

When I become a high school history teacher, it is going to be extremely important that I have some sort of management plan in place so the students know what to expect, and I will not be forced to make choices that could seem unfair to my students. My students will know exactly what act constitutes each punishment, and the consequences will never be any surprise to any student, thus making my job easier and more fair. The motivations that I use in the beginning of the school year, the motivations I implement at the end of the school year, as well as the system of consequences is extremely important to look at when constituting this management plan.

When I first begin the school year, my motivators will be significantly different from the motivators that I use at the end of the school year. First, I will probably rely more heavily upon extrinsic motivators, as much as I hate to admit it. When students are just getting off their summer break, they are typically not really excited about learning or school in general. By offering them extrinsic motivators like candy or praise, they will hopefully begin to realize that learning is not all that bad, and that school really can be an enjoyable experience.

The second reason I would probably rely more heavily upon extrinsic motivators is because students, overall, respond better to extrinsic motivators than intrinsic ones. While intrinsic motivators are important, I do not believe that many students will see their importance right off the bat. They obviously cannot constantly be given external motivators every time they do something, but if I automatically say to them, "I'm not going to grade these papers that you just worked on. Now don't you feel good about

yourself?” they are not going to respond very well at all. They must be taught that sometimes it is good just to learn, and that it can be a reward within itself. However, students typically do not feel this way right after they finish their summer vacations. If I were to simply jump in with internal motivators like “fuzzy feelings” inside, they would laugh at me and would become entirely *unmotivated* to want to attend my class in the future.

Although I would begin the school year with external motivators, I would hope that by the end of the year I could rely more upon internal motivators to keep the students interested in my subject area. Throughout the course of the year I would be working with them to slowly wean them off the idea that every time they answer a question they would get a piece of candy. Instead, I might start with this approach, but I would gradually stop giving candy sporadically throughout the lessons until it would become a rare treat for me to bring candy (or other external motivators) out at all. It is my hope that by the end of the school year, they would realize the importance of learning and would want to pursue it without any persuasion from myself.

While I said that I would like to have them move toward internal motivators and be almost completely reliant upon those by the end of the year, it is a statement that is easier said than done. It takes a lot of work to make a student *want* to learn instead of being forced to learn. I stated before that I would attempt to wean them off the external motivators, but I would also hopefully achieve this goal by using projects to spark their interests. For instance, one project that I remember very well was in my college history class. The professor assigned a 15-page paper early on and gave us the due date. We were all quite upset, but then he gave us the prompt for the paper. The only thing he said

was, “Pick any topic between 1800 and 1941, create a thesis, and write about it.” Even at this point, I was not really excited. However, when I starting thinking about my possibilities, I got really excited. Here I was with a century and a half of things I could write about, and all I had to do was pick the one that stood out the most and learn about it. I ended up realizing that I did not know a whole lot about the Ku Klux Klan (which was something that interested me because they are talked about, but not many people actually know a great deal about them), so I decided to research their beginnings and try to figure out *why* exactly they were formed. It was something that sparked my interest and made me *want* to learn, and I would probably consider doing a variation of this project in my own classroom.

In a perfect world, every student would come into class excited and ready to learn whatever it is I choose to teach them. However, our world is far from perfect, and oftentimes students act up in ways that hinder not only their learning, but the chance for others to learn as well. With this in mind, I have devised a four-step process that will hopefully eliminate this problem for the most part. The first step, if a student is disrupting class, is for me to simply tell them to stop immediately or to just stop the lecture and look at them until they figure out that they are being a pest. If I look at them, other students are more than likely going to look at them as well, and they will hopefully realize that their obnoxious tendencies are hurting the class as a whole.

Obviously, this will not work for the class as a whole. If this first step does not work, I would proceed to the next step, which is taking them out into the hallway and simply asking them why they are acting the way that they are. By isolating ourselves in the hallway, they can no longer act up to impress the rest of the class, and they will

hopefully realize that I am serious and that they do not need to act that way to gain attention.

As a sub point to the second step, there is also another approach that I might implement depending on the student. If they are the type of student that typically acts rowdy in class, I may simply put them in charge of some major part of the activity (I would not tell them this is why I was putting them in charge, because that would probably only prove to intensify the behavior). While this could prove to be disastrous, hopefully it will give the student a sense of responsibility and they will know that if the class does not do well, it is their fault. I was sometimes the student that acted obnoxious in my classes, and I remember that if my teacher decided to put me in charge of something, my behavior typically changed right away and I would change from being an annoyance to trying to get the other students motivated to complete the project.

If these two approaches do not work, my third method would be to call their parents. Oftentimes, by getting the parents involved, the students realize that what they are doing is serious and that they need to stop it immediately. My parents were extremely strict with my grades, and if I was getting anything less than an “A” in any class, they would put me to work around the house or restrict me from using the phone or computer until my grades were higher. Because I knew this would happen if my grades dropped, I graduated high school with one “A-” freshman year, and all “A’s” for the rest of my high school career. I was valedictorian, and received several scholarships because my teachers got my parents involved when I acted up too often.

While many teachers use suspension or expulsion as a punishment, I would refrain from using it except in extreme cases. I do not think that kicking a student out of

one of the few places that they may feel safe is a very good way to motivate them to do better. If anything, I think it might turn them away from school, and they would have to find something else to fill their free time that may not be healthy or safe. Sometimes, a teacher must simply fight through the bad behavior and see what the *real* problem the student has, then address that with them one-on-one and see if they can't come to some sort of agreement. This approach both allows the student the opportunity to continue learning, and it keeps them from potentially getting into situations that could be disastrous.

Having a management plan is extremely important, and I think that by beginning the year with extrinsic motivators, then gradually moving toward intrinsic motivators, as well as telling the students the punishments that await them if they act up in my class, I can reach many students that other teachers have given up on, and can hopefully get these students to be excited about learning overall.