Management Plan

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My teaching style is ever-evolving, but as of now the philosophies and values I have built up through years of self-exploration have a huge effect on how I teach and how I manage my classroom. My decision to pursue education as a career was heavily influenced by my love for working with young people. I feel that at heart I carry a very carefree and curious sensibility in my thought and actions and because of this I get along well with young people. I benefit from the perspective of those who are still actively exploring themselves and the world around them and learning and evolving based on their experiences. I would like my classroom to be an environment that affords students the opportunity to explore themselves and the surrounding world through authentic investigation. To me, my most influential form of exploration has come from artistic creation and I want to share the empowering experiences I’ve had with my students by refining their creative skills of expression. In this way I would like my classroom to encourage the development of practicing artists, rather than students who make works of art. These concepts and values will inform the structure of the physical space of the classroom, the formal and informal routines, the techniques I use to address student behavior, and the way I manage my resources.

Ideally, my classroom will resemble a studio space or a makers’ space. These formats encourage intellectual exploration through access to physical tools and materials of art-making. There are many artistic mediums, techniques, tools and processes that can be utilized to express student ideas and I would like my classroom to be able to physically enable students to choose from these mediums and tools to express their ideas. Of course, this would be more applicable to an elementary or middle school-level classroom that is less specialized, but even in a specialized classroom such as a pottery or painting class, I would like to provide students with as many materials as they need to efficiently express their ideas. In my educational experience, one of my biggest takeaways has been the importance of supporting student interests. Especially in art, student interest is arguably one of the most important aspects. Although the building of technical skills is very important to efficient expression, exploring personal interests and ideas is what I want to focus on fostering in my classroom. I think in my future classroom I will rely heavily on artistic stations where students can experiment with different mediums with the intention of finding the appropriate medium to express their ideas. Personally, the opportunity I have had in my artistic education to explore many mediums has allowed me to feel capable and confident in expressing my ideas no matter how “out there” they are, and I would like my students to feel this same sense of empowerment.

As I previously mentioned, self-exploration and investigation of the world around us is very important to me. These ideas culminate in an overall quest to stay curious and become a life-long learner. Art has been such an important part of my world for so long and it has enabled me to authentically explore ideas and concepts I may have never been introduced to. I would like to foster this idea of new discovery in my classroom through our informal routines. For example, I would like to start each class by asking a student to present research they’ve done on a contemporary artist currently working. I would start off the class the first couple of weeks by presenting new artists daily myself, and then pass the torch to the students by having them sign up for a day to present an artist of their choice. I am in a college class right now that employs this method once a week and I have found that through research of currently practicing artists I have become inspired to develop my own artistic practice and I have been made aware of the powerful and extensive possibilities of art. Researching contemporary artists also highlights the idea that art is still relevant in our world today. Starting the class with this activity would not only inform students of influential artists, it would get student’s minds in an artistic arena so they would be ready to engage artistically for the rest of the class period.

More formally, students would be held to a high level of responsibility for their craftsmanship, studio care, and respect for materials, tools, and their peer’s artwork. I would like to begin the class as more of an authoritarian and a provider of artistic knowledge with a slow release of that responsibility to my students. I would like to instill a sense of respect in my students for the space, for me, and for each other. This would begin by setting down ground rules for the classroom and communicating to my students the level of respect I expect from them. I would let them know from the beginning that I see them as students of art working towards becoming artists even if this is just an elective class for them. In this classroom, they are artists and I expect them to act accordingly. This would reach farther than just studio upkeep and craftsmanship as it would inform the way they participated in the classroom. Sketching and planning would be an expectation for my students because I see it as a very important aspect of ideation for any practicing artist. For those students who prefer to just go for it and begin a work of art, I would encourage three-dimensional ideation such as models or experimenting with a medium before beginning a final work of art. I think it would be important to not just tell students I want them to behave like artists, but to give them responsibilities that will inevitably lead to them thinking and acting like artists. Although the format for artistic instruction in education has many benefits, it also has some drawbacks in that it sometimes doesn’t model the way practicing artists actually think. For example, students in an art class are asked to come up with an idea very quickly and begin developing that idea tangibly without much time to let it gestate. They are also asked to turn in a project on a deadline and they very seldomly are given the opportunity to continue to develop on a work of art after its due date. I feel that letting feedback from formal and informal critiques inform future work and improve current work is of huge importance to the development of an artist so in my classroom I would put into place instructional routines that would encourage this type of genuine development. For example, I would have a policy for assignments that would allow students to revisit and improve work if they felt it necessary. Every assignment would have a concrete deadline for critique, that is, whether the work was done or not, a student would get a grade for the completion of an assignment by the date it was due and participation in the critique. However, they would also receive a more formal grade for the requirements of the assignment on the day of the critique. If the artwork did not meet the requirements they would receive a poor grade, but still attain the participation points for turning it in on the day of the critique. If a student wanted to improve the grade on this formal assessment, they could resubmit their work of art at any time during the rest of the semester after changes had been made based on personal, or peer feedback from the critique. In this way, students would see a work of art as ever-evolving and improving the way successful artists address their work.

Response to the behavior of students informs classroom management in any classroom. It is somewhat simple to come up with a plan for management, but this plan can sometimes crumble in the face of real, live students. I have seen this happen many times with my own instructional strategies, and it goes without saying that no matter how prepared you are, sometimes things just don’t work out. So, the way I will respond to student behavior will be completely case-based. One thing I’ve learned about students is that one size never fits all so I feel that the best method is to genuinely and authentically interact with students on an individual level. As far as responding to negative behavior, I plan on setting down stringent expectations at the beginning of the class and if students choose not to meet those expectations, that will be their choice and I will address that issue accordingly. I will try to stay true to my values and personal beliefs in any situation and try to understand the root of the negative behavior as a way to combat it. When dealing with positive reinforcement of good behavior, I will try to avoid interchangeable, inauthentic praise and attempt to tell students exactly what it is about their behavior or performance I find exceptional so that they and other students know what I expect and how to go above and beyond this.

Time and resource management have been a struggle in my personal and professional life, but I strive every day to improve. When it comes to time management, I think the best way to use time efficiently is to develop a well thought out and comprehensive plan for units and lessons. When the plan is in place, it is easier to get everything done within the allotted time. I will also expect my students to be responsible for managing their time efficiently throughout the class which will be compounded by our instructional strategies that encourage personal responsibility. I also want my lessons to allow for enough freedom for students to go over time allotted to specific sections of the lesson when they are truly engaged in a topic. I have found through experience that it is better to let students continue to explore an idea they are interested in than force them to move on for time’s sake. I think that this encourages more genuine artistic experiences fueled by true inquiry into the ideas students find interesting. For example, if we are approaching a due date for a work or art and a majority of the students have been working hard but are not near a stopping point for the project, I will allow more time for completion because these types of considerations sometimes are required as a project unfolds. When it comes to resources, I will foster a responsibility among students to take care of the tools and materials we are using. I value my personal artistic tools and materials as an artist, so to make students truly concerned with upkeep of materials I will assign student groups a collection of their own personal tools that they are responsible for throughout the class. If the tools aren’t properly cared for it will be up to those students to replace those tools or go without them for the rest of the class.

2.) Create a document that you would hand to your students on the first day of school (work with your match-up teacher if you would like).  Be sure to include all components relevant to students, and when applicable, consequences related to not meeting specific expectations. Here are specific requirements; you may add others as you see fit:

* Your rules and expectations; include consequences (or philosophy) for not meeting those expectations
* Protocols for
  + Grading
  + Homework (especially what you will do about late homework)
  + Tests/Quizzes
  + Absences (what are consequences for unexcused absences?)
  + Tardies
  + Participation