Classroom Management

I. Importance of Content conveyed by Teacher’s Enthusiasm
   A teacher’s enthusiasm and connection to his or her students can greatly affect a class. By possessing an enthusiasm that boosts the classroom environment, students can feel more connected and more driven. Some possible strategies to achieve this include:

   - Know students’ names and use those names to greet each student at the door: By addressing the student by name, he or she can feel more connected and more appreciated. Overall, they feel as if they are cared about, which will only help make them care for the teacher more in return.
   - Ask questions and give the students time to answer: By asking for the students’ input, the teacher is able to show that she values their opinion. As a response, they feel more mature and more responsible for their learning.
   - Get to know students’ interests and aspects of their lives: By knowing students’ interests and personal life aspects, students will see that the teacher truly cares for them and considers them as interesting people, not just students.
   - Relate to the students; teach them that you are a person with interests just like everyone else in the classroom: By opening up to the students, a better relationship can be achieved. Likewise, personal experience stories can serve as great anecdotes for rationales and argumentative support.

II. Management of Transitions
   High school students can get easily distracted. With limited class time, this highly detracts from the efficiency of the class and the content covered. Therefore, by proper management of transitions this can be lessened. Some possible strategies include:

   - Develop a “system” by which to run class: For example, create and follow a pattern that would include beginning class, completing simple tasks like homework hand-in, and bringing class to a close. For example, begin class everyday with saying, “Good morning class” and wait for echoed response from class or start class with Daily Oral Language exercises. Also, by not breaking this pattern, students will become highly accustomed to this plan and will know what is expected of them.
• Give the class direction: Provide the students with a question or activity at points in the day that is very difficult for them to stay on track. By giving guidance questions, students will be directed to stay focused very easily.

• Be prepared: By having everything for the lesson already creating, printed, and accounted for, one does not have to waste time to gather materials during the lesson. One should run-through the lesson to be sure that all of the materials/technology/etc. work correctly and are present. Also, one should have back-up materials, including extra worksheets, planned activities and even a substitute teacher file, to always be prepared for any circumstance.

• Be Organized: By having a classroom that is clean and organized, even if one needs to thinks quickly on his or her feet, it will be possible to do so by knowing where all classroom materials are located. For example, by having a filing system for handouts, one could always locate a certain handout at any time. Also, by having an organized room, students will not have to wander the room trying to locate things. At the beginning of the year, give a tour of the room. Give class’s individual mail spots or homework bins. This way, time will not be wasted by trying to identify a found paper or looking for a student’s homework that was not put in the correct place.

III. Expectations are Clear

Setting expectations and communicating those expectations are highly important and are, in my opinion, vital to efficient classroom management and preventing issues that could arise when rules are not clear. Strategies to attain this include:

• Have rules and expectations set on Day 1: By introducing the class and starting the year with pre-determined rules and expectations, students will be able to receive the impression that you are serious about the importance of the expectations. Also, these expectations should be discussed on Day 1 with an accompanied discussion of what takes place when the expectations are broken.
• Follow the STAR Policy:

**Show up ready for class with all class materials:** This includes pens, paper, books needed for the particular class, and homework or assignments that are due. Don’t forget a positive attitude as well.

**Try your best:** This includes participating and completing all assignments to the best of your ability. Also, this would include taking extra steps to actually reach your best.

**Ask Questions:** There is no excuse for not knowing something; ask! First, try to answer the question yourself or by asking a neighbor during an appropriate time. If an answer can not be reached, then ask the teacher. Overall, be informed.

**Respect others, the teacher, your school, and yourself:** Be mature. Respect others’ comments, opinions, ideas, and personal space. Listen and practice gratitude. Be honest (this includes following the school’s plagiarism policy as well.) Take care of the classroom and take care of yourself (Eat breakfast and sleep at night!)

(All school policies found in the handbook will also be followed.)

*Follow these guidelines and you’ll be sure to shine!* 

• Display expectations and consequences: Instead of hanging up random posters, create posters that display all rules and expectations. One wall could even display the consequences of not achieving the expectations. This way, students can be constantly reminded of what is expected of them. Also, the students can never legitimately claim to not know about a policy when it has been hung on the wall for the entire year.

• Establish high standards for the class: By setting high expectations for the students at the beginning of the year, they can be challenged and pushed to take their learning to the next step. This will be conveyed to students through an introduction/welcome letter that will explain the class’ degree.

• Maintain a class website. On the website, have an entire page that is devoted to expectations and consequences: By putting this information on the internet, parents, along with students, would have easy access to what the class requires and entails.

• Create a letter home to parents explaining the class syllabus, achievement expectations, and discipline expectations. By doing this, one’s parents are then able to feel better informed on their child’s high school experience. Likewise, this will help urge parents to question students about progress within the class.
- Maintain good communication with parents: By sending home newsletters, grade checks, and hosting conference or meeting times, parents will be better connected to their student’s education and can understand their role within that education process as well.

IV. Monitoring Student Behavior

Preventative strategies are extremely valuable in conducting a class that runs smoothly and efficiently. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Set time limits with giving time warnings throughout: Keep students on track with goals always. This can be done verbally with watching a clock or by using a tangible timer or Smartboard Timer if available.
- Walk around the room when lecturing and when students work in pairs: Proximal distance is important. Rather than being cut off from the class by a lectern or desk, be connected by walking around the room, observing, asking questions, etc.
- Look around the room: Make eye contact with students as one speaks. Span the room to look at every student occasionally. Keep their attention by keeping them in focus.
- Ask questions (comprehension) during lecture and ask for examples from students: Keep students engaged within a lesson; always find ways to include them. If the student has a task, they are more likely to stay in focus with the lesson.
- Create a conducive room set-up: Arrange desks so that the greatest number of students can be “up front.” Create a semicircle that fosters discussion and collaborative learning. This will also be easier to monitoring with having a fewer number of people in a far back row.

V. Guidance and Discipline Strategies/Consequences for Misbehavior

Students vary greatly in their discipline needs. However, by knowing students’ needs, one can understand how best to guide them throughout the class to ensure for proper discipline. In general, teachers should always be walking around the classroom, making eye contact, and asking and monitoring student work. However, for students that have a difficult time staying on task or paying attention, one can be alert to what the students are doing. By asking
comprehension questions and saying check-up statements, like “Everyone should have now finished the reading and moved on to answering the questions,” students can better stay on track. For students that need more direct attention or are not following discipline procedures, one can calmly try to address the issue quietly and indiscreetly. For example, if a student is not working on what he or she is suppose to, the teacher can simply walk over to the student, bend down next to the desk and say, “I really need for you to work on your reading assignment now.” Also, one can have a large effect by not saying anything at all to the student. If a student is acting out of line or not paying attention, a simple tap on his or her desk will alert the student that you are aware that he or she is not doing what is expected. By addressing the STAR Policy that was described earlier, students can remember to adjust their actions; by pointing to the wall-decorations/procedure listings, a student can also be reminded to get back in line with the class. Seat arrangement can be altered if students are misbehaving due to proximity to other students. By switching students’ assigned seats, further misbehaving could be prevented. (For a sample seating chart, see the diagram that follows.)

If a student goes even further and misbehaves, natural consequences should take affect. For example, a policy can be made at the beginning of the year that states that for the time a student is distracting the class, the student would have to stay that amount of time after class or in the class after school. (This would equate to the fact that if you take the teacher’s time, you must give it back in a sense.) If students disrespect the room by damaging school property, the natural consequence would be for the student to then clean the property. For instance, if a student draws on a desk or puts gum underneath it, he or she would then clean the desks after school. In general, a mature, real-world policy would thus be created and carried out, focusing on natural consequences.

VI. Motivation Strategies

The main focus within the classroom will be creating a desire within the students to learn. This will be achieved through giving real-world rationale for the subject matter. By connecting literature pieces to current issues and displaying the importance of grammar and writing knowledge, with activities like Grammar Rants and editorial sections of the newspaper, students will better understand their purpose in learning the content. Likewise, book talks can take place where students discuss issues that are highly connected to their life at that time. Also, students can have fun days with poetry readings. In general, the main effort will be revolved around
getting students to want to participate, to want to read, and not necessarily to love English, which would be too lofty of a goal, but at least to get students to be able to gain some appreciation for it.

While these strategies would mainly focus on intrinsic motivation, some external motivators could also exist. For example, by allowing students to work for a homework free pass or to receive a party day for perfect attendance would not be restricted. These external motivators would just not be focused on in order to ignite a true motivation within the student to personally want more English within his or her life.
VII. Ideal Classroom Diagram: By placing the desks in a semicircle formation, the seating arrangement is more conducive to optimal learning and paying attention. Also, desks are in pairs to be able to foster pair/collaborative work. The room has a circle table to allow for a bigger space for collaboration work. The posters on the wall remind students of classroom policies as previously stated.