

Behaviour: Effective Interactions

PINPOINT



Much of student behavior is opportunistic and undertaken in reaction to the gray area, "I can get away with it, so I will."

Doug Lemov

Power



The first principle of classroom management is that the teacher needs to claim power. Not aggressively but with a strong and enduring intention for students to do what she wants.



Without mental clarity you cannot have behavioural clarity.

Fred Jones

Self



To claim power, the teacher must gain control of her emotions. This means not taking anything personally. Breathe slowly. And

Mental clarity



Teachers need to avoid at all costs giving mixed messages to students. Effective behaviour management stems from mental clarity.

Mental strength



Teachers need the mental strength to avoid being drawn into "it's not fair" discussions. Rule enforcement must come first in any priority.



Nagging is no more than a fight-flight reflex with dialogue.

Fred Jones

Consistency



Teachers need to be consistent. It is an essential of effective interactions. Students need you to be rock-steady.

Voice



The voice can be a powerful tool if used correctly. Teachers can learn how to raise it to attract attention, followed immediately by a much softer tone. The lower volume tells the students exactly the level of attentive listening required. Then modulating the voice for interest is needed to sustain their interest.

Body language



Students read how you are feeling and what you are thinking through your body language. Stand tall and straight. Don't cross your arms in a defensive stance. Nor stand ready to fight, with puffed chest and jutting jaw. A strong, neutral posture makes an assertive statement of intent.

Movement



A teacher's authority and power is made visible to students through the speed of their movements. Confidence shows itself by not rushing. Especially when responding to students' actions. To achieve this the teacher must breath slowly. And count to three before responding. Every time.

Persistence



Students need to know that their teachers have more endurance than they do. That's to say that it wouldn't be worth while trying to get their teachers to feel too tired to follow through, or too busy, or too stressed, or too confused, or too distracted. Plain, old-fashioned, overtly visible, calm, respectful persistence.

Follow through



The severity of a punishment has no correlation with changed behaviour. What does is students knowing the inevitability of the teacher's follow through. The punishment might be slight but the thought of its inevitability makes the strongest impact on students' strategy in working out if they can "get away with it".

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