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Classroom Management Plan

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EDCC 541: Foundations of Education

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My Classroom: I am the Video and Music Production Teacher at Chelsea School in Silver Spring, MD, which is a non-public school for middle and high school students with learning disabilities. Chelsea's building was once a nunnery, and, as such, was not originally intended as an educational facility. It certainly was not meant for technological video and digital music production labs. It was decided that the best place for these labs be the basement due to noise and light issues. It was also decided that the video and the music have their own separate rooms. The music room consists of eight computer stations where my music classes create and edit digital music. The video lab is about twice as large as the music room and is partially separated by a waist-level wall that divides the room up into a space for supplies, computers, monitors, etc. and a space for production, complete with a foot-high stage. From what I have experienced in other classrooms, my rooms are quite unorthodox, but I believe work to my benefit in terms of classroom management. To ensure smooth and effective lessons, my Classroom Management Plan consists of room layout, mutual respect, and relevant rules and procedures.

Room Layout: First, as part of my Classroom Management Plan, my classroom layout helps ensure smooth and effective lessons. Johnson, et al. (2005) discusses how "the mere arrangement of classroom furniture and the use of classroom materials may be predicated on the teacher's perception of the learners as passive or active" (p. 365). The very nature of my content area dictates that my students be active learners (and I an active teacher) and I organized my classroom to reflect and adhere to this idea. In terms of my music classes, with the computer station desks placed around the room instead of in rows, the students can better see each other's work and can interact more fluidly when doing group work. I can also see their computer screens better this way, which not only

helps me make sure they are doing what they are supposed to be doing, but to recognize more efficiently when a student is struggling. Also, the placement of my desk makes it virtually impossible for me to ‘hide behind’ my desk and use it as a comfort zone. Since it is in the corner facing away from the students, I have no excuse but to constantly interact both verbally and physically with my class.

My video lab has the same idea when it comes to the layout. There are no desks in rows. All of the equipment is against the walls, leaving veritable space for production. There is no teacher’s desk in this room, so, again, I have no choice but to always interact with my classes. This helps with management because the more the students are involved with each other and myself, and are not able to ‘hide behind’ or put their heads down on their desks, my classes are automatically more manageable than they would otherwise be.

Mutual Respect: Second, as part of my Classroom Management Plan, mutual respect in my classroom helps ensure smooth and effective lessons. My classroom is not a dictatorship. Not only do I generally want and urge my students to have a voice and to use it, but I expect that they utilize their own unique point of view with all work that they do in my class. Even though there are certain curriculum requirements that we must cover and certain assignments that must be done, I try and never conduct my lessons with a “because I said so” attitude. It is in this way that I hope to show respect for my students and that I expect their respect back. Part of this is also making sure that my students have respect for their work and it is my hope that if their work is unique to them, they will have respect for it and therefore take it seriously. I do not wish that my students feel that I am assigning work arbitrarily. This goes for all of my students’ digital music and video production assignments. The last part of the nature of respect as a management tool in my

classroom is the students having respect for one another. This especially goes for video production because production, by its very nature, is a team effort and even if certain members of that team may not like one another, they must respect each other if the production is to be completed satisfactorily. I find that mutual respect is a very valuable management tool because it automatically means more personal responsibility for my students; if they don't take on the responsibility of respect, they will lose their voice in the class and I haven't met a teenager yet that doesn't want their voice heard in some manner.

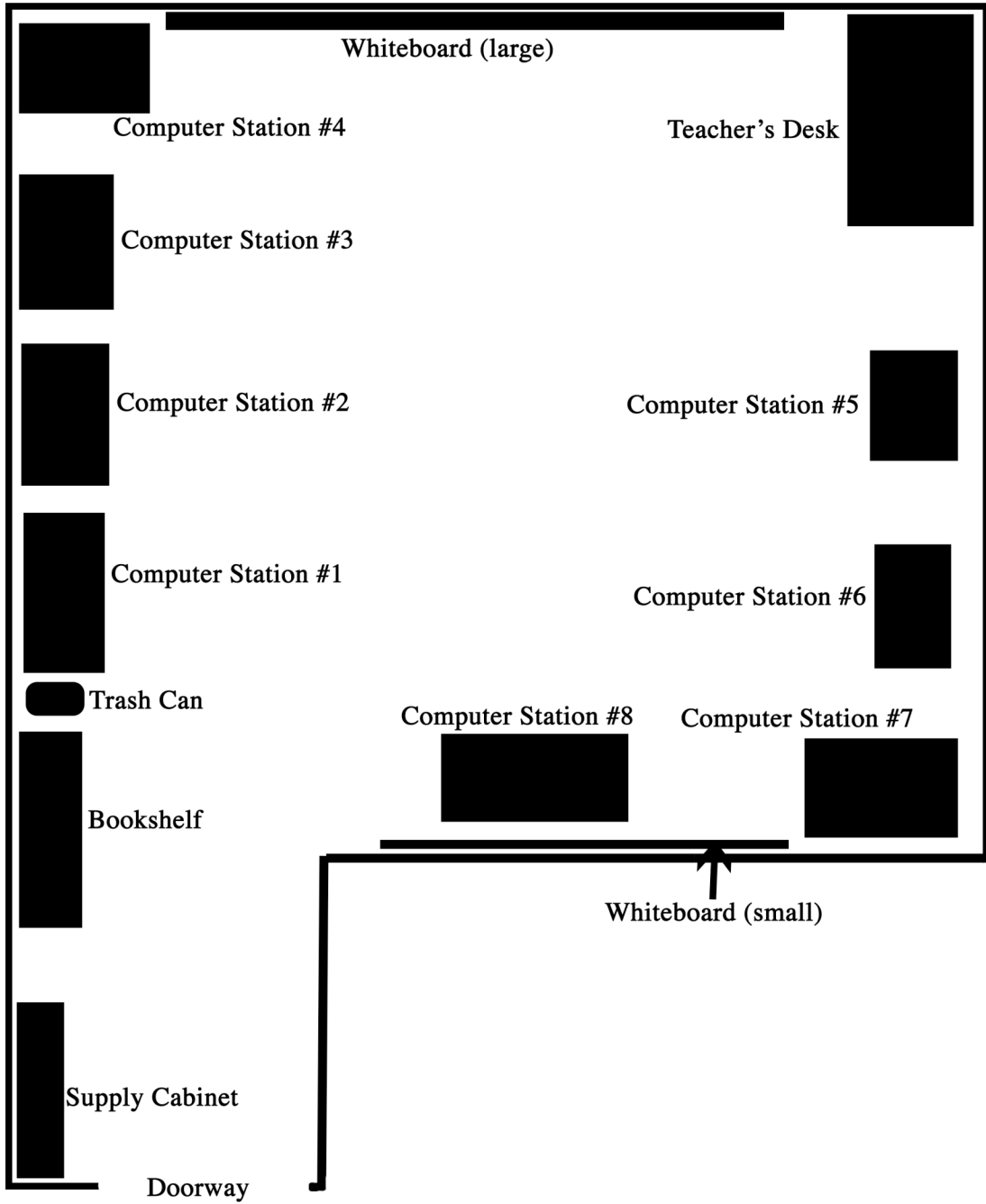
Relevant Rules and Procedures: Lastly, as part of my Classroom Management Plan, my relevant rules and procedures help ensure smooth and effective lessons. Borich (2007) discusses the idea of necessary rules, which should be implemented for specific reasons including work engagement, preventing disturbances, and promoting acceptable interpersonal relationships. Due to the nature of my content area, especially video production, many of my rules and procedures are directly related to production and its different stages. My students seem to recognize that my rules are not arbitrary, but necessary for our classes to function, and that does wonders for management. For instance, even though I have the basic classroom rules of raising hands to ask questions and to not talk when I am talking, there are also rules such as once the production is underway, the Director has final say of what happens in the project, which promotes work engagement and interpersonal relationships. There are procedures that must be followed as well, such as the Director of Photography must conduct his camera checklist before pushing record, or, otherwise, there would be any number of disturbances in the

project and with the other students who are relying on the Director of Photography to correctly follow his procedures for the sake of everyone's project.

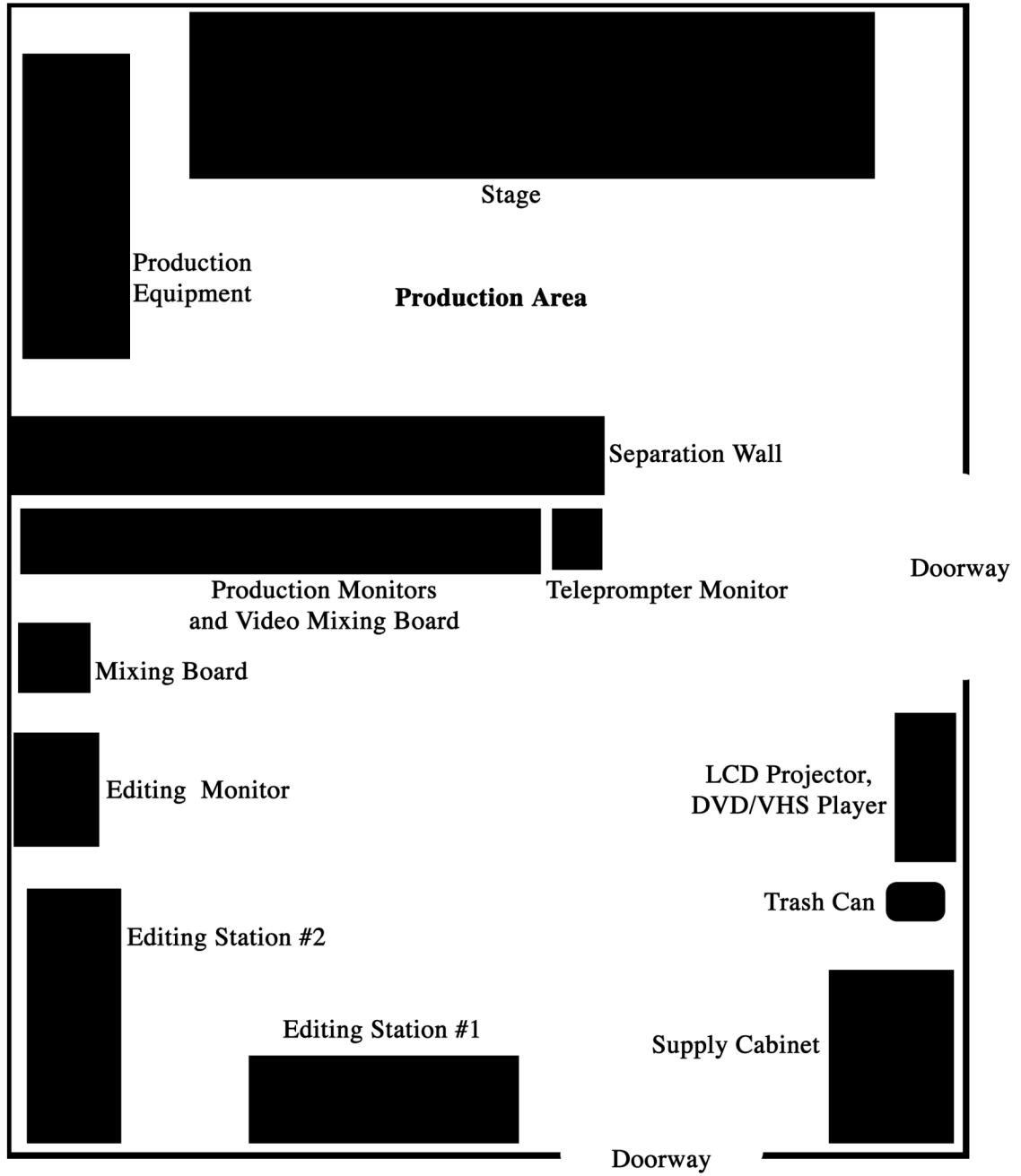
Marzano (2003) discusses "tangible recognition" (p. 36) as a way to concretely exemplify the correct behavior. For my classroom management, I use tangible recognition and positive reinforcement for similar management techniques. Borich (2007) points out that positive reinforcement is when the teacher provides a desired reward for appropriate behavior. I believe that a successful digital music piece or a video project is tangible recognition enough for the students, but it takes a lot work and many rules and procedures to get there, which I know can be daunting at times. Instead of 'punishing' the students each time they display certain inappropriate behaviors, I try and show them respect and gratitude for appropriate behaviors by giving them food and small gifts. For instance, when my students have worked hard all week on a project and have interacted well together, I will let them watch a relevant film for a day and give them candy. Also, if they point out a mistake of mine in a presentation or answer a certain question correctly, I give them a point towards possibly not having to take the final at the end of the semester. So far my students have been responding very well to this.

I know that there are many different ways to manage a classroom, but most of my management techniques that I utilize in my Classroom Management Plan were created organically from my somewhat unorthodox content area and classroom structure. I find that respect and relevance in terms of rules does much more for management than direct punishment, and it teaches my students a certain level of professionalism and respect, which are necessary as my classes are meant to prepare my students for college.

Computer Lab/Music Room Diagram



Video Production Studio Diagram



Production Equipment

Stage

Production Area

Separation Wall

Production Monitors and Video Mixing Board

Teleprompter Monitor

Doorway

Mixing Board

Editing Monitor

LCD Projector, DVD/VHS Player

Trash Can

Editing Station #2

Editing Station #1

Supply Cabinet

Doorway

References

Borich, G. D. (2007). *Effective teaching methods: Research-based practice*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Ltd.

Johnson, J. A., et al. (2005). *Introduction to the foundations of American education*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., Pickering, D. J. (2003). *Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.