

Margie Tyner

EDU6600

Classroom Management

When I first started teaching, a friend and mentor gave me very wise advice. She said, "Tell them why." This short bit of advice still rings in my mind as I plan for instruction, show examples, and administer discipline. I recall those first years of teaching when my mentor stepped along side me as I struggled to gain the ability to create a safe, effective, disciplined learning environment. To think that we may arrive at perfection when it pertains to classroom management would be presumptuous. Improvement in this area requires reflection, changes, evaluation, and repeated reflection.

The first days of school remain the crucial period where the climate is established for the year. Creating a trusting and open atmosphere requires planning and forethought on the part of the teacher. It starts long before the first day of school. Teachers plan the layout of the classroom so that the flow of movement is intuitive and smooth, supplies are easily accessed, and students have places to work individually and collaboratively. Scheduling the pace of lessons, opportunities for active participation, consistent routines and guidelines for on-task behavior also requires deliberate planning.

The first crucial aspect of creating an effective classroom is teacher attitude. The way the teacher talks to the students makes a huge difference in the way they view learning, participate in lessons, and complete assignments. The teacher's tone of voice should demonstrate enthusiasm and zeal for the topic. The choices of words used may either cause the students to take an interest in the lesson or turn off their attention.

Organization and layout of the classroom determines the next important aspect of a well-maintained classroom. When a teacher cannot find materials and

the students do not know where the items they need to complete assignments are located, valuable time is lost. Teachers must put thought into the layout of a classroom and they also must make sure the children understand the organization of materials. A disorganized, inefficient classroom proves distracting to both the teacher and students; it decreases the teacher's effectiveness.

Finally, the teacher must have established and predictable routines. Routines should provide a consistent schedule, clear expectations, opportunities for active participation, and chances to practice collaboratively and independently. Students must be aware of classroom procedures and understand the purposes and reasons for such practices. The first few weeks of school must provide the opportunities to set the tone for behavior and routines within the classroom.

An efficient, disciplined and peaceful classroom where children are part of an active learning environment must begin with thoughtful, reflective practices. When the teacher plans ahead, explains reasons, and establishes routines, the students know what to expect and are secure in the knowledge that they know how they are to behave within the learning environment.