Teaching is a huge responsibility that requires passion and commitment. I feel it is my mission as an educator to follow certain principles to guide my teaching. These principles include treating all children fairly, show them love and respect, and make them feel valued as individuals. As a teacher I want to help children progress academically, teach them to get along well with others, help them to make wise choices, and grow into responsible adults.

It is important to create a safe and welcoming environment for your students. This requires a guidance management plan. Classroom management is more about developing students’ academic and personal growth than simply reducing unwanted student behaviors. I would establish a very simple code of conduct in my classroom which would be: respect yourself, respect others, and respect property. I student taught in a first grade classroom that had this posted on a large board in their class and I felt it was a good, concise guidance philosophy that would be easy for students to remember. According to Dreikur’s model, democratic teachers allow students to have a say in establishing rules and consequences so I would have the students decide at the beginning of the year what the consequences should be for not following the code of conduct. Dreikur believes, as I do, that when students are involved in deciding rules and consequences that “they will take more responsibility for maintaining a classroom climate that is conducive to learning.” I wish I would have used this guidance management with the first grade S.M.A.R.T class I taught at CSM. We didn’t establish rules or consequences the first two classes and we had many students acting up and not following directions. Once we set up rules and told the girls they would have to sit by Girls Inc. supervisors if they failed to follow the rules the discipline problems were a lot less. I believe if we would have had the students involved in deciding on the rules and consequences, it may have produced even less behavior problems.

Dreikurs’ states “Discipline is not punishment. It is teaching students to impose limits on themselves.” As far as discipline is concerned I agree with child psychologist/therapist Haim Ginott’s theory of “correcting by directing” which has the teacher redirecting the students’ bad behavior to more acceptable ones while protecting the child’s feelings and emotional well-being. Non-aggressive language should be used. Ginott feels that successful discipline happens when students learn self-discipline. As a teacher, I can help this by building trust and mutual respect with my students. If a student trusts and respects me, then the student will most likely be cooperative, producing better behavior. Self-discipline skills will help children cope better outside of class also.

Ginott also talked about the importance of using “congruent communication” which is the communication with others about situations without negative remarks. Teachers should not preach or moralize to students, parents, or professionals. Good open communication should be respectful and invite cooperation. Establishing good relationships in your school network requires multiple channels of communication such as e-mails, notes or letters, phone calls, comment on papers and face-to-face conversations. The teachers I’ve worked with when I was a paraprofessional at an elementary school always sent Friday letters home with students discussing the weeks activities and any important upcoming activities. I would do this as a teacher because it really helps parents keep informed on what their child is doing in school.

I believe that a guidance and management plan is important to promote positive behavior. I agree with Jacob Kounin in his book, Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms, that good classroom management depends on effective lesson management. Kounin says that lesson management includes the teacher using ideas such as the ripple effect, withitness, overlapping, effective transitions, momentum, smoothness, and group alerting. I have observed classrooms where a teacher did not have good transitions and the students got loud and started acting up between lessons. As a teacher I would use the techniques discussed by Kounin to prevent classroom behavior problems. I would also begin the first day of class discussing with the student the code of conduct and working with them to establish consequences for failure to follow the code. The classroom should make students feel welcome, safe, and accepted. Teachers must model behavior they want their students to have. Students should feel cared about and encouraged to care about others. I will establish procedures and routines in the classroom to let students know what is expected of them. My classroom management plan is a work in progress and as a student and future teacher I will reevaluate and change things as needed.