a long way to establish good behavior within the classroom. It will also assist in warding off any potential problems. As a teacher, I will be continually encouraging active participation on the part of my student's parents/caregivers.

It is my belief that my philosophy for classroom organization and management as an authoritative teacher, when applied to my classroom, will go a long way to ensuring the academic success of each of my students. By creating a safe, positive learning environment and establishing reasonable limits and achievable expectations, my students will have the opportunity (and ability!) to achieve academic success, independent thought, self-reliance and socially competent behavior.