Classroom Management in the Middle School

Summary of Presentation
The “tween” years can be confusing, uncertain, and emotionally conflicting. And tweenagers have troubles too! Yes, both teachers and their students at this level are affected by adolescent development, so managing a classroom for middle school students often requires strategies uniquely different from either elementary or high school levels.

The first step for teachers in preparing for “middle school management” is to determine whether they exemplify the qualities of a “best-practice” middle school teacher. A self-assessment helps educators check whether they are ready to "get inside middle school students’ skins." Understanding middle school students’ developmental needs, physically and cognitively, makes up step two, while step three involves awareness about motivation for this age group (i.e. often the lack thereof).

Step into the world of the middle-schooler for a better understanding of this unique age to design a better management plan for your “tweenage” students—now or in the future. Presenter Vicky Tusken “gets” this world and guides you through it with her expertise and experience.

Speaker Biography
A 24-year educator, Vicky Tusken, EdD, has taught preschool through middle school students, but the past 14 years have been devoted to 7th-grade language arts students at Geneva Middle School South in Geneva, IL. Four years ago Dr. Tusken added college-level teaching to her resume as an adjunct professor for Northern Illinois University (DeKalb), where she teaches middle school methodology and curriculum and young adolescent development courses.

Time of Webcast: 1 Hour, 13 minutes

Intended Audience: Middle school teachers, student teachers planning to teach grades 6-8

Objectives:
Participants will:
- Review typical characteristics of young adolescents
- Take a self-inventory to see if they have what it takes to be a middle school educator.
- Discuss strategies that engage, rather than manage students in the middle school classroom
- Discuss key components to create an atmosphere of learning.
Pre-Questions:
1. Based on your experience, describe the typical characteristics of 12-14 year olds.
2. Describe the characteristics of a good middle school teacher.
3. What are some best practices you employ to reach your middle tweenagers?

Questions to Answer During or Immediately After the Webcast:
1. What characteristics of an effective middle school teacher do you possess? What do you not possess but wish you did? How do you develop those characteristics?
2. How do you engage your students in your classroom?
3. What is one example of a student-directed learning space that the presenter discusses?
4. How can you make your classroom into an emotionally inviting classroom for middle school students?
5. In the classroom setting, what best practices have you used that allow students to be autonomous? To be involved the mastery of the content?

Questions for Further Exploration:
1. Other than giving a grade for an assignment, what techniques do you use that gives students a purpose to complete the assignment?
2. As a middle school classroom teacher, what suggestions did you use to create an atmosphere of learning?

Self-Reflection, Enrichment, and Extension Ideas (take and incorporate into your own teaching): Were you able to move from management of the classroom to engagement of the students in the learning process? What worked well? What still needs work?

Ties to Other KDP Resources:
Articles

Webcasts and Podcasts
Barnes, Mark. “Creating a Student-Centered Results Only Learning Environment (ROLE).”
Combs, Eric. “Save the Drama for Mama.”
Hartwyk, John; Loyal, Andie; Spencer, Jeff; & Steurer, Ryan. “Project-Based Learning to Engage 21st Century Learners.”
Tusken, Vicky. “Nitty Gritty Daily Routines: Middle School Classroom Management.”

Check the KDP website (www.kdp.org) for additional and updated resources.