

Behavior Crisis Management Tool #1

Pre-Empt Behavior

Purpose

This technique is a good “tool” to have when students are exhibiting certain inappropriate behaviors in a classroom and asking them to stop in front of the class has not worked.

Examples

Everyday certain students may exhibit behaviors that interfere in the performance, concentration or facilitation of learning for both the teacher and his/her peers. For instance, a student may continuously talk to another student, interfere with his/her work, disrupt lessons, call out, or bring the negative spotlight to him/herself in some manner. These negative, attention seeking behaviors will disrupt the flow of teaching and place you in a very difficult position.

What May Not Work

Many teachers will confront the student in front of the other students. This technique usually has very little success, especially with students who have more serious issues. This technique will actually offer the student more of a spotlight. Secondly, the student, who is already fragile, needs to save face in front of his peers so that there is a good chance he will talk back or become verbally resistant to your request.

Try This

The important issue here is to realize that a student who chooses this type of behavior pattern is actually very fragile and feels powerless. Confronting him/her in front of the audience provides him/her “power” that can prove to be a problem for both you and the student. You never want to allow yourself to be “caught” as you would be if you discipline this type of student in front of a crowd.

What we suggest is that you allow the class to enter the room and ask him/her to stay behind outside. Have the assistant cover the class while behind closed doors in the hallway you speak to the student. What you have now done is remove the audience and thereby removing a source of

“power” for the student. The next thing is to set the boundary. Many teachers make the mistake by saying, “I want you to stop doing what you are doing...” If the child was able to stop it he would, but since we already know that he/she lacks internal controls saying it this way asks him to control his own behavior.

What you need to immediately establish is who is in charge. Therefore, you will need to say, “I can no longer allow you to i.e. interfere with John when he is working. I will no longer allow you to disrupt the class and my teaching. Then place the responsibility directly on the student by saying, “And if you choose to act inappropriately, I will take action to stop your behavior. Do you understand?”

If the student conforms to the boundary then you will need to reward him/her verbally or through some classroom experience so that you begin to shape his/her behavior. Remember reward tells a student what to do, punishment tells him what not to do.

Placing the responsibility for consequences on the part of the student by making him/her see that they are “Choosing to behave inappropriately” provides you with more power and control if they should continue his/her behavior.