Structure, Documentation, and Communication Plan

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Not only must students understand the class rules, but teaching a college course, they must also follow the college's codes of conduct. I will establish the rules of the class, how documentation of positive and negative actions is kept and how communication with my students will be managed. It is important to me to state this on the first day of class. This will allow my students to know what is expected of them. As Marzano et al. (2003) state, "the beginning of the school year is used as the linchpin for effective classroom management."

Classroom Structure

I will establish how the classroom will be structured on the first day. Using a discipline code, I will inform my students of what is expected and what discipline will occur if someone does not follow expectations (Marzano et al., 2003). I will use a syllabus and refer students to the college website by providing links in Desire2Learn (D2L) to share this information. D2L is a learning management system designed for skill and development in learning (D2L, 2020). Since I will use a syllabus and D2L, I will take time during our first meeting to review the syllabus, which will contain the rules and procedures and the consequences of breaking a rule. I will also help students, if needed, learn how to navigate through the course content in their D2L account for my class. After the students have had time to review the syllabus and information I placed online in D2L, they will have one week to sign a document stating that they have read and understand the guidelines for my class. I will keep the signed document in the student's folder that I will use throughout the semester for student work, extra deeds, or disciplinary referrals. I will also upload all documents into a Google folder specified for the class.

My syllabus will include the rules, consequences, and procedures I expect each student to follow. Students will have access to my syllabus in D2L with the option to download and print it. Since I will also need to ensure that students follow the College Code of Conduct and department

rules, I will establish these clear schoolwide rules regarding misconduct and ensure students have access to the links in their D2L account on the school website (Marzano et al., 2003). The class syllabus will list department guidelines and the guidelines I expect students to follow. An example of a college rule is the code of conduct. Students that are caught plagiarizing can be expelled. The dress code is an example of a department rule for dental assisting and dental hygiene students. During clinic sessions, students cannot wear fingernail polish or have their hair down. If a student breaks the rule, they will be given a deficiency that deducts points from their grade. Although college and department rules are nonnegotiable, the rules I create are open, and I discuss them with the class. On the first day, I give the students options. An example would be the color uniform they wear. Students get to vote on a black or blue uniform color. I also let students have input on how they will take their quizzes. They can have timed quizzes online using a recorded lockdown browser at home, or quizzes can be taken in class. If they choose to take their quiz online, I will set a date for completing each quiz, or the student will receive a zero. I also have instructions posted on D2L on how the quiz is to be taken. Instructions include

1. How to prepare their environment. Since quizzes are timed, they will need to use the bathroom or have water nearby.

2. Ensure they do not have smartwatches or cell phones nearby to reduce distractions from calls or texts.

3. Ensure their computer is fully charged and has a reliable internet connection.

4. I inform them of what happens if they try to take a screenshot of the quiz. If a screenshot is taken, the quiz will end, and the student will receive a zero.

5. I inform students that questions are randomized.

6. I inform them that they should have an adequate amount of uninterrupted time because quizzes can not be paused.

7. I inform them of the time limit.

8. I inform them to contact the school IT department for computers or problems in D2L. I also provide the link to the department.

9. I also tell them to contact me if they have questions.

The class can also vote to have quizzes in class. If this option is chosen, I will give students a time limit, but I will let them know I will give them a few extra minutes if needed. Also, all students are sure to have an environment free from distraction, and they do not take the quiz on their time.

If students do not follow the rules, I must apply a consequence. As an effective teacher, I must ensure that consequences are understood (Marzano et al., 2003). Teaching dental assisting and in the dental hygiene programs, I am not faced with many behavioral problems, but sometimes students break the rules. Marzano et al. (2003) suggest that when students break the rules, I should have a program for students to follow. The first part of the program entails that the students understand the consequences and that I am consistent with the guidelines of the institution I work for (Marzano et al., 2003). That is why I review how we handle infractions on the first day we meet. For minor infractions, I will use a three-step program.

1. The First infraction receives a warning

2. The Second infraction receives points deducted from their clinic grade.

3. The Third infraction will receive a write-up and meeting with the student, instructor, and department director.

Documentation

After I have determined what guidelines the students will follow, I need to keep documentation. I will keep documentation of students who do something exceptional, such as

going above and beyond to assist a classmate or help a patient in the clinic. I will also keep

documentation of students that break the rules. Some minor offenses may not be documented but

given a warning. A minor offense is chewing gum, whereas a more severe offense could be not

following proper infection control guidelines. Having proper documentation will allow me to go

straight to the facts and have solid evidence just in case any concerns follow during the semester

(Bright Hub Education, 2008). I can also use positive documentation when asked to write a

reference letter. After I have determined what should be documented, I will need an excellent

record-keeping system that is simple to use (Marzano et al., 2003). I will use Google docs,

Google mail, and Google calendar. Google is my preferred method for documentation since it is

the institution's preferred platform for sharing amongst colleagues and students. I will create an

online document for each student, and when documentation is needed, I will open their sheet and

add the date, time, what occurred, and any details if a conversation was had with a student. I will

also include documentation of any emails that I have with students. An example of how I will

document an occurrence with a student will be if a student does not wear the proper clinical

attire. First, I would talk with the student and remind them of what the proper dress code is for

the clinic. Second, I would inform the student of the penalty for not following the guidelines.

Third, I would send the student a copy of the documentation they agreed to during the first week

of class. Finally, I would place the infraction in the student file listing the date, time of

occurrence, what the infraction was, steps taken to address the infraction, and the communication

I had with the student.

Communication Plan

Communication between the teacher and the student helps improve classroom interaction,

which is why I will ensure I maintain good communication with my students. (Milner, 2019). I

feel it is vital to have a communication plan for my students to succeed. I will use Google mail to

communicate with my students. I start the first day of class by informing students that all communication will be through their school-issued email accounts. Students are informed that their accounts should be checked daily for important notifications. To ensure all communication is through their school-issued accounts, I do not respond to students that use their personal email accounts. I use Google mail to follow up on conversations, confirm appointments, and set times to discuss grades. Following up with an email using a school-issued account is a simple way to document and allows for retrieval if concerns arise.

I will use D2L when I address the class about upcoming assignments, quizzes, or any announcements the students need to be aware of. I will also use D2L to grade assignments and tests. Students who access their grades can see any comments I have made. When the student's grades drop below an 80%, I send the student an email to set up a meeting to discuss their grade. I have the student check D2L before our meeting to review what they are having trouble with, so we can communicate and develop a plan to help them improve their grades. When the meeting is set, I will email them the date and time and add it to the Google calendar. After the meeting, I will send a follow-up email starting with, as we discussed, the steps you agreed to use (what steps were discussed follows). I have found that the follow-up emails hold the student accountable, and they are more likely to follow through. The emails are also a simple way for both parties to have documentation.

Conclusion

Developing a plan for structure, documentation, and communication is essential for students to succeed. It is also crucial in the management of my classroom. That is why I will use Google and D2L to aid in the management of my class.

References

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