

The 5 Step Rule

Successful teachers try “playfulness,” silliness, or a bit of theatrics to get their attention and interest. Telling stories, especially personal stories, is effective. When telling a story it helps to add a bit of mystery to begin and have the students generate predictions.

Action 8: Keep Out Of A Power Struggle

Students with behavior issues work to get negative attention, whether that be for:

- power
- self-stimulation (the rush)
- to escape doing something like a specific task
- embarrassment.

Strategies teachers can use to deal with these situations include:

- avoid playing the “yes, it is / no, it isn’t” type power struggle. Negative consequences should be delivered in a firm, business-like way without emotion, lectures or long-winded explanations.
- have the students decide what the consequence should be. This will help the student, who looks for negative attention, to focus on identifying the seriousness of particular behaviors. By training cognitive re-structuring students learn to use more positive self-talk.

Action 9: Use The 5 Step Rule For Offering Feedback

Teachers’ discipline and supervision feedback should follow these rules:

- remain calm, state the infraction
- avoid debating or arguing
- have students design the consequence for the misbehavior, making sure that the discipline fits the “crime” without harshness
- avoid ridicule and criticism
- make it private.

Action 10: Watch The Words

It is necessary to know the difference between praise and encouragement as in:

- praise is a reward that must be earned (“Way to go. You got a 90.”)
- encouragement is a gift (“I’m glad to see you trying so hard.”)
- praise uses words that judge (“You got two questions right.”)
- encouragement uses words that notice (“I’m happy to see you on time for class and in such a great mood.”)
- praise promotes competition (“You got the best grade in the class.”) and encouragement promotes cooperation (“You’re getting better, keep trying.”)

When telling a story it helps to add a bit of mystery to begin and have the students generate predictions.

When Communication Goes Bad

Use encouragement more than praise to teach students to become more resilient and independently self-rewarding.

- praise reflects contingent acceptance (“I love when you keep your notebook so organized.”) Encouragement reflects unconditional acceptance. (“I love being around you.”)
- praise teaches students to please adults (“You did a great job on the assignment, I’m happy with you.”)
- encouragement teaches students to please themselves (“I noticed how helpful you were in class. You should be proud of yourself.”)
- praise can only be given when a student is successful (“You did a great job on that test.”)
- encouragement can be given when the student is experiencing failure or frustration (“You’ve been really trying on this assignment. Keep it up!”)

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Discouraged students with behavior issues need larger doses of encouragement. Use encouragement more than praise to teach students to become more resilient and independently self-rewarding. Praise causes students to seek extrinsic motivation. Encouragement promotes intrinsic motivation and these students often have a long way to go to become more self-motivated.

Action 11: Avoid Communication Roadblocks

Students react negatively to any teacher use of:

- ordering
- commanding
- directing
- moralizing
- preaching
- giving solutions
- advising
- lecturing
- interpreting
- sympathizing
- probing
- interrogating.

These all lead to resentment and communication break downs. Teachers need to use active listening, and “I” messages. With an I-message, a problem is stated simply without the sound of blame that comes when someone uses the word “you” to communicate. It is simpler to problem solve if people do not become defensive. For instance, it is easier for a student to hear “I am disappointed that my problem solving lessons haven’t made it any easier for you to handle situations