

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

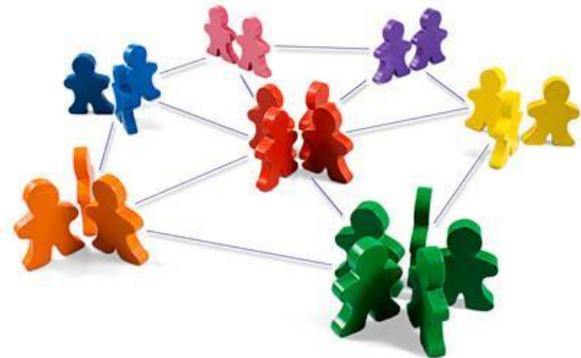
Top 10 tips for Teachers
2018

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STRONG TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS ARE CRUCIAL.

To a large extent, the nature of your relationship with your students dictates the impact that you have on them. If you want to have a positive and lasting difference on your kids, you need to forge productive teacher student relationships.

Advocates of evidence based education know that students who have constructive relationships with their teachers are more likely to do well at school, and teachers who actively build such relationships have a strong effect on the lives of their students.



WITH-IT-NESS

Students are far less likely to misbehave when they know their teacher notices every little thing going on in the classroom. Students need to think that you have eyes in the back of your head. Start the year by setting up the room in a way that maximises visibility. Then, do simple things such as *positioning yourself so you see all of your students, continuously scanning the room to see what is going on and limiting times when you have your back to the class* can make a big difference.



STRUCTURE YOUR TEACHING

There are many aspects to good teaching, but some of them have more impact on classroom behaviour than others. When teaching a new class, or struggling to gain control of a tough class the following aspects of teaching are absolutely critical: *clear lesson goals, never asking students to do something they don't know how to do, judicious use of group work and holding them accountable for the work they have done* (either as an individual or in a group).



NIP SMALL PROBLEMS IN THE BUD

Most misbehaviour can be dealt with quickly and easily. You can do this by correcting minor infringements on-the-spot and then moving on with the lesson. On-the-spot corrective actions include things such as: *making eye contact with a student, moving closer to a student or group, reminding them of a relevant rule or simply telling them to get back to work.* There are also some subtle but important tricks to the way you go about such corrections.



GROUP REINFORCEMENT

Reinforcement involves rewarding good behaviour while discouraging undesirable behaviour. Group reinforcement involves rewarding or penalising whole groups. These may be small groups within the class, or the 'entire class group'. For an example of small group reinforcement, you may reward one small group for being the first to be ready for the lesson with a point beside their group name, or you may penalise a small group for not focusing on their work. Group reinforcement works well because of the pervasive power of peers.



INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT

As with group reinforcement, individual reinforcement involves rewarding desirable behaviour and penalising misbehaviour. However, you assign rewards or penalties to individual students. Rewards can include tokens, such as points, stickers and alike. Yet, rewards can be as simple as good marks, comments to parents and praise. In a similar vein, students view penalties such as *informing parents* and *discussions* about their behaviour as being effective. Note – individual reinforcement is not as effective as group reinforcement, but it still works. Furthermore, it allows you to balance some of the inherent problems of group reinforcement (e.g. a well-behaved child being penalised because of others in their group).



ROUTINES

On average, students spend 15% of their class time following routine procedures. These procedures include things such as *entering the classroom, getting books out and stopping work to pay attention to the teacher*. You establish these routines at the start of the year, and in the words of behaviour management guru Bill Rogers, *you establish, what you establish* (i.e. it's hard to change later). Your students are far less likely to misbehave during these routine actions when you have clarified your expectations and turned them into habitual ways of acting. Research shows most teachers state such expectations, but it is the teachers who get students to practice them (while correcting along the way) that succeed in turning them into habits.



RULES

Establishing rules formalizes the expectations in your class. There are a few tricks to harnessing the full power of rules. You need to *keep the number of formal rules to a minimum*, you *explain the reason behind the rules*, and you need to *frame the rules in a positive way*. Limiting the number of rules you adopt enables students to remember them without being overwhelmed. Explaining the reason behind rules helps students see them as being fair, and it also allows for some negotiation (e.g. can they modify the rule while still achieving your underlying goal). And, framing the rules in a positive way clarifies what students are meant to do (not just what they aren't allowed to do).



EMOTIONAL OBJECTIVITY

Managing misbehaviour can be an emotional ordeal. However, you have more impact when you remain cool, calm and collected. When you are composed, you can keep things in perspective, deal with them quickly, and get back to your main task – teaching your students. To help you do this, it is important to remember that students are people too – they want to have fun, and even difficult students are not all bad. Try not to take things personally, try to see the funny side of sticky situations and always be well organised.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
STAY
COOL**

CONSEQUENCES OR PUNISHMENTS

Students need to understand there are consequences that flow from the way they behave. Sometimes, consequences flow naturally (e.g. you have no hat so you can't play in the sun) and sometimes consequences include formal punishments. While punishments should be a last resort, repetitive and serious misbehaviour needs to be dealt with. Punishments can include time-outs, working by yourself, detentions and alike. Yet, no matter which specific punishment you use it is critical that it is kept in proportion to the crime (Strategy 9 helps here). It is also important is that you explain the link between 'the student's choice of behaviour' and the 'consequences' that follow.

