

## Philosophy of Classroom Management

### **Theories/Models of Classroom Management**

I will base my personal philosophy of classroom management off of the theories from Rudolf Dreikurs, Haim Ginott, Alfie Kohn, and William Glasser. Dreikurs theorizes that all students are driven by a need for belonging, and if this need is not met, the student will resort to mistaken goals like seeking attention, power, or revenge or withdrawing from learning. Because of this, Dreikurs believes that the classroom should be democratic to best support learning by promoting belonging, self-discipline, and active participation and decision-making. I very much agree with the idea of a democratic classroom and making sure students feel welcome in my classroom and like they belong. I do not, however, fully agree with Dreikurs's ideas about mistaken goals as these ideas make the consequences sound too intense. I definitely agree that I as the teacher should provide firm leadership while allowing the students to have a say in the formation of rules and consequences.

Ginott believes in a focus of student cooperation and suggests accomplishing this by modeling the behavior you expect to see and building self-esteem in your students. I connect with Ginott's idea of congruent communication by connecting students' feelings about different situations to the ways they behave and react. Once again, I agree with the idea of cooperation in a democratic classroom; I think this is especially important in my theatre classroom as collaboration is a major component of the art form. While I appreciate Ginott's concern with how exactly to praise and communicate with students, I do not agree with his idea of not reprimanding students in an attempt to develop self-discipline. I do not think it is possible to never reprimand in a classroom.

Kohn teaches on the importance of the formation of a community to support a conducive learning environment. He notes a focus on critical thinking and forming a supportive community where students work together. I really love Kohn's idea to have class meetings and class-wide and school-wide activities. As an arts teacher, I recognize that I will have some of the students labelled as "outsiders" that the arts attract. It is important to me to provide a sense of belonging to my students through this idea of community. Additionally, I think Kohn's idea of having open discussion and reflection about academic instruction could perhaps be more successful and conducive to the learning environment than formative assessment. Students may be succeeding on assessments but still be unsure what it is they know or do not know; because of this, these class meetings are vital resources for both parties. I honestly did not find anything to disagree with from Kohn's theories.

Glasser is known for his idea of choice theory. This theory states that all behavior is a choice, and the choice is driven by five needs: survival, love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun. This leads into a focus on non-coercive discipline as the teacher should act as a manager and provide activities that satisfy the students' most important need for love/belonging through connecting with others. I agree with the biological need for belonging and the idea that behavior is a choice. A common theme for my philosophy across these theorists is the idea of making sure students feel like they belong in my classroom and a sense of collaboration with others. With Glasser's theory, I do not agree with the focus on self-assessment and the perceived stand-offishness of the teacher as an authority figure. I want my students to feel free to explore their learning, but I still wish to lead that learning.

Altogether, I will model my classroom off of the ideas of belonging and cooperation. I will support open discussion and reflection in my classroom and provide the opportunity for

class meetings and activities. I want to be firm and respected, but I want my students to feel a sense of freedom and want to be in my classroom because they feel safe and comfortable. Above all, I wish to develop a collaborative and conducive learning environment for all my students, so a sense of open communication and cooperation is necessary in my philosophy of classroom management.

### **Purpose of Classroom Management**

When I think about the role of a teacher as a manager in the classroom, I am first led to think of Maria Montessori's method of education. In this method, the teacher acts as more of a guide as students explore learning; although this method does not typically apply to secondary education, the idea of effectively managing the classroom in order to encourage active learning rings true. To me, the purpose of classroom management is not to discipline or reprimand but to welcome, love, and form a community. In order for me to effectively teach my students, I must be able to manage my classroom. In order for my students to feel able to learn in my classroom, I must create a welcoming, safe, conducive learning environment. I must be firm and demonstrate my authority to gain the respect of my students, but I will mostly gain respect through cooperation and listening to the open communication I hope to have with students. Effective teaching and, therefore, learning is not possible without effective classroom management.

Classroom management allows us as teachers to create a learning environment where students feel fully able to actively engage, participate, and autonomously choose to prioritize their own educational careers.

### **Approach to the Class**

My classroom will be democratic in nature, following Rudolf Dreikurs's parameters. Because my art form and my mission statement for my classroom prioritize collaboration, I must

begin to show that importance through how I govern my classroom. I can not ask my students to collaborate if I show a lack of collaboration. Additionally, theatre requires teamwork in all aspects, and morally I can not be autocratic and ask for team work. According to Dreikurs, in the democratic classroom students are continuously encouraged and strengths are praised while weaknesses are minimized; there is a push to strive for improvement rather than perfection while students learn from mistakes and focus on interdependence and responsibility. There is an additional call for the teacher to display student work proudly. All of these parameters directly apply to theatre. I believe in a focus on process rather than product in the theatre field, and this applies to Dreikurs's focus on striving for improvement. Additionally, the whole point of theatre or any other art form is to display and share work with others. By the very basis of Dreikurs's guidelines for a democratic classroom, there is absolutely no possibility my classroom would not be democratic.

### **External Parameters**

External parameters that will impact classroom management include mental illnesses/mood disorders/disabilities and home and familial background/parental support. Any type of disorder, mental or physical, that could hinder a child's learning can just as easily lead to disruption or misbehavior in the classroom. When the child feels incapable of learning, the child will shut down completely or find other distractions which could then distract others. Many problems with students can be explained by their home lives. A child from an abusive or neglectful home will respond differently to classroom management strategies than students from healthier homes. Additionally, a lack of parental support can negatively affect classroom management strategies. The parent must model a care for education for the student to follow. Also, a lack of parental support for the teacher and his/her philosophy is, in fact, showing

support for the student's disruptive behavior. Mental and physical disorders can lead to modifications through sources such as IEPs, but these disorders do not magically disappear when a student steps foot in the classroom and must be effectively managed through different avenues. Similarly, a difficult home life can only be solved by a welcoming and safe learning environment, but we as teachers must recognize what is the root of these disruptions and behaviors.

### **Disengaged Learners**

Different types of learners require different educational approaches, interventions, and modifications. For ELL students, I would make sure to know basic phrases in their language in case there was an easier way to relate information to them outside of the English language. I would be sure to discreetly provide one-on-one attention to these students and partner them with high-achieving typical students when doing group work. For students of diverse cultures, I would also try and know some ways to relate information to them through their cultural knowledge. I would also allow them opportunities to share about their cultures, especially for the theatre standards where cultural background is important for creation or analysis. For low-literacy students, I would modify my expectations. For example, if we were doing a written assignment with analysis, I would accept a lower level of analysis in favor of explanation to check for comprehension. Once again, I would make sure these students were paired with high-achieving typical students for group work.

### **Procedures, Rules, and Consequences**

Mission statement: In my classroom, my guiding principles are connection, collaboration, creation, and character. My goal is to create not only highly competent artists but also well-rounded, fully formed people with skills applicable to the integration of the core

curriculum. Through these foundations, the student will leave more confident, capable, thoughtful, and analytical than before they entered my classroom.

Procedures: When entering the classroom, my students will put their cellphones in the cellphone bucket before picking up their journals and proceeding to their assigned seats. Any papers that need to be turned in will either be turned into the paper basket on the way into the classroom (homework) or deposited on the way out of the classroom (classwork, exit ticket, journals back to shelf).

Rules: 1. Respect each other, the teacher, and the property of others.

2. Do not get out of your seat without permission.

3. Be prepared to learn, discuss, and engage with others.

4. Use supplies and technology appropriately.

5. Follow all school rules.

Consequences: After a first infraction, a warning will be given. After a second infraction, the student and I will have a conversation to get to the root of the problem. After a third infraction, privileges will be taken away. After a fourth infraction, parents will be notified and asked to communicate with the teacher. After any additional infractions, administration will be brought in. These consequences do not apply in the case of zero tolerance offenses.

### **Communication of Expectations**

On the first day of school, I will spend the class time going over my procedures, rules, and consequences with the students. They will be given a written copy of this information to sign, serving as a behavior contract for our classroom. An additional copy of this information will be sent home for the parents to sign. I will additionally schedule an open house of sorts (if the school does not offer one) where I will take questions and discuss the expectations for the

students. I will ensure that parents know my line of communication is always open through email, and I will make myself available for conferences.