

Positive Child Behavior Management In The Classroom

Part 1

By
BOB LANCER
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Being in charge in your classroom begins with being in charge of yourself. If a student's inappropriate behavior can cause you to react with visible signs of stress and strain, you place that student in charge because he or she is now running the show.

Control over circumstances begins with control over your reaction to your circumstances. Choosing a response in line with what you want to accomplish places you in charge. To apply this bit of "in charge wisdom", when you find a student's behavior disturbing, concentrate first on your self-control. To the degree that you have that, you limit the power of the student's ability to send you into a disturbed reaction and through that, to seize control over the classroom. At the same time, you preserve your power to determine the direction of events.

We permit a disruptive student to usurp control over our class when we become so focused on the student's behavior that we overlook the quality of our reaction to that behavior. Remember this principle of power: your power flows in the direction of your attention. Stated differently, whoever gets your attention gets your power. Focusing too much attention on the challenging student, and not enough on yourself, gives too much of your power to that student. In contrast, by remaining consciously aware of how you are reacting, you direct your power back into yourself, which translates into more power to control your reaction.

When you notice yourself slipping into a reactive state of emotional intensity, including impatience, annoyance, anxiety or frustration, stop vying for power with that student. Concentrate instead on maintaining or regaining your composure. This is a matter of learning how to be out of control of a situation without losing your calm confidence. This proves to be an essential strength for anyone who wants to demonstrate the highest possible quality of control. You simply need to accept that you cannot have complete control all of the

time. If the chaos in the classroom causes you to lose your calm composure, that chaos has spread into you. You begin increasing your control by first gaining control over your reaction. From a state of calm confidence, observe the situation patiently until you see your opportunity to increase your control over it. When you attempt to control a situation while out of self-control, you end up only increasing the situation's control over you.

So the first basic practice to keep in mind is that of avoiding giving the difficult student too much of your attention. But it is also possible to give the student too little attention, and the student's receiving of too little attention is often where the his difficult behavior begins.

Students who routinely, or even chronically, display inappropriate behavior typically do so out of an unconscious craving for power. This typically stems from their receiving too little attention at home. Remember that power flows in the direction of attention. Giving a child too little attention causes the child to feel too much powerlessness. These children usually learn that they will be ignored or overlooked until they exhibit such an outrageous form of unacceptable conduct that they become almost impossible to not pay attention to. In other words, they have learned that the only way to satisfy their need for power, which comes through the amount of attention they receive, is to act out in some form of unruly way.

End of Part 1