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and Survive.

Classroom Management Impacts Student Achievement: Tips to Thrive and Survive.

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Summer 2009

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to share specific tips and techniques used by educators, education learning societies and experts in the field of education and classroom management. Classroom management is one of the greatest concerns of teachers and administrators when addressing the safety and well-being of students. Classroom management ranks at or near the top for beginning teachers as a general concern. I do believe that quality classroom instruction impacts student achievement more than anything else, but I also feel that you cannot have quality classroom instruction without quality classroom management skills.

Classroom Management Impacts Student Achievement: Tips to Thrive and Survive

Introduction

I think it is safe to say that quality classroom instruction from the classroom teacher is the greatest factor in improving student achievement. As an educator and administrator for over twenty years, I believe there is another factor that determines the failure or success of student achievement. It is called classroom management.

Classroom management can be defined as the process by which teachers create, important and maintain an environment in the classroom that allows students the best opportunity to learn. Teachers are faced with classroom issues such as excessive talking during instruction, getting out of seat without permission, throwing objects across the room, sleeping during classroom instruction and disrespect to the teacher. It is important that teachers find creative ways to deal with the issues as well as provide quality instruction in the classroom. Classroom management and classroom instruction are connected.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2009), over three million students were suspended from public elementary and secondary schools during the 2005-2006 school year. During the same year, over one hundred thousand students were expelled from school (NCES 2009). There are different kinds and different styles of classroom management.

Froyen and Iverson (1999) stated that classroom management focuses on three major components: Content Management, Conduct Management and Covenant Management.

“Content management occurs when teachers manage space, materials, equipment, the movement of people and lessons that are part of a curriculum or program of studies” (Froyen and Iverson, 1999). An example of content management is when students are working in partners on an assignment and the teacher monitors the group by circulating around the room. The teacher will give feedback and assist students as necessary.

“Conduct Management refers to the set of procedural skills that teachers employ in their attempt to address and resolve discipline problems in the classroom” (Froyen and Iverson, 1999). An example of conduct management is when one student is making fun and laughing at another students’ work. The teacher responds by reminding students to respect each other and the teacher makes positive comments about the students’ work.

“Covenant management focuses on the classroom group as a social system that has its own features that teachers have to take into account when managing interpersonal relationships in the classroom” (Froyen and Iverson, 1999). An example of a covenant management is when students work in a group and problems may occur amongst the group. The teacher encourages the group to work together to find a solution. The teacher reinforces and commends the group for their effort.

Effective classroom management should be the primary responsibility of the classroom teacher with the students accepting the responsibility of their inappropriate behavior. Effective classroom management does not consist of just a list of rules and procedures, but the sensitivity and caring attitude of the teacher.

The classroom teacher often comes to mind when discussing classroom management. It is very important to the teacher when he or she feels that they have the support of the

school administrator. According to Curwin and Mendler (2008), there are several ways administrators can help support teachers with students who are chronically disruptive. 1) Continue to involve the parents of chronically misbehaving students. Do not be afraid to call them at home and at work when you need to. If teachers need an uncooperative parent to come to school, intercede when there is a problem and use the weight of the school to get them in. 2) Encourage teachers to try new approaches. Teachers have little to lose when trying unconventional strategies, but they often fear administrative nonsupport or disapproval. Let all teachers know that you as the administrator will support most of their plans that are nonpunitive. Administrators should ask teachers to share their ideas with them in advance. 3) Address teachers' common belief that administrators aren't tough enough. Early in the school year, let the staff know that you expect them to deal with most issues regarding discipline; but when they send you a student, you will do your very best to fix the problem. Let teachers know that when they put the student in your hands, you plan to do things your way.

Tips to Thrive and Survive

Below are some tips and techniques from several educators, education learning communities and experts in the area of classroom management and discipline. These tips will improve classroom management skills and impact student achievement if they are implemented and practiced consistently. 1) A Parent/Student/Teacher Contract. Involve the parents and students in the expectations and the responsibilities of everyone. The parent, student and teacher should sign the contract at the beginning of the school year.

When parent conferences are conducted, the teacher and parent can refer back to the Parent/Student/Teacher Contract. For older students, a parent signature may not be required, but make sure the parent is aware of the contract.

2) Be consistent (Smith 2004). “Being consistent doesn’t mean being a robot or a machine. It arises out of our caring for our students and caring for their learning.” Say what you mean and mean what you say.

3) Have high expectations for students (Kelly 2009). Expect that your students will behave, not that they will disrupt. Reinforce this with the way you speak to your students. When you begin the day, tell your students your expectations. “One thing that is true of almost all students is that they act according to the expectations of the teacher (Esubject 2009).” “Our job as teachers is to discover each students’ strength, then use that to help him or her develop skills and other strengths” (Esubjects 2009).

4) Know Your Students: Mendler (200) offers strategies that teachers can use daily to connect with their students. Familiarize yourself with all of your students through a cursory glance at their school records. When you discover students who have had an unhappy or unsuccessful prior school experience, it is wise to find out more about those students’ interests or hobbies so that you become able to connect with them in a way that promotes positive feelings (Mendler, 2001).

5) Monitoring. McDaniels (1986) tells us of a saying that goes “Values are caught, not taught.” Teachers who are courteous, prompt, enthusiastic, in control, patient and organized provide examples for their students through their own behavior. The “do as I say, not as I do” teachers send mixed messages that confuse students and invite misbehavior. If you want students to use quiet voices in your classroom while they work, you too will use a quiet voice as you move through the room

helping youngsters (1986). 6) Modeling (McDaniel 1986). The key to this principle is to circulate. Get up and get around the room. While your students are working, make the rounds. Check on their progress. An effective teacher will make a pass through the whole room about two minutes after the students have started a written assignment. The teacher does not interrupt the class or try to make general announcements unless she notices that several students have difficulty with the same thing (1986).

Research indicates that classroom management plays a significant role in student achievement. Teachers must provide students with a learning environment that is safe and enjoyable if successful learning is going to take place. The use of the tips given in this article will provide teachers with the tools needed to impact student achievement.

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