classroom management

While student teaching in Puerto Rico, one very talented 7th grader always got off task. When everyone else was working, he would often disrupt other students, criticize their work, throw things around the room, and wander about. Seeing that many students were getting upset at the unsolicited negative criticism and disruption, I knew this student needed more immediate attention. I began loudly praising this student when he would complete on-task behaviors, reinforcing what was expected of him, instead of raising my temper for the times he was off-task. Within a few days, the time that he spent off-task was significantly less and I noticed that he spent more time on-task, putting forth much more effort into his final projects than he had before. I believe that by making this student feel capable of being successful in the art room, our teacher-student relationship became more of a partnership for learning and this helped the student instill pride in his work and in himself.

Every child has something that he or she can contribute to a classroom, however sometimes what a student wants is not the same, as the teacher wants to achieve for the day. This conflict often leads to unwanted behavior in the classroom that can certainly be prevented when a student feels connected to the teacher, classroom community, and content. To prevent undesirable behaviors, a teacher must make every effort to promote a safe environment in the art classroom. By creating this atmosphere, this will let every child know that they are a valued part of the class. This can be promoted when establishing the class code-of-conduct by allowing students to identify reasonable expectations for the classroom and contribute their ideas.

While in Puerto Rico, I was fortunate that this student’s negative behavior did not escalate any further, however, establishing steps to take in case of more serious problem occurs is always a good idea. My plan is based on Linda Albert’s Cooperative Discipline theory.

When a student’s behavior is more serious, I would speak with the student in private about the inappropriate behavior. I would ask the student why he or she performed the unfavorable behavior. I would let the child know that the behavior is not acceptable in my classroom, a place where everyone is welcomed.

If the behavior were to persist, the student would need to choose to serve an after-school detention with me, or would be assigned a specific writing assignment about the negative behavior. This assignment allows the student to reflect on the undesirable behavior and clarifies desirable ones. They would be required to have their parent sign the paper, and this would serve as a notification to the parent letting them know of the behavior.
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problem that happened, thus building communication with guardians in hopes of resolving any issue the student may be having outside the classroom. If the student did not complete the assignment, further action would be necessary, such as a detention with the school disciplinarian, and a phone call to their parents to discuss the matter further.

My action plan is not to isolate any student from the art classroom, but rather to encourage every student to perform on-task behaviors. These desirable behaviors would include respecting one another and treating people the way that you’d like to be treated so that everyone will feel valued and welcomed in the class. Many misbehaviors result from students feeling incapable of success, and my goal is to make every student feel like a confident asset to my learning community.