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Assignment 4: Classroom Rules

I. General Entry

- a. Tuesday, February 12, 2008; 8:00 am -12:00 pm
- b. At the beginning of the day, I worked to type up the compliments that the students wrote for classmates for the class Valentine Project. Students wrote the compliments as homework and brought them in to be compiled for personal compliment books. While I typed the compliments the students completed their bell work, watched announcements, and came to the rug for the morning poem and center directions. After finishing with the compliments, I assisted students at their journal station during Language Arts Centers. The students wrote to the prompt "Write about something nice that you could do for a friend" and I worked to help them reread their stories and correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors. While I worked with the journal station, students were also working at the computer station, reading AR books independently, completing an identification of long i words in a poem, and meeting with the teacher for guided reading.

II. Rules

- a. List the formalized classroom rules.
Mrs. Florence's 1st Grade Classroom Rules:
 - i. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
 - ii. Follow directions
 - iii. Be respectful
 - iv. Stay in your seat, unless otherwise directed
- b. How are the rules developed?
These rules are the general rules that Mrs. Florence wants the class to fulfill. The entire class collaborates during the first couple of days of school to decide what their rules should be. After the class has come up with ideas, Mrs. Florence writes the rules on a poster to hang in the classroom. She also has the students take turns signing the rules to show that they agree to them.
- c. How are the rules communicated to the students?
The basic rules listed in part a. are posted in the classroom year round for the students to see. Additionally, when creating the rules the students act out the rules and discuss the rules they had in kindergarten that they would like to see used again. Students are able to talk together as a class and choose rules that fit their wants.
- d. How are the rules reinforced/enforced?
The rules are reinforced in numerous ways. When students are following directions and acting respectful they often receive verbal positive feedback from the teacher. Students also receive stickers for the sticker chart for following directions and returning work on

time. Additionally, students are occasionally offered a pick from the candy jar for staying on task and working hard at their seats. Finally, if students receive green dots in their agendas for an entire month the teacher buys them a special reward. For example, if students were on green for all of the January school days, they received a free ice cream at lunch time.

The rules are enforced with the use of a stoplight system that is posted on the door that leads outside to the playground. All of the students begin the day on green, but can move to yellow and then red if they are not following the rules. Additionally students can be given time outs from group activities, which involves them sitting at their seats while the rest of the class continues to participate in class and group activities. Students also receive the dots in their agendas with notes to their parents, and could even have phone calls home. For phone calls to the parent, the teacher has the student tell the parents what is going on in the classroom and what they did.

- e. Are the rules and their implementation adjusted for any students based on special needs? The rules in the classroom are very general and are essential for ensuring the classroom is run in a structured and safe manner. Since the rules are general, they allow for some leeway in enforcement. For example individual students who require specific behavior plans may have different classroom expectations. The rules may be adjusted to ensure that the behavior expectations are realistic for that student.

- f. Reflection: Do the rules reflect an interventionist, non-interventionist, interactionalist, or mixed approach? Do the rules suggest a particular discipline model? If so, which? Justify your response.

The way in which the rules were designed seems to emphasize the interactionalist approach since both the student and the teacher worked together to decide on which rules should be used in the classroom. However, since the teacher serves as the person in charge of giving both the reinforcements and the punishments, the system reflects a lot of the interventionist views. The rules and the enforcement of the rules reflect the Assertive Discipline model designed by Lee and Marlene Canter and the Behavior Modification Model by Skinner. Students know that the classroom has rules in place and that by following the rules they will earn rewards but breaking the rules will result in consequences. Although I would not view Mrs. Florence's classroom as a high control environment, her discipline plan seems to reflect medium and high approaches. I feel as though this is an appropriate level of control in a classroom of twenty-two six year olds who require some structure to their environment.

- g. Extension. I visited Mrs. Hodge's fourth grade classroom.

- i. How do the rules, their development and their reinforcement differ between the two classrooms?

Mrs. Hodge's rules are far more specific than the rules posted in my first grade classroom. Here is the list of the rules from Mrs. Hodge's class:

1. Turn in completed assignments on time.
2. Raise your hand and wait to be called on.
3. Stay in seat and remain on task.
4. Follow directions the first time given.

5. Keep hands, feet, and other objects to self.
6. Bring supplies to class daily.
7. Respect others feelings and properties.

These rules were created with class input, typed, and posted on the wall to remind the class of their expectations. Mrs. Hodge's does not have a huge stoplight to reinforce her rules. Instead she uses a punch card system. If students are not following the rules, they receive a punch in their card. At the end of the month the punches are totaled and students who have more than the set criteria of punches are not allowed to participate in the classroom reward party/activity. Mrs. Hodge's does not seem to use as many small rewards of stickers and candy picks. Instead, she uses some verbal feedback and ultimately the end of the month activity as the student's reward. Additionally, she has students with behavioral plans who require modifications to the punch cards. For example, one student has a weekly chart that is stamped to show that he is turning in assignments, remaining on task, bringing supplies, and following directions. This student earns a weekly reward of having time to play football with Mr. Michael's, the student teacher in the classroom.

ii. Do the similarities and differences reflect:

1. the age of the students?

I think that the age of the students definitely impacts the rules in the classroom. Mrs. Hodge's rules are more specific and focus on responsibility for work while Mrs. Florence's rules focus on the general classroom atmosphere.

2. the teaching philosophy and practices of the teachers?

Both of the teachers seem to adapt a mixed approach in how to deal with the discipline. They both involve the students in the planning of rules and create a community within the classroom. Every member of the community is expected to respect their peers and teachers, and the teachers serve as models for the students.

3. Other considerations?

I think that some of the considerations for rule making are a result of the classroom make-up. The size of the class and the number of students with special needs and behavioral problems can impact what rules are implemented and how they are enforced.