CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

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A. **Theoretical Introduction**

   1. **Philosophy of Classroom Management**

A constantly changing and naturally evolving classroom management plan would be the cornerstone of my philosophy, with the central question being "what do these students need and how can I meet those needs." This type of approach would ensure that I would respond to the diverse intellectual nature of a student body that are also culturally, socially and economically different. Acknowledging that these magnificent young people with exciting and formulating minds need lessons that will arouse their natural curiosity and provoke critical thinking skills, I will develop and implement an engaged pedagogy that honors them, recognizes their abilities, and challenges their constantly expanding dendrites. There is no greater honor than to help another individual come to a realization of their unique and natural talents— to facilitate another's blossoming in this world and to bring them to an awareness of their place in this continuum. It will be my role and daily challenge to devise relevant and engaging lesson plans that will help create deep thinkers and problem solvers, so that when problems do arise, the students themselves can devise the solution. The goal is to create loving and caring individuals who will take risks, establish realistic goals and assume personal responsibility for the results of their behavior; where the only competition is with themselves, the individual, and not with each other, and where the process is about discovering ideas and not about covering material. This will be a learner centered classroom that produces critical thinkers, who are at the same time deeply engaged in the subject at hand, while also enjoying the process and learning experience. This classroom will be a happy place where students come to learn, participate, and have fun. In this type of environment discipline is not an issue as the students are engaged in exciting and stimulating lessons that demands all their attention. They choose to be there and learn, therefore happy and interested students have no reason to misbehave.

   Theorists:

The existentialist philosophies of both Glasser and Kohn are the cornerstone of my belief system which states that we are the center of our experience--the one who perceives, acts in and reflects on the world--and who are internally motivated by everything we do. Teaching the tenets of this philosophy (Choice Theory) to my students would be one of the first pieces of instructions I would give them, bringing them to an awareness of their responsibility to make their own decisions about their learning and behavior in the classroom. My philosophy is based on Glasser's "Choice Theory" which posits that students must have a choice, and that if they help choose their curriculum and decide on the rules in the classroom, they will then have ownership of their learning, have pride in their participation, will have higher self-esteem and will exhibit greater levels of self confidence and higher levels of cognition. This approach to classroom management creates a safe space to learn, as mainly it is their space--their classroom, they own it, they will decorate it and they will decide the rules. When this sense of ownership is established, they will come to class willingly and with enthusiasm because they want to be challenged.

Kohn's theories on classroom management are quite similar to Glasser's. Grades and praise, Kohn says, kills intrinsic motivation and the desire to learn, and this concept is, of course, antithetical to what we've always been taught. The punishment/praise grade system that we were all indoctrinated in explains why the system has failed so many students as the competition norms of most classrooms indicates that for every winner/top of the class, there will be thirty-nine losers dealing with the inherent self-esteem issues surrounding their constant failure.

A key component of Glasser's theory is that the basic need of personal competence is an inner drive that is self-initiating and is unrelated to the need for extrinsic rewards of praise or grades. Glasser's basic need of competence ties in perfectly with Kohn's theory that extrinsic rewards destroy a student's inherent intrinsic motivation by reducing the exchange to a demoralizing, manipulative dysfunctional exchange that reduces their natural interest in a subject. Unfortunately, the traditional appeal has always been to the students' competitive instincts. Kohn states that extrinsic motivation focuses on what the students do not know, rather than on their possibilities for growth. We must question the traditional assumptions about pedagogy, as right answers are not as important as the process of exploring ideas and understanding the concepts. Helping students tap into and develop their inner authentic selves where they think, feel and care on a deeper level is our primary responsibility; arousing students' interests in learning is another.

According to Kohn and Glasser, instead of focusing on grades and tests, we must help our students to reason, to comunicate, and help them develop social and personal responsibility, self-awareness and a capacity for leadership. Thinking deeply and critically should be the first goal of education, the second goal is the desire for more education and a lifelong affair with learning.

Kohn and Glasser's theories are both non-coercive, but most importantly their theories are based on existentialist ideals of free choice and responsibility. Kounin's theories, however, take a completely different approach, where his practical and hands-on philosophy proves to be an excellent addition to the holistic theories of Kohn and Glasser. Kounin's management style addresses the fundamentals of classroom theory in concrete language and states that students must be made aware of all expectations, then, if these expectations are not met, some form of desist strategy is required. Kounin's pragmatic and practical approach blends nicely with the existentialist philosophy of Kohn and Glasser, resulting in the perfect approach to classroom management. Kounin has determined that the mastery of classroom management must include a display of "with-it-ness", the ability to teach to the learning style of the group instead of the individual, and organizing of lessons and teaching methods. The goal of classroom management is to create an environment which not only stimulates student learning but also motivates students to learn. Kounin's approach is in line with both Glasser and Kohn as he also posits that the keys to successful classroom management is in preventing management problems from occurring in the first place by putting into place good organization and planning.

2. Assumptions of the Nature of Young People & Learning

Students are naturally inquisitive and are initially intrinsically motivated. It is our failing but accepted pedagogical strategies that kills that natural intrinsic motivation, proving that grades and praise do not work, and in fact, kill students natural intrinsic motivation. Kohn makes the distinction between positive feedback and verbal rewards--one is encouraging, while the other destroys motivation. The distinction is crucial--one is a fraudulent, manipulative interaction, whilst the other is an honest interaction. This goes back to Glasser's different types of relationships as set forth in "Choice Theory": one is symbiotic and functional (lead teaching), while the other is parasitic and dysfunctional (boss teaching).

Current assumptions are that students are helpless, uneducated raw material, who are powerless and subordinate to the teachers and must be controlled and forced to learn. However, Glasser states that students are competent young people who are internally motivated. Motivation and compliance are fused and muddy words in the current pedagogical discourse--motivation comes from within, therefore attempting to motivate someone is inherently manipulative. Glasser's "Lead Management Theory" moves away from the notion that students must be manipulated, controlled, and forced to learn, instead

persuasion and problem solving are the central components of this theory. Students are considered competent young people who are responsible for their own education, and the teacher is really a facilitator who shares the power with the students by including them in decisions as to how their learning environment/classroom structure should be set up, with the teacher inviting student input on every facet of the course. Another main component of both these theorists is cooperative learning which provides a sense of belonging for the students. Belonging provides the initial motivation for students to work, and as they achieve academic success, they work even harder. Group work also means no more individual grades as the grades are shared by the team, and where the weaker students are helped by the stronger students. In boss management, weaker students experience only failure and eventually stop learning completely and usually drop out, whereas dropping out is virtually eliminated with lead management. With boss management, the stronger students hardly even know the weaker students. Helping each other almost never happens in a boss managed class and is actually considered cheating. In a boss managed class students compete only as individuals and the winners and losers are identified in the first few weeks of school.

With Lead Management there is a redistribution of the power in the classroom which creates more productivity, and we all know that the more people have power over their own destiny, the harder and more creatively they work. Lead teachers continually ask their students for input on better ways to teach, which is done in class discussions where all voices are heard. Boss management, however, does have its appeal for it promises absolute power, as opposed to lead management where teachers share the power with their students. According to Glasser, about 50% of the students in boss managed classes are paying little or no attention to what the teacher is doing, so really the power in a boss managed classroom is insubstantial.

There is nothing wrong with our students, says Glasser, the problem lies with management. Effective management has been lacking in our schools for too long and lead management can solve this problem. The lead teacher is a facilitator who provides students with the tools they need to succeed in the course as well as providing a cooperative atmosphere in which to learn. Lead teachers expect students to inspect and evaluate their own and other students' work. When the students keep their own records regarding the quality of their work, they are aware of their progress which is also empowering. Lead management teaching gives students charge over their destiny; they learn more, it gives them authority, power, belonging, and love, and allows them to realize their intellectual potential. Lead management teaching grants students their dignity, it humanizes, gives them freedom and choices, for without these they are left to wander in a maze of ignorance, a burden to all. Students taught in a lead management classroom have creative and inquiring minds who unequivocally contribute to the greater good.

B. **Expectations/Policies/Rules/Boundaries**

1. **Expectations of Students –** Students must take initiative and act as opposed to being acted upon, as they are expected to be participants in classroom projects and lessons. They will be encouraged to take risks, to exhibit individuality, honesty, and a wide range of personal expression; they will be encouraged to ask questions, to guess, to imagine, and to hypothesize. Another expectation for students is that they will cooperate and respect one another. The Golden Rule will be firmly stated and acknowledged by all (at the beginning of the semester).

2. **Expectations of Classroom Climate –** A classroom atmosphere that is both encouraging and stimulating, that develops a learning climate that supports thought and exploration and where the students feel secure and confident to take risks.

3. **Rules and Policies (or how you plan to develop clear boundaries**). The classroom policy will be determined the first week of class when student input will be requested to determine what the rules and policies should be. Students will decide, with help from me, what rules and procedures they require in their classroom environment. A social contract will be developed, agreed upon, signed, and then distributed to all students. Another component of Glasser's choice theory is the Quality World picture that we all conjure in our minds about how we want our world to look. Establishing a Quality World Picture about what type of classroom environment we want would be achieved by asking the students what they want to learn (content), how they want to learn (process), and how they want their classroom to look (environment). Spending time on establishing this picture would also be instrumental in creating the kind of internally motivated students that will make up my class. Ensuring that all of Glasser's five basic needs are met in this Quality World Picture created by the students would be essential to the establishment of this class. Freedom, fun, belonging, competence and power would all be met in the confines of this class, as freedom and power would be firmly established on the first day when the students get to decide what the rules are and what they want in their classroom instruction. They are "free" to decide the rules and what they want, but most importantly, they are free to express themselves. Belonging is inherently established as they already "own" the process as they have written the rules and have decided on the process. With this sense of belonging also comes a sense of fun as belonging connotes safety and trust, and with safety and trust, fun is easily achieved. There is a level of ease that allows for a camaraderie between the students and the teacher, and also amongst the students themselves. Competence is also inherent as these students are internally motivated due to their indoctrination and understanding of Choice Theory (a handout on Glasser's theory would be delivered and explained the first week of the semester); their internal motivation will help them strive to always do their best and to always step up to the plate and be challenged in their work as these are students aware of their responsibilities, yet who are also aware of their own magnificence.

C. <u>**Instructional & Assessment Strategies that Promote your Management Goals**</u>

What do you do instructionally to meet student's academic needs? Students have an innate inner desire for competence, so building on these desires for personal competence and self-determination would be key. Invoking the students' intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations to learn by starting with a short lecture that includes a "hook" or "grabber" and that allows sufficient time for the "romance" state of learning before moving on to the five-part lesson plan. The hooks and grabbers I will use to begin lessons are the most crucial element in my instructional strategies, for without the hook, the students will not be engaged in the lesson. In addition, I must make a rationale to the students for why they should learn this particular lesson, again, making the new learning relevant to their lives. Having the students connect the ideas in literature to their own lives, for example, by asking the question, "what would you do if" is basically presenting a challenge to their higher thought processes. Asking them to think, feel, and to care at deeper levels than they are ordinarily asked to, and by activating their inner processes of self development basically arouses their interest in learning.

1. **What do you do instructionally to prevent students' need to act out?**

Misbehavior in a classroom is a signal that something is not working and that my current pedagogical strategies are not effective, therefore, blaming myself for student misbehavior must be the solution, instead of blaming the students. Again, motivated and engaged students present little or no behavior problems. Again, the basis of my approach to classroom management is based on Glasser's "Choice Theory" and also to his "Five Basic Needs" being met. A basic understanding of "Choice Theory" would be taught to and understood by all students bringing them to the awareness that everything that occurs in the classroom is their choice. This would eliminate any discipline problems. Motivated

students cause fewer discipline problems because they care about what they are learning and enthusiastic teachers who present their material in stimulating, meaningful ways motivate students. When students are actively learning content that has personal meaning for them, they have neither the time nor the energy to create discipline problems.

When starting a new lesson using the romance stage of learning where the subject matter has the vividness of novelty, the students are intrigued and want to know more. The second phase of the lesson would be the precision or more controlled and concentrated study of facts, terms and analysis of details, but this phase comes only after an extended period of romance with the new learning. Also, students tend to act out if they are bored or if they do not understand, therefore, giving them clear and concise explanations of what I expect them to do is essential.

2. How does your assessment promote the goals of your management?

Kohn posits that letter grades damage students' self-esteem, as grades do not evaluate for deeper levels of understanding. Therefore, instead of grades, I would use non-traditional means of assessment such as portfolios, performance assessment and group work assessments. Portfolios would contain student essays that show a deeper level of understanding than traditional tests, they would also contain poems, book reports, workbook exercises, research papers and journals. Another form of assessment would be oral work like class discussions, panels, debates, and oral recitations; and performances and exhibitions that include speech and drama performances. Moving away from a testing culture and testing for real learning would promote the goals of my management approach. This type of assessment creates a product that contain all of a student's work, also, this type of product allows the student to see their own body of work in its entirety which, seeing the amount and type of work they've done over a period of time, builds even more confidence. In addition, they also have something tangible from which to gauge their own cognitive development. Part of my portfolio assessment process would be a constant editing process (on the part of the students) where the product is constantly being updated and redone. The portfolios would be assessed at the end of the school year, giving the students ample time to evaluate, edit and to continually improve their own work, finally resulting in a product that they are proud of. Another form of assessment that I would use in liu of traditional forms of grading would be student self-evaluation. These types of assessment would work to enhance the students' learning, self-esteem and academic success as this approach is also proactive, student-centered and non-competitive.

3. How do you allow for variable styles, cultures and circumstances in meeting the diverse needs of your students.

Reading the literature of the diaspora would enhance pride in the students' various cultures. Also, a respect for the various and different types of intelligence (Gardner's linguistic, logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal) would be fostered that would only enrich students' lives inside and outside the classroom. Giving the students opportunities to use all of their various intelligences and to avoid teaching in only one capacity, which means keeping the curriculum open enough. Providing an open curriculum would include lectures, group discussions, hands-on experience, video presentations, field trips, reading books, visual materials of any sort, physical performance of poetry and stories, dramatic depictions of plays and short stories would address the needs of the students. This type of approach would ensure reaching all the various students' different types of intelligences and would help maintain their interest in new learning. This type of focus on their various intelligences also helps them identify their natural abilities and gifts, in addition, this type of pedagogical and inclusive approach promotes only success, not failure.

D. **Motivation**

1. **From your point of view, what motivates students?**
    a)   In the short term by using engaging and interesting lessons that "hook" the students into the subject. Initially, there will be a "romance" section of the lesson that will pull them in by grabbing their interest, and pulling them in further by getting them personally involved will be another step. Also, appealing to their present interests, their previous experiences and understandings, and to their innate tendencies to want to resolve problems would be yet another strategy to pull them in to the lesson even more. Showing them the meaning and purpose in school learning and its connectedness to their own lives and reducing the lesson's abstractedness is another important pedagogical tool. Staying away from superficial and artificial learning is another key to maintaining their interest. Once boredom sets in, the students have mentally and emotionally checked out and it will be impossible to get them back. Therefore, grounding new learning in the students' experiences, perceptions and existing knowledge structures is elemental. Staying away from receptive learning and focusing instead on constructive learning such as essay questions, promotes deeper thinking. Creating paradigm shifts with the introduction of philosophical ideas inherent in literature also creates epiphanies in the classroom--again exploring ideas that they can relate to their own lives.

    b)   **Motivation - In the long-term?** Teaching for understanding where students can understand new ideas and connect them to other ideas and to their own lives, making them applicable and relevant. This deep level of understanding provides new pathways and dendrites in the brain as real learning is taking place. Another tool for long term motivation would be making them aware of their own meta-cognitive processes, where they see that they are building new dendrites and pathways, and they can see that they are getting smarter, which creates enhanced self-esteem and confidence in their own learning processes thereby furthering the educational experience for them. Identifying and recognizing relationships amongst various ideas, concepts, generalizations and facts, and showing a value for what is being learned is crucial for motivation, both long term and short term. This kind of learning also gets stored in the long-term memory banks, unlike repetitive learning which goes into short term memory and is quickly forgotten. Also, including them in discussions and decisions regarding their course work and course structure and showing them the relevancy of course work to their own lives. Having weekly discussions about their education and their careers would also be practiced.

2. **Why will your students do what you ask them to?** They will see the relevancy of the course work to their own lives and will be intrinsically motivated to do what I ask them to do. They will trust the classroom process, trust (me) the teacher and also one other.

3. **How do you plan to motivate your students**
    The students are the workers who are producing papers, research, plays, music, the yearbook, and the school newspaper. However, the students will only work hard if they see that there is some benefit for them to do so. Therefore, pointing out real life applications is essential.

E. **Vision**

1.   In about 2 pages, depict a typical day in your "ideal" class. See yourself one year from today, and explain how your class feels, what the students are doing, how you are acting, and how problems are dealt with. Here, you are clearly conceiving your ideal "socially constructed classroom reality." Have fun and dream.

A typical day in my class:

Friday's homework assignment, due Monday morning, is to write a short poem, or if the muse is not present, to find a piece of poetry, fiction, or song lyrics that appeals to the student and to bring it to class to share with everyone. The students would come into class on Monday morning with a copy of their favorite rap lyrics, the only rule being that expletives could not be included in the piece. Their assignment would be to "perform" the piece in front of the class, again either their own writing or their favorite singer's lyrics. This type of assignment would get them thinking about language, the power of words, and how language can deliver a message, a moral, a belief, or emotions. A discussion with the students on the power of language before the performances would be the hook to pull all students into the debate. Thoughtful questions such as "are words enough to effectively communicate our emotions" and "what ways other than words do we communicate with each other" would provide stimulating conversation with and amongst the students. Monday would be the first day of this lesson plan, with student performances taking up the entire week. However, not all students are required to perform, as there is no pressure in this classroom to do anything the students would feel uncomfortable doing. Certain students might feel uncomfortable performing and would rather write their responses. After the initial romance phase of this lesson, we would then focus in on the language used in these various poems and lyrics. An examination of words, literary devices, and a close reading of these texts would provide students with necessary tools like reading for comprehension; finding multiple interpretations and understanding different perspectives. Reading critically and carefully would be learned, as would paraphrasing and chunking. A discussion of what the text says, what happens in the poem or story, and what the theme is are also topics for discussion that further develop the students' comprehension of literature. Homework would be given that would further expound on this subject of comprehension having the students choose another piece of poetry, fiction, or more lyrics and having them write an essay on the piece they choose. This gives the students freedom to choose what to read and write about. Choosing what to read and write satisfies their basic needs of freedom; fun (writing and reading their favorite rap lyrics); power (they're choosing the content and get to share with their classmates); belonging (sharing one's ideas and expressing our beliefs to others creates a sense of belonging); competence (this is an assignment that all students can relate to and can easily accomplish, so success is achieved.)

The class is noisy and creative, the students are engaged, excited and stimulated by the subject matter, everyone is having fun and there are no discipline problems. The students are learning important lessons like how to perform in front of an audience; how to deliver a speech; how to give a dramatic presentation; and how to read poetry aloud. They are also learning how to do a close reading, reading for comprehension, literary devices like theme and audience, however, they are also making connections to their own lives. They are finding the lesson applicable and relevant and can easily understand the ideas contained in the lesson.

The classroom is heavily decorated with student work covering every piece of available wall space. Poems, inspirational sayings, papers, artwork, students' paintings and drawings of characters from literary works, adorn the walls. The chairs are in a circle around the perimeter of the class, so students can engage in group activities easily. There will be computer stations set up and functional and operational; there will be project stations for working on portfolios; an in-class library will be located at the back of the classroom with an additional supply of books (in addition to the school library); and dictionaries will be easily available. Students are allowed to walk around the classroom freely. This is a creative, noisy learning environment with students who are engaged in fun and exciting class time. Absenteeism is practically non-existent, with students absent only due to illness. When students are working in groups, I will walk around the class checking on each student and paying individual attention to whomever needs it. All students will receive adequate and equal attention from me. This is a trusting, safe learning environment where risks are taken and where intellectual boundaries are constantly pushed. Problems are dealt with easily and effectively, with inattention solved immediately with heavy eye contact or close proximity to the offending student. Students are highly responsive. This is a fun atmosphere, while at the same time stimulating and challenging.