Reflection 6: Classroom Management

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Yesterday I asked Mrs. Smith about classroom management and possible consequential alternatives to students losing recess. From conversations with her and my own observations, I have found classroom management begins with classroom community. If students respect their teacher, they will work to please their teacher, and if students respect each other, they will be considerate of other students needs and ways their own behavior may adversely affect others. Moreover, if the teacher respects the students, the students will feel safe in the classroom environment.

Some of this is facilitated by student involvement in creating rules, norms, routines, and consequences, as appropriate. Such choices make the students invested in taking ownership of class management, eventually leading them to resolve issues on their own. This involvement stems from opportunities for students to work together, which Mrs. Smith frequently provides, choosing partnerships which will work well.

Of extremely high importance are calmness, fairness, and consistency on behalf of the teacher when relating to students. I have never seen Mrs. Smith lose her cool with the class, and any frustrations of hers are presented as a teachable moment that serves to reestablish classroom management and prevent similar instigations in the future. Issues are addressed with swiftness and certainty, facilitated by an intimate knowledge of and good rapport with the student body. On a very basic level, saying “hey you, stop hogging the ball” is likely to be much less successful than using the student’s name and remarking “I know you are good at basketball because you play after school, but everyone getting a turn to try playing is more important that winning the game.”

A firm regimen is also integral for desirable student behavior, as when students are aware of the expectations the teacher has for them, they are less likely to wander aimlessly in their studies. If at all possible, good behaviours are rewarded rather than bad behaviours punished, for instance through the use of popsicle sticks which can be exchanged for rewards. A relatable disposition is also desirable, so that student learning is grounded in things pertinent to their lives, and to develop in the student an awareness that their teacher cares about them as people, and not just students. Finally, the influence of support outside the classroom, in the form of a principle, coaches, and most importantly parents cannot be overestimated as it pertains to classroom management.