



Coach's Corner

September 21, 2015
Volume 2 Issue 1

Williamsburg Charter High School - 198 Varet St., Brooklyn NY 11206 - 718-782-9830

"You teach little by what you say. You teach most by what you are."

- Dr. Henrietta Mears

Welcome to Williamsburg!

Welcome to the Williamsburg New Teacher Program, I am so excited that you are a part of our team and I can't wait to build some great friendships with fellow teachers! Each Monday I will be sending out a newsletter with some highlights from the prior week and updates for the current week. The newsletters will include strategies, quotes, session announcements, mini-PD info, and basic campus information. It is my hope that it becomes a useful resource for you!

Where to Begin...

Although we are all so excited to begin teaching our content... if our classes are not structured it is very difficult to get to the content. Here are a few pointers on *Where to Begin*. (If you missed Rick Smith's PD, stop by 220 to pick up a copy of his book, it's a great resource!)

Relationships

When it comes to adolescents, the relationship between student and teacher is essential as these young adults need to like and trust you in order to be receptive to your instruction. Don't be afraid to take a day to get to know each other. Meet students at the door, learn their names, ask questions about their life, and share stories. A great first of the year activity is *A Walk in My Shoes* (stop by room 220 for a sample). It opens up conversation without requiring too much vulnerability.

Environment

Another very important aspect to building a welcoming classroom environment is in the use of the space. It is all too common for high school classrooms to be set up in rows facing the front. The message we send with this set up is "I am the teacher, I am in control, and you are going to sit and watch me." This message often contradicts our mission of putting education in the hands of the students and helping students to take responsibility for their own education. This environment immediately turns teacher into preacher. Consider adjusting your space into a circle, square, horseshoe, debate style, or groupings. This is a nonverbal way of saying "Welcome to *OUR* classroom."

Procedures

Procedures are imperative to running an effective classroom. Devote the first few days to explicitly discussing and practicing procedures. Think about the following:

1. How should students enter?
2. How do we begin class?
3. How does a student signal that they need to use the bathroom or get a drink of water?
4. How do we move around the space for different activities?
5. How do we prepare and experience a class discussion?
6. How do we look at the end of the class to show we are ready to go?
7. How are we dismissed?
8. What happens if I am late?
9. What happens if I am absent?
10. How do we turn in paperwork?

Words are powerful, but if we use them too much they become powerless. The less we use our voice for procedural things (going to the bathroom, quieting the class, dealing with lateness) the more important and valued our voices are for important content information. Design procedures for all of the above and create nonverbal ways to deal with these daily occurrences. **If you need some ideas stop by room 220!**

STRATEGY SIDEBAR

Always assume the best about your students

Sometimes it can be difficult, but assume they want to learn your content, and assume they want to learn good behavior. When they test us, they *want* us to pass the test. Be on the same side as your students. When they complain, put yourself in their shoes ... would you complain too??

Did You Know???

We have remote controls for the Promethean board and clicker/pointers to advance presentations without having to go behind your desk!! If you need either of these items you can check them out from Rosa on the 4th floor!