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Classroom Management

My approach to classroom management involves building a positive environment for students and cultivating an effective culture for learning. Prior to this being established, it is critical to ensure a mutual respect between students and educator. In order to do so, I employ proactive strategies, maintain a balance between freedom and structure, and encourage collaboration among students.

In my classroom, the management of student behavior is initially enacted through preventive measures as opposed to disciplinary actions. No matter what age group I am teaching, it is important to be aware that students enter the classroom as diverse individuals with varying needs. For this reason, it is important that everyone within my classroom has a voice when it comes to the regulations. Prior to beginning lessons, I will assist students in developing a set of fair and reasonable expectations. The list will adhere to but is not limited to demonstrating attentiveness when others are speaking, respecting the work of peers, and maintaining materials and workspaces. By allowing students to develop a set of rules for themselves, it ensures not only that they have a voice in the classroom but also that the expectations for behavior are able to be met.

During my first clinical experience, I observed my mentor teacher create a positive culture for learning through an effective balance between freedom and structure. In her classroom, this involved specific elements such as choice seating and communication during studio time that contrasted structured lesson plans and a ban of cell phones. This is a strategy that I will implement into my own teaching as this created a balanced classroom environment and a mutual respect between students and educator. In relation to this, it is important that every aspect of my teaching includes a component for both freedom and structure. For example, students will be allowed choice seating but are limited to small cohorts of 4-6 individuals per table. Each of my lessons also contains a clear set of required objectives but also allow for a range of choice in the

ways students meet them. These are just a few of the methods I take in promoting a balanced classroom environment.

As an educator, it is important to not only familiarize myself with students and their individual identities but also assist students in connecting with one another. Collaboration is an important part of the artmaking process and the development of a strong culture for learning. Therefore, within my approach to classroom management, I will encourage this through activities and warm-ups that support students in becoming familiar with the people around them. For example, collaborative drawings are a good way for students to ease themselves into the class and get to know each other at the beginning of the school year. I've found that once students are more comfortable with each other, their level of production and creativity is heightened. In this way, I am ensuring that each of my students feels free to create art that is meaningful and true to them by finding support in my teaching, the classroom, and their peers.

Despite the enactment of strategies for any classroom management plan, it is inevitable that there will be instances of behavioral issues. In these cases, I will bring awareness of the situation to the student(s) who it involves, how it goes against the expectations of the classroom, and what the consequences will be if it continues. This is a restorative action that opens an affective line of communication between student(s) and educator in effort to get to the root of the problem and prevent it from festering. If the issue continues, it is necessary to be consistent with the consequences previously stated. However, I have found that preventive measures for managing behavior are more effective than discipline, and therefore, this is something I prioritize in my cultivation of a positive classroom environment and productive culture for learning.