

**Final Reflection**  
CEP 883 – Summer 2015  
Dr. Lien

**Big Idea & Application #1: Cultivating Positive Teacher/Parent Relationships**

As a young teacher it never really occurred to me the importance of developing a relationship with parents *before* behavior issues arise. Undergraduate studies never really addressed how to handle parent contacts and in all my experiences at school parents were only contacted if there was a concern or issue. Jones and Jones (2010) say, “By introducing parents to the curriculum and major classroom procedures early in the year, we are also able to work with the parents before any worries about their child’s achievement or behavior make contacts less positive.” (pp 138) Sprick (Champs, 2009) also says, “There is no question that when school personnel and families work together to help meet the educational needs of students, the probability of effectively educating those students increases tremendously.” (pp 51)

Both *CHAMPS* and *Comprehensive Classroom Management* offer several methods of initiating and maintaining positive family-teacher relationships. I have picked out a few methods I would like to implement this fall. Both Sprick (2009) and Jones and Jones (2010) suggest starting the year with a letter of introduction to the families. I plan writing a letter of introduction which will be sent home within the first few days of school. Information which will be included in the letter will be Goals for Success (Sprick, 2009), Class Rules (Sprick, 2009; Jones and Jones, 2010), and a brief overview of our goals for the year. I will also include my educational philosophy statement I use to help guide my decisions (Jones and Jones, 2010).

In order to maintain communication with families I have come up with the idea of having *Friday Folders*. Folders will be sent home with students every Friday (or the last day of the week). In the folder will be: completed & graded assignments, copies of missing assignments for the week, a sheet for both parents/students to sign to say they reviewed the contents of the folder, any problem-solving sheets from the week, and any additional notes or announcements from myself. This ensures students and parents are interacting with the material and discussing what goes on in class. This also allows me to have weekly communication with parents and they will also have an easy way to communicate with me. By having this rapport if an issue arises we will be able to cooperate to resolve the problem.

**Big Idea & Application #2: Cultivating Positive Peer Relationships**

As a secondary teacher in a rural school it is easy to take for granted. Since I live in such a small community it is easy to think that everyone already knows each other. Jones and Jones (2010) tell give several examples of why positive peer relationships are important. First, the attitudes of peers affects academics and behavior. Second, positive peer relationships help meet the needs of students allowing them to put more time into their academics. Third, when students have strong, positive relationships with their peers their academics will improve during small group work. Lastly, students with special needs are more successful in classroom which have positive peer relationships. (Jones and Jones, 2010, pp 102)

During my first year at my current school I was shocked at the way students talked to one another and that they thought it was ok to talk poorly to and insult one another. I quickly banned that sort of talk from my classroom but it was a constant battle. This year I look forward to using some of the techniques suggested by Jones and Jones (2010) to help facilitate stronger peer relationships in my classroom. I think this will give my students a sense of ownership and community in the room which in turn will encourage better academic performance.

The first thing I'm going to do is have students choose a Base Group (Jones and Jones, 2010, pp 118). The first few days of the class, along with going through our procedures, class rules, etc. my class is going to spend time building cohesiveness with their base groups. During those few days we will do activities like "Five Square" (Jones and Jones, 2010, pp 115-116) and "Tower Building" (Jones and Jones, 2010, pp 116). After those initial days, base groups will meet at the beginning of class on Mondays and the end of class on Fridays. At the beginning of the year these group sessions will be very structured with specific topics of discussion, jobs, etc. As students become more accustomed to working in the base groups these times will become less structured.

Throughout the year I will include whole class activities and small group activities to build and promote the cohesiveness of the class.

### **Big Idea & Application #3: Problem-Solving to Resolve Behavior Problems**

One of the big ideas expressed by Jones and Jones (2010) as well as Sprick and colleagues (2009) was that behavior need to be thought of as a skill. If a student does not have a skill to complete a task related to the content we are teaching, we teach the student the skill. As teachers we need to think of behavior the same way. Behavior is a set of skills which are learned and reinforced. If a student is acting out it is because the student is lacking skills which need to be taught.

Both Sprick (2009) and Jones and Jones (2010) suggested some sort of "Problem Solving" sheet to have students fill out when there is a repeated behavior incidents. This allows the students to think through behavior and the purpose it is serving for themselves. It also allows for teachers and students to have a discussion about why the behavior is inappropriate for the classroom and come up with a plan to help students practice correct behavior.

I plan on adapting a form to use in my classroom. I will take aspects from Glasser's Seven Steps to Effective Problem Solving (Jones and Jones, 2010, pp 334-341), the "Choose to be Responsible" (Jones and Jones, 2010, pp 323) and a "Goal Contract" (Sprick, 2009, pp 351). I will then follow a set of procedures similar to the ones suggested by Jones and Jones (2010, pp 320) starting with a nonverbal cue and moving up to sending the student to a setting where he or she can work on the problem solving sheet. Once students have completed their problem sheet we will go over them together and discuss the behavior and the suggested plan. The original will be filed in a "Behavior Folder" which I will keep for each student and a copy of the plan will also be included in the students Friday Folder. By doing this I will have a record of students' plans, and will be able to determine if additional support is necessary.

### **Big Idea & Application #4: Self-Monitoring: Student and Teacher**

Throughout our readings by Sprick (2009) and by Jones and Jones (2010) there were many mentions of using Self-Monitoring to monitor specific behaviors. Sprick (2009) points out students may not be aware of their behaviors. One of the first steps to addressing an ongoing behavior disturbance will be to assign a self-monitoring sheet to the student to draw the student's own attention to his or her behavior. Then at the end of the hour the student and I can discuss how often the behavior occurred. This will allow the student to be aware of how often they are misbehaving and help them know what needs to change. It also opens opportunities to discuss strategies to help change the behavior.

Sprick (2009) also suggests using self-monitoring as a teacher. I think as teacher we need to be setting examples for our students so if I'm asking my students to self-monitor for certain behaviors I should also use self-monitoring to ensure I am using the necessary techniques in my classroom. The technique I would like to monitor in my classes is the ratio between positive and negative interactions (Sprick, 2009). I know this is an area where I might struggle so I think it would be beneficial to monitor this area. Sprick (2009) suggests recording the given course and then using a form (as suggested on page 252) to keep track of the interactions.

### **Course Evaluation Questions**

I really enjoyed this course! So far in my career as a grad student at MSU this has been the most meaningful and helpful course I have taken. I look forward to being able to apply my learning to my classroom in the fall. My favorite part of the class was using case studies to discuss and apply our learning. This class was very difficult to keep up with as a 6 week class. It would be extremely difficult to complete the necessary reading, and coursework during the assigned timeline if I had a job, family, other classes, etc. also requiring my time. Especially at the beginning when I was finishing an additional class the expectations seemed almost unrealistic. It got a little easier once the other class finished and we fell into a routine but I am glad I did not have any other responsibilities to take away from the time needed to complete the coursework. Finally I would have liked more feedback on how the grades were going to be calculated. I am very conscientious of my grades and even though I was receiving feedback on the weekly reflections it left a lot to the unknown. Overall I enjoyed the class! I would recommend it to other students but would caution them about taking it during the summer depending on what their schedules look like.