Classroom Management: Group Development Stages

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Throughout the school year, there are four sequential stages of group development that the class as a whole experience in order to ultimately become a true community of learners (Borich, 2017). These four stages include: the forming, storming, norming, and performing stage. In each of these stages, students are learning about how to communicate with their friends and teachers and are continually understanding the importance of respect for one another. Below, there are two strategies that the teacher can implement in the classroom for each of the four stages. Each of these strategies focuses on how to best tailor to the behavioral needs of individual students in the classroom throughout various points in the school year. These strategies can be easily modified to fit with any classroom of learners.

Forming:

In the forming stage, students are beginning to build relationships with each of the students in the classroom. These students are also beginning to learn about their individual roles and responsibilities in class (Borich, 2017). The strategies below focus on how to help foster positive relationships with each of the students in the class as well introduce students to their responsibilities within the classroom setting.

Strategy 1: The teacher should have students pair up and interview one another. The teacher should provide students with questions each student can ask the other student. By doing this, students can get to know one another. The interview questions focus on the student's favorite subject material, what the student is most excited for about school, what the student is most proud of, and other questions that focus on getting to know the student. Once the student interview is over, teacher may ask some students what they learned about their partner.

Strategy 2: Each morning for the first week of school the teacher should have the class sit in a large group circle. The teacher should tell students that each student will have a chance to

tell the class what their favorite something is. For example, during one morning, the teacher can have each student tell the class what their favorite animal is. The next morning, the teacher may have each student tell what their favorite sport is. When the students have formed the circle, the teacher should explain to students that only the person with the bean bag can talk. Once each student has told the class about their favorite something they may pass the bean bag to the next student.

Storming:

At the beginning of the storming stage, students may begin to challenge the different classroom rules and procedures the teacher or school follows. It is imperative, the teacher is consistent with these rules and procedures and continually reinforces these during this stage; however, the teacher should also be willing to alter the rules or procedures that may not be as effective or successful in providing a learning environment where all learners can succeed (Borich, 2017). Below are two strategies that focus on how the classroom teacher can continue to reinforce these classroom rules and procedures, yet also respect students' voice by modifying some rules and procedures to tailor to the students' needs.

Strategy 1: The teacher should hold a weekly meeting with the class to discuss issues they may be facing during certain activities during the day. The teacher may ask students to discuss issues they may be facing during morning meeting time, daily five time, recess time, lunch time, and any other time during the day. The teacher should pair students together to discuss problems that have been occurring during these times. Once students have discussed these problems with their partner, the teacher should have students come together as a whole class and discuss the problems each group identified. The teacher should write these problems on

the board. The teacher should then ask students to come up with some ideas to avoid these problems in the future.

Strategy 2: The teacher should create different learning centers that correspond to the different times throughout the day that problems seem to occur. For example, one learning center may be recess time. The teacher should explain that in this learning center students will be practicing how they can behave appropriately during recess time. Students may practice how they can play with one another. Students may not be able to practice how to play on playground equipment in this center, but they can discuss as a group what to do and what not do when playing on playground equipment. Students may also practice how to line up when getting ready to go inside from recess. The teacher should have a list of prompts at each center that tells each student what they need to practice. These prompts should be based on what students discussed in the whole class meeting in strategy one.

Norming:

During the norming stage, students should have developed a strong foundation of trust with the teacher in the previous two stages. With this trust that the students have developed, students accept the importance of the rules and procedures that have been set forth by the teacher (Borich, 2017). By accepting the importance of these rules and procedures, students will be able to follow these rules and procedures without the constant prompting and support from the teacher. Below are two different strategies that the teacher can implement throughout this stage to help students remind themselves of how to follow the rules and procedures in the classroom.

Strategy 1: Teacher should facilitate a Socratic seminar in which students will discuss the expectations the teacher has during the school day. After students have discussed these expectations, the teacher should tell students to brainstorm some key reminders that may help

students remember the key expectations the teacher has of them. The teacher should write these key reminders on an anchor chart, and this anchor chart can be hung in the classroom where all students can refer to it throughout the day.

Strategy 2: The teacher will group students up. Each group will create and perform a skit about one of the reminders students created in strategy one. For example, if one of the reminders students created in strategy one was to treat others as they would like to be treated, one group will create and perform a skit about treating others as they would like to be treated. The skit may be about a student who is being bullied, and a student may decide if he/she were the ones to be bullied that he/she would appreciate someone to step in and be their friend. This student will decide to treat others as he/she would like to be treated and be a friend to the student who is being bullied.

Performing:

During the performing stage of group development, students are developing a sense of independence because of the three previous stages of group development they have experienced (Borich, 2017). In the three previous stages, students have recognized individual responsibilities, built positive relationships with each of the students, developed a trusting relationship with the teacher, and accepted the importance of the classroom rules and procedures. In order to foster students' sense of independence, listed below are two different strategies that encourage the students to take ownership of their learning.

Strategy 1: At the beginning of the week, teacher should explain to students that they will be evaluating how they do with following the expectations the students brainstormed in the previous stage during the week. Teacher will display a bar graph on the board with each expectation listed on the X-axis of the bar graph. Teacher should explain to students that every

time they see a student who has followed an expectation, he/she should shade in the box on the appropriate spot on the bar graph. By the end of the week, teacher should ask students to evaluate how they think they did with following the expectations.

Strategy 2: The teacher will have students journal each Friday about certain self-improvement strategies they can use to help better interact with others. For example, if a student has troubles with understanding someone else's point of view, the student may write about a strategy that he/she can use to understand another person's point of view. The student may think that in order for he/she to understand the other student's point of view, he/she may need to play and work with the other student more. This may be done by playing with this student at recess time or sitting with the student at lunch time. This way this student can get to know the other student better.

Reference:

Borich, G (2017). *Effective Teaching Methods*. Boston, MA: Pearson.