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Classroom Management

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CMP Section 7: Create a Respectful, Supportive Learning Environment

**\*How would someone observing your classroom see evidence of your “mental set” for management? In other words, if someone walked past your classroom or was observing you teach, what would they see and hear that would suggest you had the appropriate “mental set” for effectively managing your class?**

If someone were to walk past my classroom, they should see me actively engaging with students, past simply lecturing at them. I should be moving around my classroom, checking in on individual students or groups (depending on the project), offering assistance, and observing how they are doing with the assigned work. I also do not intend to be a static monologue when I do have to lecture. Instead, I will move around my classroom and ask critical thinking questions to encourage student participation and retention. Through investing more time in the entire classroom, and using the space freely for teaching, I believe that I am giving myself the chance to get to know each student as more than just a face that watches me next to a whiteboard. Getting to know students well and engaging them is what I believe allows to a teacher to be truly excellent at withitness, since you cannot foresee problems if you do not know how your students are likely to respond. Walking around also allows you easy access to all areas of the classroom in a varied loop, and thus means you are likely to be nearer to a situation, should it arise.

**\*Provide an example of something you would intentionally do to establish a “positive teacher-student” relationship.**

An example of something I would intentionally do to establish a positive teacher-student relationship is active listening. The ability to listen, and to listen actively is a key human relations skill, and one that is imperative to creating a positive atmosphere within your own classroom. This can be achieved through incorporating a sharing time into classroom set-up (right before the bell ringer, perhaps) where students can share an exciting discovery they made last class period during their history research time.

**\*Describe a lesson or activity in your classroom citing how specific strategies that encourage whole group involvement would be implemented. How would you help students assume responsibility for their behavior during this time? How would you maintain student attention and involvement? The use of vocabulary and terms cited in the text is highly encouraged.**

Last semester, I developed a unit plan with lessons on the various home fronts during WWI, and it is this unit that I will use to describe a lesson or activity for my classroom with specific strategies for whole group involvement. This unit was divided into five separate lessons, for a week’s worth of discussing home front initiatives and life during World War One. During each lesson of this unit, students will learn about a different home front, and will then have the chance to research further in groups. The unit highlights how each country that is discussed coped with the war, and what they did at home to help better their chances of success. At the end of the unit, students will have created their own wartime initiatives within their groups, just as these countries did.

Lesson one of this unit is the American home front. Students will first learn the various aspects that make a wartime initiative successful, to set the stage for the group project. Students will then learn about the Victory Garden and canning initiatives, as well as the Women’s Land Army. After learning about these, students will be broken up into groups for the rest of the unit. It will be their job to work together and research another wartime initiative in WWI America, and then begin drafting an idea of what they think their wartime initiative should address and do.

During this time, students can be encouraged to work together by having specific roles that must be filled within the group (such as “the computer whiz,” “the notetaker,” “the question asker,” etc.), and having these roles listed on the whiteboard for a high participation format where everyone must pitch in. Then, as the teacher, I will go from group to group and help them decide who will be filling what role for each group. This encourages students to realize that a team effort takes many different talents, and many different aspects of collaboration. Students would also be encouraged to monitor their behavior, as like in Thomas Gordon’s model, Discipline as Self-Control, they must assess how their behavior will affect the rest of their group (For this reason, my class will have a discussion at the beginning of the school year about how to use I-Messages for group communication). Maintaining student involvement and attention should naturally occur through a fun project where everyone feels included and needed. No student should feel left out, since each person will have a task and a role within the group. However, I will be overlapping and monitoring regularly as I move from group to group through the allotted project time. I will make it clear that as I move from group to group, that I will come back in a bit and will assess for more progress. Students can also keep each other accountable and on task within their own groups, since their success depends on everyone doing their part.

**\*What types of reinforcers will you use in your classroom? Explain why you have chosen these.**

For a ninth-grade class, I would mainly use social reinforcers. This is more in keeping with real world cause and effect, and ninth graders should be able to behave themselves without much impetus on my part. They are old enough, and should know what is socially acceptable, and what is not. Also, with clear guidelines put in place, it should automatically be easier for students to behave since they have a clear idea of what is expected.

However, I realize that ninth graders are also new high schoolers and may be struggling with a vast variety of insecurities and various changes in their lives, causing them to misbehave or engage in off-topic behavior. Should this start to become a habit in my classroom, I would introduce activities and privileges. This type of reinforcement seems geared towards a younger audience (which would match less mature young teenager behavior) since it involves a more tangible reward but should not make high schoolers feel patronized by being “too little,” like a token system might be perceived.