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# Managing Behaviour in Today's Classroom

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In order for you to teach and your students to learn, you want to create the optimal classroom environment, one in which your students feel emotionally and physically safe. *Classroom Management: Teaching Responsible Behaviour for Today's Students* offers practical strategies for successful behaviour management in a classroom led by a teacher who builds personal, trusting relationships with students. If you are committed to learning these proven techniques, you will have the ability to reach the vast majority of your students.

### **Chapter 1—Your Role as a Teacher**

The first chapter discusses how social developments have redefined the teacher's role.

### **Chapter 2—A Proactive Approach to Student Behaviour**

The second chapter examines the benefits of using a proactive approach to help students succeed.

### **Chapter 3—A Balance Between Structure and Caring**

The third chapter offers advice on how to strike a balance between establishing a structured classroom while building trusting and caring relationships with students.

reminded her student of the specific rule she expected her to follow. When the reminder didn't work, she immediately referred to the corrective action, "one minute after class", known to everyone through the discipline plan.

Proactive responses are aimed at stopping the disruption so that the student may get back on task, the teacher may resume teaching, and the class may resume learning. Instead of getting emotionally involved in the situation, the teacher remained focused on the task at hand until the desired effect was achieved: Pam went back to work. Proactive responses are further aimed at giving the student guidance to choose more appropriate behaviour in the near as well as distant future.

This book provides the tools you need for developing a more proactive approach towards managing behaviour in your classroom. You will learn about developing a plan for correcting inappropriate behaviour and for supporting and encouraging appropriate behaviour.

All teachers want the best for their students, but that vision is often limited to students' educational achievement. When you can look beyond their studies and include in your vision the need to teach appropriate behaviour, you will have a greater chance of realising your goals for your students.

## Remember . . .

- Reactive responses are counterproductive because they lose sight of the immediate goal of behaviour management: to stop undesired behaviour and teach appropriate behaviour.
- Reactive responses preclude the achievement of the long-term goal: to help students move toward self-control and self-management.
- Proactive responses are productive because they stop undesired behaviour and model socially acceptable behaviour.
- Proactive responses put the responsibility on the student for choosing appropriate behaviour.
- Planning is crucial for proactive behaviour management. Don't wait until students misbehave before planning how to respond.

# A Balance Between Structure and Caring

At the core of proactive behaviour management is a structure called a behaviour management plan. This plan establishes rules and behaviours you expect your students to follow. It determines the supportive feedback and the corrective actions you will take should a student misbehave. It gives your students clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour. It gives you clear guidelines for appropriate and effective responses should emotional or physical conflicts arise.

A proactive response style and a behaviour management plan alone are not enough to motivate students to change their behaviour. If you want students to choose appropriate behaviour, they need to know that you are concerned about them—that you care about their personal lives and their achievement in school. Building positive relationships with students and earning their trust set the stage for motivating them to follow your guidance in the classroom.

If, however, your students do not trust you or do not believe that you genuinely care and want them to succeed, they will not be compelled or motivated to cooperate with you or to comply with your requests. Your behaviour management efforts will be undermined. If you do not demonstrate that you care about the student, he or she will not care about your encouragement or your corrective actions.

Students grow intellectually, socially and emotionally in a classroom with a teacher who sets consistent, positive behavioural limits, teaches self-discipline and at the same time establishes caring relationships that value the uniqueness of each student.

*Students begin wiggling. In a few minutes, give the signal by ringing the bell. Begin immediately to acknowledge those students who are following the direction.*

**Teacher:** Marcia has stopped wiggling. Ben has his eyes on me. Pat is listening. Well done!

Now, does anyone have any questions about how to follow my signal?

## **Years 4–6: Teaching Specific Directions**

Students in years 4–6 want to understand the reasons behind the directions they are expected to follow. Explain why they need to follow each direction and what the benefits will be for them and the other students.

### **Specific directions for a seat work activity**

#### **1. Explain the rationale for the directions.**

**Teacher:** During the year, I am often going to ask you to do work at your desk. I call this seat work. Doing seat work means working on your own at your desk. You may be reading. You may be writing. You may be working on a maths problem. Whatever it is that you will be doing, you will be doing it on your own.

To make sure you understand exactly how I expect you to behave during seat work, I am going to teach you the directions I expect you to follow. It's important that everyone follows these directions because everyone needs to be able to work in a quiet environment.

#### **2. Explain the specific directions.**

**Teacher:** I have listed the directions for seat work here. (*Point to the chart.*) Let's look at the first one. When I tell you it's time for seat work, I expect you first to put all necessary books, paper, pencils and other materials you will need on your desk. I also expect you to clear your desk of any other materials you won't be using.

Now let's look at the second direction. (*Point to the second direction on the chart.*) "Stay in your seat and begin working on your own as soon as you receive the assignment." That means no wandering around. No working on other classwork. No reading a library book.

The third direction for seat work is (*point to the chart*), "If you need help or want to ask a question, raise your hand." I will come over to you or ask you to come to my desk.

Finally, the fourth direction (*point to the chart*) is "No talking during seat work." Seat work is quiet time.

### 3. Check for understanding.

**Teacher:** Now, I want to make sure that I was very clear in explaining these directions for seat work and that everyone understands what I expect of you. Can someone raise a hand and tell me, in your own words, what I mean by the first direction, "Have all necessary materials on your desk"?

**Julian:** You mean that we have to take out all of the stuff we'll need for doing the assignment, like paper, pencils and books, and put them on our desks.

**Teacher:** You did a good job of listening. Can someone explain the next direction (*point to the chart*), "Stay in your seat and begin working on your assignment on your own as soon as you receive it"?

**Bella:** That means we need to begin working as soon as we get the assignment. You can't get up and talk to your friends.

**Teacher:** Exactly right! Can someone now explain what I mean by this direction (*point to the third direction*), "If you have a question or need help, raise your hand and wait until the teacher calls on you"?