



What Makes This TEAM Reflection Paper Successful?

Some specific examples/ evidence that contributed to the success of this paper are provided below.

Module 1: Online: Classroom Environment

Grade: 6 - 8

Subject: Physical Education

Criteria I: Development of New Learning (*How the teacher developed new learning and what was learned*)

How the teacher developed new learning:

- Observed mentor and physical education teachers
- Read *Classroom Management That Works* by Robert Marzano
- Met with a former physical education teacher who now teaches Health

What the teacher learned:

- "I learned it is important for students to have a firm understanding of the routines and expectations in addition to what the consequences are for not following the rules. With a clear understanding of the expectations and how they must act, students are much more focused."
- "I gained information on the use of a token economy system and how it can be beneficial ... Marzano says it is very important that students do not perceive the reward given as a bribe for correct student behavior."
- "I learned from other physical education teachers that sometimes the most effective way to correct an unwanted behavior is to have a student sit out of an activity very briefly and speak with her/him one on one."

Criteria II: Impact on Practice (*How the teacher's practice is different*)

- "I shared a list of locker room rules and expectations with the class: 1. Arrive on time 2. Demonstrate appropriate behavior 3. Lock up personal items 4. Remain in the gymnasium until the final bell. I invited students to add specific details for each ... "
- "I rewarded students for following the rules and routines we set in place by giving students 'Cougar Coupons' and acknowledging their appropriate behavior to the rest of the class."
- "As a result, I then gave students the opportunity to trade their coupons in for a 'Gym Pass' if they wanted the option of an extra physical education class during the day."

Criteria III: Impact on Students (*How student performance/learning has improved as a result of changes in the teacher's practice*)

- "Students who were following the rules started asking other students to 'please be quiet' and encouraged them to follow the set routine. Some students referred to the expectations posted on the door ..."
- "Students who have trouble following the rules and routines see students who do follow them getting rewarded with a compliment from myself and a 'Cougar Coupon.' By doing this, students who normally look for attention through negative reinforcement are now looking to get attention for demonstrating appropriate behavior ... I also have students asking me if they or their peers can have a 'Cougar Coupon' because they did a good job following a rule or routine."
- "When we first moved back into the locker rooms, one of my most disruptive students led his peers in following the routine and urged them to be quiet while in attendance lines."
- "For example, in one lesson a student continued to wave his racquet around after I asked the class to put them down. I quickly called him aside and asked him to place his equipment back in the bin. A moment later he said, 'I'm sorry I should have put it down when you asked.' The next time I asked the class to place the equipment down, he did."

Indicator 4: Teachers promote student engagement, independence and interdependence in learning by facilitating a positive learning community by: fostering appropriate standards of behavior that support a productive learning environment for all students.

Goal:

I will learn how to improve my classroom management skills by setting and reinforcing routines, rules and consequences for students while instilling high standards of behavior for all students. In setting this goal, the students will learn to have respect for me as their teacher as well as respect for their peers and will be more productive in class.

Initial Summary:

Currently at my school, students are unable to change for PE class, as we do not yet have locker rooms due to ongoing construction. This has made it difficult to get students into a routine that they can master with the limited space available. This is especially true for our eighth graders, who are accustomed to routines from previous years. Students are also having a difficult time going out to their attendance lines quietly and effectively. This leads to some students being inattentive and off-task. I believe that I can improve my classroom management throughout this module and in doing so hope to become a more effective educator and professional.

Reflection Paper:

I began my module to improve my classroom management by first speaking with my mentor. We discussed what classroom management skills I was employing and if they were currently effective. After discussing this, we looked to the CCT Performance Profile to determine what my current practices were in the classroom and where we wanted them to be. In determining this, it helped me to realize what direction I needed to take to achieve my module goal. As a first year teacher, I knew the road to completing my goal would be a challenging yet rewarding journey. I have found that during this module I have learned more about my students and about my own teaching methods than I thought I ever would.

In discussing my professional growth plan with my mentor, I found that there were many things I could do to improve student's behavior in the gymnasium as well as in Room 5 and then later with transitioning into the new locker rooms. I found that through looking at the CCT and thinking more about professional growth activities, there were some things that I could change to improve student's behavior and increase instructional time. As part of our discussion, my mentor and I brainstormed a list of possible changes I could make to positively affect my students' learning and my classroom management. For example, we talked about creating expectations for the locker room and acknowledging appropriate behaviors using our school-wide "Cougar Coupons."

I shared a list of locker room rules and expectations with the class: 1. Arrive on time 2. Demonstrate appropriate behavior 3. Lock up personal items 4. Remain in the gymnasium until the final bell. I

invited students to add specific details for each, some comments included: being quiet in line, using respectful language, no yelling, putting clothes and books etc. in your own locker. Once finalized, I placed a large poster with the rules and expectations for the locker room on the door where students enter. These also align with our school's PBIS plan and behavior code. I rewarded students for following the rules and routines we set in place by giving students "Cougar Coupons" and acknowledging their appropriate behavior to the rest of the class.

One source of my learning about classroom management came from observing both my mentor as well as the physical education teachers at a neighboring middle school. Although my mentor teacher elementary aged students, I found my observation of her class to be very beneficial for a number of reasons. I learned there was a lot of structure within her physical education class and that students were very clear about the routines and expectations. In watching this, I tried to apply some of what she used in her classroom into mine. For instance, she made sure to greet her students at the door and walk them into the gymnasium. I believe that this helps students see that you are interested when you make it a point to say hello to them upon entering. I now stand right where students enter and exit the locker room to greet them immediately. I noticed that this has had a positive effect on my relationship with my students and their respect towards me. During the observation, I also noticed that she was very good with students' names and in asking students for their full attention. I have applied this to my teaching and make it a point to learn all of my students' names, so that during my lessons I can call on them when needed. It has helped me immensely to know the students' names, especially when I give them positive reinforcement or I need to redirect their attention or behavior.

In observing the neighboring middle school physical education teachers, I gained a lot of information on how their routines and rules are enforced and how they give appropriate and consistent consequences. While observing in the boys PE locker room, I noticed students looking at the posted rules after they were asked to get changed into their activity clothes and sit quietly on the bench. They were ready to go in about 5 minutes or less. The teacher waited for students to be quiet before letting them proceed out of the locker room and into the hallway facing the activity field. This is a strategy I use in my locker rooms since and I have found it is very effective in getting students calm and mentally prepared for class. In speaking with both teachers about their routines, I learned it is important for students to have a firm understanding of the routines and expectations in addition to what the consequences are for not following the rules. With a clear understanding of the expectations and how they must act, students are much more focused. The observations gave me an excellent view into ways to improve my existing classroom management plan.

Another useful resource was speaking to and meeting with a former PE teacher who is still working in the building teaching Heath. He shared his knowledge of strategies for improving classroom management and spoke to me about having students start to regulate their own behavior rather than me asking them to be quiet over and over again. I learned about the importance of being visible to students. This is a strategy that has worked out very well for me in the locker room and in getting students ready for class. He pointed out that when students see that you are waiting for them, many students who want to participate in physical education class will start to encourage other students to follow suit. He also strongly urged me to use "Cougar Coupons" every opportunity I get to reinforce

our school's PBIS plan and behavior code. As a member of the PBIS committee at our school, he said this helps in the overall mission of the school in promoting positive behaviors. As a result, I then gave students the opportunity to trade their coupons in for a "Gym Pass" if they wanted the option of an extra physical education class during the day. I have noticed through the use of the "Cougar Coupons" and positive reinforcement of correct student behaviors, the locker room and classroom environment has improved.



In *Management That Works* by Robert Marzano, I gained information on the use of a system and how it can be beneficial. I found it interesting that there must be a way to use it effectively. Using tokens like "Cougar Coupons" has been very effective in changing student behavior in my classroom. In his book, Marzano says it is very important that students do not perceive the reward given as a bribe for correct student behavior. I am careful to reward students only for positive behaviors and make sure to identify which students got the reward and why they received it to the entire class for peer recognition.

In using these resources and in meeting with my mentor to discuss various options for improving my management, I was able to apply what I learned from observations and in my lessons. I found a variety of things could be changed in the way that I managed my classes. If a class of students could not walk quietly out of the locker room and get in their attendance line quietly, all students would be asked to go back to the locker room and we would practice. I found that repeated practice with some of the same classes was frustrating those students who were performing the routine correctly. Students who were following the rules started asking other students to "please be quiet" and encouraged them to follow the set routine. Some students referred to the expectations posted on the door: 1. Arrive on time 2. Demonstrate appropriate behavior 3. Lock up personal items 4. Remain in the gymnasium until the final bell. This peer interaction seemed to have a large impact on the overall behavior of the classes. Students who were behaving poorly started to see that their actions were affecting their fellow classmates and began to improve their behavior.

When all the students were in the locker room for the first time due to construction, there were some definite adjustments I had to make. I found that it was much easier to get the boys into a consistent routine once we had access to the locker and they were separated from the girls. The 7th and 8th grade students seemed to be more comfortable with a steady routine. It was very important for me to be visible in the locker room and to rarely or never go into my office. I realized, this creates a blind spot where I cannot see students. In one instance, I learned just how important this was when I had to retrieve a lock combination for one of my students who had forgotten it. The second it took me to grab the locker combination off of my desk and find the combination, I heard students yelling and arguing. The students had gotten into a scuffle and needed to be sent to the office. Now, I keep the locker combinations in my grade book, which I keep with me outside of my office.

Both in the locker room and during my classes, the use of positive reinforcement through both verbal recognition or through "Cougar Coupons" has helped to create a positive learning environment. Students who have trouble following the rules and routines see students who do follow them getting rewarded with a compliment from myself and a "Cougar Coupon". By doing this, students who

normally look for attention through negative reinforcement are now looking to get attention for demonstrating appropriate behavior, for example; being quiet and the first in attendance line. I also have students asking me if they or their peers can have a “Cougar Coupon” because they did a good job following a rule or routine. Focusing more on reinforcing positive behaviors rather than punish negative behaviors seems to be paying off. When we first moved back into the locker rooms, one of my most disruptive students led his peers in following the routine and urged them to be quiet while in attendance lines.

Another aspect that I have been trying to improve in my classroom management skills is the use of consistent and fair consequences. There are normal consequences already in place for students who cannot follow a routine of changing into their gym clothes or getting to class on time. I learned from other physical education teachers that sometimes the most effective way to correct an unwanted behavior is to have a student sit out of an activity very briefly and speak with her/him one on one. For example, in one lesson a student continued to wave his racquet around after I asked the class to put them down. I quickly called him aside and asked him to place his equipment back in the bin. A moment later he said, “I’m sorry” I should have put it down when you asked. The next time I asked the class to place the equipment down, he did. Another student picked his racquet up and continued to play with it. In my effort to be as consistent as possible, I asked the student to put his equipment back as well. The student was not happy about being out of the activity and was willing to correct his actions. If I am not consistent, the students definitely let me know. This is why I make it a point to be as consistent as possible in my teaching and in handing out both positive reinforcement as well as consequences. Students are beginning to show me more each and every day that they understand what the expectations are and that they need to meet those expectations to be successful in class.

