

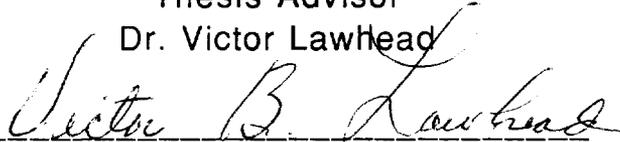
Creating and Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Purpose of Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to heighten the awareness of everyone involved in the education process, primarily in the secondary school setting, concerning the creation of an environment that nurtures a student's innate need to succeed. Inside, the creation phase consists of an exploration of classroom management styles of selected educators and suggestions for strengthening the self esteem of young adolescents. Following this, the paper focuses on the essentials for maintenance of a carefully constructed classroom. The essential components include dealing with conflicts and communicating effectively. Finally, stress is given to the need for educators to view the profession as more than a source for knowledge. Rather, it is the duty of a teacher to enhance the lives of young, impressionable adolescents so that they become responsible citizens.

Acknowledgements

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NOTE: The reference to the male gender in this paper is by no means discriminatory. It simply maintains the continuity of the text and is inferred to be gender neutral.

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CREATING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Prologue

Laura walks into her fifth hour class not knowing what to expect. She needed another math credit to graduate so she reluctantly enrolled in an Investigative Geometry class. She found out that morning that Miss Jacobs was teaching her class. The school has been buzzing all day with talk of this brand new teacher. The kids in Miss Jacobs' first hour class report that she is a great teacher whose class is going to be an excellent experience, while her second hour class is running to the counselors to change their schedules! How can one teacher arouse such opposing reactions?

It boils down to the characteristics of the groups of students and their reactions to Miss Jacobs' first day discussion of responsibilities and expectations. She made everything very clear for them because she agrees with D. P. Ausubel who said, "it is impossible for children to learn what is not approved and tolerated simply by generalizing in reverse from the approval they receive for the behavior that is acceptable" (Clazario 100). Furthermore, unlike many teachers who lay out rules and regulations accompanied by consequences for non-conformers, Miss Jacobs is attempting to take a positive approach to her learning environment. The opposing reactions occurred because some students cringe at the thought

of being responsible for their actions and ultimately their success. They are more accustomed to taking a passive role in the classroom until they detect the chance to cause a disruption. When this chance arises, the continuity of a lesson, the concentration of the students and the train of thought of the teacher are all demolished. Wishing to avoid such situations, and more importantly, to set her students up for success in her class as well as in every day life, Miss Jacobs is insisting that her students take an active role in her classroom.

Introduction

This thesis will examine what the students will be able to expect from a teacher like Miss Jacobs in addition to what she expects of them. Specifically, the thesis will examine various classroom management models, will identify numerous teacher actions which strengthen self esteem, will define a guide for dealing with conflicts and will present the importance of open communication. Each of these components is essential to creating and maintaining a positive learning environment.

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Realistically, each teacher is different and has an individual personality which shapes his classroom management plan. The students react differently to teachers simply based on their physique, tone of voice or disposition. For example, a six foot five, 250 pound male will not have as much difficulty earning respect as a five foot three, 100 pound female. As the difference between the students' stature and the teacher's stature becomes more slight, however, more emphasis must be given to disposition and professionalism. Just because a physique is more intimidating or a disposition more inviting, the management plan will reflect the preconceived respect of the students.

This range of styles is the major reason why so many behavior psychologists have developed various classroom management strategies. Very seldom does a teacher always turn to one specific plan. Rather, each unique teacher creates his own unique strategy by picking and choosing the techniques which best suit his personality. Other factors to consider when developing a learning environment are the type of class and type of facilities. Laboratory classes, for example, require procedures for setting up and putting away equipment--often in two different rooms. Other classes such as mathematics or English have a need for expectations regarding small group discussions or possibly the use of a learning center.

Therefore, just as each teacher is different, each positive learning environment will be different.

Generally speaking though, all student responsibilities can be classified as a form of respect. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding of the definition of the word "respect" emerged from military abuse. In the armed services, respect is a forced, authoritarian concept which reflects an emphasis on obedience rather than learning. In contrast, an educator's view of respect is a desirable, reciprocal relationship between people which is necessary to be an integral part of society. When applied to a classroom atmosphere, for example, a student needs to work well in large and small groups and understand the expectations of respect for his peers. The student also needs to realize that the teacher is leading the classroom and that he deserves the respect of authority. Authority that the teacher needs to be cautious not to abuse. Surprisingly enough, some students need to be told about respect for property which does not belong to them. This encompasses school property, the teacher's property, and fellow students' property. Lastly, and most importantly, the issue of self-respect must be addressed. The more respect a student has for himself, the more open he will be to the learning process. DeBruyn supports this concept by saying, "...lack of self-confidence is the cause of the misbehavior *regardless* of how it is manifested. It is the real issue and, therefore, must be treated. Again, only success can change the

students' self-image"(22).

Through my research and after examining my belief system, I insist that classroom management must be addressed in terms of awareness and attitude of the teacher. "The Road to Discipline", Dynamics of Effective Teaching and Building Classroom Discipline all reflect this point of view. They stress being aware of group dynamics, the causes of misbehavior and the individual personalities of the students. Most of these techniques, with the exception of Behavior Modification and Assertive Discipline, are broadly known as group process strategies. The following portion of the paper will describe several well defined plans dedicated to such techniques.

Management Philosophies of Selected Educators

The Common Threads

All of the eight strategies which follow have five common threads which tie them together. First of all, as a result of the positive approach they share, most of them strive to cultivate good habits rather than admonish the bad ones. Secondly, each author stresses that people choose their behavior therefore making the student ultimately responsible for positive or negative consequences. Furthermore, each plan supports logical consequences to the student's behavior as opposed to tedious punishments or undesirable awards. In addition, positive reinforcement is

used to help build the self-esteem of students. Finally and most importantly, addressing the situation instead of the student will maintain the fragile personal link between a teacher and a student. It is unfortunate the number of students who tune out and refuse to learn once that link has been broken.

Distinctive Qualities

Redl and Wattenberg--Group Processes

Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg have researched the roles of teachers and students since the 1950's. In their examination of classroom behavior, they have found it necessary to focus on how students act as a group. To them the group is an entity in and of itself. "A group creates conditions such that its members will behave in certain ways because they belong to it; at the same time, the manner in which the parts functions affects the whole" (Redl and Wattenberg 267). As a teacher then, one needs to be concerned with the principles of group dynamics, or as Charles asserts, "psychological forces that strongly influence individuals" (6).

Such a study of how groups act will make the teacher aware of the causes of behavior. According to Redl and Wattenberg, "Understanding motivations, the basic causes behind behavior and conflict, is half the battle of classroom control" (Charles 5). They insist that knowing why a

— student behaves undesirably leads the teacher to a plan of counteraction which emphasizes understanding. Students tend to react better if they feel that the teacher is genuinely concerned. Redl and Wattenberg's suggestions are sensitive to the emotional health of students.

Kounin--Dual Track Logic

Dr. Jacob Kounin's work through the 1970's reflects the basis of Redl and Wattenberg's ideas and adds new concepts to an educator's repertoire. Kounin's system stresses group management as the Redl and Wattenberg model does. However, in order for Kounin's philosophy to be very effective, the teacher needs to be able to simultaneously handle two trains of thought. At the same time a teacher is concentrating on his presentation and activities, Kounin expects him to be aware of each movement of each student. For those who have difficulty chewing gum and walking at the same time, this may be more trouble than it is worth. Nevertheless, Kounin made new and useful observations regarding group behavior which he termed the "ripple effect" and "withitness."

He admits that the ripple effect is not as effective in a high school atmosphere but still has relevance to a positive learning environment. Charles explains it as, "the way in which teachers issue desists (remarks intended to stop misbehavior) also influences the behavior of students who merely witness the desist. The effect of the desist ripples from the

target student outward to others”(23). In some instances this may be beneficial. For example, if a student is dozing off, waking him up with a loud noise will alert the rest of the class as well. But in others, it could be detrimental. Some students react negatively when a teacher uses them as an example for the rest of the class. In order to use the ripple effect in a positive learning environment, the teacher must be aware of the individual personalities of all who are involved.

“Withitness” simply refers to being aware of every action in every part of the room. If a teacher can anticipate misbehavior, he can defer it with the use of body language or a verbal desist. In order to master this skill, teachers need to be very secure in the material they are presenting due to the dual track thought process necessary for success.

Neo-Skinnerian--Behavior Modification

The Neo-Skinnerian strategy, so named because it was derived from the earlier work of B. F. Skinner, is more explicit than many of the others. It is based on the belief that this world operates in a cause and effect fashion. Every action that we take results in either a form of reinforcement or punishment. When the teacher applies this philosophy in a lesser extreme in the classroom, he is using behavior modification. Skinner recognizes that as students get older, they are less likely to react positively to public praise. Rather, he suggests the teacher uses a

— structure of consequences. Students are also taught to be responsible for themselves because they are the ones who will pay the consequences for misguided actions.

Skinner is also responsible for the idea of token economies, simulated money systems awarded by the teacher as reinforcement. Some teachers make them work well, while others find it time consuming or demeaning to the education process. The latter group claims it ignores the importance of respect for education and instead promotes extrinsic motivation and loss of free will (Charles 44).

Behavior modification allows the teacher to remain professional in all aspects of classroom management. Realistically, it has to be used with extreme care so as not to destroy the free will of students or to create a power struggle within the learning environment.

Ginott--Role Models

Haim Ginott's stress on teachers as role models makes his strategies stand out from the others. Students look to teachers to learn how to become responsible citizens. Hence, if teachers can exhibit cooperation, acceptance of responsibility and respect for our fellow man, our students will at the very least notice and think it reasonable that we ask the same from them.

Like Redl and Wattenberg, Ginott is concerned with the emotional

well-being of students and consequently, he urges teachers to use "sane" messages when addressing students, assume sincerity of students and not to praise judgementally. "Sanity, according to Ginott, depends on people's ability to trust their own perception of reality"(Charles 50). His messages encourage students to be true to themselves and not to be influenced by judgments of others. Teachers need to avoid intentionally shaping a child's personality by praising his character. Rather their encouragement should focus on the work a student has done well. All of these concerns, according to Ginott, contribute to emotionally stable adolescents.

Dreikurs--Mistaken Goals

Rudolf Dreikurs' most innovative concept is that of mistaken goals. Each misbehavior, he says, is a direct result of one of four mistaken goals: attention getting, power seeking, revenge seeking and displaying inadequacy. If the teacher can identify which goal applies to a situation, he can react accordingly. This idea is closely related to Redl and Wattenberg's issue of identifying motivating forces. However, it differs in that Dreikurs has narrowed the motivations to four categories. He even went a step farther to suggest specific strategies for dealing successfully with each mistaken goal.

Dreikurs also promotes encouragement as opposed to praise. He

— feels that by commenting on the student's achievement, his personal character is not being judged and he is not as easily set up for successive ridicule from his peers. This applies to reprimands as well. Focusing on the deed permits respect for the student even if his behavior was unacceptable.

Another point unique to Driekur's plan is to keep behavior in perspective. Before a teacher takes action, he must ask himself, "Am I making a mountain out of a molehill?" One should strive to be realistic and thin of the students' positions.

Jones--Shaping the Environment

The Fredric H. Jones strategy is a simple one focused on subtle teacher reactions to students. His studies revealed that most of the misbehavior in classrooms is merely "talking without permission (80%) and general goofing off" (Charles 80). Generally, he is concerned with a well organized and efficient classroom. He emphasizes that in such an environment control can be maintained through effective body language, incentive systems and efficient individual help.

He feels that body language can settle most minor disruptions without disturbing the continuity of a lesson. Eye contact, physical proximity, body carriage, and facial expressions can all be useful for communicating disapproval of an inappropriate behavior and even curb the

behavior before it becomes a disruption.

Jones' incentive systems differ from the Neo-Skinnerian view in that they involve free time or choice of an enrichment activity. He suggests setting time aside at the end of the week and deducting from it the time that the class spends off task during the week. It is important for the students to know that the group needs to behave appropriately in order for the group to be rewarded.

Lastly, he feels that time allotted for independent practice would be more beneficial to everyone if the teacher provided more efficient help. According to Jones, the whole key is, "be positive, be brief, and be gone"(Charles 89). Instead of asking a series of leading questions, as many teachers do, one should give the student encouragement and a straightforward hint. Other more serious problems can be handled after class.

Canter--Assertive Discipline

Lee Canter's model has withstood the test of time. His plan is thoroughly developed and widely taught. In order for the methods to be useful, however, a teacher needs to subscribe to the whole strategy. He is mostly concerned with insisting on appropriate behavior.

The primary strategy is to continuously remind students of the behavior expected of them. If they do not respond, they are reminded

successively until the behavior is intolerable. The success rests on clear communication.

The advantages to assertive discipline are that it is very clear cut and can be adapted in most situations. The disadvantage is that it could add rigidity to a learning environment. The teacher needs to decide if this model suits his personality. Unlike the other suggestions, this one must be taken all or nothing.

Glasser--Meeting Students' Needs

William Glasser has gone through a transition in the past ten years. Prior to 1985 he stood by a no excuses policy. Rather than examining motivations like Wattenberg or Dreikurs, Glasser accepted behavior for exactly what it was and issued consequences immediately. Since then, he has changed his ideas. He is living proof that authoritarian methods do not foster success. The new philosophy insists "that education that does not give those [genetic] needs top priority is bound to fail"(Charles 117). He also sees a need for new and interesting teaching techniques to alleviate boredom and consequently, misbehavior. Directly following from this thought is Glasser's concept of the role of a teacher. He contends that it is not merely a teacher's duty to relay directions. Rather, a teacher should be spending most of his time making learning a worthwhile experience for the students. In addition, Glasser feels that the best way

to deal with a nonconforming student is to acknowledge the problem and offer to discuss it on the student's terms. Overall, Glasser's model offers a method for teaching self direction and intrinsic motivation.

Above and beyond the five common threads, each program has a pattern which makes it unique. As stated before, as an unique individual, each teacher is going to adopt various parts of these plans to create his own positive learning environment. The individual needs to be secure in what he believes before searching for methods to support those beliefs.

Strengthening Self-esteem

As teachers, our role in strengthening the self-esteem of young adolescents is crucial. At that age, students are very impressionable. If we do all that we can everyday to make them realize they can succeed, we will only be creating a better tomorrow. Most of what needs to be done involves attitude , a supportive atmosphere, and genuine concern for the individuals entrusted to us. The first key is to believe in ourselves. Whether we realize it or not, our personal level of self-esteem is evident to everyone around us. A person with a high self-esteem tends to be more in control and have a positive outlook on life in general. This is reflected in how we dress, carry ourselves, and interact with others. We need to be aware at all times of how we present ourselves.

A high self-esteem coupled with genuine interest can only work

magic. A teacher with these qualities will want to provide students with every possible chance to succeed. This can best be accomplished by working to strengthen their self-esteem. In fact, in 1961 Bruck "found a positive and significant relationship between self-concept and grade point average at all grade levels" (Wattenberg, Relationship 9). Teachers need to stop saying "I think you can " and convince each student that "I KNOW you can."

The classroom management plan developed by the teacher involves a total attitude. Within each plan there are several individual strategies which can be used day to day to strengthen the self-esteem of students. The list on the next page is by no means exclusive. These are simply suggestions to help spark other creative means of fostering success. Many can go without explanation, but a few clarifying paragraphs follow.

Smile
Touch
Be honest
Compliment
Learn names
Be professional
Provide structure
Care, do not coddle
Present challenges
Have a positive attitude
Give public recognition
Involve each student actively
Call parents when they do well
Arrange a "Special Friends" program
Accept each student for what he is
Set tangible goals for individual students
Talk to the students about things other than academics

Trust
Respect
Encourage
Be sincere
Have patience
Be supportive
Meet their needs
Give responsibility
Give token rewards
Do not show favoritism
Show interest in each student

Smiles

There is a poem that says, "A smile costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive, while fulfilling those who give." Smiles are one of a teacher's strongest tools. Something so simple can give encouragement and motivation to students to keep trying while simultaneously reassuring the teacher that he is reaching the student. To ensure the effectiveness, however, it is beneficial to couple a smile with strong eye contact. It would help strengthen rapport with students to consciously integrate more smiles and eye contact into the daily routine.

Arrange a "Special Friends" Program

This is an experiment the teachers at Beiger Elementary School in Mishawaka, Indiana initiated in order to let underprivileged students know that someone cares. The teachers who volunteered to help were assigned to a student they would not see on a normal day. They were instructed to take the child to lunch, buy him a Christmas present, and generally make time to spend with him. The entire program was very discrete. The students were never noticeably singled out. In the end, everyone gained something. The child's self-esteem was boosted and the teacher was able to feel good about helping in a special way.

Meet Their Needs

Robert DeBruyn's philosophy recognizes primary and secondary needs of students. By honoring their primary needs, classroom control can be maintained. By appealing to their secondary needs, however, a teacher can improve the self-confidence of each student.

"The secondary needs are:

Gregariousness	Aggression
Affiliation	Inquisitiveness
Achievement	Power
Status	Autonomy" (16)

His strategies urge teachers to create an atmosphere in which the students can simultaneously feel as if they are part of a group and individuals with unique personalities. "Unless we devote time to discovering and meeting each student's unique needs, our efforts to discipline students may parallel going fishing without any bait" (DeBruyn 19). He basically encourages allowing the students to be people as opposed to bodies in chairs.

Challenge Them

Students are in school to add to their existing knowledge base. The only way to move forward in this quest is to present them with opportunities to think critically. Furthermore, they need to be expected to

reach new heights. By the theory of the self fulfilling prophecy, high expectations supported by encouragement will lead students to success and consequently high self-esteem. Rosenthal, Tanner and others have researched this concept and have repeatedly found that “pupils live up, or down, to their teachers’ expectations of them” (Tanner 89).

It is good to have an atmosphere filled with expectations for success, but caution needs to be taken to ensure the success of each student. The teacher should set tangible goals reflective of the abilities of the individuals. By doing this, everyone is given the chance for his own personal achievement. In addition, the goals do not always need to focus on the number of correct answers. A goal could encourage good behavior, neatness, classroom involvement or completed work. The only stipulation is that it is not too close, but within reach of the student.

Care

A common theme throughout this thesis is genuine concern for each student. DeBruyn goes one step further to say that teachers also have to be cautious not to coddle. “Coddling supports weakness. Caring develops strengths. Without caring all teacher methods and techniques lose their weight and may be regarded by students as manipulation” (91). Teachers need to see past the complaints about high expectations and remember that they have the students’ best interest at heart.

— All in all, it is the responsibility of teachers to do more than simply impart knowledge upon young people. Employers search for teachers who control a class efficiently as well as present the material effectively. In addition, professional standards also obligate teachers to shape responsible, confident citizens. In efforts to reach these goals by creating a positive learning environment, teachers should adopt appropriate elements from classroom management strategies (such as the eight presented here) and couple them with a substantial effort to raise self-esteem. Teachers who are aware of the effects of the environment they create take a giant step toward shaping a promising future.

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The plan is set. Respect, responsibility, expectations are all clarified. Now the challenge to the teacher is not only to enforce the guidelines he chose but to be consistent throughout the year. This is not to say that the guidelines cannot be amended, but in order to be fair to the group, a teacher cannot show partiality for any reason when behavior problems are involved. Hence, a teacher should have a systematic manner of maintaining the positive learning environment he was so careful in creating. Inasmuch as the creation theories allow one to maintain a positive learning environment, less time will be spent on the subject of maintenance. The thesis now focuses on accomplishing the goal of encouraging quality learning for all students through dealing effectively with conflicts and promoting open communication.

Dealing with Conflicts

Undoubtedly some students will put the teacher to the test. They want to know if he means what he says and how high of a tolerance he has for non-conformers. As a result, conflicts will arise which challenge teachers to keep priorities in perspective. There are general steps a teacher can take to ensure that this sort of situation will not interfere with the educational process of the innocent. Following the initial

actions to minimize the disruption, the specific routine is determined by the classroom management plan developed by the teacher. Each incident, however, causes distinctive reactions from the teacher, misbehaving student and innocent bystanders. Even though a routine can be established, each case will require careful consideration of the personalities involved while keeping in mind the need for partiality.

The first action must occur immediately following the misbehavior. The teacher must be careful, though, not to assume the situation is worse than it really is. At the very least he ought to make eye contact with the offender to let the offender know he is aware of his action.

If further recourse is necessary, the teacher needs to be sure to keep it private. He should not involve anyone other than the offender and himself at this point. "Handling discipline problems publicly is the greatest form of disrespect a teacher can reveal to students and often results in the greatest amount of disrespect students give to teachers" (DeBruyn 98). Keep in mind that you do not want to contribute to the problem.

If the student must be confronted, the teacher should insist on a discussion after class. It is not fair to the other students for the teacher to spend their time disciplining rather than teaching. Now may be a good time for the teacher to remind the misbehaving student that he has responsibilities to the class as a member of the group. It also needs to be

made clear to the offender that the teacher is not interested in attacking the student's personality. He should focus, rather, on the deed.

At this point, approaches will vary greatly from one teacher to the next. Possibly during the conference after class the teacher could explain what he saw and how it was inappropriate. Another option is to ask the student what he did and what he is going to do about it. Perhaps both would help uncover the issues. DeBruyn contends that, "It's a waste of teacher time and effort to proceed in problem solving before finding out what the issues are in the eyes of students, and sharing with students the teacher's perspective" (103). Most importantly, the teacher must at all times remain professional and stay calm.

Now the teacher needs to decide if the offense was serious enough to render a consequence. If it was and the school has a policy regarding such situations, he should by all means follow the policy. However in a situation in which the decision of an appropriate consequence is left to the teacher, there is one simple guideline. It is the opinion of several veteran teachers that the "punishment should fit the crime." Teachers should be creative but always remember the student's self-esteem is at risk if the situation is not kept as discrete as possible.

The time when teachers are forced to discipline is when that fragile teacher-student link is the most vulnerable. Maintaining respect for the student and professionalism will salvage the bond every time. DeBruyn

summed it up when he said, "Teacher respect for the student is a vital element in problem situations, regardless of the respect being offered by the student - and loss of disrespect on both sides of the desk" (94).

Open Communication

When dealing with conflicts, one needs to remember to stress open communication. This cannot be emphasized enough. It is not only essential when facing confrontation, but also in the efficiency of every day classroom life and the maintenance of positive self-concepts. For example, the teacher must be conscious of what he says when he issues directions. It is a good idea to appeal to as many of the senses as possible in order to remember something. With this in mind, issuing instructions verbally and in writing (chalkboard, overhead, handout) will allow students to use both hearing and sight. The teacher must be careful not to present contradictions which can lead to misunderstandings. Doing so could be a detriment to the teacher-student link.

Open communication also opens the door to better relations between the student and teacher. It is up to the teacher to convince the students that he is approachable. This usually only happens if the teacher reaches out first. The quiet and shy ones are the most difficult and the most important to reach. "Weaker academic students or quiet students may sit in class without recognition for a week or more at a time. Part of the

communication should be positive feedback given at the appropriate time” (Kinsvatter 42). As a teacher, one cannot let this type of student, or any type for that matter, slip through the system. A good teacher will make an effort every day to let each student know that he is concerned with the student’s success.

Equally as important is the communication between teachers and parents. Parents can be the biggest resource both when solving problems and offering encouragement. DeBruyn makes this point with these words: “Unless a teacher shares problem solving with parents, he or she has not only overlooked an important resource, but has also moved beyond his or her authority and responsibility as an educator” (131). They can offer insight to motivations and even add some encouragement at home.

Teachers need to remember that these are not their children. Any decision a teacher makes regarding a student should be personally relayed to the parent. They will often respect and appreciate the effort the teacher makes to help their child succeed.

Maintenance of the positive learning environment is as equally important as its creation. The teacher should always remember that the means to the ultimate goal is strengthening self-esteem and the traditional discipline process is a threat to this goal. If the wrong words are spoken or an inconsiderate action taken, the teacher is risking the severance of the teacher-student link. After that, the only hope for

reconciliation lies in open communication. Parental involvement can be helpful in strengthening the link to prevent a loss of respect for the teacher. In the end, teachers need to be open minded and willing to actively lead students to success.

Conclusion

In summary, a teacher's responsibilities encompass more than simply imparting information. They need to teach kids, not just math, science or music. To this end, the responsibilities include creating responsible citizens who reflect a strong work ethic, respect themselves and understand the principles of getting along with one another. There is not a curriculum guide to teach values of this kind. Many experienced educators, such as the eight introduced earlier, have also seen the need for expanding a teacher's responsibilities beyond the academic realm and have offered plans supported by research. Beyond determining a personal management philosophy with the advise of these educators, strengthening the self-esteem of the individual students deserves special consideration. Furthermore, maintaining an objective attitude when dealing with conflicts and ensuring open communication will only build respect and diplomacy. If a teacher is going to accept the challenge of improving the future of our world, then he must incorporate life enhancing values into his daily routine through creating and maintaining a positive learning

environment.

Epilogue

Let's turn back now to Laura's story. Remember that she only enrolled in Miss Jacobs' class because she had to. When she was in elementary school, her teachers unintentionally created math anxiety with their negative attitudes. Now a senior in high school, she is faced with a teacher who expects her to earn her grades. At first the anxiety returns. She listens on. By the end of class Miss Jacobs' sense of humor, willingness to help, understanding and clarity of expectations indicative of valuable teachers (Wattenberg The Ad Yrs 265) created a new excitement in Laura. From that day on Miss Jacobs knew Laura would be successful because she was eager to come to class and learn.

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