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## Student Input is the Key to Effective Classroom Management

Teachers who use student input to develop classroom rules and consequences increase student classroom achievement and reduce student classroom disciplinary infractions.

In classrooms across the nation, the teacher begins the year by establishing classroom management rules intended for the students. Students intend to follow the rules but in many cases their desire for socialization leads to talking during classroom instruction which is the number one cause for classroom disruptions. Classroom disruptions result in lost instructional time for students and teachers. Teachers can reduce this loss by involving students in the process of developing rules and consequences for student classroom behavior.

While working in a previous school district a high school math teacher approached me for advice regarding a specific classroom management problem. The ninth grade students who reported to her had difficulty settling down to begin class. They reported to her class after playing basketball and socializing during lunch. This frustrated the teacher because she was losing five minutes of instructional time each day. This translates into a little more than fifteen days of lost instructional time per year. The teacher commented that “they are not disrespectful students they are

just antsy”.

I recommended to the teacher to use a process that includes input from the students. The process involves teachers and students working together as a team to develop the classroom rules and consequences for violating the rules. Teachers and students enter the classroom with different cultural values which impact the classroom environment and expectations. Students and teachers who work together as a team establish an environment which fosters respectful and positive classroom relationships. When teachers enlist students to work together to develop classroom rules they enhance the overall productivity of students and begin the process for facilitating a learning environment that is respected by the students.

As a result of the process the teacher reported the following:

“I must tell you that this was done on Tuesday. The next day, I had 3 people forget rule number 2 and had to issue a verbal warning. Today, I am pleased to say that I did not have to issue any warnings. They have taken ownership of the rules and the consequences”.

The process for developing classroom rules with students includes:

1. Place students in groups of four or five students.

2. Ask each student to imagine that they were the teacher of the class.
3. Ask each student to develop five classroom rules.
4. Give each person in each group two minutes to share their rules with the group.
5. Ask each group to develop five rules that the group can agree on.
6. Give each group five minutes to explain the five rules that should govern the class.
7. Guide the class to agree on the five most common classroom rules.
8. Ask each group to develop consequences for each rule.
9. Ask each group to present their consequences for each rule to the class.
10. Guide the class to agree on consequences for each rule.
11. Post the rules and consequences in plain sight for all to see.
12. Enforce rules according to the student’s input

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