BEST Spring Symposium 2016

*Equity In Action: Habits of Heart and Mind*

**Creating Socially Just Learning Environments Through Effective Classroom Management**

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| **Mindsets and Practices**  **Mindset #1—Assume the Best vs. Blaming and Labeling**   * Practice—Seek to understand the goals of behavior * Practice—Reframe the dominant narrative * Practice—Assess true student engagement   **Mindset #2—Focus on Teaching and Intervention vs. Punishment**   * Practice—Intentionally teach procedures and routines * Practice—Utilize explicit codes of conduct * Practice—Effectively de-escalate behavior   **Mindset #3—Value Relationship AND Rigor**   * Practice—Prioritizing academic achievement for all students * Practice—Examining situational and systematic inequities |

**Mindset #1—Assume the Best vs. Blaming and Labeling**

Practice—Seek to understand the goals of behavior

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| **Goal of Behavior** | **What the behavior might be communicating** | **How adults typically feel and react** | **Effective intervention** |
| **Attention** | *I count only when I’m being noticed. I feel invisible. I feel like I don’t matter. I need to be validated.* | Feel: annoyed, irritated, frustrated  React: reprimand, scold, remind, punish, coax. | -Give positive attention when least expected  -Have interactions not contingent on student behavior or academic work  -Promote autonomy  -Provide opportunities to contribute  -Give responsibility  -Take time for training and teaching |
| **Power** | *I feel powerless in my world and I’m looking to exert some control in my life. The world is a scary place to me and I am trying to create some order. I count only when I am in charge and I can do whatever I want.* | Feel: worried, angry, provoked, challenged.  React: force, argue, punish. | -Develop mutual respect  -Withdraw from conflict  -Avoid punishments as they create power struggles  -Give choices  -Involve the child in problem solving  -Give student authentic power |
| **Revenge** | *I am angry at someone or some thing. I can’t be liked. I don’t have power but I’ll count if I can hurt others as I feel hurt by life.* | Feel: hurt, angry, spiteful, challenged  React: punish, reprimand, engage in power struggle | -Avoid retaliation or punishment  -Take time and effort to help the child  -Build a trusting relationship  -Connect child to support services |
| **Avoidance of Failure** | *I can’t do anything right so I won’t try to do anything at all. I don’t understand what you are asking me to do and I feel embarrassed and helpless. I want to protect myself.* | Feel: hopeless, frustrated, defeated, sad, discouraged  React: give up, apply pressure, punish, scold | -Encourage the student  -Create a high level of academic support  -Give feedback and clearly name next steps in learning  -Create an atmosphere where it is ok to be imperfect  -Show trust and faith  -Give responsibility |
| **Trauma or Basic Needs** | *I have experienced something very traumatic. I’m stressed, hungry, and tired. My brain is chronically stressed and in an emotive state. My brain literally can’t attend to cognitive tasks. I am in constant fight or flight mode. I feel very vulnerable.* | Feel: confused, sad, empathetic, helpless | -Create a high level of academic and behavioral support  -Build a trusting relationship  -Help student access necessary services  -Create a safe, predictable learning environment with consistent expectations, rituals, and routines |

Adapted from the work of Alfred Adler.

**Five Myths About Student Engagement**

Student engagement is very important, yes, but I am not sure that we’re all that clear on what true engagement really is. In fact, many teachers and administrators I talk to tend to buy into one or more of the five myths about student engagement. Read on below to see if you suffer from one or more of these myths.

**Myth One: An engaged kid is an attentive kid.**  
It is a mistake to think that just because a student is tracking you with his eyes or nodding when you speak that the student is actually engaged in his learning. How many times have you feigned attentiveness in a workshop or a meeting when your mind was really a million miles away? Just because a student seems attentive doesn’t necessarily signal that she is actually engaged. What’s more, real engagement often looks inattentive as students are so consumed by their work that they are not paying attention to you.

**Myth Two: An engaged kid is an obedient kid.**  
We often think that if a student is truly engaged, he or she will do exactly as we say. Sometimes students can get so engaged in the work that they are not ready to stop when you call “time!” They may want to continue their small group conversations long after you’ve instructed them to come to order. Or, they may not want to do the assignment exactly the way that you prescribe. If students are truly engaged in the work, they will own the work and that means that they may not always follow instructions.

**Myth Three: An engaged kid is a productive kid.**  
We often think that an engaged kid will produce the work we want when we want it. But students who are truly engaged may not follow the directions or turn in their work on time. They may want more time to figure out a problem or be reluctant to let the work go until they have gotten it completely “right.” They may get so interested in one part of an assignment that they neglect the other parts. You cannot judge a students’ engagement by their productivity. A truly engaged student may be so engrossed in the work that she isn’t as productive as a student who is just trying to get the assignment done as quickly as possible.

**Myth Four: An engaged kid is a polite kid.**  
Many teachers think that engaged students are polite – waiting for their turn before speaking, sharing, and honoring social norms. But a student who is truly engaged in the learning may be so anxious to share that she doesn’t wait her turn before speaking or is loath to give up an activity just because it is someone else’s turn. An engaged student may be so engrossed in the learning that he skips many of the niceties and social norms. While it is important that students are polite to each other and to you, politeness isn’t a sign of true engagement. By the same token, a nice, orderly classroom of students may not be a sign that students are truly engaged.

**Myth Five: An engaged kid is an excited kid.**  
Sometimes, we think that in order to get students really engaged, we have to find some fun activity or some cool demonstration. We think that is the only way to capture and hold their interest. But be careful. There is a [difference between a kid who is engaged and one who is merely entertained](http://www.mindstepsinc.com/2010/09/engagement/). A student may get excited about an activity and still not be engaged in the learning.

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| **Lesson for Teaching Expected Behavior** |
| **Skill Name** |
| Reading Right |
| **Rationale for Teaching the Skill** |
| Reading time is an important time for students to practice their reading skills. To become better readers, exposure to books is an important aspect of improvement. Reading without distractions allows everyone to become better readers. |
| **Modeling the Skill--Teaching Examples** |
| **Teacher Models Examples of Expected Behaviors:**   1. Sitting in my own area with an appropriate level book reading quietly to myself. 2. If a peer is talking to me, quietly and politely asking if they can talk later or moving to a different area. 3. If I finish my book, quietly picking a different book and returning to my spot.   **Teacher Models Non-Examples of Expected Behavior**   1. Reading loudly and very near another person. 2. Talking to my peers. 3. Choosing a book that I am not interested in reading. 4. Finishing my book and talking to my peers, stealing another’s book, or causing a disturbance while choosing another book. |
| **Visuals or Rubrics to Support Learning of Procedure** |
| http://www.sff.net/people/jchines/Pics/Hands to Yourself-No Border.jpgMC900437803[1]MC900437990[1]  **Read the entire time Be Quiet Keep your hands to yourself** |
| **Practice Activities** |
| 1. “Simon Says”: Based on Simon says, I will ask the students to perform various ways in which sustained silent reading is done properly and incorrectly. For example, I would say, “Simon says choose an appropriate book for sustained silent reading.” Then students would show their choices and explain why their book was a good choice. I could also say, “Simon says choose a book that wouldn’t be a good choice for sustained silent reading.” Students would also explain these choices. 2. “Make a Match”: Students will each pick one piece of paper from a hat. The paper they choose will have one of the pictures depicted above. They will then have to form groups of three making sure each person has a different picture. The group will then create a short skit showing a way not to silent read and the proper way to silent read. |
| **After the Lesson--During the Day or Week** |
| 1. During sustained silent reading, the visuals above can be put onto an overhead which runs throughout the time students are reading. If students need a reminder, I can just point to the overhead. 2. Before it is time to read, I will call on students to explain the expectations during reading time. 3. Give specific praise after the time has ended for reading for what was done correctly during that time. |
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Note. "From Teaching Respect in the Classroom: An Instructional Approach" by S. Langland, T. Lewis-Palmer & G. Sugai, 1998, *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 8, pp. 245-262. Copyright 1998 by Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. Adapted with permission.

**Explicit Codes of Conduct**

**Principles:**

* Guidelines that are more general and more value-laden than rules
* The “big picture” that governs conduct in the classroom
* Add a sense of underlying purpose and spirit to a list of rules
* Usually limited to 1-2
* Posted and reviewed regularly

**Rules:**

* What you would see and hear if classroom principles were being supported
* The non-negotiables in a classroom
* Worded behaviorally rather than morally
* Worded specifically to avoid misinterpretation
* No more than five or six
* Posted and reviewed regularly

Effectively De-Escalating Behavior

* *Create a 'safe' setting.* An educator attempting to calm an agitated student cannot always select the setting in which that interaction plays out. When a student outburst occurs in the classroom, however, the educator should attempt to engage the student in a semi-private conversation (e.g., off to the side of the room) rather than having an exchange in front of classmates. As part of the protocol for conducting a de-escalation conference, adults should also ensure that they are never left alone with agitated students.
* *Limit the number of adults involved*. Having too many educators (e.g., teacher and a teaching assistant) participating in a de-escalation conference can be counter-productive because of possible confusion and communication of mixed messages to the agitated student. If more than one adult is available in the instructional setting, select the one with the most experience with de-escalation techniques to engage the student one-to-one, while the additional educator(s) continue to support the instruction or behavior management of other students.
* *Provide adequate personal space.* Stand at least 2 arm's length of distance away from the agitated student. If the student tells you to 'back off' or 'get away', provide the student with additional space.
* *Do not block escape routes*. When individuals are agitated, they are more likely to experience a 'fight-or-flight' response that can express itself in the need to have escape routes available. When engaging a student in a de-escalation conference, do not position yourself between the student and the door. If the student says, "Get out of my way", step back to give that student additional personal space and reposition yourself out of his or her potential escape path.
* *Show open, accepting body language*. Convey through stance and body language that you are calm and accepting of the student--and will treat that student respectfully and maintain his or her safety. Stand at an angle rather than facing the student directly in a 'confrontational' pose. Keep hands open and visible to the student. Stand comfortably, with knees slightly bent. Avoid 'clenched' body language such as crossing arms or balling hands into fists.
* *Keep verbal interactions respectful.* It is natural for educators to experience feelings of defensiveness, embarrassment, anxiety, or irritation when attempting to talk down a student from an emotional outburst. However, you should strive to appear calm and to treat the student respectfully at all times. Avoid use of teasing, reprimands, or other negative comments and abstain as well from sarcasm or an angry tone of voice.
* *Communicate using simple, direct language*. When people are emotionally upset, they may not process language quickly or with complete accuracy. In talking with the student, keep your vocabulary simple and your sentences brief. Be sure to allow sufficient time for the student to think about and respond to each statement before continuing. In particular, if the student does not respond to a statement, avoid falling into the trap of assuming too quickly that the student is simply 'ignoring you". Instead, calmly repeat yourself--several times if necessary. So long as the student's behavior is not escalating, give him or her the benefit of the doubt and use gentle repetition to help the student to focus on and respond to you.

* *Reassure the student and frame an outcome goal*. You can often help to defuse the student's agitation by reassuring the student (e.g., "You're not in trouble. This is your chance to give me your side of the story")  and stating an outcome goal ("Let's figure out how to take care of this situation in a positive way" ; "I want to understand why you are upset so that I can know how to respond"). Also, if you do not know the agitated student whom you are approaching, introduce yourself and state both your name and position.

* *Identify the student's wants and feelings*. Use communication tools such as active listening (e.g., "Let me repeat back to you what I thought I heard you say ...."), open-ended questions (e.g., "What do you need right now to be able to calm yourself?"),  and labeling of emotions ("Rick, you look angry. Tell me what is bothering you") to better understand how the student feels and what may be driving the current emotional outburst.

* *Identify points of agreement.*A powerful strategy to build rapport with an agitated student is to find points on which you can agree. At the same time, of course, you must preserve your professional integrity as an educator and therefore cannot falsely express agreement on issues that you in fact disagree with. Here are suggestions for finding authentic common ground with the student in response to different situations. (1) Agreement with student's account: If you essentially agree with the student's account of (and/or emotional reaction to) the situation,  you can say so (e.g., "I can understand why you were upset when you lost your book on the field trip. I would be upset too."); (2) Agreement with a principle expressed or implied by the student: If you are unsure of the objectivity of the student's account, you might still discern within it a principle that you can support (e.g., If the student claims to have been disrespected by a hall monitor, you can say, "I think everybody has the right to feel respected."); (3) Agreement with the typicality of the student response: If you decide that the student's emotional response would likely be shared by a substantial number of peers, you can state that observation (e.g., "So I gather that you were pretty frustrated when you learned that you are no longer sports-eligible because of your report card grades. I am sure that there are other students here who feel the same way.";(4) Agreement to disagree: If you cannot find a point on which you can agree with the student or validate an aspect of his or her viewpoint, you should simply state that you and the student agree to disagree.

http://www.interventioncentral.org/behavior\_calm\_agitated\_student

By Kate Sobel

From Teaching As Leadership By Steven Farr

***I had so much to give, but I forgot to teach. While I think I was right to support him in the ways I did, I wish I had also maintained focus on the all-important goal of teaching him to read.***

Francisco came into my room for the first time, looked around, and grinned a wide smile. Having spent four years in the classroom, I easily looked past the too-big shoes, too-short pants, and backward t-shirt to see the excitement in his soon-to-be- a-first-graders eyes. Francisco and is brother, Victor, spent the day putting up butcher paper, organizing the library, and unpacking boxes of fresh-tipped crayons Francisco was off to a good start. I had big plans for the students of Room B and Francisco was already high on my list.

I spent so much time with him that year and grew to love his toothless smile and misfit uniforms. But all of that time, I lost sight of my expectations and my primary responsibilities as a teacher. I let Francisco go through an entire year of first grade without learning to read.

I think about it all the time. It’s one of those things that seemed to be a part of a year flying by. I remember each incident clearly, but I can’t remember when I decided to put my academic priorities aside for Francisco. There was the time when, with a tooth so rotten it made his face swell like a football, I sent him home with explicit directions to stay there until he had seen the dentist. And the afternoons when he and his brother ate peanut butter and crackers at my desk when I was content to use tutoring time to provide a much-needed snack. And all the time I spent talking to his mom about bedtime and visits to the clinic, and getting new clothes. Somehow when Francisco walked through my doors in the morning, my mind spun through a checklist that was different from when I greeted other students in the class. Instead of “Homework? Check. Does he know his spelling words this week? Check.” I jumped to sending him to the bathroom with soap and a toothbrush, checking to make sure he was wearing socks and that be brought a jacket for recess. I had so much to give, but I forgot to teach. While I think I was right to support him in the ways I did, I wish I had also maintained focus on the all-important goal of teaching him to read.

Francisco spent a year in first grade with me, better fed and cleaner than perhaps he would have been otherwise, but because I forgot to teach Francisco, he spent two years in first grade. The year he left Room B to join a first grade class for the second time, Francisco learned to read with his peers. Another teacher looked past the too-big shoes, too-short pants, and backward T-shirt to see his potential as a student—and he lived up to her expectations.

**Reframing Behaviors By Assuming the Best**

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| **Naming the Behavior** | **What I might think if I’m not assuming the best…** | **Reframe the behavior by assuming the best…** | **Based on the new assumption, steps I might take…** |
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