Classroom and Behavior Management Strategies

Without adequate classroom and behavior management, instruction will quickly falter. Over the course of my student teaching experience, I have learned the greatest classroom and behavior management strategies that can be used are consistency and fairness. Students thrive on consistency in the learning environment. This begins with an easily understood and maintained set of rules and procedures. For example, early in my internship, I realized how distracting it was when students left their seats during lessons. Therefore, I created a classroom rule prohibiting students from leaving their seats without permission during instructional time. However, no classroom rule goes unbroken. Conversely, some students rarely, if ever, break classroom rules. As a result, consequences and rewards are also necessary attributes of classroom and behavior management. I formulated a classroom behavior chart for my students to enforce rules and reward positive tendencies. The chart is designed to mimic a number line ranging from negative three to positive three with either consequences or privileges on each number. All students begin each day with their name clips on positive one, which allows students to take a piece of candy from the jar at the end of the day. However, if a student breaks a classroom rule, he or she must move their clip to zero, or the warning spot. Further poor choices result in the student moving to negative one (silent lunch), negative two (loss of recess), and finally negative three (phone call home). Nonetheless, commendable choices in the classroom must be reinforced with rewards. Therefore, good behavior results in moving up the chart. In this case, students move to positive two (have lunch with a friend) and then positive three (enjoy a classroom privilege, such as computer time). For students who struggled with constant movement up and down the chart, it became evident an individualized plan was necessary. In these cases, I created a chart for that particular learner based on problem behaviors and kept a running record of these incidences for each day. This allowed the learner and his or her parents to see the intrusive nature of these actions. It also gave the student goals to work toward. For example, a student who begins the program with seven daily instances of disruptive behavior may be given the goal of reducing the number to five. Once this goal is reached, the student will be rewarded accordingly. This is an integral part of classroom and behavior management because it helps struggling students avoid learned helplessness in the whole group behavior plan due to repetitive negative consequences. Therefore, with consistency, fairness, classroom rules, and a concise behavior plan for the class, both on a group and individual level, instruction can proceed.