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Secrets of Classroom Behavior Management

Beyond the College Textbooks for Elementary School Teachers

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ISBN-13: 978-1-935500-07-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009942776

Contents

Introduction	ix
Perception of Education	1
The Problem	1
Change Your Students' Perspective	2
Getting Started.....	5
Classroom Management	9
Your First Structured Activity.....	13
Classroom Procedures	15
Walk Through Your Procedures.....	15
Classroom Procedure Checklist.....	17
Delegating responsibility.....	20
Managing Too Many Students	23
Managing Undesirable Behavior	25
Using Compliments	25
Handling Class Rebellion.....	27
After lunch	28
Extremely difficult students	29
The Sneakiest Behavior Problem	30
Reward Systems	33
Commonly Used Behavioral Strategies.....	35
Behavior Board	35
Behavior Wheel.....	37
Rookie Mistakes to Avoid	39
Reduce Your Work Load	43
Prepare for a Substitute Teacher.....	45
Reading Strategy	47
The Last Weeks of School.....	49

Introduction

This behavioral instruction booklet was designed to help new teachers manage student behavior, making the classroom conducive for learning. New teachers have no idea of the challenges they will face. In recent years, not only are teachers expected to teach, but they also must prepare students to compete in the global economy that has been created by modern technology. This is a monumental task considering that many students in the United States cannot even pass a standardize test. Unfortunately, there are many students who lack discipline, making it stressful and difficult for their teachers to teach the skills necessary to excel on standardize tests.

This manual should be viewed as your behavior management reference handbook. Some of the information in this manual you have read in your college textbooks. I am simply taking it a step farther by providing practical applications that you can learn and use as you begin teaching. I like to think of it as the reality of teaching. When you get a teaching job, especially in the inner city, it will seem as if the professional experts who wrote the college textbooks never taught elementary school. Most of what you learned in college is theory!

I have taught elementary school for several years. You will read

Introduction

about and learn from my personal experiences. I have mastered effective behavioral strategies that have proven successful in managing the toughest inner city students from kindergarten through fifth grade. After you read this manual and implement the behavioral strategies, you will experience the rewards of teaching.

Perception of Education

The Problem

I believe that one of the biggest reasons students fail to achieve academically is because of their and our perception of education. In order to prepare students for the competitive technological world it is essential to acknowledge that there is a problem with our perception of education.

America's biggest dilemma is that we do not value education. It is up to each and every one of us as educators, as well as parents, to change the perception of education, starting with our children. Our society feels that education is not important. An example of this is that athletes are paid much more than teachers. In fact, most professionals are paid more than teachers, even though teachers' salaries are better now than in previous years.

Nevertheless, our view of education is being manifested in our children. It is a known fact that in African American urban schools, children feel that if you are smart and make good grades, you are trying to be White. This reflects what they think about themselves. They feel worthless. They are saying that if you are Black, your birthright is to be stupid. In some Caucasian schools,

if a child is extremely smart, his peers will call him a nerd. It is that type of thinking that has to change. I usually tell my students that if someone calls you a nerd for being smart, do you know what they will call you when you grow up? Boss!

Change Your Students' Perspective

Give a visual representation of the importance of learning the basics. It is easier to start in the primary grades. Children do not understand the reason they should pay attention to a lesson that involves learning the vowel sounds or one plus one equals two. The child is thinking, "big deal." I have found it helps tremendously to give students a visual representation of the importance of the foundation of education. This sounds obvious and insignificant, but I have met first and second graders who did not know the reason that it is important to learn the alphabet sounds or the significance of understanding that one plus one is two. I usually explain the importance of learning the fundamental concepts of education by giving a visual illustration. I begin by drawing a picture of a house on the board. Next, I draw horizontal lines inside the house. Then, I label the lines starting at the bottom, each line represents a grade, such as, first grade, second grade, on up to twelfth grade. I tell the students that this represents a house made of bricks. I ask them what they think

will happen to the house if the bottom bricks are weak. They are able to answer and tell me that the house will collapse. I tell them this is what will happen to them if they do not pay attention to math or reading. I continue to explain that if they do not have a fundamental or basic understanding of these subjects, school will become harder and harder, which will make them feel as if their life is crumbling. After doing this demonstration, I get results from the students.

The next thing I do is compare American students with other students their age from around the world.

Getting Started

You will need to be prepared for your first day of school. These are some of the basics that will help you get started on the right track.

1. Observation Stand at the door as the students enter the classroom. Notice on the first day that most of the disruptive children sit in the back and the very studious kids choose to sit in the front. The well-behaved students usually come to class early and the disruptive students usually come to school late or right before the tardy bell rings.

2. Attendance When you take attendance, have the name tags ready to put on each child's desk and shirt. That way it will be easier to call them by name when the students get in line.

It may also be a good idea for you to spell each child's name phonetically on a separate note pad so that it helps you pronounce the name. You will notice that today's parents are simply putting letters together that defy the rules of phonics. I am not talking about foreign students. I am talking about an American student whose name is La'qesha. This parent obviously does not know the purpose of an apostrophe. Furthermore, that parent does not know that the letter q is always followed by the letter u in the English language.

3. Class Rules This is a good time to go over the class rules and consequences. It may be best if you make them feel as if they are creating the rules and consequences. Ask them what they think the rules should be. Most children know what the rules should be, except for kindergarteners.

4. Consequences Assign the rows or tables names or numbers. Write on the board, “Table -1, Table-2, Table-3,” and so on. Give them points throughout the day. **This is a very effective discipline tool!**

Example: You may say, “I would like you to sit in the listening position, with hands folded on your desk and feet on the floor, all eyes on me.” Give each table or row a point for doing it. You can also take points away for being too noisy when you ask them to do something. When they get a certain number of points, reward them. For instance, they may get 15 minutes of free play at the end of the day. If someone was misbehaving, no free play. Remember, at this point you have already reviewed the rules and consequences. You can modify this point system to work for your students.

5. Restroom The most difficult part of the day may be **taking them to the restroom!** No matter how well behaved children are in the classroom, all hell breaks loose when the students go into the restroom. That is their opportunity to talk loudly, hit each other, or display any other type of outrageous behavior. That is the reason that you want to have a girl and a boy restroom monitor. Their job is to stand inside the restroom and make sure

that nobody is playing or talking in the restroom. The boys usually play in the restroom, more than the girls do. The monitors also have liquid soap so that when there is no soap in the dispenser each child will be given only one squirt of soap.

Remind the students who are standing in the hall to put their hands behind their backs and stand one tile length apart to give the person in front of them enough space. (Tile floors are helpful – very helpful!) Complement them if they are doing a good job. If everyone behaves, give all of them a point when you get back to the classroom. If another teacher compliments them, give them two points. If one person misbehaves, no one gets a point. This seems harsh, but it works. Explain that they have to help each other to do the right thing and follow the rules. **This also reduces the chances of a child being a tattletale.**