Kory Wallace

University of South Florida

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Dr. Latzke

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**Beliefs about Classroom Management**

The best schools, teachers and administrators across the county continue to create a safe, orderly environment in which all kids can learn. This is a difficult job in most schools as student attitudes, expectations and behavior have changed dramatically in the past several years. As a new classroom teacher and in spite of these challenges, I hope to establish a friendly, organized and welcoming classroom for all my students.

Several behavior theorists were studied throughout this course. I find myself identifying more with Linda Albert’s Cooperative Discipline. I firmly believe that most children make the choice to behave or not behave. I see that most children are capable of behaving if they choose to behave. I believe that students who feel they belong in a classroom will respond by making better behavior choices. When students are feeling like they are constantly being skipped over with questioning, they begin to start yelling out the answers. There again, they are making a choice to misbehave for attention. If they are not getting their needs met, students will not follow rules. Parents should be part of the classroom management program. Communicating with parents, allowing input for codes of conduct rules and structuring parent-teacher conferences for success will ensure students and parents feel welcomed in a classroom. I have experienced that, when children know their parents are actively involved in their education, they tend to make better behavior choices.

I find myself practicing French and Raven’s Reward/Coercive Authority Base in my management system in my classroom this semester. This is the system that was in place when I came into the classroom. The students earn reward money for good behavior and can use that money in the class store. At the beginning of the year all students were on this behavior management plan. Now, I have one student who has major behavior problems and throughout the day he gets a good behavior sticker and has to move his clip. If he does not follow the rules, he has to move his clip down. For example, the other day he was talking while I was talking and he had to move his clip down. When students have to move their clip down, they have to sit out of teacher directed PE or another important event of the day. I observed that, at the beginning of the year, this reward system worked with all the students. They do not want to bring home an orange, yellow or red dot in their agendas. The rewards have changed throughout the semester and the management system has been fine-tuned based on the individual student. I am hoping, with experience, to move to the Referent Base in my management system. I want students to like me as a person and to respect me as the teacher. I want children to make good choices because they want to, not because they have to. I have observed many teachers who have expert classroom management and I hope to refine mine in future years.

I also believe students should play a big part in making the rules for the classroom. According to Linda Albert’s *Cooperative Discipline*, when students help make the rules they are more likely to follow them. I believe in making the rules represent a contract, and having the students sign the contract at the bottom will help remind them they made a commitment to follow the classroom rules. As with any behavior and classroom management system, it takes time to teach, learn and refine it to match the individual needs of all students.

**Learning Environment**

This semester, I am in a kindergarten classroom. I have had the opportunities to observe and work in a well-designed learning environment. The classroom is set up in a u-shape with the teacher workstation at the top. The actual teacher desk is off to the side of the classroom and the teacher rarely sits there during the school day. The students all sit facing the inside of the “u”. This allows them to be able to see the teacher and the board during a specific lesson. The students sit two to three per table. This permits them the opportunity to work in small groups and participate as a whole group, when needed. The arrangement also allows the teacher to circulate and work with all the students. According to Levin and Nolan (2014), “An effective seating arrangement allows the teacher to be in close proximity to all students. This type of arrangement allows the teacher to reach all students in the class with minimal disturbance to other students and enables all students to see instructional presentations” (p. 153).

The outer edges of the room contain the social centers, library and “rainbow” table. The teacher uses the “rainbow” table to conduct small groups. There is a bathroom located in the room but the students do not have to cross in front of the class in order to use it. This helps cut down on distractions when the students are working.

During this semester in the classroom, I have learned the importance of having a seating chart for the students. According to Levin and Nolan (2014) “a teacher’s first concern should be the arrangement of seating” (p. 153). I also appreciated the use of name tags on the tables which helped me learn the students’ names. The teacher allows for flexibility and the movement of student seats as necessary. The seating chart for the class is on my blog ([Seating Chart Blog](http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/seating-chart-observation)). The organization of the classroom offers a safe, flexible and inclusive environment which enhances learning for the kindergarten students.

**Needs of Learners**

The students in my classroom are mostly five and six years old. We do have one student who was retained last year and will be seven in March. I used the birthday cluster, developed by Chip Wood, to help identify and organize information about the chronological ages of my students (Clayton & Forton, 2001, p.18). This was helpful because I could see the developmental needs of the students in the classroom. The birthday cluster exercise revealed to me that most of the students in the class were born in the fall and older than other kindergarteners in the school. We do have three students who do not turn six until after the school year has ended. There are eight boys and nine girls. Most of the students in the class are Caucasian; however, there are four students who are African American, one Hispanic and one who is Indian. All students speak English as their first language. There are no English Language Learners (ELL) in the class. There is one student in the classroom that has special medical needs. I have two students whose parents are in the military, one is active duty and the others are veterans. One little girl has separation issues but most of the students usually come in the classroom on their own. I do have a talker, a little boy, who likes to have the attention on himself. He often throws temper tantrums when the teacher calls on someone else for information.

The particular characteristics of these students impact the structure and management of the classroom. The little boy who likes to talk sat at a table with other children during the beginning of the year. Soon he will be moved to a table by himself. He will have the opportunity to move himself back to the table group. One of the military children is without a father in the household most of the time because he travels for work. She sometimes gets emotional over small issues and seems to miss her father. Most of the students in the classroom are on the “clip” system. They have a chance to move their clips up and down all day. There are seven different colors on the “clip” chart. Everyone starts on green. Doing good things allows them to move up to blue, purple or pink and when they are not following directions, they have to move down to orange, yellow or red. This system allows the students to improve their behaviors throughout the course of the day and earn a reward for their good behavior. We do have three students who are not on this behavior plan. Two are on a sticker system where they earn stickers for the morning and the afternoon. For one of the students this system has had a big impact on the way he behaves. Since he is no longer on the clip system I have seen a major improvement in his behavior. I believe this is because he is focusing on smaller amounts of time to earn rewards. When a sticker block is full, the student is allowed to go to the treasure box. One student has a chart of each part of the day such as morning bellwork, math and science and is allowed to earn check marks throughout the day. At the end of the day he receives mini marshmallows depending on the amount of check marks he has. This strategy works well for him because he knows if he behaves during a lesson he gets to put a check mark in the box. He looks forward to the end of the day when he can count his check marks and trade them in for the mini marshmallows. The variations in these behavior management systems allow my Collaborating Teacher and me to address the individual needs of the students. In the morning, the students have a special routine that all students know by heart, however, some still need reminding to hurry up and get ready for the day. More about this is located in my blog, [morning-routine](http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/morning-routine).

**FEAP 2**

a. **Organizes, allocates, and manages the resources of time, space, and attention;**

The following links are to my blog that explain how I have organize, allocate and manages the resource of time, space, and attention. I have completed thing such as a seating chart and physical room assessment and using my time wisely when getting the students to line up.

<http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/seating-chart-observation>

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/line-up-line-up-everybody-line-up

**b. Manages individual and class behaviors through a well-planned management system;**

The classroom I am in has multiple types of behavior managements systems set in place. The students are on a clip system and depending on their behavior they can move their clips up or down. They also receive money to use in the class store which takes place every other Friday. There a few students who are one their own behavior plans. Two of them receive stickers in the morning and afternoon depending on their behavior. The other student receives a checkmark after each subject and at the end of the day gets mini marshmallow depending on the number of checkmarks he got. I also use different types of attention getting strategies while in the classroom.

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/-class-class

**c. Conveys high expectations to all students;**

When planning my lessons this semester, I expected all students to follow directions of the games we were playing. I conveyed that to the students in the classroom at the beginning of the lesson.

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4944-level-iii/ct-observation-9272016

**d. Respects students’ cultural and family background;**

Each students’ name is something that is of importance to their family background. By learning the correct way to pronounce each name shows respect for the students in the classroom. More information can be found here: http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/the-importance-of-a-name

Also, when putting together my summative assessment for my connected lesson, I used pictures that were common in all cultures to ensure that all students had an equal chance at answering the questions correctly. Pictures of my assessment can be found here:

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4944-level-iii/connected-lesson-reflection-blog

**e. Models clear, acceptable oral and written communication skills;**

When lining the students up before lunch and at the end of the day, I have to use clear oral skills so the students know what I want to them to do. By just saying line up is not enough for the students in my class. I have to remind them that when we line up we need to do it quick and quietly. Students in kindergarten are still leaning rules and procedures. Making sure my directions are clear and acceptable will help make sure they understand. <http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/line-up-line-up-everybody-line-up>

Every morning, I check the students’ agendas for parent notes. My Collaborating Teacher allows me to answer the parents. If I am not sure what to write, I talk it over with my CT to make sure the written communication is clear and acceptable.

**f. Maintains a climate of openness, inquiry, fairness and support;**

Every morning, I stand by the door of the classroom and greet the students by name. On Wednesday, I often ask about how something went for example, I asked a student how is visit with his sister went.

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4504/good-morning-students

**g. Integrates current information and communication technologies;**

During level 2, I taught a lesson using PowerPoint and PLICKERS. The use of PLICKERS was new technology to me. The website provides you with cards that contain codes. Each code in attached to one person in the class, so the teacher needs to pass out the cards to ensure students get the card attached to their name. The cards contain the answers A-D in a unique order to that person. This allows each student to hold up their card and others cannot copy because they letters may be in a different order. I then used my cell phone to scan the cards. This uploaded the students’ answers to the PLICKERS website. There I could see which students understood the concept and which ones needed more help.

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4942/technology-lesson-reflection

**h. Adapts the learning environment to accommodate the differing needs and diversity of students;**

I want the students in my classroom to be successful in all that they do. By accommodating the differing needs will help make sure all my students are successful. In my classroom, I have a student who needs to have the directions repeated to him one-on-one in order to make sure he understands them. For this student, I give him the directions and ask him to repeat them back to me.

http://korywallace.weebly.com/ede-4944-level-iii/all-students-should-be-successful

**I. Utilizes current and emerging assistive technologies that enable students to participate in high-quality communication interactions and achieve their educational goals.**

I have one student in my current class who has a hard time holding a pencil correctly. After talking with my Collaborating Teacher, we decided to give you a thicker pencil to help with the grip. This has helped for a lot and she is able to keep up with the rest of the class when writing.

**Reflection**

This semester I was fortunate to observe and work in a well-designed learning environment. My Collaborating Teacher (CT) immediately made me feel welcomed and part of her classroom. I liked the setup of the classroom as it allowed me ample room to circulate, work individually with students and maintain eye contact at all times during instruction. When I conducted my lessons, I found it easy to interact with all students individually and at the same time. Students were able to watch me and observe my demonstrations without too much disruption.

As I reflect on the semester in the kindergarten classroom, I believe students felt comfortable while I was teaching and they generally respected the classroom rules. Each morning I greeted the students and made them feel welcomed in the classroom. We talked about their family time and I answered any special questions they had about homework. I firmly believe that students who feel they belong in the classroom will respond with better behavior. I also believe students should play a big part in making rules for the classroom and themselves. When I entered the classroom at the beginning of the semester, the rules were already established and I was unable to alter them. I did feel, however, I was able to work with the established rules.

I personally like to show attention to students who struggle with academic and behavior problems, trying to help them be successful during their school day. My classroom had a few challenging students and I learned ways to work with them. One of my students has a difficult time following directions. I learned that, with him, he needed the directions given to him one-on-one. Once I began doing this, he was able to complete more tasks and stay focused a little longer. I used consistency, individual attention and behavior charts to help improve classroom behavior. During Parent Conference Night, parents felt comfortable talking with me about their child and I felt confident with the academic and social information I shared with them.

Throughout this internship, my CT used several different methods of behavior management. I was unable to enact my personal behavior management system as my CT already had one established in the classroom. My CT changed the behavior management system throughout the semester when the rewards were no longer attractive to the students. She also had to change the behavior plan based on individual students’ needs. As a new teacher, I would like to find one that works well with the students in the class and use it effectively and consistently. I would to like move from French and Raven’s Reward/Coercive management to their Referent Based type of management. I want students to respect me as a teacher and like me as a person. I am sure that time and experience will enhance this transition.

During my final days in my kindergarten classroom, I will spend my time working with all the students, evaluating my impact on their learning. I feel the students benefited from my presence this semester and I certainly learned from them. One student I worked closely with has blossomed in her learning behaviors and social interactions. During RTI time, she was in my small group and I was able to talk quietly with her and build her self-esteem. I also kept track of her classroom academics and helped her with assignments. After a period of time, I earned her trust and she began to like me as a person, not just her teacher.

I will have several days this week when I am teaching all day, with my CT close by to assist. This will be a great practice for my final internship. I am looking forward to having my own classroom where I can establish a friendly, organized and welcoming classroom for all my students, and where every student will have opportunities to learn and grow.

Citations

Levin, J., & Nolan, J. F. (2014). Principles of classroom management: A professional decision-making model, (7thEd.). Boston: Pearson.