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I have been working with children and students in some capacity since graduating college (and even before then, though not professionally). I have taught students in outdoor classrooms in Thailand, taught students with behavioral needs in a one-on-one setting, and led both students and tutors in a summer reading program and after school tutoring program. There are so many instances over my career that have helped to form my own theory of behavior management and that have helped me to see which theories we read and talked about in class I subscribe to. I've had students run out of a classroom and spray a fire extinguisher at each other; I've had a student who pretended to sleep whenever a task was presented; a student who could not help but pull any and all blonde hair; a student who has tried to destroy the school environment; and a student who was recently diagnosed with bipolar disorder. All of these students challenged me, but they also taught me what I view as the most important aspect of my behavior management philosophy: working to build those personal relationships with both students and their families.

While there are definitely aspects of my own beliefs in every model we read about, my philosophy most closely aligns with the ecological model and the behavioral model. Quickly, as stated by our book, "the ecological model is focused on the interactions that occur within these environments and how they influence behavior and learning in all of us" (p. 8), and the behavioral model "views behavior from a functional perspective in terms that are both measurable and observable" (p. 12). In theory, I am a firm believer that behavior is directly affected by your environment. I know without a doubt that, for example, students' behavior is more temperamental on dress down days at schools with no dress code. I know that students feel safer and calmer in well-organized classrooms that look like they are taken care of than when they step into a chaotic setting. I know that the climate, rules, and

expectations that are set in a class can change behavior as well. The relationships that students make within the walls of a school and a classroom can be the difference between cooperative and combative behavior. Finally, I do believe that almost all behavior serves a purpose, and it is our jobs as educators to do our utmost to figure out what that purpose is so that we can best serve the student. Students who are not doing their homework because they have no time or space to complete it at home have far different needs than a student who is trying to get some attention from a teacher or parent.

Lastly, as I have seen in action in my field experience classroom in the best ways, restorative justice is a model that I am very much drawn to. I witnessed a school dean take four boys (who had gotten into a fight before the school day had even begun) into a classroom to have a long talk with them not only about why fighting is wrong, but also about their other options as well as the consequences they may face in secondary school and beyond. He then gave them time to discuss their actions together and come to a solution—something that I was surprised to see ended with fist bumps all around. Additionally, after some kids had been goofing off during a recent fire drill, my cooperating teacher sat all his students down for a talk and explanation about why he was so strict during these drills and why it was so important that they take them seriously. Each student at the end of the discussion was able to identify that he was strict because he loved them and apologized for goofing off. Each of these instances reflects my own philosophy, in allowing students time and space to reflect on their actions and come to a solution with support from the teacher. It does not simply dole out punishments when poor behavior is identified.

With all that in mind, as a teacher, I have a few different key ideas when it comes to preventative classroom management. First, I will work my hardest to ensure that every student who walks through my door feels safe, supported, and loved. As made clear above, building relationships with students and their families is key to maintaining reciprocal respect in the classroom. Opening up communication with parents so that they know that every call will not be about something negative, but

rather that we are free to talk about both successes and failures. Additionally, it will allow for open communication from and to parents if a child has had a bad day and will perhaps need some support. Second, rules and expectations will be made clear from the start, both for academic performance (turning things in, paying attention, etc.) as well as social interactions (respect yourself and your peers, help if you see someone being bullied, allow for respectful discourse, etc.). Setting these clear expectations right out of the gate will allow students to feel they have agency within their own classroom, as they know where the line is. Last, as a teacher I have always subscribed to some form of reward-based system, giving students points or stars for positive behavior. While extrinsic motivation is not always necessary, it can provide for a space to create unity where everyone is working toward a common goal. a functional behavior plan (FBA) if necessary (and can also help to keep parents in the loop).

In the school where I eventually end up, I am hoping that there is some form of school wide positive behavior and intervention and supports in place. After a lot of reflecting after interviewing my teacher friend, I do understand her point that it can come from a very white-centric and individualist mindset, which is why I do believe that in order to be successful there needs to also be some form of restorative justice in place as well. Students need to understand that their behavior doesn't only affect them but their community as well. I will also work hard to ensure that there is a school-wide focus on social emotional learning and development, which is so important especially in this day and age of pandemics, online learning, and social networks. We cannot watch students' behavior 24/7, especially online, so it is important that we provide them space to develop online and in person empathy.

As for reactive strategies, or how I will deal with challenging behaviors after they occur, I have a few key ideas as well. First of all, as stated above, restorative justice is key to my management philosophy. Allowing students time to reflect and come to a space where they can find a way to a solution on their own (or with support) is key to helping students develop as young men and women

(and non-binary young adults). It is so important to have them see and understand the consequences of their actions so that they can work to fix the problem, as this is essentially what will be required of them as professional adults. I have seen so many successful instances of this in practice, as with the boys meeting with the school's dean, or with my friend who sat down with a student who had destroyed a bathroom (the girl came to the conclusion that she should be the one to clean it up, not the school custodian). This not only helps to build empathy but also gives them real world practice of repairing relationships.

Of course, I will also subscribe to the idea that occasionally punishments will have to be doled out and privileges will have to be lost. However, I am a firm believer that students cannot and should not ever have recess withheld from them. The only privileges that will be lost are privileges within my classroom. Also, I do not believe that suspensions are a useful form of punishment as it denies students the education they deserve (the only acceptable instance would be in the case of a student who presents immediate safety risks to themselves or others). Additionally, here again is where communication with families is key. Keeping parents and guardians up to date on students' behaviors is so important, not only so there are no surprises come parent teacher conferences, but also so that there can be collaboration between home and school (e.g., are there strategies that work at home that we should try in the classroom, or vice versa?). Last, I have learned over the years that one of the most important aspects of classroom management is to document behavior as often as possible. This allows teachers to stay on top of challenging students and can help when writing a functional behavior plan (FBA) if necessary (and can also help to keep parents in the loop).

That said, if a crisis were to occur in my classroom, my first and most top priority would be to ensure that everyone involved is safe. Should the need arise, I would find a safe space for the student in crisis, whether that is a separate room or a quiet space in the back of the classroom. I would immediately call for staff support if necessary and work first to ensure that everyone involved is safe

and secure. I do believe, however, that while the initial response is the most important as it should keep everyone safe, just as important is how the crisis is dealt with after the fact. Here again is a time for reflection, not only for the student involved in the crisis, but sometimes for the bystanders as well. Teachers need to be aware of the resources available in the school that can be provided for the student (do they need to meet with the school psychologist, counselor, or social worker?). Communication is so key, both with other necessary professionals in the school as well as with parents and guardians when appropriate.

To sum up, I believe in having an organized classroom with clearly identified safe spaces for students who need to walk away or have a break. I will have explicit rules and expectations that will be gone over as often as necessary. I will work all year to develop relationships with students and their families so that effective collaboration can be achieved. I will ensure that each challenging behavior incident is followed up with reflection and conversation between affected parties (when appropriate) so that a solution can be reached if possible. Students will know that they own their own behavior, and while fidgeting and doodling will always be tolerated, I will help students to understand that they cannot disrupt the learning of others.

Of course, I understand that even with all the preventative measures in place, my idea of behavior management will not work for every student and will occasionally need to be modified. As a teacher, I fall in the middle between student and teacher control. Some students, however, when given some slack, will run away with the rope. Therefore, some students will require more explicit rules and regulations to match their behavior, which could be discussed with them and their families prior to formulating an FBA. However, on the whole, I am hoping that my philosophy will work with a diverse group of learners as it does tend to focus both on individual students (building relationships) and also on the class as a community (restorative justice and classroom climate). Because I will work to ensure that

students know that can should help each other when needed, hopefully my philosophy will apply under most circumstances and communities.

However, I do know that this philosophy does not always connect with the philosophies of others, at all times. Even my cooperating teacher, while he often employs those ideas of restorative justice, occasionally uses the equivalent of an in class suspension to deal with challenging behavior. I know that working in his classroom as a student teacher is going to challenge the both of us, as he is occasionally less tolerant than myself. If this happens, I think it is important to sit down with the collaborating teacher to discuss how best to move forward and what rules should be adhered to at all times, as it is so important to present a unified front so that students know the expectations of the classroom, rather than the expectations of a particular teacher. Teaching in tandem with someone with a different philosophy of behavior or education can never be easy.

All in all, this class has provided a space for me to reflect on my own practices and come to a realization of who I hope to be as a teacher: someone who encourages the best from her students while developing lasting relationships. I hope to use some of the practices we've learned to better the lives of my students so that they feel better equipped to enter the world as high schoolers and later as adults. I know that I am not always perfect, and neither are my future students, so it is so important to give myself and others time to grow and reflect. I also want my students to always be confident that, like my cooperating teacher and the teacher I interviewed made clear, that even if I'm strict and firm, it's because I love them and believe that they can do anything.

#### Works Cited

Wheeler, J., & Richey, D. D. (2019). *Behavior Management: Principles and Practices of Positive Behavior Supports* (4th ed.). New York: Pearson.