

## The Resource Room- October 2023

This is a space where we will share ideas and resources about all things Special Education every month. A place centered on sharing evidence-based theory and practices for those educators that continue to seek learning, share knowledge, and reflect on growth.

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### Addressing Behavior in the Classroom

As the school year moves forward, educators find themselves reflecting on their instructional practices and how to best move forward with addressing behaviors in the classroom. It may be a time to re-teach and practice expectations, routines, and procedures. Correction and feedback are also essential to positive learning outcomes. Knowing the ways in which to provide feedback and correction for the most effective and desired results is an important part of a teacher's practice. Also important is understanding some of the basics of behavior, including what reinforcement is and how to use it as a tool for addressing behavior. Here are some things to consider as teachers reflect on their own practices and the interactions within their classrooms.

#### Clarity of Expectations

In John Hattie's research study "Visible Learning", through meta-analysis he studied 6 areas of influence that positively or negatively influence the outcome of student's learning and found that of the 138 influences, the average effect size was a .40. What he did see in this research, and over time, is that the most effective and positive effects come from visible learning. Influences such as feedback, teacher clarity, and teacher estimates of achievement had very high effect sizes.

What does this mean for pedagogy and practice? Have expectations been explicitly taught, modeled, practiced, and reinforced? Do teachers hold high expectations for behavior and achievement for all students? Are educators able to deliver timely, concise, specific, and positive feedback to students?

Source: <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/> (Retrieved September, 2023).

#### Method of Correction

How educators provide corrective feedback or correction can make all the difference to the classroom climate. It is important to match the type of correction to the situation and to the individual receiving this feedback. Non-verbal and Para-verbal communication make up a large part of what is "said" throughout the school day and being aware of facial expressions, posture, gestures, and the tone, volume, and cadence of speech goes a long way in preventing power struggles and gaining compliance and learning in the classroom. Along with the tone of communication, approaching students privately or publicly can also make a huge difference. Each situation and individual may require a separate approach. Different approaches can include positive group corrections, quick public corrections, and private corrections. A positive group correction is when a teacher restates publicly for the whole group the common expectations for that moment and task. Positive group corrections are quick verbal reminders given to an entire group that describe what students should be doing and not what they shouldn't be doing. An example might be,

“We are all lining up with a voice level zero and hands and feet to self”. A quick public correction might be a redirection directed to an individual student in a whole group, but it is limited verbal, stated with what is expected rather than stating what is wrong, and it should be quickly turned to positive praise when behavior is corrected. An example might be “John, I need your book open to page 12. Great, much better. Thank you!” Often, however, the situation and individual are better served with a private correction. This is generally given when all other students are engaged in a task and allows the teacher to use proximity to get to the student’s level and provide a clear expectation and praise for compliance. The volume and tone should be low and even, without emotion. An example of this might be, teacher squatting next to desk and in quiet and even tone, whisper, “John, what page are we supposed to be on? Thank you for getting to that page and getting started.”

*This is a great video to see an example of these techniques in a high school strategy and the power of positivity.* “A Snapshot of the PBIS 4:1 Ratio In a High School Classroom”

<https://youtu.be/Q3wpviS5gaQ>

Source: D., Lemov (2021). Teach Like a Champion 3.0 “63 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College” (3rd Edition)

### **Setting Limits**

Providing corrections and feedback will often be enough to address unexpected behaviors in the classroom. However, when those behaviors continue it is time to set limits and if necessary, implement consequences. It is important to remember that consequences do not necessarily need to be punitive. Consequences are not as effective when framed as ultimatums, punishment, or negotiations and can lead to power struggles if presented in this manner. Setting limits is concisely and specifically stating what needs to happen and the contingencies around that expectation. Limits should be limited in the amount of language used and often a visual can support the clarity and understanding for the student. The sentence frames most often associated with setting limits are “first... then...”, “If... then ...”, and “when...then...”. An example would be “If you can put your phone away, then we can finish our work so we can all get free time”. It can be helpful to understand the contingencies for common scenarios and have that language and statement ready. It is important to be consistent, concise, specific, and positive rather than verbose, wavering, inconsistent, or punitive. The more often that consequences can be natural and framed in choices that are being made, the more likely that they will be successful in addressing behaviors. This is accomplished when educators are prepared for scenarios, have identified possible consequences and contingencies, are able to manage their own non-verbal and paraverbal communication, and in calm and even tone, with few words, restate a limit and allow time and space for the student to choose their response. Hopefully, the student will choose behavior that meets the expectations.

When addressing behavior in the classroom, the most effective tool an educator has is their own behavior. Reflecting on oneself, on classroom management, on instructional practices, and on personal social emotional skills can support being responsive and positive in addressing student behavior in the classroom. While educators cannot control a student’s behavior or choices, they can manage the environmental factors and control their own behavior to support a positive learning community.