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I am no Mary Poppins

“But Mary Poppins’s eyes were fixed upon him, and Michael suddenly discovered that you could not look at Mary Poppins and disobey her. There was something strange and extraordinary about her—something that was frightening and at the same time most exciting” (P. L. Travers, *Mary Poppins*, 1934). Sometimes I daydream about my future class and what I see is awesome! I see my students as little angels who never do anything wrong and perfectly understand everything I teach them. I imagine myself as Mary Poppins in my daydreams. But I have come to the harsh realization that that will never be reality because I do not have unlimited magic powers that cause children to obey me at the drop of a hat.

However, there are times I daydream about my future classes and I am not Mary Poppins. I am the teacher who just cannot take one more crayon marking on the wall or else I will explode on my class of second graders. In these nightmares, I have no control, the students are controlling me. I am a grown woman who is scared of seven and eight year olds. This is something that, of course, is exaggerated to some extent but, in all reality, who is crazy enough to take on a roomful of small children, by themselves, without any fear. Well, besides Mary Poppins. I teach a group of three to six years olds at church on Saturday nights. On a normal night I get about five or six and even that makes me a little nervous (and I have help). I like my biggest fear going into teaching is not being liked or respected. That is the root of my nightmare.

There are many behaviors that I want in my classroom but if I had to pick just one behavior trait that my students would be guaranteed to have it would be respect. When a student

has respect for themselves, their peers, and their teacher the class is a happier place. Students would respect themselves enough to pay attention in class because they have a right to a good education. Everyone in America is born with the right to an education and that is something students need to know. If students do not know that, then it will be taken for granted. If a student has respect then everything else falls into place. The behaviors that I do not want in my class are disrespect, negative attitudes, and irresponsibility.

Classroom management matters because it is what keeps the classroom running. It is imperative that teachers have a “classroom management plan”. This consists of everyday routines, what students are expected to do and the punishments for misbehaving. If everyday routines are not put into place, the classroom will always have this sense of confusion about it. Students will not know where to hand in daily work or tests and this can cause disruptions in the class. A routine keeps the pace of the class and efficient.

The National Education Association gives a lot of good ideas for rule making. The idea that I liked best was letting the class help create the rules. When students make their own rules they will want to follow them. The teacher should have an idea of what rules are desired and then lead the class in the right direction to reach the desired product.

Letting students come up with their punishment is something that works well. When students have a voice they feel valued. When teachers show that they value their students opinion in something as big as punishment then they feel respected. Students will most likely go harder on themselves then what the teacher originally planned and that helps reinforce the rules.

Michael Linsin (a teacher and writer) says that “one of the biggest classroom management mistakes teachers make is that they take disrespectful behavior personally”(Linsin,

2009). When a teacher takes behavior personally then it makes the teacher irrational when reacting to the situation. The teacher may want to try to get even or over punish a student for something that is very small in retrospect. Linsin says that best way to prevent this from happening is to respond “dispassionately follow your classroom management plan and enforce a consequence” (Linsin 2009).

Jennifer Jensen, a teacher, talks about how it is important to get to know students on a personal level. Humans are relational at the core; we thrive on relationships with other people. Teachers have to be able to build good, strong, supportive relationship with their students so that the students will want to learn from them. A personal environment is a place where students thrive.

IOSIE is method to help teachers with behavioral problems in the classroom and it is comprised of five steps: identifying the problem, objectives, solution, implementation, and evaluation. When identifying the problem, teachers need to look at how the student is behaving and figure out what is really going on in the students’ life. After the teacher understands what the child might be going through they can better understand how they need to help the child in the classroom. When teachers decide what problems they are able to fix they need to come up with objectives. Objectives are simply what you want the student to know and understand. Objectives should help “facilitate learning and encourage self discipline” (Scarpaci 2007). This is a crucial part of the method because it is where teachers set the ultimate goal they wish to achieve.

Next, the teacher is ready to move onto making a solution. A solution is the course of action that will help achieve the objectives. There are three types of solutions: consequence approach, group guidance, and guidance. The consequence approach is where there is

consequence for bad behavior. With the group guidance approach the whole student body is “encouraged to establish rules to prevent inappropriate actions” (Scarpaci 2007 p. 112).

And lastly guidance approach is where the teacher talks to the student in trouble about what they have done and encourages the student to own up to it. “The purpose of each strategy is to assist students to develop self discipline and responsibility for their actions” (Scarpaci 2007 p. 112). Now it is time for the implementation step. The implementation step is where the teacher carries out the solution that they have decided upon. Before the solution is carried out the teacher must address these four questions: “who is to implement the solution, how do you get the cooperation and support of everyone involved, how long do you expect it will take before a positive result is accomplished, and what happens if the solution doesn’t work” (Scarpaci 2007 p. 112).

The final step to this method is the evaluation. If the results the teacher got matched their objectives then the solution was successful and if not then the whole process needs to be revised. Some questions that will help the teacher determine what went wrong, if there was no improvement, are “was the problem really identified, were the objectives attainable in the time span anticipated, was the proposed solution appropriate for the objectives you wished to achieve, was the implementation done correctly, and Are you sure you did not succeed, even partially” (Scarpaci 2007 p. 112).

I believe that the IOSIE method is thorough and realistic enough to meet the needs of the classroom. It is an excellent model that has the teacher pause and look at everything that is going on before jumping straight to a punishment that is not going to work. I believe that if each step is followed in depth then the teacher will see successful changes in the behaviors of their student.

There will also be students in the class that have special needs that will need to be addressed differently than someone without. Some disabilities that students' can have might cause outbursts of bad behavior. This is something that needs to be addressed and helped but must be done with great patience. Some disabilities will cause the student to need more one on one attention from the student and sometimes that can be difficult for the teacher to give.

As a future teacher this is an area that makes me slightly uncomfortable. I do not really know how to deal with children with behavioral or learning disabilities. When I was in school they were always separated from the rest of the school so I never had much interaction with classmates with special needs. Before I go into a full-time teaching job I want to make sure that I am comfortable handling students with special needs. I want to help every student that walks through my door to learn as much as they can.

The IOSIE method is something I plan to use as a teacher. It is a very basic template but it also lets the teacher know what should come next. I believe this method would be helpful even when a student has a special need because it focuses on looking at the problem before acting. It makes teachers look at where the students are coming from and what is the best way to approach it. Every student is different and every student needs something different from their teacher.

I am no Mary Poppins but with the many resources that I have found, I can pretend to be. I know that my class will at times be a real life nightmare and then other times it will be like a dream come true. Whatever the situation may be helping students with life and learning makes all of the nightmares worth it.

Works Cited

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