Title - ‘Positive’ is the way to manage my classroom.

“I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.” – Hiam Ginott

 Esther Park

The year of 1995, I as a second grader, met an explainer Mr. Moon at Mok Il Middle School, who taught morality. He harmed student’s learning atmosphere by controlling student’s behavior in his own way. He commanded students to not speak unless he asks a question and always look at Mr. Moon or at the chalk board. We weren’t also allowed to put are hands in our pockets or put our elbows on the desk. I can’t forget his face when he saw my hands in my sleeves. With luck, I didn’t get hit but he was so mad to see my behavior and I was told to finish 500 sit ups in front of the class. I wasn’t allowed to attend his class for a month but write my self-reflection paper at the floor of the hallway during his hours. Students were very focused on not being disagreeable to Mr. Moon’s feeling rather than his lesson studies. It gave me a lesson to know what I should avoid in my classroom management. For situations that could arise in the class, I want to use positive reinforcement and discipline for creating positive classroom atmosphere.

Preschool learners don’t always know right from wrong which can cause student’s behavior cross the line. Illustrating proper and improper picture and using books or puppet’s role play that relates to what that student’s behavior is the way I want to help children to understand and behave appropriately. I also want to keep parents in the loop because they might be able to let teachers know about the issues at home that are causing behavioral problems. Sometimes positive reinforcement will work better than criticizing the bad behavior. Offering reward to good behaving students can be positive for both, good and bad behavioral students because the ‘bad’ will want to mimic the ‘good’ to get a reward.

Elementary school students may know what’s good and bad. For setting classroom rules, I would want my students to arrange into small groups, come up with characteristics of a good student, create their list for ten minutes and gather together as a whole class to create the master list. After that, students can make a poem or a song to remember and memorize the classroom rule they made. I believe designing classroom rules with the students can be effective because it can reduce rejection and reinforce student’s responsibility for keeping the rules.

Concerning absences and tardiness, if my student is frequently tardy or absent and doesn’t have a reasonable excuse, I would have to give a punishment by warning and to stay after school. I would also send a letter to their parents that tardiness to the school is disruption to the classroom learning environment and a parent’s note cannot excuse a student for being tardy. A student may not complete any assigned homework, then I would ask that student to stay after school to finish the assignment in order to catch up the missing. I would also give extra homework assignment to be completed and send a letter to their parent. For the ones who did finish their assignments, I would give a cotton ball to fill up their jars or stickers to attach which can be exchanged to a prize as a positive reward.

If a student is acting out in class by throwing out materials, I would firmly explain at a private place that classroom rule is broken and his behavior is inappropriate. But if child refuses to listen to well behave, I would withhold privileges such as recess or playtime for additional approach. I also want to document inappropriate child’s behavior and involve student’s parents for working in conjunction. Should my institution have a very strict ‘English Only’ policy, I would resolutely tell my students to not speak Korean at the beginning of the semester and stick to my guns. I would model good behavior by not speaking Korean to my students because it can cause a rule breaking situation that make students to think that they don’t always have to follow the rules. I can be regarded as a cruel teacher but eventually it’ll end when their habit grows upon them. Upholding the ‘English Only’ policy, younger students might not say a word by zipping their mouth up because of not knowing what to say. For that, I would want to teach the words and sentences using some visuals that are useful in communicating to attach on the classroom walls. I also want to encourage the good and discourage the bad by writing everyone’s name on the board and a smile face next to their names to start off every day. The ones who did follow the rules by not speak in Korean and finish the class with their smiles on the board, gets a stamp, sticker or a pencil as a reward. The ones who didn’t follow the rules, gets their smile erased and no reward will be doled out.

Hiam Ginott said, ‘I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.’

I believe it’s up to the teacher who can either help students to learn with the interest in their studies or be an obstacle for positive learning atmosphere. I will always consider student’s needs by putting myself in their shoes and preserve all my efforts to maintain positive classroom management atmosphere.