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MusEd 350

Dr. Inks

Topic Paper #2

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For this topic paper I have decided to discuss the classroom management at my junior high school. Prior to my placement there I have seen a variety of disciplinary systems that teachers used. So worked very well while others not so much. Several of my classmates had informed me of the “check system” that was in place at my junior high school and how intimidating it could to the students. I wondered to myself how something as small as a “check system” cause so much talk around my fellow educators. So I entered my second placement with the notion that students feared this system and that the teachers were very strict in using it. Now sitting here seven weeks later at the end of the placement I can that these rumors are just that. Rumors.

It is clear to see that the “check system” is something significant in the junior high band program. As educators we must understand that this time in a students life may be one of the most difficult they may encounter in their educational career. With various social factors, learning experiences and other items going on in their life we must devise a system that is going to best suit students when dealing with these types of situations. The check system provides just that. Here we see a multi-level system that provides students opportunities to correct behavior. My cooperating teacher describes it as a system that starts with little punishment like telling the student they have a check and increases to administration officials in later levels. Students constantly know where they stand with this system. If a student becomes more of a problem as the class period goes on, this system also provides detailed instruction on how this must be handled. Perhaps the most notable aspect of this system is its day-to-day operation. If a student receives a check or multiple checks in one class period the next day the student will have none. As I mentioned before this is a difficult time for students. Any one student can wake up feeling terrible. The act of feeling terrible may influence how he works in his classes and treats other students. The next day though this student may be fine and cheerful. This is where the check system shines. Giving students another opportunity is an excellent way to encourage good behavior and be productive in the classroom. This also provides a direct connection with INTASC principle five. As a teacher it is important for us to provide a system of educating that can be clearly understood by children and executed correctly. The check system provides as a good example of INTASC five and where educators should stand on the subject.

As far as my own experience with the check system goes I found it a little difficult. There were times that students began to act out during my lessons. Their actions more than constituted the use of a check but I found myself not giving them out. It was as if I was almost afraid. An example of this comes from a sectional I did with the brass instruments. A trumpet student began to argue with a trombone student. Luckily the event did not escalate much farther than that and I was able to keep control of the lesson. Going back and analyzing it now I find one possible explanation. The staff at my school is much more exposed to the students on a day-to-day basis. Here they are able to become more comfortable with students, learn their habits, and adjust according to those habits. Knowing what these students are capable of may influence how they see a certain student’s discipline may need to be. Me acting as a student teacher I am a little less knowledgeable with each student’s behaviors. I needed to make more “gutsy” calls when dealing with students and using the check system to help show the students that I am a serious teacher and that they could not get away with items like talking in my lessons.

This classroom management policy has definitely influenced they way I see discipline in the classroom. Time and time again I have seen systems set up by teachers that fail to meet rules and then in turn make a band program chaotic. After experiencing a clearly successful attempt at discipline I can say that I will be using a system very similar to this junior high school. There are obvious results and the program speaks for itself. Junior high students need guidance as well as boundaries. This system gives us the best of both worlds. This experience will greatly affect how approach teaching experiences in the future.