



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

December 12, 2005
Volume 3 Number 15

Classroom Management Ideas

<http://atozteacherstuff.com/pages/4169.shtml>

Gather information. On the first day of school, give the students a personal questionnaire. Ask about siblings, hobbies, likes, dislikes, favorite teachers, problems with teachers. How they would like to be addressed, class schedules, successes they have had in school, perceived failures in school, how they like to be taught, and problems they have had in school. The more you know about them the easier they are to control.

If you know Johnny is looking for a job, and Robert has one and the firm where Robert works is looking for another employee, well, you have just made a friend for life and at least one of your problems is no longer. If you know Johnny plays baseball, often a word to the coach can eliminate rude behavior. If Johnny is causing problems and you know he is smoking marijuana, an anonymous note home to mom might get Johnny in so much trouble that he no longer has the energy to cause you trouble. The point is, knowing things about your charges can make a huge difference if you are vigilant and creative in using that information to your advantage. Talk to counselors and other teachers that have your problem children. Often identical students will behave remarkably differently in different classes. If you find a teacher who has found a way to get Johnny to be kind and polite, ask what they have done that you haven't yet. Often counselors have insights into behavioral problems and can provide actionable intelligence that you can use to your advantage.

Do what is necessary but not more. All you want is for the students to be kind and polite. Once they are kind and polite, it is not necessary to impose more punishment. It is not necessary to hold grudges. This will just poison the class and you will have a harder time getting the students to see that you are on their side.

Beware of Pyrrhic victories. If you humiliate a kid, that kid may shut up for that day, but there are two problems. First, you now have an enemy and teachers do not need more enemies; and second, you have sent a message that the class is not a team that you are not on their side and the mutiny is only one misstep away.

Be strong to fight another day. Ok, you had a bad day. It happens to the best. Figure out what went wrong, why, and how you can remedy it. Reflect on the near-certain fact that it is going to be better tomorrow.

Ways of Organizing Paragraphs

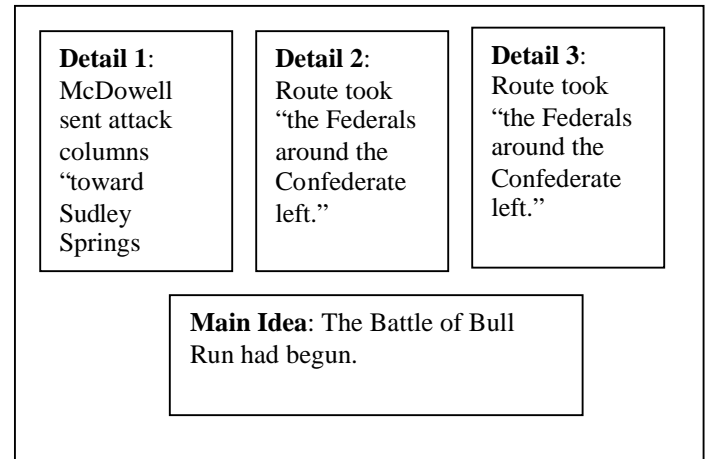
from *Reader's Handbook*, Great Source

Order of Importance: Least Important to Most Important

Notice how in the following paragraph from a social studies textbook the writer begins with the least important details and builds toward the most important idea, which appears in the final sentence.

On the morning of July 21, McDowell sent his attack columns in a long march north toward Sudley Springs Ford [*Detail One*]. This route took the Federals around the Confederate left [*Detail Two*]. To distract the Southerners, McDowell ordered a divisionary attack where the Warrenton Turnpike crossed Bull Run at the Stone Bridge [*Detail Three*]. At 5:30 A.M., the deep-throated roar of a 30-pounder Parrott rifle shattered the morning calm and signaled the start of the battle [*Most important idea*].

Note how this paragraph begins with a series of details that lead toward the most important idea—the start of the battle.



As you read a text with your students, point out to them the way that the details are organized. Once the students understand that there is a pattern to the information that they are reading, they will be better able to understand what the author is trying to say.

Asking students to fill out a graphic organizer similar to the chart above can reinforce the main point and the details that support it.