



Welcome to Our Leadership Classroom

September 5, 2018

Hello. Imagine if students around the world felt safe, welcome, and had a sense of belonging at school. Over the years I have visited many amazing leader-owned classrooms. In such a classroom, students are very involved in creating a leadership culture. Unfortunately, I've also visited many teacher-owned classrooms. The difference shows up in many critical ways. This month, we will look at the class environment through our students' eyes. Shifting this paradigm will help us work collaboratively with our students to create classrooms where all members thrive. But don't take it from me, let's get a student's perspective. Picture the student ambassador for your class offering up a tour to a visitor. Imagine the student pointing out the features that make the space a leadership classroom. Would it sound like this?

"Welcome to our classroom! I'll be your guide today. I'll show you what makes our classroom a leadership classroom!"

"Probably the first thing you notice here is that there's a LOT of **student work on the walls**, right? This is OUR classroom. Our teacher asks us to create the space and this is what we came up with. And we're the ones responsible for it too! Just looking around, I like spending my days here! Wouldn't you?"

"We have **all 8 Habits posted** over there. We created the posters the first week of school as a reminder of how we want to grow as leaders. We see them, we speak and hear them, and we use them every day."

"This is our **class mission statement**. We created it together, recite it regularly, and it really does keep us focused on what matters most, whether we're in the classroom or not. **Our teacher has hers posted** right

there by her desk and, of course, we each have our own too!

“**Here’s our EBA display.** EBA stands for Emotional Bank Account. We’re super focused on our work and our learning in here. And we take care of each other. This EBA display—we’re doing the 100 Acts of Kindness Challenge this month—helps us remember that we need to be a people-first group of leaders.

“On the whiteboard right now you can see our shared **learning target**—we call it our **end in mind**. That helps us stay present in the learning with each other. And then you can see that we’re using the Brainstormer in our learning right now. It’s just one of the **leadership and quality tools** we use all the time. See, over there, yesterday in math we worked with a Venn Diagram.

“Some other things we do in here are work on our goals—we call them **WIGs**[®] because they’re wildly important. We keep track of them in our **Leadership Notebooks**[®]. That’s actually our WIG wall right there. It has our class goals and lead measures and how we’re tracking them. Every class has one of these walls and the cool thing is that when you add all of these numbers up across the school, then you get the numbers posted in the entrance to the school on our schoolwide WIG board.

“And lastly, on the wall here, is our **leadership-roles** display. Everyone in our class has a leadership role all the time, so this is where we check in on who is responsible for what and also get a sense of what we might want to try next month. We also help out the next person who takes over our role by teaching them what we learned in the role. My leadership role is to be a writing leader. I’m a really good writer, you see, and so my assignment is to help other students when we have papers to write. I told my teacher I wanted to do this role and she said okay. I really love helping other students, and I like it too when they help me with things I’m not so good at, like art.

“Some things that we do that aren’t posted on a wall but that we do as leaders are **class meetings, morning greeting, and class celebrations**. And that is the key to, actually, everything we do in our class—it’s that **we do it and we own it**. I love knowing that I’m essential for our class to run well and that I’m needed and cared about every day. This is what learning leadership is all about.”

As you can see, there are lots of ways to collaborate with students to create a leadership classroom; we just need to get out of their way. The physical environment of a classroom can foster and shape student leadership, leading to a strong emotional environment. Engaged students are more likely to feel ownership, take risks in their learning, develop strong relationships, and build up their leadership skills. I can’t think of a better way to develop global citizens.

Warm regards,



Sean Covey
FranklinCovey Education