EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

by:

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Teaching is complex and cannot be reduced to discrete tasks that can be mastered one at a time. Teachers must "win their students' hearts while getting inside their students' heads". (Wolk, 2003) The purpose of this article is to suggest effective classroom management strategies that integrate knowledge and skills from education and counseling to help teachers develop a strong management system based on the development of personal relationships with students.

Classroom management is critically important in high school when students are more likely to experience problems in academic motivation and self-esteem. Thus, one of the keys to effective classroom management is the development of a quality relationship between the teacher and the students in the classroom. This relationship as a means to manage classrooms includes recommendations like using gentle interventions, finding time for bonding, avoiding punishments and building activities that ensure success for all students. (Hall & Hall, 2003)

Teachers with effective classroom management skills are aware of high needs students and have a repertoire of specific techniques for meeting some of their needs. (Marzano & Marzano, 2003)

The first strategy is building empathy. It is the most important aspect of a positive helping relationship. As a matter of practice, this results in the student feeling understood. It is defined as “seeing with the eyes of another, hearing with the ears of another and feeling with heart of another". The teacher could have easily encouraged the
student through an empathetic response and such a response would have communicated understanding to the student that the teacher would have been found valuable and that would have enhanced the level of respect for the teacher.

The second strategy is admiring negative attitudes and behaviors. Admiration is extremely rare in the lives of young adolescents, and much rarer than love. To receive it from an adult is precious indeed, and it often earns the teacher immediate loyalty and respect. Rather than engage in a power struggle with such a student, a teacher should acknowledge the skill that the student has worked so hard to develop—and then redirect it. Again, after acknowledging the skill, reframe the skill and then redirect it. It is important that this skill be applied with sincerity.

The last strategy is multicultural connections. Developing relationships with students who come from culturally different backgrounds can be challenging and requires specific skills from new and experienced teachers alike. (Nieto, 1999a, 1999b, 2008) For teachers to engage in successful intercultural interactions, they must maintain a smart approach to learning relationships and be aware of the ways schooling helps to reinforce social class differences (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Teachers who are vested in educating students who come from such backgrounds should develop relationships by making meaning of the curriculum as it relates to their lived experiences outside the school.

For the most challenging students, teachers can learn and apply strategies used in the field of counseling and psychotherapy. It seems particularly important to provide specific strategies for dealing with what can often be the problems that prevent us from persevering in the important work of helping students learn.
References:


