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A Plan for Classroom Management

August 16, 2010. That was the date I was hired for my very first teaching job. I had landed the dream job right out of college, right down to my preferred grade level. I could not have been happier, more proud, or more determined at that moment. Immediately I went to the school building to see my first classroom and then reality set in. There was nothing there. No bulletin boards, no job charts, no calendar, no desk arrangement. I quickly became panicked! I thought about everything I had learned about teaching and although I had so many ideas and examples of classrooms and how the space was managed, there was no clear answer or one specific way a classroom should run. The two weeks that followed were a tornado of thoughts, ideas, themes, colors, routines, procedures, rules, and rewards systems circulating through my head. As I was setting up for my classroom, anticipating the 20 second graders that were going to shape my first year of teaching, many decisions that would determine my year had to be made. Thank goodness Michigan State provided me with a strong foundation, that there was google for ideas, and my mother for an extra set of hands to hang paper!

Now, almost one year later, I can say I did more than just survive my first year of teaching. I feel that I succeeded, thanks to a combination of teaching colleagues, workshops, and long dedicated hours before and after school. However, throughout the year a teacher's mind is never done thinking and reflecting about how they might do things differently. Although I believe my classroom management was strong for a rookie teacher, I know there are aspects I would like to improve. Additionally, I have continued to learn about some "best practices" for creating a classroom community, one in which students and teachers feel connected and instructional time is maximized. I would like to use some of my new found knowledge in my classroom, to make my second year of teaching even more successful than my first. Therefore, I will be composing a classroom management plan for second grade including five specific aspects that will help shape what I find to be my most problematic areas. I will be discussing a very explicit and detailed design for the following areas of management: Classroom rules and procedures, physical room arrangement, parent relationships, student-student relationships, and teacher-student relationships.

Jones and Jones (2009) reference *Handbook of Research on Teaching,* where Walter Doyle wrote, "Broadly speaking, classroom teaching has two major task structures organized around the problems of (a) learning and (b) order." He continues, "…Order is served by the managerial function, that is, by establishing rules and procedures" (p.173). At this point, I am going to focus on establishing rules in order to create an organized classroom structure. Rules need to be established at the beginning of the school year and time needs to be spent teaching students these classroom rules. I will start my plan by identifying five classroom rules that will be used as a basis for providing positive and corrective feedback, as suggested by Sprick, Garrison, and Howard (1998) in *CHAMPS*. There are a variety of ways in which the rules can be created. I have decided that with my guidance, the students in my class will have input into the rules in which we create and post. I have chosen this style of creating rules with my students because I believe there are many benefits, supported by research. Sprick et al. (1998) suggests that student developed rules has an advantage that because they helped create the rules, they might have a greater sense of ownership in the classroom. I believe that this outweighs some of the

challenges that having student developed rules can present, such as not having rules on the first day or if teaching multiple classes distinguishing between rules could become confusing. I do not teach multiple classes so this would not be an issue to consider in my plan. Additionally, I am going to use the first day to create the rules with my students. I believe this will be a way to engage students and begin taking ownership of their new classroom right away. Rules will be written out as a whole class rough draft the first day, revisited the second day of school in case editing needs to occur, and then written out in poster form to be posted in the classroom by me. If I feel there are rules that the class missed or rules that need tweaking in order to cover a wider range of issues, these will be communicated with students during the first two days of creating and editing. In order to be sure that rules are effective, I will keep in mind some suggestions from Sprick et al. (1998). For example, they suggest having no more than six rules, therefore, I have set my limit at five (p. 75). They also suggest having rules that are stated positively (p.76). This is where my guidance will come in. For example, students might suggest not being mean or using bad language. I might shape that rule to be stated positively as, "Please always use kind words and actions." I will also use Sprick et al. (1998) suggestion of making rules specific and observable (p.76). For example, a rule that is vague might state "Be prepared in class," but a more specific version of that might state "Turn in your homework daily." This is much more observable to students and something that they can communicate more easily back to me. Finally, I need to consider the location of where the rules we have created as a class are going to be posted, as suggested in Sprick et al. (1998). I am going to place these rules on a large poster in the front of our classroom so they are visible from all parts of the room. Also, this is the way in which student desks face, therefore allowing them to see the rules during anytime they are at their seats. Because I am going to enlist the help of my students to create rules, I do not have a set of them to include in this plan. However, I know a few rules that I would like to include or add if students do not suggest them. Having an idea and expectation of what I want rules to absolutely include is important. Therefore my own ideas of these rules are included here to better help me guide the ones students help to create.

Our Classroom Rules

- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Work and stay focused during all work times.
- Follow directions immediately when they are given.
- Always use kind words and actions.
- Be helpful and respectful to children and adults.

Now that I have a clear idea of how classroom rules are going to be developed, I need to identify consequences if these rules are broken. I will follow the suggestions outlined in Sprick et al. (1998). One of these suggestions is to identify one or more consequences for each rule that will be implemented when a student breaks that rule (p.77). For example, if a student hit one of their peers they would be violating the rules of keeping hands to themselves. Therefore, a consequence for this action might be losing five minutes of recess time that day. Another suggestion from Sprick et al. (1998) is, "Making all

consequences mild enough that you will follow through with assigning them consistently" (p.77). I believe this to be very important because if the rules are effective and all-encompassing students will break them daily. A few possible mild consequences for breaking rules might be, losing five minutes of recess time, losing computer time, needing to flip their card to yellow (suggesting that a "stop-light" system is in place where all students begin on green, flipping their card when breaking a rule one time to yellow, flipping their card to red if breaking another rule or the same rule again, etc.), not obtaining a sticker for that morning or afternoon, etc. Having a system in place that allows me to record rule infractions so that I do not forget or overlook consequences assigned is important as well according to Sprick et al. (1998). After thinking about how I will keep track, I have decided that keeping a clipboard with all students names on it and slots for rule infractions will be the best and more organized way for me to keep track and have a running record of assigned consequences. See Appendix 1 for assigned consequence form.

In order for the rules and consequences to be most effective, students must be taught these rules. Rules need to be monitored and reviewed, especially during the beginning weeks of school. Jones and Jones (2009) explain, "Especially in elementary school classrooms, it is important to review the rules frequently for several weeks" (p.184). They further suggest, "A good approach is to review them every day for the first week, three times a week during the second week, and one a week thereafter" (p.184). I will follow this timeline in order to help me review rules. Setting aside this time to review and monitor classroom rules is necessary to having classroom organization. I will review rules briefly at the beginning of each day and towards the end of the day have the class evaluate their behavior. If the entire class consistently displays appropriate behavior, a class compliment will be given for that entire day, or might even be given one compliment for the morning, one for the afternoon. Jones and Jones (2009) suggest a few creative ways to teach rules. One of their suggestions is called *Rule Unscramble*, where I would have my class rules stated in phrases, mix up the words in the phrases, and have students put the words in correct order so they make sense (p. 190). I think this is a perfect exercise for second grade students. I think I might even try to put the scrambled phrases on the smartboard in order to engage students and introduce them to using the smartboard. Another suggestion in Jones and Jones (2009) is *Rule Bingo* where bingo and acting out rules is combined. I would make bingo cards with our classroom rules on each square and have students act out the rule. Students would then cover the square if they have the rule listed on their bingo card (p.190). The final suggestion that I am going to include as part of my plan to teach and review classroom rules is role-play. One discussed in Jones and Jones (2009) is called *Wrong Way*. Students would role-play the wrong way to behave and the whole class would review why it was the wrong way to behave and how we could change it to be the desired behavior (p.190). I think all of these strategies help engage students in teaching and review rules and could also act as great first week peer building activities.

In addition to establishing, teaching, reviewing, and creating consequences with regards to classroom rules, I also need to create a plan to establish procedures. I will use many of the best practices suggestions from Jones and Jones (2009). Identifying areas and times where procedures need to be in place is crucial. "Research indicates that effective teachers not only work with students to develop general behavior standards but also teach the procedures they expect students to follow during

specific classroom and school activities" (Jones, 2009). The following places and activities are areas in which I will set-up procedures that will be taught in the beginning of the school year: playground, restrooms, halls, lunchroom, snack time, small-group activities, and whole-class activities. For each of these areas or times I will have a reminder poster or chart by the area as a reminder to students. This will help them be reminded of the expectations for each area or time. In the next section, you will find the reminder poster or chart created to help teach and review procedures. Many are adapted from Appendix A of Jones and Jones (2009), ideas reprinted from Sprick, R.

Playground Procedures

1. Rough play is not allowed.
2. When the whistle blows, immediately stop what you are doing and line up quickly and quietly.
3. Try to solve problems on your own before going to an adult.
4. Follow directions by all adults the first time they are given.
5. Stay out / off of areas that are dangerous or wet.

**Note: Class will be taken outside during the first week of school with this poster. Students will role-play to help demonstrate how to correctly follow these procedures and what it looks like to violate these procedures. The recess monitors will be given a paper copy of these rules in case students need reminding or reinforcement while on the playground.

Restroom Procedures

1. Best times to use the restroom are: during lunch/recess and snack time.
2. You do NOT need to ask to use the restroom.
3. You must get the restroom pass and put it on your desk before leaving the room.
4. NO talking in the restroom.
5. Check that it is clean before you leave.
6. Return silently to the classroom, return the pass to the hook.

**Note: During the first day of school the whole class will go through the restroom procedures. We will walk down to the bathrooms so students know where they are located in case they are new to the building. We will identify where the passes belong. The procedures poster will be placed next to the passes in case students need a reminder of the proper procedures to follow.

Hallway Procedures

1. Silent travel in the hallways at all times.
2. If working in the hallway use a volume 1 voice.
3. Always use walking feet.
4. Walk in a straight line when traveling as a class.
5. When given the silent signal in the hallway, immediately repeat the signal back and be silent.

Note: This procedure will be practiced as students move to their specials and lunch each day. Teacher will demonstrate how a volume 1 voice sounds and does not sound. Students will be asked to explain why they think it is important for silence and walking feet, hopefully responding with ideas like safety and not interrupting the learning of others. Students will be taught the silent signal in the classroom. This signal is right hand in the air, left hand by your face with the index finger over your mouth. Students will understand that when they see an adult doing this it means they should also do it and be absolutely silent. These procedures will be posted on the door of the classroom.

Lunchroom Procedures

1. When waiting in line, be patient and keep hands and feet to yourself.
2. Use volume 2 voices while talking to friends.
3. Follow directions given by lunch adults immediately when given.
4. Eat your food…don't play with it!

Note: I will eat lunch with students in the lunchroom the first full day of school. During this time, I will model how a volume 2 voice sounds and does not sound. I will also show them where they go to get hot lunch in case of new students. I will introduce my class to the lunch adults that are supervising and ask them to respect them as they would any other adult. These procedures will be placed on the outside of the lunch bins where students put their lunches daily.

Snack Time Procedures

1. Get your snack silently from your locker after special.
2. Stop at the door and wait until the snack supervisor gives you hand sanitizer.
3. Sit at the rug and begin eating quietly.
4. If you need a snack get a tissue and patiently wait by my desk.
5. Use eating manners.
6. Clean up your area, throw wrappers away, and put any containers or left over snack in your backpack.

Note: Procedures will be placed next to the hand sanitizer as a reminder. On the first day of school students will be given a snack. We will go through the procedures that day. I will model how I expect the rug to look when we are finished eating snack, what it looks like and does not look like to use eating manners, and how we should sit on the rug (legs criss-cross apple sauce and snack in front of us).

When students are engaging in small-group activities, procedures must be put into place as well, specifically during literacy work stations and word study buddy time. Procedures for literacy work stations and word study buddy time are posted in the same area where they find their groups / partners.

Work Station Procedures

1. Stay on task to complete activities.
2. Use a volume 1-2 voice to talk with your group.
3. All completed activities go in the green bin by the windows.
4. Do not give answers to people in your group…use your words to help and explain to them.
5. When teacher is wearing her beads you are not to talk with her unless it is an emergency.
6. Do not walk around to other groups.

Note: Students will understand what a 1-2 voice volume means from other procedures introduced and practiced. Each work station group will role-play a different procedure for the class in the wrong way. It will be the rest of the groups challenge to fix the procedure so it matches the expected behavior. I will show students my Mardi gras beads and explain the importance of giving me time with my guided reading or strategy group.

Word Study Buddies

1. Work on all word sorts together.
2. When quizzing each other, use volume 1 voices.
3. Always bring your word study bags and games to an area away from another group.
4. Be helpful to your partner.
5. Raise a quiet hand if you need help and stay in your seat.

Note: These procedures are going to need a great deal of modeling. Students need to understand what it sounds like and looks like to work effectively with a partner. I will model with a variety of students and be sure to recognize specific behavior with positive encouragement and help students who struggle to follow procedures. I will show students where their word study bags will always be located.

Whole-class activity procedures are important to set up immediately to avoid chaos. A few of the whole-class activities that I will make sure to teach in the first weeks of school are: signals for student attention, think-pair-share expectations, and turning in homework and notes. A few attention signals might be: bah bah bah bah bah…and the students say bah bah, silence please everybody freeze…and the students say dah dah dah dah dah dah shhh, ringing of a bell, gimmie 5, etc. Students will be taught how to think-pair-share while introducing Making Meaning, a literacy program used in my school district. They will understand how this time should work, what to say, how to listen, and how to share their own ideas and the ideas of others. Students will be shown where to turn in homework and notes in clearly marked bins in the front of the room. I am confident that if I am able to discuss the need for each procedure, have students practice the procedures until they are performed correctly, and reinforce

the correct behavior with specific examples, as suggested in Jones and Jones (2009), I will be using best practices in my classroom and I will have a smoothly run room (p.189).

The next section of my classroom management plan that I will outline is physical classroom arrangement. I will arrange my physical classroom space so that it promotes positive student/teacher interactions and reduces the amount of disruptions and behavioral issues, as suggested in Module 2 of Sprick et al. (1998). The physical organization of a classroom can influence student behavior, therefore, it is a necessary piece of my classroom management plan. As stated in Sprick et al. (1998), "Well designed physical space prevents a wide array of potential behavioral problems" (p.54). I will use the five aspects of physical space suggested in Sprick et al. (1998) to help me design a plan for my classroom, as I believe these to be areas that can improve behavioral and academic success.

The first aspect I will consider in terms of physical space is how to arrange student desks in order to optimize the most common types of instructional tasks that I will have students engaging in (Sprick et al., 1998). After accessing what types of instructional tasks my second grade students mostly engage in, I have decided to arrange my desks in clusters. This will be an excellent arrangement for cooperative learning tasks. For example, my students engage in small group work stations, think-pair-share discussions, word study buddies, and reading workshop daily. All of these activities lend themselves to having desks in small clusters of four. In addition, arranging student desks in these clusters will allow me to circulate easily around to listen to small group talk or check in during writing workshop. I am in a school district where students usually succeed and can function in a low to medium structure. Therefore, it is my hope that some of the concerns with clustered seating, such as off-task conversation or more distractions for students will not be prominent. See attached diagram (Appendix 2) for clarification of arrangement.

After looking at this room arrangement with student desks clustered, I have arranged the other furniture to make sure that I have easy access around all parts of the room, as suggested in the second aspect of the physical space plan in Sprick et al. (1998). It is best practice to circulate throughout the room often and unpredictably. Therefore, I need to be sure that I can move around from any area of my room. This will help me provide feedback to students easily and correct of task behaviors quickly and efficiently. Additionally, I needed to consider how students were going to move around the classroom to get the supplies they need throughout the day without disrupting other students or taking too long. This is why I have created a front table area where student supplies can be found easily and act as a hub for what they need to access fast. It is easily located in the front of the classroom, but slightly separated from the student clustered desks, as to minimize distractions. This is part of the suggestions given in Sprick et al. (1998) and the third consideration of my physical arrangement plan. At this student supplies hub, they will find two baskets, one they turn their homework in at and one where I can find the homework I am giving for the week. They will also find a pencil sharpener, extra sharpened pencils, a cup for pencils that need to be sharpened, and five supplies bins (one per table) that include crayons, markers, scissors, and glue. The cluster of desks closest to this area will always seat my least distracted students.

Another area in my classroom that should be noted is one of the back bulletin boards that will be devoted to displaying student work, a suggestion from Sprick et al. (1998). I have placed it next to the very important word wall and it is the second biggest bulletin board space in my room. I agree with Sprick et al. (1998) that when student work is prominently displayed, it demonstrates to them that I am proud of what they have done and that I want to show other people what they have accomplished (p.59). I also have a great hallway area where bigger projects and more elaborate work will be hung to demonstrate the same idea of student pride and accomplishment.

Finally, I have created a space where students can reflect on poor behavior and remove themselves from a difficult situation. This area is called "The Reflection Station" and is located in the front of the classroom by the door. This is an adaption of the idea given in Sprick et al. (1998) of a "Time Out" space. Because I am teaching second grade, this area is appropriate, however, I believe that calling it a place to reflect instead of a time out area is less intimidating. In second grade, I think it is important for students to write and draw out why they were asked to reflect on a particular situation. Therefore, a folder explaining the procedure for this area and time of reflection will be located on the desk with reflection forms inside. It is my hope that all of these spaces and my overall plan for the physical arrangement of my classroom promotes responsible behavior from students.

At this point in my management plan I have set rules and procedures and created a thoughtful physical space for students to learn and grow in. Therefore, because my classroom organization is coming together, I feel it is appropriate to discuss and plan how I intend to communicate and build relationships with parents and families. As Molloy et al. (1995) explains, "Collaboration that involves the home, school, and community has been heralded as an effective way to reform and improve services for children and families (U. S. Department of Education, 1994). When all of these players work together to enhance services for children and families, the undertaking is often new and very complex" (p.7) Having parents as collaborative partners in their students educational lives will give students the best means to succeed. The power and importance of parent communication is supported by a wealth of research, including Jones and Jones (2009), Sprick et al. (1998), and Jensen et al (2000). Sprick et al. explains, "You can increase the likelihood of communicating efficiently and effectively with your students' families, if you develop a specific plan for how you will make initial contact with them at the beginning of the school year and how you will maintain ongoing contact with them throughout the year" (p.19).

The first piece of my family contact plan will be to create an introductory letter, often suggested in research as a best practice. This will be my initial contact with families and I will send it home on the first day of school with each child. The purpose of this letter will be to begin to establish a productive relationship with each family and to give each family important information about me and my vision for the school year (Sprick, 1998). In my letter I will introduce myself, state my interest in developing positive teacher-parent contacts, give important information about how they can contact me, and invite parents to back-to-school night (Jones, 2009). Please see Appendix 3 for my initial contact letter.

It is my hope that I will be able to meet some parents during drop off and pick up times, as my school district is a walking district. However, the first formal meeting that I will have with parents and families is our building's back-to-school night, which takes place the second week of school. Parents are

formally invited to this event by the school and will also be told the date via my website and weekly newsletter. When families arrive at back-to-school night I will have a packet for them including a description of the curriculum, a copy of my introductory letter, a schedule of their specials classes, a statement of my classroom-management procedures, specific ways parents can help their child succeed (provided by the school), and a list of special projects we will have throughout the year (Jones and Jones, 2009). As suggested by Jones (2009), "Providing parents with written information, you indicate that the information is important" (p.143). Additionally, I will have students write a brief letter to their parents about our classroom. This will give a personal touch and welcome parents nicely into their child's classroom. Finally, I will have a several sign-up sheets this evening to help get parents involved. Some of the sign-up sheets may include: Mystery Readers, Help with Compliments Parties, Copy Helpers, Holiday Party Helpers, etc.

After the initial written contact and a face-to-face contact with all families, follow-up and on-going contacts and communication is imperative. Two forms of this continued communication that I will have with families is through my weekly newsletters and website. Jones and Jones (2009) discuss newsletters as a way to keep a large number of families informed. I like their suggestion of jotting a personal note on newsletters to parents whose child is experiencing noteworthy success or problems (p.148). In addition to weekly website updates and newsletters, I will try to make informal connections with parents and families. For example, I will strive to make a phone call to inform parents of exceptional behavior or questionable behavior within the first several weeks of school. Jones and Jones (2009) explain, "Parents appreciate knowing that their child's teacher cares enough to make a phone call, and the most critical parents will frequently become supporters of the teacher who takes time to call" (p.150). I also agree with their research regarding the relaxed and more enjoyable feel to parent-teacher conferences when a personal phone call has been previously made. If a phone call contact cannot be made easily, an email may be sent with the same messages to parents. Two other forms of informal connections with families are attending extracurricular activities in which their children are involved like a baseball or soccer game and having parents volunteer in the classroom. In both cases, parents will get to see me interacting with their child and see the efforts I am making because I genuinely care about their child. As stated in Sprick et al. (1998), "…the more families feel you are making an effort to keep them informed, the greater the probability that they will work with you should their student have a behavioral or academic problem" (p.23). Please note that if there are individual students that need more than a weekly home note / newsletter to go home in order to provide more information between me and parents, one will be created using *The Tough Kids Tool Box* form. Jensen, Rhode, and Reavis (1994) provide a daily home note that would go between the classroom and home (p.41). It allows student's classroom behavior and/or academic performance to be checked each day by parents. This is important for me to have available in case there is a student and family who needs a little more than a general weekly newsletter. This would be student specific and help keep the communication open on a daily basis with parents.

Although the hope is that all parent interactions will be smooth, friendly, and result in positive results for their student, I am aware that some criticisms and confrontations may occur. Sprick et al. (1998) suggests recording ongoing contacts with families. I think this is an excellent idea because if

problems should arise with families, I will have a record of what happened and when, ultimately giving data to ensure truthfulness. Therefore, I will use it in my management plan, organizing it in a binder titled "Parent Communication." In addition, there are some strategies suggested in Jones and Jones (2009) that can be used to cope with critical or confrontational parent situations effectively and professionally (p.163). The strategies that I found to be most useful and will put in the front of my "Parent Communication" binder are: meeting with families in a safe space, potentially with another school adult, use active listening in the hopes of defusing parent's emotions, ask parents what they wish to accomplish in this meeting or conversation so expectations are clear, set a time limit for the meeting, be honest, and emphasize and have specific data available. I believe that really following these strategies can help create productive and positive outcomes for uncomfortable situations. I believe that I can never give up on a family because that would be giving up on a student. It is therefore imperative to have this home connection strong with each and every family. Having this plan and some of these organizational techniques in place will help me keep the very best communication with families.

Creating positive peer relationships is a key piece in my management plan. There is an overwhelming amount of research about the importance of developing a positive classroom community where students feel safe and valued. I believe that this will be one of my very first tasks during the beginning of each new school year, helping students get acquainted with each other so they feel like they are part of a caring community. Jones and Jones (2009) present several peer-acquaintance activities designed to help students get to know each other better so they feel safe and secure throughout the year and thus become more actively engaged in the learning process (p.105). There are a few activities suggested that I would like to include in my plan for my second grade students within the first four weeks of school. Jones and Jones quote Schwartz, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates (2000) to support the activities presented, stating, "By implementing activities to enhance positive peer relationships, we increase the likelihood that a wider range of peers will be accepted and supported and we decrease the likelihood that bullying, intimidation, and isolation will be experienced by students"(p.105). This idea clearly supports why the activities in my plan are best practices within the first weeks of school.

The first activity I will be using is called "The Name Chain," suggested in Jones and Jones (2009). This activity helps students learn each other's names. They will start by sitting in a circle on our rug and I will explain to them that we are going to participate in this name chain to help us know everyone's name and feel comfortable in our classroom. I will discuss with them that knowing everyone's name helps us be friendlier to each other which will make our classroom a positive and safe place to learn and grow. Next, I will explain how the game works. Each student will say their first name and tell the group one thing about themselves. They can tell us something they like to do, something interesting or fun that happened to them this summer, how they feel about school, their favorite subject or pet, etc. Then students will be asked to repeat all of the people and their fact that went before them. For example, the first student might say, "I'm Marco and I love playing soccer." The next student might say, "That's Marco and he likes playing soccer. I'm Victoria and I swam all summer long." I will be the last person so I can repeat every student's name and fact. After asking students if they have any questions about the activity, we will begin! Once we have finished students will go back to their seats and take out a pencil and piece of paper. They will start writing down every students name to see how many they can

remember. After several minutes, I will give one or two students a chance to read their list so everyone hears the names again and can check who they might have missed. For the next few days I will have a volunteer try to name each student in the class when we gather around the rug. This activity will hopefully allow for smooth group work where students feel confident with their group mates.

I also really like the "Know your Classmates" activity presented in Jones and Jones (2009). Each student will need a pencil and a copy of the "Know your Classmates" form provided in Jones and Jones (2009, p. 107). I have included a slightly adapted version in Appendix 4. Students will need to find a person in the class who fits each description and have that person write their first name on their sheet. I will explain to them that they can only use a person one time so they must have 15 different first names on the sheet. I particularly like this acquaintance activity because it allows for students to get up, move around, and actually talk to each other. I think it would be wonderful the second week of school, after some initial meeting has happened with the name chain and follow-up. This might be difficult for some students who are shier, but ultimately will help all students recognize differences and similarities about each other.

The third acquaintance activity that I am going to include in my plan is called "T-Shirt," suggested in Jones and Jones (2009). Students will be given a piece of large paper with a t-shirt drawn on it. They will be asked to draw within the t-shirt things about themselves that would help us get to know them better. Once students finish I will have them share in their small table groups. This would be an activity I would do with students the second week of school. It would allow them to draw what they feel are the most important things we should know about them. As they share I will walk around to hear what they have to say about themselves and see their t-shirts. These will be the first pieces of work hung on the student work bulletin board. See Appendix 5 for a copy of the t-shirt.

In addition to the above acquaintance activities, I think it is important to have some activities in place that help to establish a supportive and cohesive class. Jones and Jones (2009) explain that group cohesiveness is friendly and warm interactions among all members' not just small groups of students (p.111). They continue, "Cohesive groups provide settings in which students feel safe, experience a sense of belonging, and view themselves as being liked and respected by others" (p.111). Therefore, I feel that when paired with some acquaintance activities, these cohesive group ideas will be extremely effective in allowing students to feel valued and cared for.

The first activity I will include in my management plan is "Class Pet," adapted from Jones and Jones (2009). Our class pet will not be a living one, but rather a stuffed animal. The theme of my room is "Rainbow Fish," after the story by Marcus Pfister. I read this story to students on the first day of school to teach them about selflessness and true friendship and happiness. To keep with this theme I will have our class pet be a stuffed rainbow fish. I will draw popsicle sticks every Friday to see who gets to take rainbow fish home for that week.   Students will take home a large Ziploc bag that contains a small copy of the story, the rainbow fish stuffed animal, and a notebook. Along with these items will be instructions for the parents and child for what to do over the course of the next week. Students will be asked to write in the notebook about what they did with rainbow fish over the past week and include pictures (drawn or taken) of themselves and rainbow fish. Students will also be asked to create a small

poster about themself to be the "star fish" of the week. All items will be returned to school the following Friday to share their experiences with the class. Additionally, their poster will be hung on the "star fish" bulletin board. Then a new name will be drawn. I believe this is a perfect way for students to feel connected to the class and their peers.

Another whole group activity that will help students feel part of a cohesive classroom is using opening and closing questions, suggested in Jones and Jones (2009). "…It is important that students be given a few minutes at the beginning of each day to share any events that are significant to them" (Jones, p.114). I think this is very important, especially in the young elementary grades. Therefore I will have my students share when we meet in a circle for snack time in the morning. If students would like to share something significant happening in their day or week this is their opportunity to do so. If they do not want to share, they will not be forced to but may have the option of writing their need down and setting it on my desk during this time. This will help students understand that I respect and accept their needs for that day and care about what is going on with them. Just as this is a wonderful way to being our days in the morning, students need to have some closure at the end of their day. Jones and Jones (2009) suggest asking questions like, "What did you learn today? How do you feel about the day? What did you like and dislike about today?" (p.114). I think these could be used in the form of an exit slip each day. Students would be given an exit slip at the end of each day with a question similar to the above examples on it. They would need to respond in a ten minute time period and then begin packing up their things for the day. I can read these exit slips as students pack up and gather items from their lockers and comment back to them as they line up to leave. This allows me to hear how their day was, gives them a positive ending to their day, and encourages them to examine what they accomplished or how they felt that day.

The final step in helping me to create student-student connections in the classroom is having activities for enhancing diverse liking patterns, as suggested in Jones and Jones (2009). They comment, "Students…are happier and more productive in environments that provide warmth and friendship" (p.119). They continue by quoting Lewis and St. John (1974) indicating that, "…the presence of high-achieving students was not in itself enough to increase achievement among lower-achieving students. In addition to being exposed to norms that supported academic achievement, the lower-achieving students needed to be accepted as friends by their classmates" (p.119). Therefore, the following activities are included in my management plan in order to help increase the likelihood that all students in the classroom will be liked and accepted by their peers.

The first activity that I will be using to help students make connections with their peers are "Wanted Posters," suggested in Jones and Jones (2009). Students will be given a piece of construction paper with the word WANTED at the top of it. Students will bring in a picture of themselves and place it under this word followed by the phrase "FOR A FRIEND BECAUSE…" Around their picture students will write words that describe qualities that make them a good friend. These posters will be created during the third week of school and hung on our student work bulletin board. We will then have a classroom discussion on friendship, helping to build connections between students and teach them what it means to be a good friend.

"Warm Fuzzies" is the second activity that I will use to guide students in connecting with each other in genuine ways to help create a friendly classroom environment. This idea is suggested in Jones and Jones (2009) and assists with giving students compliments and smiles to encourage them throughout their days. I will make warm fuzzies by having colored pom-poms in a bucket with quarter sheets of paper next to them. The paper will say "WARM FUZZY given because _____." I will give a warm fuzzy to each child during the first week of school by gluing a pom-pom to the paper and writing in the reason. Then, throughout the year, students will be encouraged to put together and give warm fuzzies to their peers. I think students will enjoy receiving these from friends and creating them for their classmates. See Appendix 6 for an example of a warm and fuzzy sheet.

The final piece of my management plan includes building positive relationships between me and my students. Schaps argues the importance of students feeling connected to their school (2000, p. 1). He discusses how the connections students make with their families and teachers reduce the likelihood of risky behaviors such as violence and drug use, stating that one major factor strongly linked to risky behaviors "…was feeling connected to school—feeling close to people at school, **feeling fairly treated by teachers**, feeling part of one's school" (Schaps, 2000). Having a connection with each student in my classroom and consciously treating every student fairly will hopefully not only give them feeling of safety and love but also could reduce the potential for risky behaviors. It is therefore incredibly important that I work to build these positive connections and relationships with my students. In addition, Jones and Jones (2009) also discuss the extreme value in establishing positive relationships between teachers and students. They remark, "…an educator's relationships with students is an incredibly important factor influencing student learning and behavior. **Perhaps no other factor will influence how effective you are at motivating students**, establishing a safe, positive learning environment, and having students respond respectfully…" (p.58). Believing this to be true, it is probably one of the more crucial pieces of my management plan. Without positive connections being made with my students the rest of the plan will not pan out as effectively. Jones and Jones (2009) quote Kleinfeld (1972) in a powerful analysis of teacher's interactions with Eskimo and Native American students. Kleinfeld explained her work, "…Students interpreted teacher's demandingness as another expression of his personal concern, and meeting the teacher's academic standards becomes their reciprocal obligation in an intensely personal relationship" (p.59). This research aligned with the research conducted at the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching at Stanford University 25 years later. This study showed a recurring theme in students' comments about the "tremendous value they place on having teachers who care" (p.59). From these studies it is clear as to why I felt the focus of teacher-student relationships needed to be the last section rounding out my management plan. It is an essential and crucial piece of my management puzzle.

Understanding that positive relationships need to be built with all students, I can better engage and challenge my students. I question what exact qualities students say they value in teachers. What are the most important connections I need to make with students to have them feel a personal relationship with me? Jones and Jones (2009) guide me in understanding these values. They quote the extensive research completed by Woolfolk and Weinstein (2006) that "found that students preferred and responded best to teachers who possessed three sets of skills, establishing caring relationships with

students, setting limits and creating a safe environment, and making learning fun" (p.60). I have established setting limits in order to help create a safe environment within my management plan. I believe that as a result of this thoughtful management plan, students will be engaged and thus our classroom will be a place where learning is fun. The piece I now need to incorporate into my plan is establishing these caring relationships students need from their teacher. Other research presented by Jones and Jones (2009) continues with the idea that students want their teachers to "value them as individuals, treat them respectfully, care about their learning and their personal lives, and maintain an orderly, safe classroom environment" (p.61). However, they also caution that being a teacher who builds these student relationships, demonstrates interest in their students, and supports them is not the same as being the more popular teacher (p.61). I think this is a fine line and is important for me to keep in mind as I continue with my plan in building positive student-teacher relationships.

The research is overwhelming about the importance and true effect that good student-teacher relationships can have when they include openness and care. As I begin my plan to establish strong relationships with students, I take a piece of Marva Collins (1992) who is quoted in Jones and Jones (2009). She explains that when she taught in public high school she ate lunch with a different group of students daily. She felt that it made it easier for her to teach because she earned the students friendship and respect (p.68). Even though this is a secondary example, students in elementary school would love this equally. Therefore, I will have lunch with a different child once per week. I have done this in the past, but it has been presented as a reward, something they had to earn. I am going have lunch with the "Star Fish" of the week. A permission slip will be sent home and must be signed in order for the lunch to occur as a safety precaution. I think having lunch with students is a perfect way to begin building relationships with students and is a way for that week to be particularly special for them. During this time, we will share our interests, I will listen to any concerns they might have, and just get to know each student a little better on an individual basis.

Another strategy for me to show students that I care about them as individuals outside of the classroom is to attend some of their after school activities. I do not yet have children of my own and have the time to attend soccer and baseball games, plays and concerts, or even a first communion. This is also a way for me to become more involved in the community in which I teach. I believe it will also help me build parent relationships, which is a bonus! In addition to attending events, there will obviously be days that I will need to have a substitute teacher in our classroom, not allowing me to make face to face connections with my students that day. In order to help them know I am still thinking about them and expect appropriate behavior I will leave a sticky note on each student's desk. The sticky notes might say "Michael, you rock! Have a great day." Or "Lauren, stay focused today. You can do it!" This is a way for my students to know that I will go the extra mile to be there for them when I can and when I can't be there they are each very important to me.

In addition to making some efforts to create positive student-teacher relationships, I also need to be sure that while teaching academics students feel that they are valued and being held to fair and high expectations. In second grade, we do much with discussion of texts to build comprehension skills like summarizing, predicting, and inferencing. Therefore it is important that students feel respected
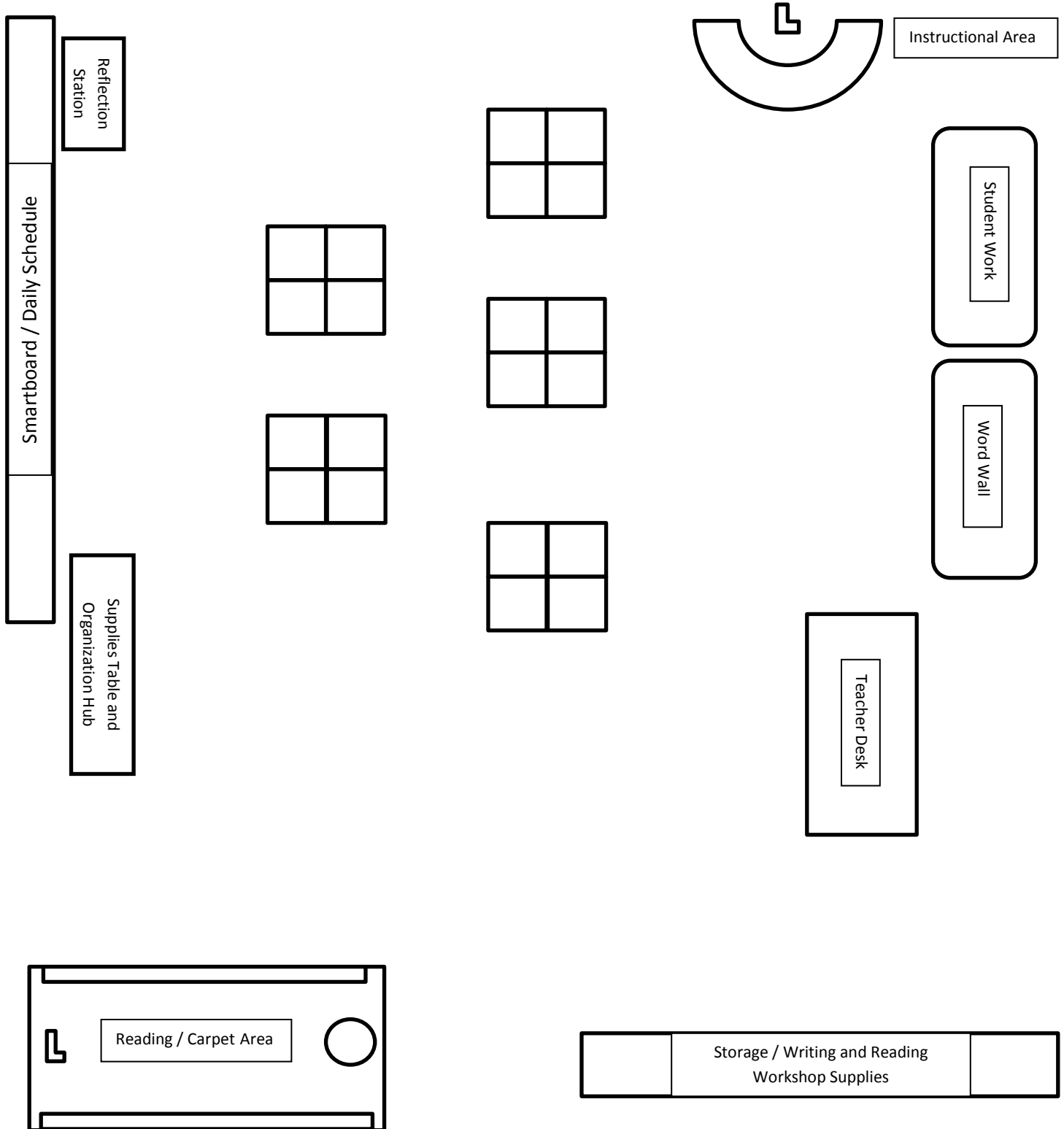
when giving responses, especially when they are struggling with the concept. I will provide adequate wait time, as suggested in Jones and Jones (2009) so students can generate more thoughtful and thorough replies (p. 83). They will also feel like they are being respected and not pressured to get a response out the second it is asked, giving them more confidence. I will also rephrase the question, offer for them to pair and share to discuss the question, offer hints, and break the question down into smaller parts. These techniques will help students feel safe in large group discussions. It is my hope that they will feel comfortable trying in whole group discussions knowing that I will guide them through and not make it a scary situation for them. This will come only when trust is built with each student and they genuinely understand that I care about them and will support them.

Developing an effective classroom management plan is a difficult task, one that is always being tweaked and reflected upon. This plan will act as a working document as every class will require different techniques. I believe this plan has allowed me to firm up ideas that I had and create many new ones, all of which are supported by best practiced research. The five areas of focus, classroom rules and procedures, physical room arrangement, parent relationships, student-student relationships, and teacher-student relationships, are ones that I felt most unsure about in my first year of teaching. I never laid them out in this clear and structured way creating less clarity for students. Now, I genuinely believe that my classroom will run much smoother, will be much more engaging for students, and will help me become a more reflective and effective teacher. Jones and Jones (2009) state, "…decisions about how you teach involve a delicate blend of who you are, who you want to be, what you believe about your students and student learning, and how you integrate this into the classroom" (p.25). That is exactly what I have tried to do within this plan. I have taken the research and theories that I have learned about, my own experiences and beliefs, and the community and school that I am teaching in and created the best management plan that encompasses all of those aspects. Although I will continue to grow and learn new practices and ways of management, I must always remember to make decisions based on who I am and what I believe is going to be best for my students. Staying true to who I am as a teacher and my style is going to allow for a natural classroom flow. I am excited and anxious to put my plan into action and am confident that I have created one that will provide an outline for a magnificent year!

<u>Appendix 1</u>: Assigned Consequences

Student Names	Date of Infraction	Rule Broken	Consequence
Example: Lily	10/3/11	Did not follow clean up directions	Lose sticker for that task on chart

Appendix 2: Classroom Arrangement

Reflection Station

Smartboard / Daily Schedule

Supplies Table and Organization Hub

Instructional Area

Student Work

Word Wall

Teacher Desk

Reading / Carpet Area

Storage / Writing and Reading Workshop Supplies

Appendix 3: Initial Introductory Letter to Parents

****Suggested letters from Jones and Jones (2009) and Sprick et al. (1998) used.**

Dear Second Grade Parents and Families –

With school under way, I'd like to take a moment of your time to welcome you and introduce myself. My name is Ms. Gina Ventimiglia and this is my second year teaching. I am excited to be returning for my second year at Mason in second grade. I completed my undergraduate work at Michigan State University and am in the process of obtaining my master's degree from there as well.

I am very interested in making this a successful and happy school year for your child. To ensure this success, we must keep the lines of communication open. I respect the fact that you know your child very well, and so when either you or your child feel worried, please contact me. Likewise, if there is an activity or project that you enjoy, please let me know. I am available by phone or email, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

I will be sending home a classroom newsletter every Monday. The weekly newsletters will include important dates, academic happenings, tips to help your child succeed, and behavioral expectations. Please take time each week to read them over with your child. In addition, please visit our classroom website which will be updated often to ensure effective communication at your convenience.

In a few weeks Mason will have its annual back-to-school night. At that time I will discuss in detail the academic program, what your child will be studying this year, the skills and knowledge you can expect them to develop and my grading and discipline procedures. I encourage you to attend this special evening because it will give you an opportunity to understand the second grade program and to become better acquainted with the room and materials that your child will be using throughout the coming year.

Your partner in education –

Ms. Ventimiglia

Email: Gina.ventimiglia@gpschools.org

Phone: 313-590-1774

Website: http://missventimiglia.weebly.com/

<u>Appendix 4:</u> Knowing your Classmates

Name: _____

Collect the signatures of the appropriate people:

_____ 1. A person whose birthday is in the same month as yours.

_____ 2. A person who has blonde hair.

_____ 3. A person who you don't know very well.

_____ 4. A person with freckles.

_____ 5. A person whose favorite color is purple.

_____ 6. A person who loves to read.

_____ 7. A person who plays on a sports team.

_____ 8. A person who is left-handed.

_____ 9. A person with curly hair.

_____ 10. A person who is in boy / girl scouts.

_____ 11 .A person shorter than you.

_____ 12. A person taller than you.

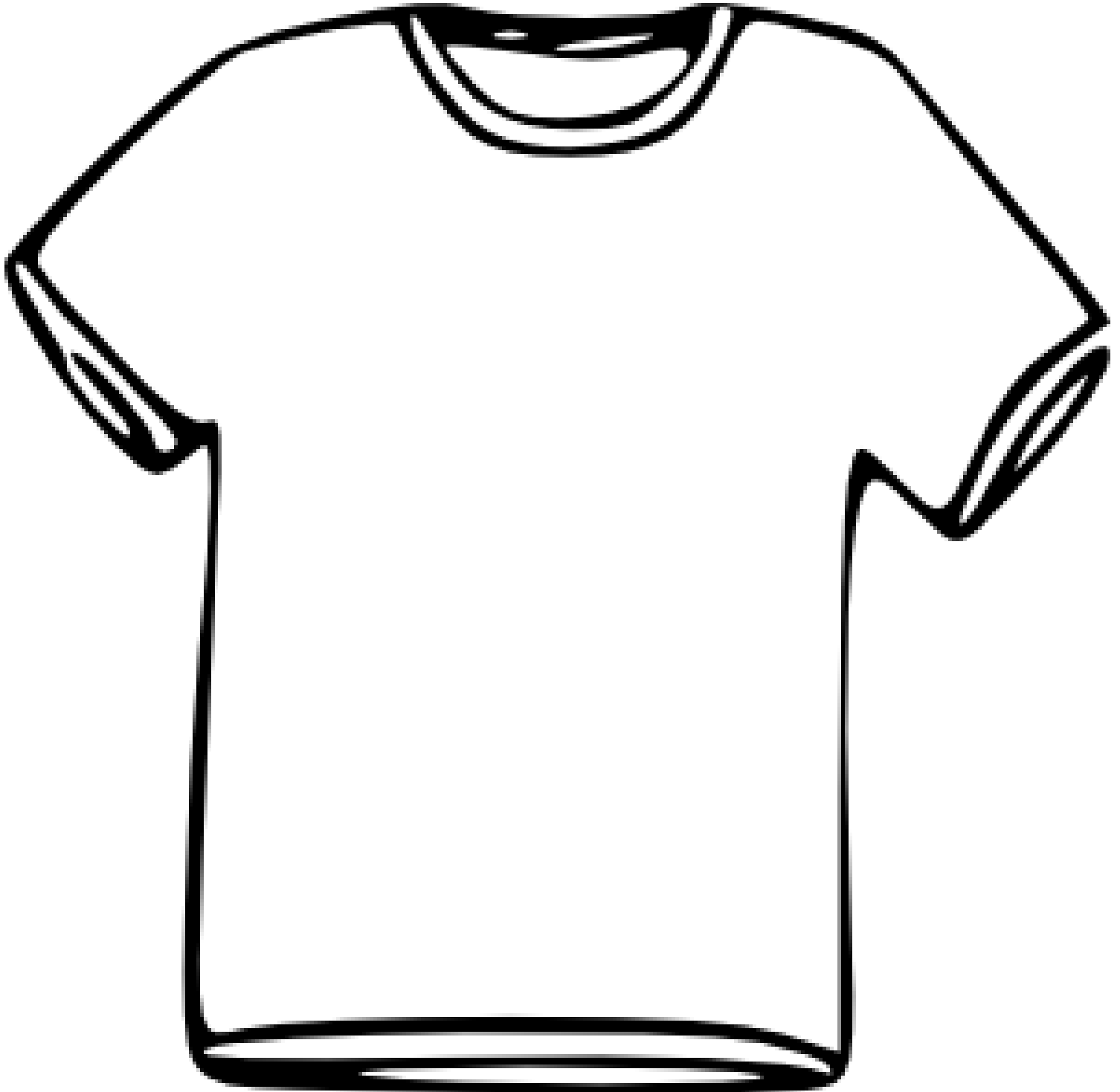_____ 13. A person who plays an instrument.
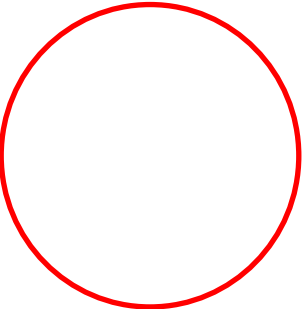
_____ 14. A person who has a brother.

_____ 15. A person who has a sister.

Appendix 5: T-Shirt

**Note: Blow up design to a bigger piece of paper for younger students

Appendix 6: Warm Fuzzies

WARM FUZZY given because

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(Place the pom-pom in the circle to complete the warm fuzzy)

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