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The Preparation for Unexpecteds

“Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.”   
― [Plato](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/879.Plato)

In the real class room, the unthinkable challenges happen. However, the organized classroom management can prepare the teacher from the class uncertainties to some extent. In the paper, the three given situations, deal with implementation, enforcement, and discipline of an institution’s policies, are discussed. It appears to me that planning ahead for particular challenges eventually helps teachers to get to the lesson objectives which is helping students to learn. Based on my experiences and rationale, the solutions to the classroom issues will be given. Although there is no definite answer, the careful consideration to the issues will facilitate effective teaching.

First, in order to execute a strict English only policy, the policy should be mentioned explicitly in the very beginning of the course for the consistency sake. In my brief teaching experience, especially for young students, insisting on speaking only English in the middle of the semester was unsuccessful due to the student’s habit formation. Also, among the Skinner’s operant conditionings, positive reinforcement seems to be appropriate such as using detention and extra homework. One way to apply the English only rule is that, when a student speaks Korean unintentionally, a fair warning can be given. But the student starts using Native language on purpose, one can get detention. If the student doesn’t follow the rule in spite of all the warnings, before the student affects the whole class, the issue needs to be notified and addressed to the institution. However, a teacher should be discreet in student’s public humiliation while enforcing the rule. The inconsiderate punishment can traumatize students and hinder the English learning. I’ve met few people who lost the confidence in English and gave up studying in their young ages due to public embarrassment and humiliation discipline experiences in English class.

The second issue is the attendance regarding the constant tardiness and absences. Especially, a student who comes in the classroom once a lecture is started can make noises and cause negative learning effects to other students. Yet, in my option, a harsh attendance rule is unnecessary. One of the biology instructors from the college in Seattle implemented negative punishment by locking a class room door which in turns took a way student’s class time. The rare aspect of the rule was that the teacher locked the door on exact the class time. Although, the rule was very effective, it appears to me that the instructor’s way of implementing the rule was very offensive as well. For example, when even a student knocked the locked door, the teacher didn’t open it in any circumstances and the situation made the class uncomfortable. The most of the students were responsible adults, commuted to school and paid costly tuition. The teacher’s unforgiving rule enforcement, nevertheless the existence of uncontrollable factors especially regarding the commuting traffic, contributed to the awkward and rigid class atmosphere. In my option, similar to the English only policy, Negative rewards is the suitable operant conditioning. A teacher can let students in the classroom quietly and ask the reason later for the tardiness after the class. Unless the reasonable excuse exists, teacher can keep the record of the tardy and three tardiness can count as one absence. Then student can make up the missed class time in detention. Meanwhile, positive rewards are unfavorable to me because I want students to think punctuality is the basis of something not to be rewarded.

The third issue is how to help student to prepare for the lesson presentation. First, the lesson topics decided by students may increase the students’ motivations and lead to self directed learning. Also accumulative steps and stages seem crucial to prevent the cramming at the end of the course. For example, throughout the classes, the presentation can be discussed. A teacher can guide the learners’ works in the progress and plan the upcoming lesson according to the development. In my English writing class, from a choosing a topic to finishing the final paper, many useful steps were taken thorough out the semester such as learning how to research, using credential resources, and team proof reading.

Using three scenarios: English only policy, attendance, and lesson presentation, the unexpected classroom factors were considered. The thought out organization of the classroom will certainly assist a teacher but it seems to be impractical and unattainable to prepare all the possibilities especially for the novice instructor like me. Therefore, along with the putting on persistent efforts in the part that I can control, facing the unknowns with positive and exciting attitude is also crucial.