

Engaged Student Discipline Model

There are many discipline models that have contributed to the various teaching methods implemented all over the world. Many of these have influenced my approach to teaching and classroom management, helping me to form my own discipline model. My own personal experiences as a student and working with children in various contexts contributed to the views I currently hold about teaching.

I have worked with children as a swim instructor in one-on-one situations and coaching a team of over 250 swimmers ages four through eighteen. This has provided me with many opportunities to see how different types of students interact with one another and their coaches. While being at the pool is a different environment from the classroom, I feel it is still influential in my beliefs. Through coaching, I have experienced the entire spectrum of discipline because of the wide range of ages I coach. With the younger swimmers, it is important to make it slightly less structured to make sure they are having a good time while learning to swim. For the fourth through seventh graders it is important to have more structure because I have found them to be more outgoing and rambunctious. It is important to distinguish with them when it is time to goof off versus time to work hard at practice and still have fun. With the high school aged swimmers, I have found in my experience, that it is important to make it less structured and fun again in order to get them to return to the team year after year. Having to adjust my interaction with the swimmers has been a positive experience because it allows me to practice the various control levels, which I believe will be beneficial when I get my own class. It is through this experience,

as well as my practicum and tutoring experiences in actual schools, that I have developed my own discipline model and philosophy.

I would say that my model and approach would be placed in the middle of the continuum as an interactionalist with moderate control. This could vary from year to year, however, depending on the needs and level of my students. In general I follow the models of Glasser, Dreikurs, and Curwin and Mendler. I find that I really want to reach out to students and engage with them on a personal level while still holding control of the classroom and/or situation. I think it is important to have a solid relationship with each child in order to help each one reach his/her fullest potential. This is a direct reflection of the educational experiences I had as a student with my teachers. They were willing to work with students to solve and problems or miscommunications among students, just as Glasser describes in his Non-Coercive discipline model. If a teacher is able to do this effectively, I believe it places them leaps and bounds ahead of other teachers who cannot. If students do not feel like their teacher will mediate and work with them to reach a solution, I do not believe a strong relationship can grow, limiting the student's potential. This also touches on Dreikur's model in which there are rules and consequences that are put in place to maintain a positive classroom environment. By letting students know that there will be consequences for misbehavior, the classroom runs much more effectively. Since the students hold themselves responsible and experience the consequences of misbehavior, they are not as likely to act out as they are in more controlled environments. Through this form of discipline, the classroom is a positive place where encouragement and praise are given regularly.

Finally, by making the classroom an engaging and welcoming environment, students should always be learning and exploring. In an ideal classroom, behavioral issues would be

avoided by making sure that students do not have time to act out. As discussed in Curwin and Mendler's model, the best strategy is to actively prevent having to discipline students. I would love to have a very engaging classroom with a large class library, multiple activities that students can do if they finish their work early, and an organized environment in which to do so.

Ideally, I would love to have a classroom where discipline is never an issue; however, I know this is practically impossible. Therefore, with my interactionalist model, I believe that I will be able to have an engaging learning environment that should keep most students busy throughout the day. If a student does choose to misbehave for one reason or another, they will be held accountable for their actions through the class expectations and consequences. Through these actions, students will know what the consequence will be if they act out, which I believe is important. No consequence will be a surprise and the class will be a support system to help the student stay on track in the future while I can be there to enforce the rules when necessary. I hope that as I spend more time in my classroom this semester, I am able to adjust this discipline model when necessary and learn from my students and cooperating teacher how best to operate an efficient classroom with minimal discipline problems.