

*Classroom Management, Classroom Community, and Behavior Intervention Plans*

Classroom management begins when you create an all inclusive setting that is based on mutual respect, care for one another, and establishment of the best possible environment for learning. Ruth Sidney Charney states in her book *Teaching Children to Care*, “ Rather than simply reacting to problems, we need to establish an ongoing curriculum in self-control, social participation, and human development” (p.17). This begins at the first of the year and the students must take ownership in the process. My philosophy of classroom management is rooted in the idea that students need to understand the reasons behind expectations and rules. Students need to comprehend why certain rules are put in place and why they are important. These rules and expectations must be put in positive terms so that students feel like these expectations and rules are things that will create the best possible environment for every student in the class, including themselves. Skits with role playing, showing negative reactions to situations and positive reactions to given situations, and class discussions help establish the foundational understanding for rules and expectations.

My classroom management philosophy aligns with the ideas of Ruth Sidney Charney in her book *Teaching Children to Care* because I truly believe that teachers should not limit themselves to academic education, but teachers are also educating students on how to be caring and productive members of society. This means that classroom management is defined by two basic goals: the creation of self-control and the creation of community. The creation of self-control as stated by Charney means that teachers create an environment that gives children the

power to assert themselves in a positive way. Setting up a classroom with the expectations that every student has the power to express their ideas and feelings in a respectful way, without fear of being oppressed by anyone in the classroom, is vital to a productive classroom community. The other basic goal of classroom management is to establish a community that teaches children to care and receive care from others.

In her book entitled *Positive Discipline*, Jane Nelson's summarizes the driving force behind my philosophy of classroom management and classroom community: "What good is academic learning if young people don't learn to become contributing members of society?" Building community in my classroom means establishing the expectations for children to cooperate, respect each other, support each other, and solve conflicts reaching mutually acceptable decisions. The word community basically means a group of people who share common characteristics and perceive itself as distinct from the larger society in which it exists (Dictionary.com). These common characteristics of distinction are set up by the students through teacher direction, but a classroom culture may be unique each school year, but there are some characteristics that must remain the same. Mutual respect, support, care, and cooperation are aspects to a classroom community which must be established at the beginning of every school year. It is so vital to establish a classroom community in every classroom and all-inclusive classrooms because it represents the same values and characteristics that we would like our students to take with them into the world. Teaching children to care is something that should not be taken lightly. It does not mean teaching children to care about some people; it means we must teach children to care about all people.

I would set this up in my classroom much like I did in my student teaching unit. I believe classroom discussions and role playing play an integral role in comprehending the reasons why an inclusive classroom community is so important. I would have all of my students come up with rules and expectations for the class as a whole and talk about the reasons why we should have those rules. Then I would have students get into groups and do skits that show various reactions to certain scenarios that may occur throughout the year. We did this during my student teaching unit and the students really enjoyed getting to show a negative reaction and then a positive reaction to each scenario. It proved to be an ice-breaker for myself and the students. It was also a comedic way to show how students should react and should not react to confrontational situations. Once rules and expectations have been established, we would create a classroom checklist where we gauge how much progress is being made on each of our goals (expectations). I also appreciated what my cooperating teacher implemented in the classroom. It was called the Kindness Chain and at the end of everyday, students could raise their hand and share a specific act of kindness from one of the students in the classroom. The teacher would write it down on a colorful strip of paper and create a chain link out of the paper. The link would be added to a chain. Once the chain touched the floor, the whole class would get a reward.

My case study student is ten years old, Caucasian, and has been at North Chatham School since kindergarten. He was diagnosed in kindergarten as autistic and received E.C. Services every day for specific needs he has. My student is very strong in mathematics, he is very funny and creative. He enjoys making his peers laugh and thinking up creative and artistic ways to pass time when he is bored. My student is very intelligent in every subject but has needs in organization and responsibility for his work. He rarely ever turns in homework and has difficulty

completing assignments in class without constant reminders. This is the challenging behavior I targeted throughout my student teaching experience.

I used the Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence Analysis Record system and recorded notes on my student for about a week and a half. I found that my student did not respond to the negative consequences that had already been implemented before I began teaching for not turning in his homework and was not being challenged to be actively engaged in the class lessons. He was often found off task and acting in a manner that was distracting to students. I found that the only time he was on task and focused was during math instruction. He was not inattentive or distracting to the other students. I wanted to find a way to motivate my student to take ownership for the rest of his learning and become responsible for turning in his work.

We devised a plan that instilled the motivation to complete his work and maintain good behavior during class. Since my student is so strong in mathematics, he had devised his own method of entertainment. The students called him the “Human Calculator” and he would create problems that the students would try to solve throughout the day. If they got the answer right, he would give them something of his own like a pencil or eraser, or even tickets. I decided to utilize this idea and make it official. I created a chart and told my student that we were going to implement a Challenge Problem of the Day for all of the students to solve. The way he would be able to put the Challenge Problem on the board is if he turned in all of his homework and behaved throughout the day. Each day he achieved these two goals, he would get a star in the appropriate box in the chart. This star meant that he could go up to the board the next morning and put a problem in the designated Challenged Problem of the Day section. He was so excited to do this and it worked for about two weeks. My student went from rarely ever turning in his

homework and constantly having to be reminded to do his work during class to a responsible student who turned in his homework and remained on task. However, the excitement wore off after a couple of weeks and he became complacent again about doing his work. Some of his off task behaviors began revealing themselves again. I talked with him about it but it did not help as much as I had hoped.

I used three websites, among other books and advice from teachers and student teachers, to support my plan and progress with the Behavior Intervention Plan. These websites are: Positive Behavior Interventions and Support ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)), Autism: The Spectrum, Support, and Resources ([www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)), and Positive Behavior Plan Templates ([www.advocatesforspecialkids.org](http://www.advocatesforspecialkids.org)). They were all very helpful in understanding my student better and how to develop a plan that would best support his needs and also highlight his strengths.

Upon reflection of my Behavior Intervention Plan, I realized that I learned a great deal from this project. I wish I had more time to revise and continue the behavior plan with my student and possibly implement a couple more BIP's for other students in my class. I also learned that as a teacher I must constantly be reflective in my teaching and support methods for every student in my class. After the excitement over the Challenge Problems wore off, I needed to be creative and devise a new plan that would re-motivate my student to continue in his progress. I learned that every student wants and needs to feel appreciated for his or her strengths but also learn that continual improvement on other areas is important as well. We are all life long learners and students must understand that as life long learners, there are always things we can work on and improve upon.

If I had more time, or if I could go back in time and recreate my Behavior Intervention Plan, I would emulate the process and the templates shown in some of the technological resources I used to support my student. I know that being creative is important, but sometimes adhering to a template or learning from an experienced teacher is better than being creative in the process. I also would have found a way to support my student by initiating more ownership by monitoring his own progress. Next time, I would have a chart that he completes on his own, where he either gives himself a check mark or a sticker, or gets signatures from his teachers. This will allow him to monitor his own progress and will ultimately instill responsibility for himself. As long as someone other than himself is gauging his progress, it will be difficult for him to see that progress and appreciate responsibility. Responsibility is vital to a person's ability to become a productive member of society and the earlier students can understand the value behind it, the better.

This case study and Behavior Intervention Plan project has taught me even more about valuing every student through keen awareness of strengths and needs, observation of every aspect of the classroom community, and utilizing data to devise the best support for each individual student. I believe this study has challenged me and accelerated my progress in an area where I may have not seen as much improvement had I not been involved in this project. When I am hired as a full time teacher, the school in which I am employed will be very excited to know that I am experienced and familiar with the BIP process. The school staff and my students will know that I care about each student and that I know the process of best supporting each student's unique needs.