



# HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

The Ultimate Guide  
to Practical Behaviour  
Management

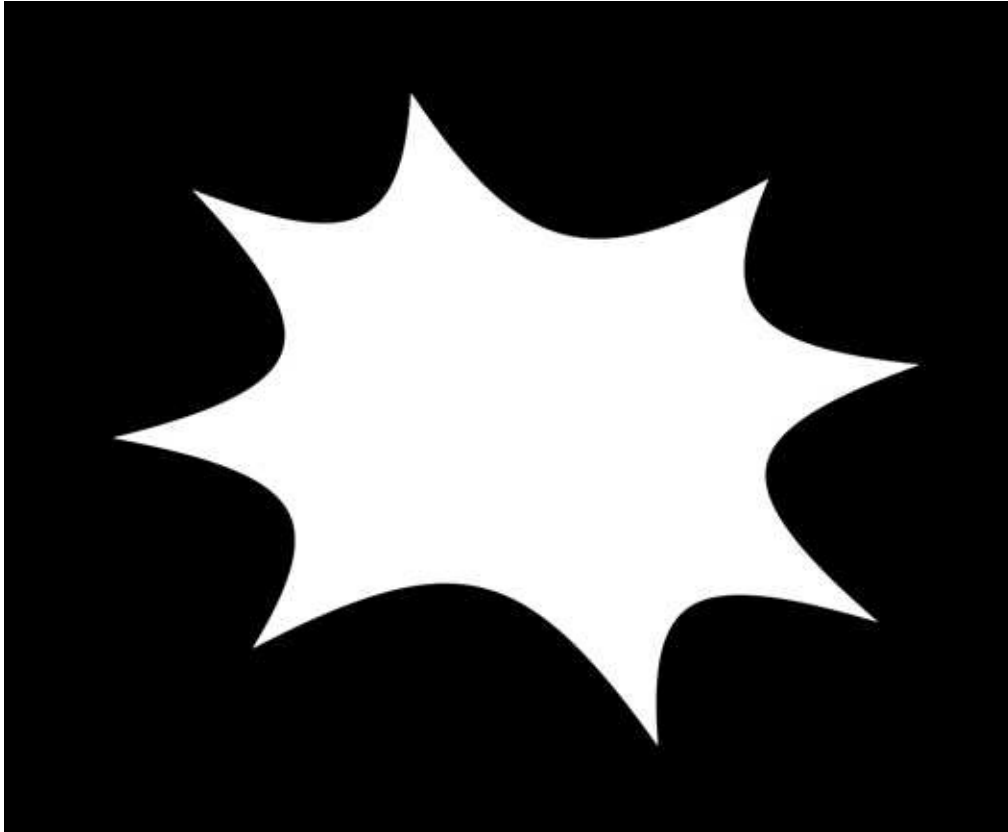
*that  
works!*



# Marie Amaro







**HABITS**

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**EFFECTIVE**

**TEACHERS**

The Ultimate Guide  
to Practical Behaviour  
Management **that**  
**works!**

**Marie Amaro**



### **about the author**

Marie Amaro has been a teacher for over 30 years. She holds a Master of Special Education, focusing on students with emotional and behaviour disorders, and works as a consultant in schools. She provides practical, teacher-focused, easy-to-implement strategies that are based on vast experience and understanding of how schools work.

Marie believes that academic outcomes are improved by addressing the social and emotional needs of students through explicit teaching of expected behaviour, engaging pedagogy, modelling of pro-social skills, collaborative learning strategies and giving students a voice.

She is passionate about students achieving their potential, about supporting the wellbeing of teachers and about schools providing positive, stimulating and nurturing environments.

Marie is a highly sought-after speaker and trainer who specialises in improving teachers' personal and professional effectiveness. She designs and delivers specialised

courses for University students, new and experienced teachers as well as training and coaching for executive and principals.

She is currently co-director of The Highly Effective Teacher.com

This is Marie's first book. It is a compilation of the information and research from the one-day course of the same name.



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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Welcome.to.this.book.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Chapter 1: .	
<b>HOW.BELIEFS.SHAPE.YOUR.TEACHING.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Chapter 2: .	
<b>OH.BEHAVE!.....</b>	<b>40</b>
Chapter 3: .	
<b>THE.INEFFECTIVE.TEACHER.....</b>	<b>62</b>
Chapter 4: .	
<b>IT’S.ALL.ABOUT.THE.LEARNING.....</b>	<b>74</b>
Chapter 5: .	
<b>CREATING.CONNECTIONS.....</b>	<b>99</b>

Chapter 6: .

## **THE.SECRETS.OF.**

**CLASSROOM.COMMUNICATION..... 120**

Chapter 7: .

**THE.POWER.OF.CONSISTENCY..... 146**

Chapter 8: .

**REINFORCEMENT.RULES..... 158**

Chapter 9: .

**BE.LOGICAL.—CONSEQUENCES.THAT.**

**MAKE.SENSE..... 181**

Chapter 10:

**ADOPTING.NEW.HABITS..... 196**

**Resources..... 202**

**References..... 206**

### **testimonials**

Habits of Highly Effective Teachers details the proven methods of effective classroom management that every teacher needs to be successful.

With simple, easy-to-follow tips illustrated by clear, everyday examples and case studies, this book is a little gem!

With the focus on building and maintaining positive relationships and developing an effective learning environment, we are reminded of our power as teachers and the necessity for continuous self-reflection about the way we relate to students.

**Dr Rich Allen, Educational Psychologist, Teacher, Speaker and Author**

Providing opportunities for self-reflection and consideration of the impact we have on our students and the power we have to shape young minds, *Habits of Highly Effective Teachers* is a timely reminder of what is important in the classroom. Everything in education comes back to relationships and by emphasising this aspect, the book can help teachers to refocus when there are the inevitable classroom challenges.

**Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood.**

**Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools 7**

This is a book for all teachers, from beginning to experienced.

Between these pages lies helpful hints and tips, supported by extensive research, that anyone can implement in their classroom. Marie's book has helped me rediscover the enjoyment and connection in teaching, as her strategies help me to plan my reactions to behaviours as much as I plan my lesson content. This is a comprehensive and well-written book that I have utilised over and over again in my classroom management. I'm so grateful to have found something so useful and incredibly easy to understand. Without a doubt the best teacher-help book I have ever read!

**Stephanie White, Classroom teacher**

PRAISE FOR THE WORKSHOP, HABITS

OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Thank you for an incredibly interesting, beneficial and highly practice-based course. You really get what teachers come up against and give us effective, new strategies to implement in our classrooms and schools.

This has been a very valuable, affirming skills workshop for me. I can't wait for the next one. Thank you for an effective Professional Development workshop! Thank you, Marie and Tanya!

**Susan Barta, Rouse Hill**

[Habits of Highly Effective Teachers course] distilled down the essence

of the research and academic reading and made it accessible and available. The workshops are a wonderful blend of delivery and content combined with hands-on activities.

Everyone across the whole range of the school gets something they can take away. The follow up is fantastic! No other company works to provide emails and follow up to keep everything on track.

**Ian Casey, Assistant Principal, Fairfield PS**

8

We got a lot out of the workshop today. It affirmed a lot of the things we are doing well, but it also taught us about managing children with difficult behaviours in the classroom using different strategies. I would highly recommend the value of attending a workshop or having Marie come to your school.

**Lucia Gargaro, Principal Goolgowi PS**

Even if you are a really experienced teacher, these workshops are cutting edge. Marie keeps up-to-date with the latest research so that even the most experienced teacher will be able to refresh some of their ideas and strategies.

**Suzanne Kiraly, Teacher, Consultant, ACT**

Marie is an inspiring teacher and presenter. She conveys her depth of knowledge in creative and engaging ways to motivate her students, both adult and children. She is passionate about supporting teachers and students and loves what she does.

**Wayne Cook, Assistant Principal, Griffith East PS**

I've really enjoyed Marie's workshop from the school's perspective because it is going to give my entire staff common content to discuss using a common language. There's something for everybody because behaviour management is an integral part of what you do in the classroom every day.

**Justin Dawson, Principal, Lake Wyangan PS**

These programs are extremely relevant and are engaging. They enable you to learn skills you can take back into your classroom and really become more passionate about understanding what makes us humans tick.

**Amy Berriman, Teacher, Tamworth 9**

The workshop challenged my thinking. Some of the big things I got out of today are looking at the reasons and the underlying factors of student behaviour and what it is that actually causes them to act the way they do.

**Ross Mayall, Teacher, Hunter Valley**

I found the session to be amazingly practical and you come away with some really great ideas that are classroom ready for you to implement. As a new teacher it just makes your job so much easier and more manageable and enjoyable. I'd highly recommend the session to absolutely everyone, whether it's beginning teachers or teachers who have been in the industry for a while that would just like some new strategies.

**Derusha Naidoo, Wade High School, Griffith.**

Knowledgeable and engaging presenter - thank you Marie. Excellent, respectful discussion-great opportunity for sharing of ideas. Well organised. Excellent useful content.

**Joan Wood, Tamworth**

Large practical component. Well organised and well structured. A fantastic and very informative day! Thank you!

**Hannah Dusting, Sydney**

Great balance of theory and practical-great practical strategies. Very interactive, very experienced presenter. Excellent content-very relevant.

Loved the day!

**Helen Morel, Griffith North PS**

Marie not only presents ideas and skills for teachers to learn and embed in their classrooms, but she creates methodologies to suit the variety of cases that the everyday teacher might come across in their teaching career.”

**Roz Nisbet, Assistant Principal, Leeton High School** Marie is a fantastic presenter who puts her audience at ease with her calm, friendly nature. She gets the important messages across through interesting activity and discussion based presentations.

**Susan Limberger, Assistant Principal, Riverina Region**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to all the wonderful classroom teachers, executive teachers and principals I have worked with over the years who have taught me about excellent teaching and effective leadership.

This book never would have been possible without the brilliant ideas of the hundreds of teachers across Australia; the many teachers I have worked closely with throughout my career. Their ideas have helped shape the course, *Habits of Highly Effective Teachers*, as well as this book.

A special thanks to all the specialist behaviour teachers I have worked closely with, especially Roz Nisbet and Susan Limberger who shared their considerable expertise with generosity, patience and relentless optimism.

Thank you, Roz, for your proofreading and valuable feedback.

Being an ex-English teacher has really come in handy! Also, a big thank you to Steph White who graciously agreed to use her English teacher skills to proofread the manuscript.

Thank you, Tim Amaro for the fantastic illustrations that capture the humour, inherent in teaching, I was hoping to convey.

Thank you to my children, Michael, Emily, Madeleine and Tim who were (mostly!) not behaviour problems at school. Thank you for the wonderful, caring people you have become.

Thank you, Tanya. We have taken this crazy ride together and this book is just as

much yours as mine. Thank you for your constant love, support and encouragement.

We chose teaching - or in some cases teaching chose us - to make a difference in students' lives. I hope this book helps you continue to do just that.

13

## **FOREWORD**

*“The time to have the map is before you enter the woods”.*

*–Brendon Burchard.*

Like most teachers, I have been kept awake many nights trying to come up with strategies to engage the student who refuses to work, or the class that continually talks while I talk. or the student who fights with or hurts other students. My teacher training had provided some behaviour management tools, but many school or classroom issues can only be dealt with as they occur.

In some ways, I feel that teachers are expected to go into the woods of the classroom without a clear map for negotiating the tricky area of student behaviour. Many can only refer to their personal school experiences as students, and their limited classroom time while at university. They often model themselves on the teachers they had and their perceived experiences of school discipline, or on the behaviour management style of their parents. Even with their university degree, many teachers are ill-prepared to manage the complexities of student behaviour, according to an Australian Education Union report (2008).

As a teacher, I have experienced firsthand the pain, confusion, and frustration that comes with not being able to manage the behaviour of some students despite my best efforts. In hindsight, I know that I was unaware of many strategies, simply through lack of experience and

**FOREWORD**

15

exposure. When I had a student refusing to work, running around the room, and hurting other students, I wanted a quick fix, an immediate cure for the student or the class. I have learnt, however, that no basic formula works for every student, every time.

As you will learn throughout this book, any behaviour plan, whether applied to a whole class or an individual student, takes time, adjustments, and consistent application to yield results.

Conversely, some teachers appear to manage their classes effortlessly—they seem to get the best out of their kids, even the difficult ones.

There are teachers whose classes run like clockwork—environments where students feel respected and appreciated and where learning is valued by all.

In my years of experience in schools working alongside teachers and executive staff as a mentor and coach, I have been fortunate enough to work with many astute and talented practitioners. And it is the study of what works that gives us insight into great teaching practice.

It can be a challenge to identify what it is that these teachers do that works, because the skills they draw on and the personal tools they use are often hidden and instinctive. Most classroom management strategies are simple, but that does not mean that they are easy to implement on a consistent basis.

The concept of class behaviour management incorporates everything teachers do in the classroom—from expectations for behaviour to the way double-digit maths is taught. All teacher classroom methods impact the way students behave and, consequently, the way they learn.

My one-day workshop, *Habits of Highly Effective Teachers*, examines the presence, practices, and goals of great teachers to understand what they do and how they make it look so easy.

The workshop asks teachers several questions: What do you do with the student who constantly calls out? How do you handle the student who is out of their seat, says the work is boring, or chats with their friends? And how do you maintain calm when you feel your authority is challenged?



## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

I spend my time exploring the answers to these questions, offering possible solutions to behaviour challenges. I work with schools to develop and refine evidence-based processes that promote dignity, respect, and healthy relationships. It's about managing behaviour effectively, with less stress and more positivity, while getting on with the job of teaching.

My purpose in writing this book is to consolidate the information from the workshop into an easily accessible and digestible format that teachers can dip into at any point and refer to as needed. The book is designed to be easy to read, easy to reference, and to save time for teachers who are looking for a specific answer to a problem related to behaviour experienced in their classrooms.

The concepts in this book are relevant for early childhood, primary, and high school teachers. I have found that the main difference between the year groups is the size of the students! All kids have the same basic needs, and the same principles apply, whether you are teaching kindergarten or Year 12.

As with all areas of teaching, the type of language you use, and mode of delivery will change, depending on different age groups and the composition of the cohort.

## FOREWORD

## WELCOME TO THIS BOOK

In addition to considerable educational research and evidence, my work is based on what I do in classrooms with real teachers; on what I know is good practice. I aim to balance what is practical and realistic for teachers considering the difficulties and constant demands of teaching, and the rights of all students to respectful interactions.

Teachers often think of behaviour management as how to deal with

difficult or challenging behaviour in the moment, but effective behaviour management begins with classroom organisation and whole-class strategies that provide a solid foundation for all students. Building relationships, having high expectations for academics and behaviour and using curriculum and pedagogy to engage students, puts the focus firmly on prevention and early intervention.

Have you ever wondered why some teachers seem to be able to manage their classes with what looks like minimal effort? And have you wondered how they do, and more specifically, what they do? Has it seemed elusive to you, and as if there is some secret set of tools that only some teachers possess?

Conversely, have you ever wondered why some kids just don't seem to listen, no matter what you say or do? Or have you thought about why you always feel like you are managing behaviour rather than teaching?

WELCOME TO THIS BOOK

19

As Bill Rogers points out in his introduction to *You Know the Fair Rule*, “*Discipline (as a major facet of classroom management) is not easy. It is emotionally taxing at times, straining relationships between staff and students and even between members of staff. Making discipline a positive feature of our teaching practice, and school life, such that students have maximum self-control and responsibility, with minimum damage to self-esteem and the due rights of all, is no mean feat. It requires skill, planning and colleague support.*”

It can be tempting to get caught up in negative thoughts and feelings when student behaviour is disruptive. It can also be tempting to resort to one of two approaches: threats, humiliation, sarcasm, ridicule, and putdowns; or ignoring, and inadvertently condoning, inappropriate behaviour.

There is no magic wand for classroom behaviour management, and, certainly, success is not guaranteed. It is hard work. However, some strategies are more effective—and that's what this book asserts. The best behaviour management foundation means having sound, evidence-based practices and putting most of your effort into positive proactive approaches

that benefit all students.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE?**

*Discipline*, in popular usage, refers to making people obey rules or standards of behaviour, and punishing them when they do not. (Collins Dictionary) Another meaning, which leans more to the traditional sense of *discipline*, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is “training that is expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behaviour, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement.”

This definition emphasises training or teaching behaviour as part of a whole positive-behaviour approach.

In schools, we tend to think that *discipline* and *punishment* are synonymous.

Examine a school’s discipline policy and you’ll find multiple references to detention, in-and out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and restitution.

Rarely does the policy include the explicit teaching and reinforcement of appropriate behaviours.

20

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

Why do we want our students to know how to behave appropriately?

Do we want our young people to be compliant so that we can teach our content and have quiet, well-managed classrooms?

To some degree, yes!

When students have good self-regulation skills, it is easier for us to provide instruction, and students are more successful in their learning.

Discipline, however, is not a goal unto itself. When we consider the needs of the whole child and their successful integration in society, we want far more for them than compliance.

Learning essential social and emotional skills will equip young people with strategies and knowledge to navigate the world in an effective, dignified, and caring way.

The core competencies are well documented in the Collaborative for Academic and Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL):

• **Self-Awareness:** Being able to identify your own emotions and thoughts and understand how they impact your behaviour

• **Self-Management:** Being able to successfully regulate your emotions, thoughts, and behaviours

**The role of**

in various circumstances

**the teacher is to**

**teach students,**

• **Responsible Decision Making:**

**not content.**

Being able to make productive choices

about your own behaviour and social

exchanges based on ethics, safety, and

social norms

• **Relationship Skills:** Being able to build and maintain healthy and satisfying relationships with diverse individuals and groups

• **Social Awareness:** Being able to see a variety of perspectives, empathise with others' points of view, including with those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

welcome to this book

21

According to the CASEL website, these competencies can be applied as a whole-school approach:

*“Teaching of SEL (social and emotional learning) permeates every part of school life and focus, from the interactions between staff and students, to curriculum choice and classroom pedagogy”.*

We teach students appropriate behaviour so that they:

- learn effectively

- learn to cooperate with others in a social and academic setting
- learn how to manage conflict

- develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and high self-esteem
- develop skills of independence

Discipline takes on a radically different perspective when teachers understand that poor behaviour is a symptom of a lack of appropriate social and emotional skills.

If you use this book as it is intended, you will avoid what I believe are the most common mistakes in classroom behaviour management.

**curriculum**

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Kids Learn Better When

Kids Learn Better

You Facilitate Deep

When They Know

Understanding

You Care

**Students**

**Exceeding**

**their**

**Potential**

**pedagogy**

**High**

Kids Understand Better

**Expectations**

When You Engage

Kids Learn Better

Their Emotions

When They Know You

.

Believe In Them

22

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES IN**

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

1. Not setting clear expectations or explicitly teaching the behaviour you want to see.

2. Not being consistent with expectations and following through.
3. Not treating students with respect.
4. Letting behaviour issues go on too long—not dealing with disruptive behaviour because of fear, not knowing what to do or how to handle it.
5. Causing low-level behaviours to escalate by reacting to student behaviour.
6. Thinking that yelling, nagging, and harassing are behaviour-management strategies.
7. No (or ineffective use of) positive reinforcement
8. Allowing students to see that you do not like them.
9. Blaming students for their lack of engagement or achievement.
10. Not considering age, ability, cultural differences, interests and strengths of students, their living situation and family stability.

Let's make sure you dodge all of these pitfalls!

## **HOW TO GET THE BEST**

## **VALUE FROM THIS BOOK**

I recommend that you read through the chapters and answer the reflection questions, either on your own or as part of a discussion with colleagues. Case studies, research information, and personal experiences are provided, along with practical applications for you to try with your class.

welcome to this book

23

Effective behaviour management consists of prevention, maintenance, and correction procedures. Most of your efforts will go into preventing behaviour issues by laying out clear expectations, combined with systems, routines, and procedures that make it easier for students to do the right thing.

Maintenance refers to the supports you have in place that help you and your students develop good habits—for example, positive reinforcement, pre-correction, reminders, simple ways to access academic and social supports, good communication with parents and parental backing, and collegial support.

Correction is being prepared for what you will say and do when students are off task, disruptive, or challenging. Having a plan for correction means you will more likely respond in ways that are respectful, generous, and in keeping with the kind of teacher you want to be.

You will get the most benefit from reading this book by accessing the supporting resources. You can do this by visiting: **[www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com/resources](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com/resources)** **OVERVIEW**

**Chapter 1:** Explores attitudes and beliefs that shape our values as teachers and challenges us to take stock. What we believe informs the path we will take in dealing with students and student behaviour.

**Chapter 2:** Looks at the models of behaviour management that can assist teachers to understand their own behaviour as well as student behaviour.

Understanding how to manage your own emotions can prevent being drawn into conflicts and provide appropriate support at all levels of escalation. Case studies are used to illustrate the various concepts.

**Chapter 3:** Examines the characteristics of ineffective teachers to help identify good practice. It is affirming to note that even the best teachers sometimes mess up. After all, we are human!

**Chapter 4:** Explores the fundamentals of effective teaching and how each of the elements contribute to the smooth running of a classroom.

24

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

A framework for effective behaviour management must include the impact of teaching and learning practices on student behaviour. By providing relevant curriculum, engaging pedagogy, high expectations and positive relationships we increase the likelihood of student success.



**Chapter 5:** Studies the crucial role of the teacher in building, maintaining and repairing relationships with students. It is also important to build effective relationships with parents, and reduce workload and stress by collaborating with colleagues.

**Chapter 6:** Discusses the need for deliberately setting the tone of the classroom early by establishing clear expectations, ideally in collaboration with students. This is underpinned by clear communication about the behaviour expected by the teacher and the students, through the use of explicit teaching, specific teacher techniques and positive reinforcement.

**Chapter 7:** Examines what it means to be consistent in the classroom.

How to develop a consistently professional attitude by being prepared with interesting, engaging and relevant lessons, not taking student or parent behaviour personally, following through with consequences, starting fresh every day and having a sense of humour.

**Chapter 8:** Explains the characteristics of positive reinforcement, how to use reward systems effectively and how to avoid inadvertently reinforcing inappropriate behaviour.

**Chapter 9:** Explores aspects of consequences, what they are and how to make them meaningful and effective. The issue of relevant consequences and for schools to be seen to be ‘doing something’ drives many decision-making processes rather than what will help the student to learn better ways of behaving.

**Chapter 10:** Discusses the most effective ways to build new habits by incorporating the skills in this book into regular classroom practice.

WELCOME TO THIS BOOK

25

CHAPTER 1

**HOW BELIEFS SHAPE YOUR**

# TEACHING

*It's like Forrest Gump said 'Life is like a box of chocolates'*

*and in teaching you never know what you're going to get!*

Whenever I am at a social event and tell people that I am a teacher and consult with schools in behaviour management, I always find someone who is either a teacher or who has a friend, son, daughter, niece, nephew, or neighbour who is struggling with some kind of student behaviour issue. The behaviour of the students in your class determines how you feel about going to work every day, the tone of the class, how happy your students are, and how much they learn. Student behaviour, achievement, and engagement affect student learning (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, Marzano & Pickering, 2003), and most student behaviour is heavily influenced by teacher behaviour.

I was seven years old when I first got a taste of the big black strap from the head nun at my primary school. My "crime" was not answering the bell to leave the playground and line up after lunch. I had been caught up in a game of jumping over puddles, and I didn't hear the bell. When I noticed everyone had left the playground, I raced up to the assembly area

HOW BELIEFS SHAPE YOUR TEACHING

27

but I was too late to sneak in unnoticed. My friend and I had to go to the cloak room and wait for the nun to come and mete out our punishment.

It was a humiliating experience that made me see these teachers as adults to be feared and obeyed. My stinging hands let me know that I was not important, and the adults at school held all the power.

Understanding the power you have in your own classroom is important for your development as an effective teacher and for the ultimate satisfaction you will find in your work.

Nevertheless, teachers can become disheartened by the many factors outside their control that influence student achievement and student

behaviour. They may act in ways that are not necessarily in the long term interests of the students because they feel the pressure to achieve results immediately. Punitive responses can give the illusion of a 'quick fix'.

Some of these external factors that impact students include: • parental expectations

- student self-belief
- home life
- peer pressure
- poor sleep
- mental health issues
- relationships with previous teachers
- past academic experiences
- learning difficulties
- school culture
- the weather
- engagement in learning
- student motivation
- drug or alcohol use
- school resources
- student ability

Some issues are outside a teacher's control, but it is vital that teachers focus on what they can control. As educational researcher and professor of education John Hattie (2003) passionately explains, the teacher 28

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

makes the difference in the classroom, second only to the nature of the student. When the teacher focuses on the factors they can control such as, the classroom environment, differentiation, relationships and teacher expectations the magic happens. As Hattie says, it is what teachers know, do and care about that makes the most difference.

Haim Ginott reinforces this point:

*“I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom.*

*It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be an instrument of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanised or de-humanised”.*

I don’t know how you came to be a teacher, but my story is pretty ordinary. I am the eldest of eight children (yes, we were Catholic; yes, we did have a television!). My mother was often very ill, and my job was to look after my brothers and sisters. I was the boss! So, I got to decide the games we played, and when you have that many siblings it makes sense to play school. Of course, the big draw to the game was writing on the chalkboard and telling my brothers and sisters what to do. It was great fun (from my perspective anyway). I also knew that I loved kids and enjoyed being with them—again, a product of having had a large family. For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher.

Throughout my own schooling, I made connections with some very kind, caring teachers who gave me attention and support. Some of my teachers were influential in my life, helping shape how I felt about learning and how I felt about myself. School for me was usually a safe haven, where I could be a child and be responsible only for myself, and enjoy the inherent freedom of that.

I have now spent the past thirty years working in schools. Firstly, as a full-

time classroom teacher, then job sharing and relief teaching while my children were young. I gained invaluable insight into the lives of children and their families when I worked as a welfare support teacher (replacement for a school counsellor), and then as a behaviour-support HOW BELIEFS SHAPE YOUR TEACHING

29

teacher. In varied roles, as a support for teachers of Aboriginal students and as a behaviour management consultant, I worked alongside primary- and secondary-school teachers.

It has been a diverse, challenging, and deeply rewarding career in many ways.

For example, years ago, I was at the local swimming pool with my children doing the obligatory (and very necessary) swimming lessons.

A young girl in her early 20s came up, asked if I was Miss Bruton (my maiden name), and introduced herself. She was a former student of mine.

She proceeded to tell me how much she had loved being in my Year 1

class and how she had gone on to become a teacher because of me. She was full of praise, and explained how she had developed an intense love of learning from her experiences whilst she was in my class. It was a very humbling experience because I never thought I was a particularly good teacher, even though I loved the experience of teaching.

The little things can also touch your heart. I distinctly remember the smile on the face of a boy from a very troubled background. He was so excited to tell me that he had used the “turtle” strategy, rather than yelling, swearing, and hitting, when he became angry with his teacher.

The “turtle” strategy is an anger-management tool for young people; they imagine they are going inside a turtle shell when they feel angry.

Inside their shell, they can visualise objects and experiences that make them feel happy. The student had used this tactic when his teacher was angry at him!

I tell these stories not to impress you—most teachers will have similar stories—but to highlight the fact that we never know how our actions can affect another person’s life. The influence you have on your students can be far-reaching and remarkable. You may never know the full extent of the impact your teaching may have on your students; something that you said or did may resonate with a student years later.

An off-hand comment made to a parent by a well-meaning but thoughtless Year 2 teacher at a parent interview (“Well, she’ll never be a brain surgeon”) was still vividly remembered when the young person graduated.

30

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

In the same way, a teacher’s belief in a young person can make all the difference. Teacher

and educational leader, Rita Pierson in her

inspiring Ted ED Talk, Every Kid Needs

**Any teacher can be a**

a Champion, tells of students returning

**great teacher if they**

to pay respects to her mother, also a

**apply the principles**

**and skills outlined in**

teacher, saying, “You made a difference

**this book.**

in my life...You made me feel like I was

somebody, when I knew at the bottom

I wasn't".

I now use my passion for education to design

and deliver professional development for

teachers and executive staff in schools, giving me the opportunity to share my experience and expertise. And though I have a great deal of knowledge and an understanding of student behaviour, I am continually learning from other teachers.

I consider it an honour to be teaching teachers.

Over the years, I have had the unique privilege of going into many schools and many classrooms, seeing what does and doesn't work. I have learnt that patterns for success exist in the classroom. Effective teachers have effective habits; the good news is that these habits and skills can be learnt.

Using this book, you can learn too. I will break down the strategies and skills that can make your teaching more effective. The principles I discuss in this book can be applied to your classroom immediately.

On any given teaching day, you can't be sure what behavioural challenge you may face in the classroom. But if you have a basis of sound, evidence-based practices, you increase the odds that you will manage an unexpected behaviour incident in a way that increases your authority, promotes student success, and maintains positive relationships.

Managing student behaviour by playing such odds is described by Jim Wright at [interventioncentral.org](http://interventioncentral.org) as the "Vegas" approach.

There are effective, tried and true structures for classroom management and specific teacher actions that will ensure greater achievement for HOW BELIEFS SHAPE YOUR TEACHING

31

your students. While no one approach guarantees total success, there are simple steps you can take that prevent poor behaviour, maintain a calm and ordered classroom, and provide support when things go wrong.

In this book, I have synthesised information from my own experience, from my studies, and extensive research from the most current educational experts. You can benefit from the work I have done, apply it in your classroom, and achieve better results with your students.

Teaching is a complex and increasingly demanding profession. Principal and education consultant Jim Mahoney likens a teacher to the CEO of a large company because the challenge of building relationships and the set of multifaceted tasks to be completed define both milieus.

According to the Australian Journal of Teacher Education (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011), managing student behaviour is a major cause of stress for teachers and a chief contributor to teachers deciding to leave the profession. Teachers generally consider their training for management of student behaviour inadequate, and they are ultimately left feeling unprepared and ill-equipped for that aspect of their job.

If you have you ever felt overwhelmed with juggling the demands of teaching, and especially with managing student behaviour, you are not alone. Most teachers have, at one time or another, felt that they have tried every technique they could think of, to no avail. Nearly all of us have had days when we didn't actually teach anything due to the seemingly unmanageable behaviour of our students.

At times, I have felt at a loss with student behaviour. I taught students who made little progress, who refused to listen, who called out constantly, who ran around (or out of) the room, who kicked and hit other students, who got into fights on the playground, as well as those who did not listen to the principal or the executive staff. I tried reward charts, lolly jars, giving attention, ignoring the behaviour. . . . I sometimes felt hopeless, but I knew there had to be better ways to manage student behaviour.

I became interested in proactive, preventative approaches to behaviour management. I read everything I could, interviewed other teachers, observed teachers whom I considered to be expert managers, and studied 32

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

the specialised field of behaviour. While no instant remedy for student behaviour exists, it is clear to me that preventing off-task behaviour



is infinitely more effective than intervening once the disruptive or inappropriate behaviour is already occurring.

As the gladiator saying goes, “The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle.” Our training as teachers, learning effective prevention measures, can reduce or eliminate many of the student behaviour issues that plague our lives.

Even so, teachers don’t always have the time to self-reflect or step back from what is happening in the classroom to see where they could improve a behavioural situation using simple yet effective strategies.

What I provide throughout this book, is the opportunity for you to reflect on your current practice. I offer practical and easily implementable approaches to address any challenges, in the immediate sense, and, over the long term, to empower students and facilitate an environment where they become independent learners.

In the past, teaching was about controlling or suppressing students. Corporal punishment was par for the course. Teachers today, must deliberately incorporate ways of relating to their students that model mutual respect.

The use of positive behaviour-management strategies supports the social learning that demonstrates care for and understanding of students.

Behavioural support specialist Tim Lewis, has noted that “when students are asked what makes a teacher special and worthy of respect, students consistently cite three characteristics: firmness, compassion and interesting, engaging and challenging teaching style” (Noguera, 1995).

## **CASE STUDY**

A young teacher complained to me that her high school students did not show her respect. They didn’t listen when she was teaching, they rolled their eyes and turned away when she tried to reprimand them, and they were generally difficult to manage.

In her opinion “Kids should just show respect to teachers” as HOW BELIEFS

## SHAPE YOUR TEACHING

33

she had done when she was a student. She reinforced that was how she was raised. She didn't feel the need to prove that she deserved students' positive regard or that she needed to work at building relationships.

While I understand her perspective, and also her frustration at being ill-treated by students, a significant, but often-overlooked, aspect of our job as teachers is to teach students how we want to be treated. We do this through explicit lessons about appropriate behaviours, by modelling respectful behaviour towards our students and colleagues, and through building a positive classroom culture where students learn respectful ways of relating to each other.

As demonstrated by this young teacher, high schools can dismiss the importance of teaching values as the work of primary schools. With our current knowledge of brain development, it is unwise and potentially detrimental to treat teenagers as if they are adults and assume that they do not need explicit instruction in social and emotional skills.

The role of a teacher in the twenty-first century is to nurture and expand students' love of learning. We increase the potential for future student success by providing a secure environment in which students can learn and take risks; by supporting meaningful collaboration through teaching relevant social and emotional skills; by developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills; and by encouraging students to develop a growth mindset.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**In one word, describe your academic year so far.**

**What is your story of becoming a teacher?**

**What behaviour challenges do you face in the classroom?**

34

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES**

Effective positive behaviour management begins with teacher attitude.

Your beliefs about why students don't behave appropriately will determine the course of action you take and how committed you will be to using positive behaviour approaches.

Check your beliefs about student behaviour by examining the following statements and answer the reflection questions. The statements could be used as discussion starters in a staff meeting or professional learning community, especially if you are working on your school behaviour policy.

## **Students.should.come.to.school.knowing.how.to.behave**

Undoubtedly, parents have a responsibility to teach their children how to behave at home and when they socialise: basic good manners, using respectful language, and how to get along with parents, siblings, and friends. When children come to school, teachers have the task of teaching them how to behave in the classroom and the playground; to respect diversity, to listen to others, and to work collaboratively. The school context differs from the home environment, so different rules apply. Behaviour that is perfectly acceptable at home is not appropriate at school (e.g., cuddling, being in another person's personal space, walking out of the room).

As students move through the various levels of schooling, the type of behaviour that is acceptable and appropriate changes. Some high school teachers will say,

“Students should know how to behave by the time they get to high school”. However, the high school environment varies greatly in relation to the primary-school environment. Students move from having one or two teachers to numerous teachers whose expectations can be dramatically different. High school students need clear boundaries and explicit teaching about the behaviour expected by each of their teachers.

The most successful high school teachers are clear and specific with their students about what they expect.

## HOW BELIEFS SHAPE YOUR TEACHING

35

### REFLECTION QUESTION

**What steps do you take to teach your students explicitly how to behave in your classroom?**

**It.is.not.the.teacher’s.job.to.teach.social.skills** While social-skills training is the task of the parent, kids spend an enormous amount of time at school. School is an entirely different social setting in comparison to the family environment, and different skills are needed. One of the objectives of school is positive socialisation. A successful work life often relies on being able to get along and work collaboratively with others.

Adults who build positive relationships have happier and more successful lives, so teaching social skills contributes to a better society. The Harvard Men Study demonstrated such. The study followed 268 men from their entrance to college in the late 1930s, for almost eighty years and discovered that the presence of positive relationships distinguishes a successful life from a less successful one. Social interaction with others increases positive emotions, reduces anxiety, and improves concentration and focus (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

“It takes a village to raise a child” sums up the responsibility we all have as adults, and especially as teachers, to contribute to the healthy growth and development of all young people with whom we come into contact.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**While you may model social skills, do you explicitly teach social skills, especially considering those students who do not easily recognise social cues?**

**What are you currently doing to encourage students' pro-social behaviour?**

**Students must be punished so that they..**

**learn appropriate behaviour**

The key phrase here is “learn appropriate behaviour”. What is the most effective way to teach behaviour? In the past, it was believed that 36

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

punishment was necessary, but we now know that positive interventions work much more effectively and without the accompanying resentment or damage to relationships (Maag, 2000).

Though the terms *punishment* and *consequence* are often used interchangeably, they are not the same. Punishment is a penalty inflicted on the wrongdoer by some higher authority. It is usually designed to make the offender suffer in some way. In a school context, punishment includes detention, repeatedly writing lines, being kept after class, suspension, removal of a pleasant experience, or exclusion from activities.

While it was once believed that punishing young people was “teaching them a lesson” the treatment was effective only in the short term to gain compliance, but ineffective in the long run, especially for those students who were already living with aggression, violence, and neglect. For these students, punishment reinforces the concept of problem solving by force. It does not help them to learn more appropriate behaviour nor does it support them to adopt positive social behaviours that would help them succeed at school.

Effective consequences, on the other hand, are natural, collaborative, and involve a learning opportunity. The aim is to help a student learn why the behaviour is inappropriate and how more socially appropriate behaviours can serve them better.

As social psychologist Rudolf Dreikurs states, “Punishing an inappropriate behaviour does not teach an appropriate behaviour”.

## **REFLECTION QUESTION**

**Are any of your school or classroom “consequences” really just punishments with a different name?**

### **Consequences or Punishment?**

**Detention:** Being sent to spend time alone at recess, lunch, or after school to think about your behaviour or being denied playground time with peers is punishment. I have worked in schools where the same students turned up every day for detention. These students had poor self-regulation and social skills.

how beliefs shape your teaching

37

**Restitution:** As with most consequences, how restitution is perceived by the student depends on how it is presented. If making amends is a collaborative process with the student contributing to the conversation, sharing what is happening for them and outlining the restitution, then it is not punitive. However, if the restitution is imposed on the student, for example, a primary school that insists on a “sorry card” being made and presented to the injured party, then it is a punitive response (with little educational value for the wrongdoer).

**Suspension:** While suspending a student can provide the school with time to prepare and plan for a different response, it is often used to show the student that they are wrong and to make them feel bad.

This is evidenced by teachers’ disappointed statements of “He likes

being suspended”.

**In-school suspension:** While this keeps a student at school and therefore can have positive benefits, separating a student from their peers and forcing him to work in isolation can be compared to being put in solitary confinement.

The negotiation process between teacher and student determines the nature of the consequence and the style of delivery. (See chapter 9) **\*A note on safety**

There are times when students need to be removed from the school, playground, or classroom environment for their safety or the safety of other students and staff. In these instances, removal is not punishment, but a necessary strategy used while the behaviour team puts together a plan to teach safe behaviour and gives the student opportunities to practise social skills in a supervised setting.

**Students.would.display.appropriate.behaviour.if.**

**they.had.the.skills**

When students behave in ways that are challenging or inappropriate, adults can fall into the trap of labelling the child “naughty” or “bad”.

Such an attitude ignores the fact that most people want to belong, and students are people too! They don’t like to be different or stand 38

**HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

out in negative ways, but because of their age, experience, and life circumstances they may act in socially unacceptable ways.

When you understand that some of your students lack appropriate skills, you can adopt a pedagogical, rather than a punitive, approach to managing their behaviour. The educational psychologist Ross Greene, in *Lost at School*, refers to students with lagging skills. He has developed a process to work with students to identify the gaps and collaborate to develop the skills needed to help them change their behaviour.

Apply the concept to yourself. Everyone knows that to be healthy you should drink less red wine, eat less chocolate, go to bed early, and exercise regularly. But very few of us do this on a consistent basis in every setting. That's because we don't have perfect self-regulation skills yet! Some of your students will need deliberate and intentional support to develop self-regulation, in addition to other social and emotional skills.

### **reflection questions**

**What social and emotional skills have you noticed lacking in your students?**

**How could you teach those skills?**

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- As a teacher, you may never know the long-term impact you have on a student's life.
- Teachers make the most important difference in the classroom.
- Proactive prevention of off-task behaviour is more effective than intervention.
- Positive behaviour management relies on simple strategies that are not always easy to apply consistently.
- Your beliefs about students and what their behaviour means will determine your approach.

### **HOW BELIEFS SHAPE YOUR TEACHING**

39

### **CHAPTER 2**

**“OH, BEHAVE!”**

***“If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” –Wayne Dyer***

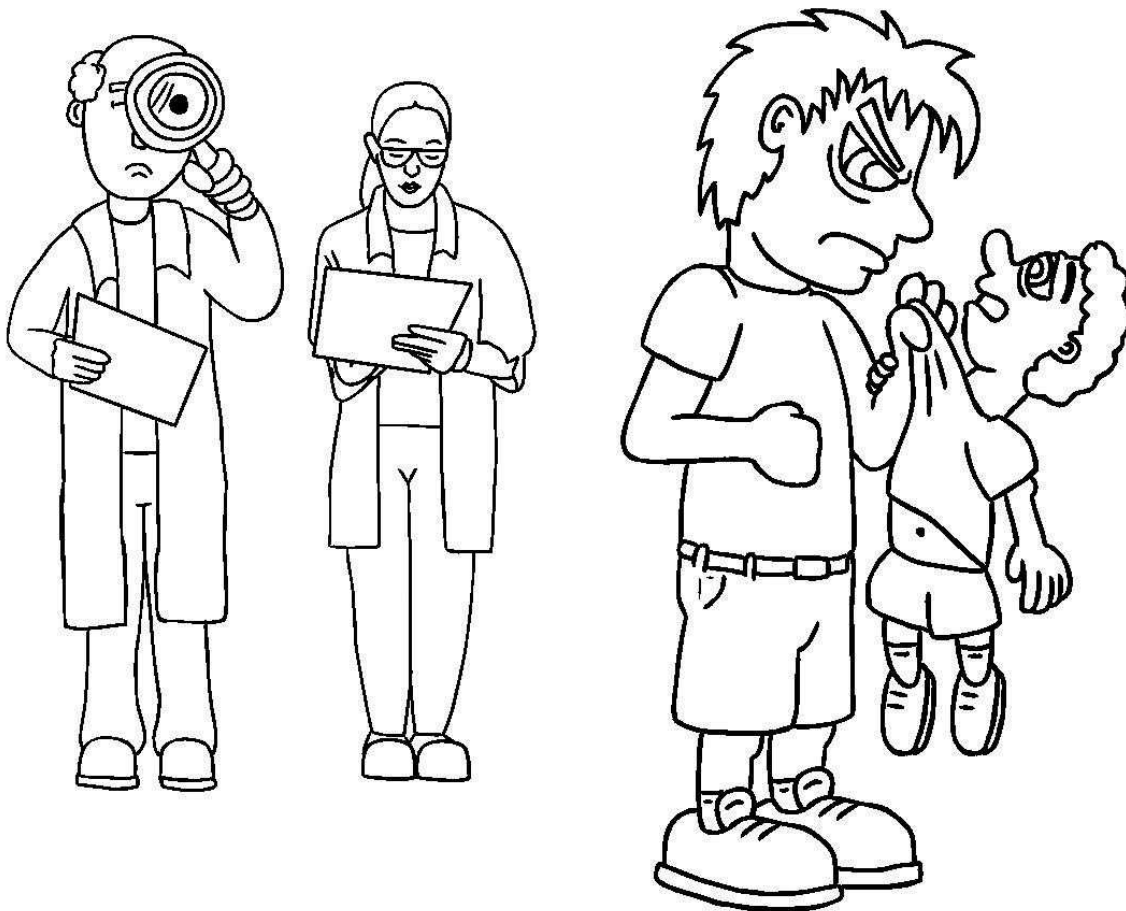


All behaviour occurs for a reason. Sometimes the reason will be clear, but at other times you may have to look a bit harder to find out what is behind the behaviour.

Have you ever felt frustrated or bewildered by a student's behaviour? I would hazard a guess, based on my own experience, that you have. It can seem like there is no rhyme or reason and that the behaviour comes out of the blue. I taught a student who continually refused to follow my directions, wandered around the room, hurt other students, and swore at me. I felt confused and helpless and like I had no options. I couldn't control his behaviour! I tried building a relationship by chatting with him and gaining his trust. I called for the executive teacher to help me with his behaviour, but nothing seemed to make any difference. His behaviour continued largely unabated, because at that time I didn't have the knowledge and skills to figure out why he acted the way he did and to work with him to find better ways of having his needs met.

40

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



Understanding human behaviour and current theory about what drives behaviour can help you move out of the confusion and develop more effective ways to support your students and help them achieve academic, emotional, and social success.

In this chapter, I examine the factors that contribute to off-task behaviour and discuss ways to address that behaviour. Effective teachers recognise that problem behaviour can be an indication of a student's need for one or all of the following:

- To learn social and emotional skills
- To make academic adjustments
- To provide environmental adjustments

## **FUNCTION OF BEHAVIOUR MODEL**

I remember overhearing a principal repeatedly questioning a student about her behaviour, asking, “Why did you swear at the teacher? Why did you run out of the classroom? Why did you run across the road?” Of course, the student did not have any answers, at least none that would satisfy the principal.

Asking a student “why” is not helpful, especially when they are in a heightened state. However, it is useful to ask ourselves “Why is this behaviour occurring?” Discovering why a student is behaving a certain way can help us determine a course of action and devise a plan to assist the student to learn

more appropriate ways

of acting.

All behaviour is a form

of communication, and

a sound understanding

of the function of the

behaviour model can

provide clues as to what

the student is trying to

communicate.

“OH, behave!”

41

According to this model from Horner and Sugai (1999), problem behaviour usually has two functions: to access (gain something) or to avoid (get away from something).

**problem**

**behaviour**

**ACCESS**

**avoid**

Three categories describe what the student is trying to access or avoid: sensory, attention, or tangible.

**attention**

**from peers**

**sensory**

**or adults**

**tangible**

**Sensory.issues** may

**Attention** refers to

**Tangible** refers

include light, noise,

behaviour that is

to anything the

touch, quiet, smells,

used to gain attention student can touch—

heat, hunger, thirst

or get away from

for example, school  
(this is especially  
attention from peers  
work, the computer,  
relevant for students  
or adults.

rewards, food,  
with Autism Spectrum  
or drink.

Disorder, but may  
also be the case for  
other students). The  
environment may  
be too hot, too cold,  
too noisy, too quiet,  
too many people,  
not enough people,  
or particular smells  
and/or sounds may  
disturb a student.

**Sensory issues** can be dealt with by adjusting the environment to better

cater to the needs of the student. For example, if a student finds assembly tricky because of the noise, crowds, or the large space, they could go to an alternative setting during assembly, sit near the door or the teacher, or wear headphones to block out the noise. You may have to trial a few techniques before you hit the jackpot, and don't forget to ask the student 42

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

what they think might work. Even young students can provide input into what will work for them.

Students who display inappropriate behaviour to gain **peer attention** often do so because they lack social skills. In the classroom, they have a captive audience and so may act out to get a reaction from other students. These students need to be taught how to interact appropriately with others, how to make friends, how to maintain relationships, and how to repair relationships.

A student who is trying to access **teacher attention** needs to be taught how to gain adult attention appropriately, and to have any low-level attention-seeking behaviour given minimal attention.

If a student is **avoiding work**, the teacher must determine why. Is the work too hard, too easy, too boring, or not relevant to the student? Do they need to learn how ask for assistance from the teacher, or could peer tutoring or mentoring be helpful for them?

## CASE STUDY

On his first day at a new school, a teacher encountered behaviour he had never seen before. A student placed a large pair of open scissors at her neck and said she was going to cut her neck.

Though the teacher was understandably alarmed, he remained calm and asked the student what she was thinking about.

The student replied that she was hungry and that if she cut off her head, she wouldn't feel hungry any longer.

The function of the behaviour was not immediately obvious and required an attitude of curiosity to understand from the student's perspective.

The student consequently needed to be taught what to do when she was hungry and how to ask for what she wanted.

“OH, behave!”

43

**problem behaviour access**

**avoid**

**sensory**

**tangible**

**attention**

**peers**

**adults**

Horner & Sugai, 1999

## **CASE STUDY**

**STUDENT:** Sam, Year 3

**BEHAVIOUR:** Sam found it difficult to sit still, keep his hands and feet to himself, and refrain from calling out, and he often ended up in fights during recess and lunch.

**FUNCTION.OF.BEHAVIOUR:.** Sam was trying to access attention from peers and adults. He was also trying to access touch (sensory) by touching other students and objects.

**PLAN.FOR.SUCCESS:.**

1. The teacher began working on his classroom behaviour by giving him a stress ball to play with when the students were all sitting on the floor, so that he could keep his hands off other students.

2. The teacher refrained from giving Sam attention when he called out, instead giving specific feedback to other students who raised their hands (“Thank you for putting your hand up, Alisha”) and then making sure that she called on Sam as soon as he raised his hand.

44

**HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**





3. The teacher developed an individual reward program for Sam, reinforcing the behaviours of both raising his hand and keeping his hands and feet to himself in the classroom.

4. Sam's reward program was linked to the whole class reward system—i.e., when Sam was given a stamp, the whole class was given a marble in the jar. In this way, the other students were motivated to encourage Sam because they benefited from his appropriate behaviour. Sam had lost popularity with the other students, and he had become something of a scapegoat, as can often happen,

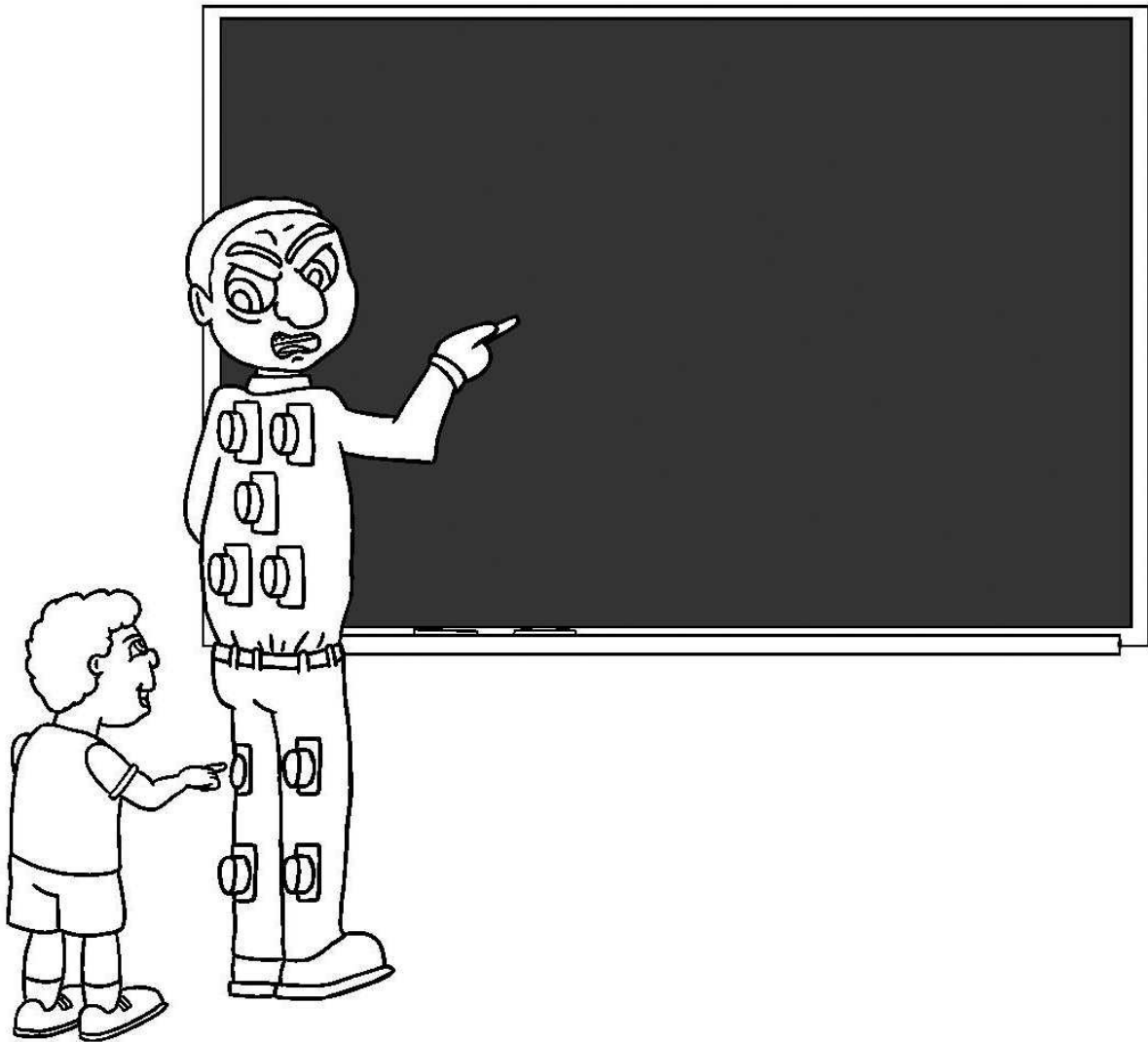
with these students.

Because the teacher gave him positive reinforcement and focused on what he was doing well, she increased his status and reputation amongst the other students.

5. To deal with his playground behaviour the teacher designed a system whereby Sam would go to the principal for a quick “well done” every time he had a successful playground session. In conjunction, Sam attended social-skills training sessions where he learnt appropriate ways of managing his anger.

“OH, behave!”

45



## **MANAGING YOUR OWN EMOTIONS**

Because teaching and learning occur in a highly social situation, teachers need to be aware of their own emotions and have effective strategies to deal with difficult behaviour from students, parents, and colleagues.

I remember, when I was teaching kindergarten, how much it would frustrate me when the students would poke me with their fingers to get my attention, instead of using my name. And with the high school kids it was the eye roll and the “whatever, Miss” that really got under my skin.

The behaviours that bother most teachers are often those that appear as lack of

respect or lack of empathy, because they trigger an emotional response related to the values many teachers hold dear (Roffey, 2011).

That is why rude behaviour towards teachers or other students can push a teacher's buttons.

So, what pushes *your* buttons?

Understanding the student behaviour that pushes your buttons can help you manage your own emotions in the classroom, as well as maintain your wellbeing. Dealing all day with students' competing demands and sometimes-erratic behaviour can take its toll on your ability to manage your class effectively and will affect your general health. Having some strategies to manage your emotions when things start to get under your skin makes good sense.

46

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **Some strategies you can use to remain calm and regulate**

**your own emotions include:**

- Deep breathing and counting to 10 (very effective, though often underrated strategies for managing strong emotions)

- Walking away from the situation. You can almost always come back when you are calm.
- Using positive self-talk.
- Refocusing the class
- Using a very quiet voice
- Playing a game with the class
- Using movement or stretching by yourself or with the class
- Playing music
- Asking a colleague for support
- Opening the cupboard and looking in (pretend to look for something)

- Taking time in the day to reset yourself (quiet time, meditation, breathing exercises)
- Reteaching expectations to the whole class • Restating expectations and giving students take-up time • Debriefing with a colleague.

### **reflection questions**

**What student behaviour really gets under your skin?**

**How do you manage your emotional state when this behaviour occurs?**

### **THE CONFLICT CYCLE**

**EXERCISE:** Think about an interaction you have had with a student that escalated into a confrontation ending in a conflict or the student having a “meltdown”.

“OH, behave!”

47

Consider the following questions: Was the outcome of that interaction what you expected?

How did you feel about the outcome?

If you could revisit that situation, would you do anything differently?

Understanding what happens during a conflict can help you to manage your own emotions and avoid conflict with students. This allows you to maintain positive relationships, model appropriate behaviour, and demonstrate confident social and emotional skills to all your students.

Let's examine the conflict cycle.

If a person has a negative experience in a particular setting, the experience may be real or perceived since perception is reality. The individual will then have negative thoughts about that experience.

These thoughts determine their feelings about the experience which, in

turn, drive the person's behaviour. If the negative behaviour provokes a negative reaction in another person (in this case, the teacher), then there will be a conflict.

**BEHAVIOUR**

**FEELINGS**

**REACTION**

**CONFLICT**

**THOUGHTS**

**EXPERIENCES**

Long & Wood (1993)

48

**HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

Now let's look at an example of how this might play out with a student.

A student who has had real or perceived negative experiences in a maths class may feel negative about maths and the maths teacher. Perhaps the student was asked a question they couldn't answer, or they had negative interactions with other students, or they got into trouble from the teacher. These experiences determine their thoughts about maths.

The student's thoughts could be: "I hate maths", "I am dumb at maths", and "the teacher hates me". Their feelings about maths may then be negative: shame, embarrassment, anger, or resentment. These feelings will drive their behaviour in maths class or in the time leading up to maths, which could look like withdrawal, disruption, refusal, or distraction.

If the student's behaviour provokes a negative reaction in the teacher, such as threatening, yelling or intimidation, there will be conflict. And when a teacher

enters the conflict cycle with a student they are unlikely to win.

If, on the other hand, the teacher recognises that the student's behaviour is based on their negative perceptions, they can be prepared for a negative attitude and use more preventative measures to help the student feel more comfortable and able to learn.

This could include:

- purposefully building a positive relationship with the student (see chapter 5)
- having a conversation about what is going on for the student at the end of a lesson or in a break
- check in with the student at the beginning of the lesson • giving the student additional assistance without making it obvious to other students
- having an agreed-on cue between the student and teacher when the student needs help
- giving the student time and space at the beginning of the lesson to get organised

“OH, behave!”

49

When we know that a student has a negative perception about a particular subject or situation, then it is our responsibility to investigate what the student is thinking and feeling and work with them to change that perception.

Remember, students are people too, and some of your behaviours push their buttons. For example, giving them boring work, yelling, not showing that you care, disregarding their feelings, being late to class, or giving poor explanations. When students with poor emotional regulation skills, have their buttons pushed, they are likely to react in inappropriate ways that push the teacher's buttons.

## **CASE STUDY**

**STUDENT:** Tom, Year 8

**TEACHER:** Miss W

**BEHAVIOUR:** Tom refused to complete any work in maths class. When presented with worksheets, he would swear at the teacher and leave the room.

**FUNCTION.OF.BEHAVIOUR:** Tom avoided the work because he found it difficult and he was embarrassed because he couldn't do the work. He also avoided attention from the teacher with whom he did not have a relationship.

**PLAN.FOR.SUCCESS:.**

1. The teacher used the 2x 10 strategy (see chapter 5) to build a relationship with Tom. During one of their chats she discovered that he was interested in motor bikes.
2. The teacher used the information from their chats to link some of the maths work to motor bike riding.
3. The teacher checked in with him at the beginning of each class to see if he needed equipment, space, or time to be ready to learn.

50

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

4. The teacher worked out a secret cue to reveal when Tom required attention. He would put his hand on his shoulder when he needed assistance.
5. The teacher positively reinforced Tom, praising him in private when he completed any part of the work. She also contacted Tom's mother to let her know that he was getting on track with his maths.

**Watch a video explaining the Conflict Cycle.**



**Visit [www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com/book-resources](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com/book-resources)**

### **The Role of Mirror Neurons**

Mirror neurons are the body's natural response to another person's demonstration of their feelings. Mirror neurons are the specialised brain cells that actually sense and then mimic what another person is feeling. This is why smiling can be so contagious and also why other emotions can seem to "jump" from person to person. Neuroscientists have found that the same neurons that light up when something happens to us also light up when we see someone else experience the same sensation (Iacoboni, 2008; Goleman, 2006). When another person is upset, for example, we can empathise with them, and we may feel sad too. Think of how you feel when you watch a sad movie.

When a person is angry and our mirror neurons are fired off, we may also look and sound angry. In an interaction with a student this can intensify the situation and lead to conflict.

To avoid conflict with students, we need to act counterintuitively by managing our physical and emotional state, despite what they may be doing or feeling, to avoid mirroring their anger.

"OH, behave!"

51

### **the following strategies can assist in avoiding conflict with students:**

- Maintain calm, open body language
- Keep your voice low and slow
- Remember that you are the adult in

the situation

- Understand that it is easy to be drawn into a conflict, especially if the student's

behaviour pushes your buttons

- Don't take the behaviour personally

(this is key and not always easy to do)

- Remain emotionally objective
- Use neutral language (don't threaten)
- Stay out of the student's personal

space

- Allow cool-down time for the student

Of course, students can still escalate and have meltdowns despite your best efforts. Nevertheless, the most important thing to remember is that the only person whose behaviour you can control is your own. When you have followed your plan, and acted respectfully, maintaining your own dignity and the dignity of the student, you can rest assured that you have done all you can in a difficult situation.

### **MANAGING PERSONAL STRESS: HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS**

What you say to yourself during stressful situations determines how well you cope. Check your self-talk. Keeping things in perspective will help you cope with the challenges of teaching.

52

### **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

#### **UNHELPFUL**

#### **THOUGHTS**

I shouldn't have to put up with this!

He'll never change.

I'm sick of putting out fires!

Are there any jobs in the Public Service?

This is going to be the worst year  
of my career!

**HELPFUL**

## **THOUGHTS**

This student is testing to see where the  
limits are. My job is to stay calm and  
help her learn better ways to behave.

I feel undervalued right now – I need to seek support from my peers and  
supervisor.

Having this student in my class will be a wonderful  
professional development opportunity.

### **reflection questions**

**What can you do next time you feel yourself being drawn into a conflict  
with a student?**

**If you know a student has negative feelings about a certain subject, how can  
you assist them?**

**Are there any things you are doing that may push a student's buttons?**

“OH, behave!”

## **STAGES OF AN ESCALATION OR THE**

# **STAGES OF ACTING OUT BEHAVIOUR**

Well known teacher, researcher and consultant in problem behaviour, Geoff Colvin observed and documented the seven stages of acting-out behavior, making “generalizations or summaries of behavior observed from a large number of students of many years”. The descriptions he created are used to illustrate the seven phases of escalating behaviour.

Identifying the stages of acting-out behaviour, and the appropriate accompanying strategies, can assist teachers in managing student behaviour and, in many cases, prevent the situation from worsening.

### **Stages.of.Escalation**

## **Intensity**

**5 Peak**

**4 Acceleration**

**6 De-escalation**

**3 Agitation**

## **Recovery**

**2 Trigger**

**7**

**1 Calm**

## **Time**

Colvin & Sugai, 1989.

54

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**stage**

**BEHAVIOUR**

**STRATEGIES**

Promote successful

**1..**

Cooperative, on-task,  
engagement, reinforce

**CALM**

**relaxed**

appropriate behaviour,  
maintain relationship.

**2...TRIGGER**

Focus on de-escalation:

Sensory,

Use diversionary tactics

environment,

*e.g.* distraction, removal

student,

of the trigger.

particular

Eyes darting,

teacher, work

non-conversational

For a student with

task, conflict,

language, busy hands,

known triggers:

denial, change in and out of group/seat, 1. have a plan to in routine,

off task/on task,

manage triggers,

pressure or

talking to others.

2. use pre-correction and

interruption,

3. address non-school

academic

based triggers

mistakes or

corrections.

Reduce anxiety by

making structural

Pacing and increasingly

or environmental

unfocused behaviour,

modifications, give

decrease in behaviour,

space, use teacher

**3...**

stares into space,

proximity, provide

## **AGITATION**

language is subdued,

choice, offer preferred

hands are contained,

activities, independent

withdraws from the

activities, movement

group, off task, 'frozen'.

(drink, job, walk),

teacher empathy (I can

see you are feeling...)

"OH, behave!"

55

**stage**

## **BEHAVIOUR**

### **STRATEGIES**

Questioning and

Focus on safety:

arguing, non-compliant

Redirect to the task,

and defiant, off task,

maintain on-task

provoking other students,

behaviour, emphasise

### **4..**

whining, crying,



student choice, use

## **ACCELERATION**

avoiding or escaping

non-confrontational

the situation, threatening limit setting strategies, or intimidating others, administer consequences.

using verbal abuse.

Speak respectfully,

use simple language

The student may be

the student can under—

violent, screaming,

stand, acknowledge

running, self-abusive,

that you are trying

**5..**

having a tantrum,

to work with the

## **PEAK**

hyperventilating,

student, withdraw,  
wanting to destroy  
give space, do not  
property. They are  
display urgency with  
in crisis.

the hope of gaining  
control.

Monitor the health  
and safety of the  
student/s involved and

The student is starting  
staff members, monitor  
to calm down, taking  
for re-escalation as this

## **6..**

deeper breaths, able to  
is where a student

## **DE-ESCALATION**

have a conversation,

could go back to the beginning to manage crisis point, provide their behaviour.

an opportunity for a conversation without judging them, use active listening.

56

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**stage**

### **BEHAVIOUR**

#### **STRATEGIES**

Reinforce appropriate behaviour, debrief with staff and check that planning is

During this stage the appropriate for the goal is for the student

student. Communicate  
to return to stage 1  
with the student,

**7..**

and regain calm, to  
reviewing the plan-

## **RECOVERY**

assist them to return  
what happened, what  
to normal activities  
could the student do  
and focus on regular  
next time, what could  
routine.

adults do to help next  
time and how can we  
work together to ensure  
success for the student?

Be aware that some students come to school already in a heightened state. They may live at Stage 2 or 3 due to high levels of cortisol in their system. These students lack self-regulation skills—the ability to adjust and control their

energy level, emotions, behavior, and attention in socially acceptable ways.

You can teach your students self-regulation skills by giving them exercises for when they feel stressed or anxious—deep breathing, taking space (moving to a calmer area), using a stress ball, colouring, or listening to music.

Many schools are incorporating calming spaces into their buildings.

These areas may contain soft furnishings, a tent, blankets, a variety of tactile experiences, fiddle toys, headphones, paper and pencils, journals, and books in a quiet space away from the class, where students can go when they start to feel “wobbly”. It is an area best used in the early escalation phases as a prevention strategy and to “reset” when students “OH, behave!”

57

are not coping. When introducing such a space, it is important to explicitly teach students how to identify when they are feeling restless or agitated by focusing on their physical reactions. Students can learn to take responsibility for how they feel by taking space when they need it, and returning to the learning when they are ready.

## **CASE STUDY**

**STUDENT:** Joshua, kindergarten **TEACHER:** Ms. B

**BEHAVIOUR:** Running out of the classroom, out of the school, and onto the road without any concern for his safety.

**FUNCTION.OF.THE.BEHAVIOUR:** When Joshua was upset, he would run away to avoid attention from peers and adults.

**PLAN.FOR.SUCCESS:**

1. Ms. B felt she already had a good relationship with Joshua, and the parents confirmed this, saying that he spoke positively about her at home. Ms. B recognised maintaining

the relationship was a priority, especially in relation to Joshua's unsafe behaviour.

2. Ms. B provided Joshua with a safe space to use when he was feeling upset, and she taught him how to use the space.
3. Ms. B gave Joshua private praise as positive reinforcement when he used the safe space.
4. Joshua's parents were involved in the planning and discussed the very unsafe behaviour with Joshua at home, encouraging him to use the safe space when he was upset.
5. A safety plan was designed using the stages of escalation to guide the strategies—i.e., what Ms. B would do when Joshua was calm to encourage him to remain calm, and then what she would do as he became more agitated.

Finally, the plan spelt out what Ms. B would do when Joshua reached crisis point (when he ran out of the room).

58

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**NOTE:.** A safe space is a designated area that a student may use when they are feeling upset or stressed. A teacher could add some cushions, a soft blanket, some stuffed toys or quiet activities that help students self-regulate. Teaching a student how to use the calming space involves a 3-tiered approach. First, teach the whole class strategies to use when they feel upset (e.g., deep breathing, tell a friend, go for a run, sing a song, take some alone time, or go into the safe space). Second, some students need additional teaching in a small-group setting to practise using the skills. Finally, some individual students, including Joshua, may need one-on-one instruction and practise using the strategies and the space.

# CASE STUDY

**STUDENT:** Jane

**TEACHER:** Mr. T

**BEHAVIOUR:** Jane had a meltdown, yelling, screaming, and tipping her desk over whenever Mr. T stood in front of the work that the student was copying from the board.

**FUNCTION.OF.THE.BEHAVIOUR:** Jane was trying to access the work and would become upset if she had to wait.

**SKILL.BUILDING:** Jane's behaviour indicated a lack of skill in waiting, and it was decided that Jane needed to learn the skill of waiting patiently. Mr. T believed that other students in the class would also benefit from a lesson on how to wait patiently (a valuable life lesson) and developed a whole-class approach as part of his social and emotional programme.

Jane would then receive additional small-group work dealing with how to wait, using role playing and simulations to demonstrate and practise waiting, when she was not stressed or anxious. It was agreed that an executive teacher "OH, behave!"

59

would take Mr. T's class for a half-hour slot to allow Mr. T to work with the small group and develop the relationship he had with Jane.

Mr. T also taught whole class lessons about recognising emotions and what to do when students are feeling anxious, frustrated, stressed, or angry. The students came up with strategies such as deep breathing, counting to 10, and taking time out, and practised these strategies while calm.

**PLAN.FOR.SUCCESS:**

1. Teaching Jane helpful self-talk to use in the situation (e.g., "I know how to

- wait. The teacher will help me soon.”) 2. Devising an agreed-on cue between Mr. T and Jane to let her know when she needs to use the skill of waiting patiently. When a situation arose, Mr. T would give Jane the cue and then give her positive reinforcement when she displayed the skill. In the beginning the teacher gave positive feedback to Jane when she waited even for a short time, so that the behaviour would be repeated.
3. Creating a positive reinforcement strategy to encourage Jane to continue using the skill. (An individual reward program linked to the class reward system to increase her status with peers, and also harness peer pressure to promote success.)
4. Communicating with Jane’s parents who may be experiencing the same issues at home, and encouraging them to use the same language and strategies.
5. As Jane became more adept at waiting patiently, gradually reducing the number of rewards to increase independence.
6. If Jane regresses, or there is a change of situation, the reward system may need to be reintroduced.

60

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The function of problem behaviour is usually to access something or avoid something.
- If we understand the function of a student’s behaviour, we can teach better ways to meet their needs.
- Understanding what happens in the conflict cycle can help us avoid conflict with students.
- Knowing what pushes our buttons, and managing our own emotions, will



help avoid conflict with students.

- Colvin's seven stages of acting-out behaviour provides effective strategies for helping students remain calm, preventing a meltdown.
- When a student is learning a new skill, give praise for approximations of the skill. Don't wait until they do it perfectly before giving them that encouragement.

“OH, behave!”

61

## CHAPTER 3

### THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER

*“Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness*

*is doing the right things” –Peter Drucker*

When I was in the last year of my teaching degree, a girl (who had already graduated) told my friends and me about her first year of teaching.

She had decided that she would concentrate solely on her teaching for the entire first term (in those days a term was 12–13 weeks!) and not socialise at all. I considered this quite a sound idea and thought that I would be adopting the same practice. However, by the end of my first week of teaching, meeting all my students and their parents, navigating the buildings, the timetable, and the staff room, in 40-degree Celsius heat with no air conditioning, I needed adult company, to compare notes with others in the same situation, and a way to let off steam. Of course, everyone is different, but this situation emphasised to me the need for balance and being aware of what I needed to be effective. I had thought that focusing all my time and energy on my work would make me a better teacher more quickly. Teaching is not easily mastered. After 30 years in the profession I am still learning!

Ex-principal and school administrator, Jim Mahoney, in his keynote address “Creating Highly Effective Teachers,” tells the story of two teachers,

one effective and one ineffective:

62

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

One teacher built positive relationships by learning all her students' names, going to their sports games, and being interested in them as people; she created interesting lessons, built on prior knowledge, related learning to the students' backgrounds; and was well prepared and organised.

For the second teacher, classroom management was a struggle. She was rarely organised, and her day book was more like a diary, recording what she had done that day rather than a planning tool. She was haphazard about standards and goals, and her programming was unclear.

If you consider which teacher you might be, you may well be surprised to learn that they are the same teacher.

On any given day, we can be both effective and ineffective.

Teaching is such a multifaceted profession that you cannot just focus on one area to be an effective teacher. The teaching profession has been described as having an “unforgiving” nature (Skilbeck and Connell, 2004). Teachers have to show up and be responsible for groups of students whether they feel like it or not, and there is nowhere to hide when you are in front of a class of 30 kids. Teachers have a rich, varied, and complex set of responsibilities:

- Designer of learning activities
- Nurse
- Curriculum planner
- Emotional-support person
- Behaviour manager
- School-home liaison

- Role model
- Risk manager
- Values educator
- Administrator
- Religious educator
- Substitute parent
- Social worker
- Active school community member

It is no wonder teachers can feel overwhelmed!

### **Becoming more effective**

When you are striving to improve your teaching practice it can be useful to examine the management strategies that don't work because they can give you excellent clues. For example, when you want to get fit and healthy, it may help you to look at what things you are currently

**THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER**

63

doing that don't support a fit and healthy lifestyle, so that you can reduce or eliminate them. Often (but not always), the effective strategies are simply the direct opposite of the ineffective strategies. For example, if you eat unhealthy foods, change to eating more healthy foods, or if you do not exercise, start doing some exercise.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**Think about teachers you have had in the past or teachers you have observed. What do they do that makes them ineffective?**

**What do they say?**

**How do they interact?**

**What mistakes do they make that hinder their ability to be effective?**

Considering ineffective teaching strategies can give us hints as to the techniques and strategies that we may need to cultivate.

It can be fun to describe the teacher from hell! Here are some of the most common characteristics of ineffective teachers as provided by over 800 teachers at our workshops. I have categorised them according to the elements of an effective learning environment and, while some of them will belong in more than one category, this gives you the general idea.

**high expectations**

**(for yourself and your students)** Messy,

Inflexible

Poor/unsafe

Disorganised

Inappropriate dress

environment

Late

Unprofessional speech Lots of free time

Lack of preparation,

No passion

No reflection

Lazy

Poor time

Inflexible expectations

Low expectations/

management

Lacks self-control

unrealistic

Late to school/leaves Sibling comparison

expectations

early

Assigns blame to

No routine

Unhealthy-sleep,

students for learning

Unwilling to change

sick, stressed

and behaviour

Absent

No timely feedback-

Loud, noisy chaos

work not marked

Lack of focus

No goal setting

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **RELATIONSHIPS**

Yelling

their class

Inconsistent, no follow through

Talking over students

Poor communication

Reacting emotionally,

Not asking for help

confrontational style

Easily drawn into conflict

Punishing the whole class for one

Playing favourites

behaviour

Too friendly

Inconsistent positive

No rewards, no consequences

reinforcement

Scared of students

No student voice, no fun

Focusing on the negative

Predetermined attitude to

No respect for students as people  
students

Authoritarian, reactive

Lacks assertiveness, permissive

Don't know students-or how they

Easily flustered, scary, grumpy  
learn/act

Poor relationships with students,

Belittling, humiliating, insulting,

colleagues, parents, bagging

demeaning, threatening

other teachers out

Public admonishing

Not a team player, not sharing

Not taking responsibility

with colleagues

Letting issues go on too long

No initiative

Different rules for different kids

'White ant' or undermine school

Not knowing student names

processes

Refusing to have students in

**PEDAGOGY**

**CURRICULUM**

**Boring**

No differentiation

Too much "chalk 'n' talk"

Doesn't know content

Not utilising learning styles

Too much emphasis on content

Teacher centred

Irrelevant content

Monotone voice

No scaffolding

Unengaging lessons

"Busy" work

No change in style

Not using student interests



No variety in lessons

Lacks big picture focus

No formative assessment

No real-world connection

No explicit teaching

Not following procedures

Rushing through content

Not knowing curriculum—

Not addressing learning needs

wrong focus

Outdated practices

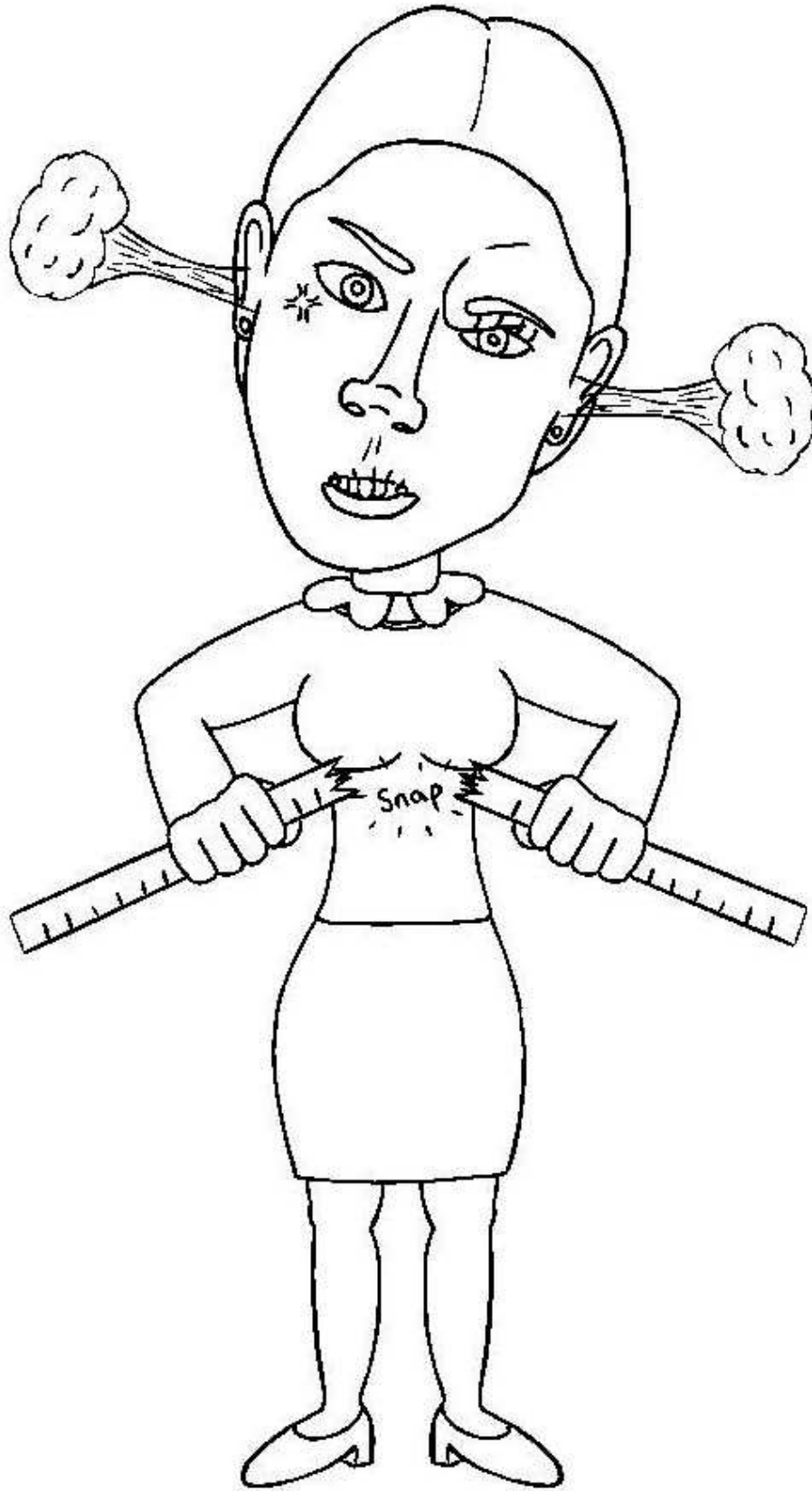
Not following procedures

Too much same, same,

Fixed mindset/no flexibility

or spontaneity

THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER



The ineffective teacher can also display intolerance, impatience, frustration, moodiness, negativity, and comes across as beaten down and stressed. He/she has low energy, lacks enthusiasm and motivation, and is unfair and distant. He/she can lack empathy, may be needy and whingeing, defensive, angry, and unimaginative. Other traits include being jaded, lacking in compassion, being tired, unhappy, pessimistic, mean, forgetful and thinking he/she is always right. Oh, yeah, and ineffective teachers also overuse sarcasm...

Teachers who are highly stressed will often exhibit many of these characteristics.

## **CASE STUDY**

### **PRIMARY.SCHOOL.**

A kindergarten teacher was in a world of pain!

He complained about his students' poor behaviour and lamented that his colleagues, both teachers and executive, did not support him. He complained loudly to anyone who would listen about the hardships and lack of control he endured in his personal situation.

His 5-year-old students were expected to sit on the carpet every morning for up to 45 minutes while he ran about getting organised. His manner with the students was frantic, negative, and impatient. He also made inappropriate remarks to the students such as, "Oh yes you would forget to do that, Tom!"

and "I really need extra help with all the difficult students I have in this class!"

66

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

The most surprising thing was that the students were extremely well behaved!

Because he felt so stressed and powerless, the teacher felt that the only solution could come from outside himself. He wanted a funded teacher assistant, or for the executive staff to take individual students out of his class.

**Do.you.know.any.teachers.who.act.this.way?.What.might.help.them.and.their.students?**

## CASE STUDY

### **HIGH.SCHOOL.**

A geography/history teacher was at the end of her tether.

When she was placed on an improvement program by the deputy principal and provided with additional support, she did not accept any responsibility for her students' lack of academic progress.

She blamed the students for their lack of academic achievement and their poor behaviour. She also blamed the executive staff for consistently giving her the worst classes.

Upon examining her practice, she often turned up to class unprepared, she lacked assertiveness in dealing with students and displayed a distinct lack of engagement and enthusiasm, which was evident to her students.

Unfortunately, she had failed to build relationships, either with the students or the staff.

**What can a teacher in this situation do to help themselves?**

THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER

67

**BEST PRACTICE VS**

## **BEST PRACTICE ON THE DAY**

While we all have bad days (and alas, sometimes bad weeks), times when we may not show up as our best selves, a reflective teacher will recognise when they have been underprepared, reacted negatively to a student's behaviour, or even snapped at a colleague. Self-reflection is one of the most important qualities necessary to be an effective teacher.

### **MANAGING YOUR WELLBEING**

Before the stress of teaching takes its toll on you, find ways to help yourself maintain high levels of positive emotional energy that will build your resilience (Roffey, 2011).

Here are a few suggestions:

- **EXERCISE, SLEEP, AND EAT WELL:** Looking after your health is vital. For the day-to-day running of your classes you need to be at optimum capacity. You also need reserves of energy for times when there are additional demands placed on you, for example, report writing time, parent/teacher interviews, the beginning of the year, and the end of the year festivities/

performances.

- **BE HONEST WITH STUDENTS:** I have found that telling my students that I am unwell or stressed elicits lots of sympathy. It also allows them to step up and show care for someone else, and be more independent learners. Some teachers tell their students that their tolerance levels are low due to outside factors, “so please take it easy on me!”

- **GET ORGANISED:** Take the time to plan your lessons, organise your resources, tidy up your desk, and arrange your classroom. Having these things done will help you feel calmer and more in control, reducing your stress.

- **BREAK TASKS INTO SMALLER CHUNKS:** Sometimes your list of “to dos” seems overwhelming and impossibly long. Breaking the tasks into smaller achievable tasks can help.

68

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

This is exactly what good teachers do with students who are overwhelmed by a large task. Here is the chance to do the same thing for yourself to reduce anxiety and increase the possibility of success. Be kind to yourself.

- **ASK FOR HELP:** Sometimes, just telling someone how overwhelmed or stressed you are can help you feel better instantly. The old adage “a problem shared is a problem halved” still holds validity. Studies have shown that putting your feelings into words reduces the intensity of the negative emotions and puts you into a more positive state, better able to make decisions (Zweig, 2007). It can also help when you know that others are feeling stressed and that you are not on your own!

- **CHAT WITH POSITIVE COLLEAGUES:** Surround yourself with positive people and avoid the whingers and complainers.

An adage suggests that you become those you surround yourself with, so choose carefully. You tend to adopt the attitudes and beliefs of the people around you, and I have seen young, idealistic teachers quickly infected with the negativity and cynicism of staff room talk. A good friend's daughter went to teach in rural Australia. When she discussed her high expectations for her students (all would start with an A grade) with her supervisor, she was told not to worry about that and just hope to get through the year and not expect too much from her students.

*The quality of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts.*

— Robin Sharma

- **PROBLEM SOLVE:** Adopting a problem-solving mentality toward issues in the classroom (and staff room!) means that you don't get caught in a downward spiral of negativity. You can complain about how much marking you have, for example, **THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER**

69

but there are always more effective strategies you can learn from colleagues or you can do your own research on ways to make tasks more manageable.

- **USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK:** When you are in stress mode, your self-talk can become negative and unhelpful. Check the things that you are saying to yourself because it will affect your performance, relationships, and energy levels.
- **HAVE FUN.** Incorporate fun into time with your students— especially activities that involve movement or laughter, which increase the levels of feel-good chemicals such as endorphins.
- **TIME OFF.** Ensure that you take time for yourself to pursue interests and hobbies that are separate from school. Enjoying other activities will make you a better teacher.
- **CELEBRATE SUCCESSES:** Tell other people when you have a win: a student goes up a reading level; you finish your reports; you make headway with

difficult parents; you hand in your programme on time. Celebrate achievements with your students as with your colleagues. Go to Friday drinks with your colleagues. . . it is a great time to unwind and share battle stories.

### **What.if.you.still.feel.overwhelmed?.**

If you feel that you have tried everything, and nothing has changed, and you are still in a constant state of stress, you may need to consider taking time off or reducing your working hours. Teaching is a demanding profession, and you owe it to yourself and your students to consider the most appropriate options for you.

Of course, it is also a possibility that the job you are currently in may not be the most fulfilling one for you. Taking time off for much reflection and re-evaluation could be the ultimate answer for your woes, too. Of course, only you can make big decisions about your future teaching career, and finding supportive senior staff with whom 70

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

you can discuss your situation may be most helpful to guide you through the decision-making process.

**To access a short online course on how to manage your wellbeing visit [www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher/book-resources](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher/book-resources)**

## **Tips to Reduce Marking**

How many times have you taken that tub of books or assignments from the classroom to the car, into the house, back to the car, back to the classroom and still not completed the marking?

In your search for a balance between home and work, improved marking strategies could give you more flexibility and time. . . that could be better spent doing other things!

We mark students' work to:

- See if they understand the task



- Check for understanding of concepts
- Ensure task completion
- Provide useful feedback
- Motivate and engage students

Consider using the following tips to reduce your marking time, increase the effectiveness of your feedback, and have the students contribute to “closing the gap” between where they are and where they need to be. After all, the purpose of feedback is to make students more aware of improving their own learning and to take responsibility for that improvement.

1. **Use symbols** to indicate certain points that you may be making—e.g., use a plus sign when a student needs to give more information. Use a code to indicate the most prevalent comments (praise, indicators, improvement suggestions) you use for student work. Have the guide stuck in the front of their books for them to refer to and use.

2. **Have a focus** for your marking, and let students know in advance what you are going to mark. For example, you may THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER

71

only mark their use of descriptive language. In other words, don’t feel that you have to check everything every time.

3. **Reward students.** Most kids, from kindergarten upwards, love stickers. I have met teachers using stickers for Year 12 students who loved it!

4. **Use different coloured pens** to indicate the level of achievement—for example, green for work done well, orange for more work needed, and red for work that must be redone.

5. **Peer marking.** Teach students to mark each other’s work using assessment criteria. Ensure that work marked by students is clearly noted and signed by the student. A teacher I know uses “3 before me” in this way. Students must have their work checked by 3 sources before it gets to the teacher.

This is usually most effective if more than one student checks the work, and students can learn a great deal from critiquing each other.

6. **Peer comment.** Use the “kind, specific, helpful” mantra for students to provide feedback to others.

7. **Use self-assessment** in the same way. Explicitly teach students to assess their own work and provide opportunities for them to do so before they hand work to you. The teacher assesses the work after the student has made comments and adjustment. Teach students how to effectively proofread and edit their own work.

8. **One-on-one conferencing.** Set students to independent work in class while you conference with each student to discuss and expand on written feedback.

9. **Swap and mark.** Where appropriate, have students mark each other’s work in class, reducing the amount of time you need to spend on each piece. Such practice also has the advantage of immediacy, which increases effectiveness.

72

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

10. **Use shared technology spaces**—for example, Google docs, where students can post assignments, giving the teacher access to work in progress.

11. **Check drafts.** Have students submit drafts of their work during the process rather than simply handing in the finished product. In this way you can give them feedback while they are working on the task, reducing the amount of work you will need to do once the assignment is completed.

Give students templates to follow that demonstrate their thinking along the way. Ensure that the process is about improvement, not about a grade.

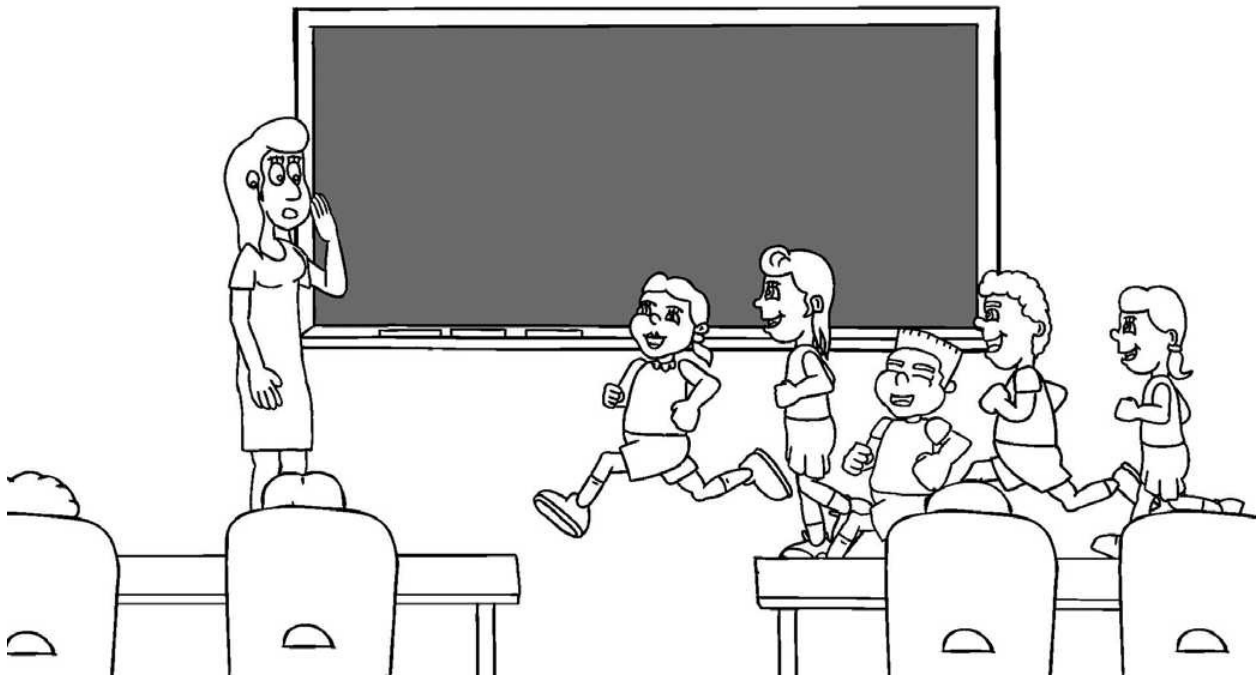
12. **Use examples of work to critique as a class.** Examine past students’ work with the class, identifying strengths and weaknesses and how it could be improved.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Examining the characteristics of ineffective teachers can give us information about how to be more effective.
- An effective teacher incorporates time for self-reflection into their practice.
- There are ways to reduce your workload if you think creatively.
- Managing your wellbeing is vital to becoming an effective teacher.
- Seek help from colleagues earlier rather than later, in times of stress.

### THE INEFFECTIVE TEACHER

73



## CHAPTER 4

### IT'S ALL ABOUT

### THE LEARNING

*“I am always ready to learn although I do not always*

*like being taught” –Winston Churchill*

Have your students ever been so excited about what they were doing in class that they ran in, eager to get started? Wouldn't that be a dream?

I recently heard the story of a relief teacher who was working at the local primary school for the first time. When the kids raced off the bus into class and got started on their work without any prompting from the adults, she didn't know what had hit her. Now that's keen to learn!

74

### HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

The natural human state is one of curiosity.

Just look at a baby who explores the world and learns constantly through the senses.

**We can't change a**

Humans love to learn new things and to get

**person, but we can**

better at doing the things they already know.

**influence the way they**

Harnessing this natural curiosity is what

**behave by shaping the**

good teachers do.

**environment in which**

**they function.**

A book on classroom behaviour management

is not complete without the all-important

discussion about learning. Teaching and

learning is the core business for schools.

When you provide relevant curriculum, combined with varied and engaging pedagogy, you greatly reduce the likelihood of students being off task and dramatically increase opportunities for students' academic success.

## **AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

An effective learning environment has 4 essential components: positive relationships, engaging pedagogy, relevant curriculum, and high expectations.

**Respect,.**

**Relevant content,.**

**collaboration,.**

**differentiation, .**

**social-emotional.**

**strengths based**

**curriculum, peer.**

**.....relationships.**

**relevant**

**positive**

**Curriculum**

**relationships**

**engaging**

**High**

**pedagogy**

**expectations**

**.....Quality.work,.**

**Innovation,.**

**accountability,.**

**creativity,.**

**rules,.structure,.**

**cooperative.learning**

**scaffolding**

**75**

——— POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS ——— Relationships are the foundation of an effectively operating classroom.

They are the cornerstone of your work as a teacher. The effectiveness of the learning is highly dependent on the quality of the relationships between teacher and student, between student and student, and between teacher

and parent. Relationships build positive groups, lower tension, enhance feelings of safety, and help create feelings of belonging.

In chapter 5 I expand on effective ways you can build relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.

Positive relationships in the classroom are essential for students to feel that they can make mistakes within a safe environment (Hattie, 2003).

Positive teacher-student relationships support students, encouraging them to take risks, to have a go and to be unafraid to fail. To be successful, students must understand that it is okay not to get everything correct on the first go.

The development of a positive classroom climate, built on mutual respect and acceptance, powerfully increases learning and engagement.

Positive relationships between students are vital, guided by modelling and explicit teaching of values by the teacher. Students will always take their cues from the adults around them.

## **CASE STUDY**

A year 5 teacher found it very difficult to manage the behaviour of a student with autism and became very stressed by the student's meltdowns.

He often made negative comments about the student, suggesting that he shouldn't have to deal with this behaviour or this student. His attitude toward the student was overtly negative, and this rubbed off on the rest of the class, who teased the student, hid his belongings, and refused to allow him to join in games. The other students also taunted him so that he would react.

The teacher did not accept responsibility for his part in the student's learning and usually left his educational needs to the teacher's aide.

**How can a teacher's negative attitude affect students and the way they behave?**

Develop positive relationships and a supportive culture that encourages all students to feel safe, respected, and free to 'fail':

- **EXPLICITLY TEACH RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR.**

Make your classroom a "no putdown" zone and encourage students to support each other by listening and valuing each other's opinions.

- **DEVELOP A GROWTH MINDSET:** Stanford University psychologist, Carol Dweck is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation. She has demonstrated how a growth mindset supports learning, meaning that teachers recognise that success comes from effort, that with hard work most students can learn most things, and that the key role of the teacher is to find the thing that makes school meaningful for students. When teachers encourage a growth mindset in students, they emphasise effort over talent or ability and value the process over the product.

- **MODEL MAKING MISTAKES.** Show students that you are not perfect and that you make mistakes too, either in an area of weakness for you or when you are learning something new.

When we learn something new, we make mistakes, we figure it out along the way, and we aren't perfect the first time or even perhaps the tenth time (Thomas Edison failed 10000 times before he succeeded with the light bulb!)

- **EXPLICITLY TEACH STUDENTS WHAT LEARNING**

**MEANS.** Discuss the process of learning with your students.

Demonstrate that you are a lifelong learner by sharing your learning experiences with your students. For example, if you are taking tennis lessons or learning to play a musical instrument, **IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING**



show students how you have progressed.

Encourage students to reflect on what their learning journey looks like (e.g.,

**“I’m not real good**

when they first learnt to ride a bike or

**with Math, but I was**

**working on it”**

learnt to swim, emphasising that when

— **Rita Pierson educator**

we are learning something new we rarely

**and inspirational**

do it perfectly the first time).

**speaker.**

- **ALLOW PROCESSING TIME.**

Give your students time to think

after you ask a question. John Hattie’s

research showed that teachers generally give less than 1 second processing time after asking a question. When you go from listening mode to speaking mode your brain needs time to understand the question and formulate an answer.

- **STUDENT DISCUSSION.** Encourage students to share their ideas in pairs or small groups before they speak to the larger group. This helps reduce students’ anxiety because they can compare and clarify their ideas before speaking to the

whole class.

- **CELEBRATE THINKING RATHER THAN PRODUCING.**

Reward “having a go” and showing improvement rather than emphasising getting everything correct.

- **TEACH YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THE BRAIN.** Kids love to learn about how their brain works, and with all the new brain research we are finding out exciting information all the time. Help them understand how learning something new can be hard at first, but as our brains make new connections what was once difficult is now easy (Jensen, 2005).

- **ALLOW STUDENTS TO REDO TESTS AND TASKS.**

When you give students only one opportunity to get it right you limit their potential and increase their anxiety. My good friend Mary Milthorpe, a highly experienced teacher, tells her students that tests are to see how well she has taught them, so that she can have another go at it.

78

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### CASE STUDY

The attitude of the teacher can make a student feel accepted and cared for.

When a Year 4 student had a meltdown, and trashed the store room, throwing bags and belongings around the space, the teacher told the other students that Billie was feeling angry and sad. He reassured the class that they were safe, and explained that Billie was having a hard time and they could help him by just getting on with their work. The teacher spoke in a quiet voice and welcomed Billie back into the class when he was ready.

The attitude and example of the teacher meant that Billie was

accepted by the other students. Because the teacher helped the students empathise with Billie rather than judging him, they did not tease or bait him to get a reaction.

Some teachers and parents might think that the other students are disadvantaged by having Billie in their class, and they may miss the fact that students are learning valuable life lessons.

Learning to accept diversity and have empathy for others is essential for compassionate and caring citizens.

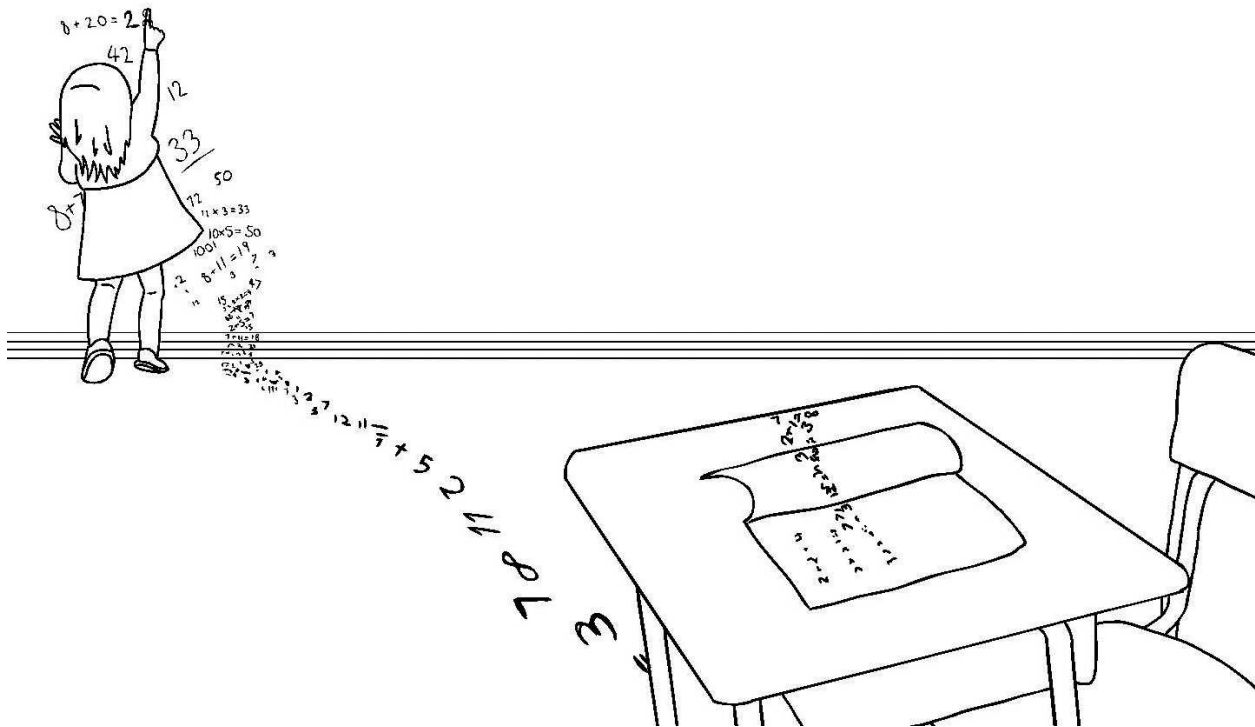
—— relevant curriculum ——

Many issues that manifest as poor behaviour could be avoided by careful attention to curriculum because students who are bored or frustrated are more likely to be off task or disruptive. Curriculum must be built on what students already know, provide enough challenge to be interesting but not too difficult, and be presented in a way that makes it relevant.

Instruction must be differentiated to cater for a variety of learning styles and ability levels and utilises students' strengths and interests.

Creating and adapting curriculum and pedagogy to ensure students are successful learners, and so self-esteem is bolstered, can dramatically reduce problem behaviour (Lewis and Sugai 1999).

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING



## Differentiation

As educators, we recognise that students are individuals who learn at different rates and in different ways. However, planning, programming, and assessing for the wide variety of needs and interests of multi-age and multi-ability classes can be quite a challenge!

Here are some ideas that can help you cater to the learning styles, abilities, and interests of your students by providing flexible and alternative learning experiences that are engaging and motivating.

- **WHOLE TO PART:** Once you have given whole-class instruction, give small-group lessons to reinforce the learning and to check for understanding. Allow students to opt in to extra group work and encourage your class to speak up if they don't understand. Model risk taking and making mistakes for your classes to create a culture of respect, empathy, and acceptance of difference.
- **GRADED WORKSHEETS:** Instead of creating multiple worksheets for different students, which can have social implications and a greater time commitment for the teacher, consider one worksheet with progressively difficult

tasks.

80

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

The capable students will quickly move on to the more challenging tasks, while the less able students can take their time to understand the basics.

- **CHOICE:** Provide students with a choice of activities and assessment pieces—including written, spoken, video, and PowerPoint presentations, story boards, mind maps.
- **VARIED RESOURCES:** Provide students with a variety of resource materials. For example, simpler texts with illustrations, more difficult and complex texts and online materials such as videos that support students learning in different ways.
- **FAST FINISHERS:** Have additional interesting, challenging tasks for students who finish early, so you can assist the students who may need more time. Make sure the tasks are purposeful, engaging, and not just busy work.
- **INDEPENDENT LEARNING:** 80 percent of students are capable of being self-directed with their learning if they are taught how and given the opportunity. This gives teachers time to assist the students who need additional support or individual instruction.
- **ASSESS:** Use regular formative assessment to evaluate where students are in their learning, and then adapt your teaching to their needs. For example, [store.scholastic.com](http://store.scholastic.com) has 25 Quick Formative Assessments for a Differentiated Classroom.
- **COLLABORATION:** Use cooperative learning groups or pairs, and consider having small mixed-ability groups for tasks. Give students defined roles within the groups, and explicitly teach them how to fulfil each of their role descriptions. See Kagan Cooperative Learning for more ideas on how to use these.
- **ASK STUDENTS:** Survey students to determine their learning styles, and use the information for your planning and for students to gain greater insight of

how they learn. For example, [educationplanner.org](http://educationplanner.org) has questionnaires for students, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

81

check out Ralph Pirozzo matrices combine learning styles and Bloom's taxonomy for student centred learning at [pli.com.au](http://pli.com.au).

- **BE A MOVIE STAR:** Create short videos of yourself teaching a concept and upload them so students can access the instruction at any time.
- **MENTORS:** Peer mentoring and cross-age mentoring benefits the mentor and the mentee. A student who lacks confidence can make massive gains when they can share their expertise with a less able student, and young people can often explain concepts to their peers in ways that are more easily understood.
- **PLAY:** Use games and simulations to engage students in learning. Simple games such as Celebrity Heads can be adapted to learning. For example, the “celebrities” can be characters from a novel, historical figures, scientific researchers, or answers to a mathematical equation.
- **EVERYONE THINKS:** Use cold calling rather than “hands up”

when you ask a question. Develop a culture in which everyone is expected to think and participate. Use strategies such as picking a name out of a hat or a paddle pop stick with each child's name, and give processing and thinking time. Encourage students to “have a go” rather than needing to be 100 percent correct before giving an answer.

- **QUICK ANSWERS:** Use miniature white boards for every student so they can all write an answer to hold up to the teacher.

This is a quick and effective way to assess each student's understanding. (See Wiliam and Black, *Inside the Black Box*.)

Good teachers have always practised differentiation. It means giving students a variety of options for accessing information, making sense of ideas, and demonstrating what they have learnt. It is recognising that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching and learning.

“[Differentiation] means teachers proactively plan varied approaches to **what**

*students need to learn, **how** they will learn it, and/or how they will **show** what they have learned in order to increase the likelihood that each student will learn as much as he or 82*

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

*she can, as efficiently as possible.” — Carol Ann Tomlinson, 2013.*

According to Tomlinson, teachers can differentiate through content, process, product and the learning environment.

**CONTENT**—What information to teach

### **Make.decisions.about.the.curriculum**

- Deciding on the amount of content
- Gauging level or depth of the material
- Determining/building on prior knowledge
- Relating material to students’ backgrounds • Identifying student strengths and interests to make the content relevant
- Scaffolding tasks in meaningful ways
- Tailoring content to experience and current knowledge • Creating challenging and achievable tasks
- Using pre-assessment and formative assessment to guide teaching decisions

**PRODUCT**—HOW STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE WHAT

THEY KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND WHAT THEY CAN DO.

**Provide.a.variety.of.ways.that.students.can.show.what.they.know:** • Written

- Mind maps
- Verbal

- PowerPoint presentation
- Group research
- Dance
- Individual project
- Song
- Paired work
- Drama
- Visual/creative arts
- Self-reporting
- Teaching peers
- Interview
- Speech
  
- Diagram

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

83

**PROCESS**—How students access the information and interact with the content

**Present.the.information.in.a.variety.of.ways**

- Audio
- Cooperative Learning



- Visual
- Peer Tutoring
- Video
- Lecture Style
- Excursions/Incursions
- Enquiry Learning
- Reading
- Project Based Learning
- Discussions
- Whole Group Instruction
- Research
- Paired/Small Group Work
- YouTube clips
- Independent Tasks
- Diagrams/Pictures/Maps

**learning environment**—create a supportive climate or tone

**Provide a supportive student-centred classroom environment** • Growth mindset of the

- Supportive relationships

teacher

are developed between

- Develop a growth  
students  
mindset in students
- Process is valued over
- Open to mistakes as  
product  
part of learning
- Thinking is valued over
- Flexible space  
talking
- Learners feel valued
- Students talk more and
- Focus on positive  
ask more questions  
relationships  
than the teacher
- Flexible
- High expectations are  
combined with high levels
- Adaptable  
of support for all students

- Students feel safe  
(i.e., We believe in you and physically, emotionally intend for you to succeed).  
and psychologically so
- Teachers model life-  
that they can take risks  
long learning and
- Mistakes are accepted  
producing quality work  
and expected

84

—— HIGH EXPECTATIONS —— People will live up (or down!) to your expectations. Student achievement is strongly affected by what the teacher expects of them, as demonstrated by many educational researchers. The first and most famous experiment is known as the Pygmalion Effect.

Researchers Robert Rosenthal and Lenore

**‘When we expect**

Jacobson conducted an experiment at a **certain behaviours of** primary school where all the students sat **others, we may act in ways that make the**

for a predictive “intelligence test”. The

## **expected behaviour**

experimenters then gave the 18 teachers

## **more likely to occur'**

the names of the students who scored in **(Rosenthal & Babad, 1985)** the top 20 percent, telling them that this

meant they showed exceptional potential

and would achieve high academic results

within the year.

Unbeknownst to the teachers, these students had been randomly selected, and the testing showed no such prediction.

When all students were tested again 8 months later, the so-called 'gifted'

students performed significantly higher than the other students.

Rosenthal and Jacobson referred to this as the Pygmalion Effect.

## **GROWTH MINDSET AND EXPECTATIONS**

It is more helpful to ask, "How can I

teach these students the content?"—

NOT "Can I teach them?" It is better

to ask, "How will they learn best?"—

### **If a child can't**

NOT 'Can they learn?'

**learn the way we teach,**

**maybe we should teach**

Dweck's Mindset: *How You Can* **the way they learn**

*Fulfill Your Potential* relays the work **Ignacio 'Nacho' Estrada**

of researcher Falko Rheinberg, who

studied how students' academic

achievement and progress is influenced

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

85

by teachers' mindset about intellectual ability. He found that when teachers believed that ability is fixed, the students ended the year at the same level as when they began the year. That is, if they were in the bottom group to begin with, then they were in the bottom group at the end. When teachers taught with a growth mindset, it did not matter where the students began, they all progressed and developed to a much higher level.

## **CASE STUDY**

Early in my career I taught a boy who had repeated kindergarten because at the end of a year of school he still could not read his name or even the pronoun *he/she*. At the end of another year of schooling in my class, he could still not read.

I often think about him and how there must have been some other more helpful way to teach him that I was not using.

My lack of skill in dealing with his particular needs did not help. I certainly did not unlock the door of learning for him!

Perhaps he had decided that he would not be able to learn to read, considering the lack of progress he had made. I cannot help thinking that a growth mindset on my part, and his, could have made a difference.

We convey expectations to our students not only through what we say but in how we act and what we don't say.

- **EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN YOUR STUDENTS:** Let your students know that you believe in them, and speak positively about them to other staff. If you know a task is particularly difficult, tell your students, but also let them know that you are sure they will do well if they work hard.

Encourage your students through positive non-verbal signals such as smiling, nodding, eye contact, and proximity.

86

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

- **COMMUNICATE HIGH EXPECTATIONS WITH YOUR**

**ACTIONS:** Set complex tasks that challenge your students and don't accept poor behaviour or below-standard work. Use the phrase "not yet" to describe your students' progress.

- **OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE:** When students are given the opportunity to voice their opinions and learning in a validating atmosphere, they learn better and achieve higher results. Ensure that all students are given the opportunity to speak, especially those who may be reticent or lack confidence. Provide lower-achieving students with the chance to be the expert in a topic. This can help raise their status with peers, increase self-esteem, and instill confidence in their ability to learn.

- **GIVE SPECIFIC FEEDBACK:** Individualised feedback (not simply "good job") has one of the most significant effects on student achievement, according to many educational researchers, allowing students to use such feedback to improve.

- **HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT:** For students to achieve at school they all need (a) positive relationships with caring adults; (b) additional and varied teaching; (c) varied modes of presentation; (d) to be explicitly taught how to access teacher help; and (e) consistent, specific feedback.

- **GOLDBLOCKS PRINCIPLE:** Provide work tasks that are not too easy,

not too hard, but just right! For students to be motivated the task must be achievable but not so easy that it doesn't challenge them. It is about finding the ideal level of work that will stimulate the desire for learning without disheartening the student.

- **SET OPEN-ENDED TASKS:** Encourage students to think for themselves with complex tasks where there is no “right”

way. Provide genuine reasons for students to work together rather than using group work for its own sake.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

87

——— engaging pedagogy ——— How to make sure that your students are off task and disruptive: 1. Be boring. Insist that your students simply need to learn the content.

Don't waste your time and effort trying to make lessons interesting!

2. Be rigid. Present lessons in the same way, over and over, whether or not students are learning.
3. Have little or no variety in assessment tasks. Make sure all your tasks are literacy based; students must write their responses and read the information from texts.
4. Drone on and on and do not give the students an opportunity to speak. You are the font of all knowledge, and they need to hear everything you have to say.
5. Insist that the students sit still for the whole lesson.

While every lesson does not have to be full of bells and whistles, a few basic principles make learning more engaging. John Hattie's research revealed that teachers talk for 80 percent of the day, ask 150–200 questions—97

percent requiring a factual answer—and teachers allow, on average, less than 1 second for students to respond. To increase effective learning, students need to be talking and asking more questions.

As Hattie points out, large amounts of teacher talk can cause low student involvement, loss of concentration, and reduced learning. It can also mean no checking for student understanding. A high level of teacher talk reduces the opportunities for students to explore concepts and to take responsibility for their own learning. It reinforces the idea of passive learning.

Graham Nuthall, in *The Hidden Lives of Learners*, conducted ground breaking research on how children learn by taping student conversations in classrooms and interviewing students about their learning. His work revealed that students spend about 70 percent of their time pretending to listen, feigning engagement!

Nuthall tells the story of a Year 3 boy who was meant to be reading 88

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

during class. The student found the reading difficult and was looking out the window. As the teacher walked past, the boy began looking at the pages and mumbling to himself as if he was sounding out the words. Once the teacher had gone past, he went back to looking out the window. He had pretended to be doing what the teacher expected!

John Holt, in *How Children Fail*, says that most students are either bored, confused, or scared. The classroom climate of pressure for the correct answers, rather than a spirit of inquiry, creates anxious students who don't see the meaning of the tasks they are asked to do.

To engage your students, consider these basic principles and incorporate a variety of approaches:

- **ACTIVE LEARNING:** and cooperative learning strategies increase academic achievement as well as developing social and emotional skills. As social beings, we all learn more effectively when we discuss information, explain what we have learnt to someone else, and when physical movement is incorporated.

Use paired and group activities that teach students how to interact with others, how to take turns in a conversation, and how to work with others who may not be their friends.



- **SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING:** One of the best things you can do is to teach your students to be self-directed learners.

80 percent of students are capable of being independent learners if they are trained (Phillips & Gibbons, 1996). This frees you to assist the 20 percent who genuinely need your help. Graham Nuttall, in *The Hidden Lives of Learners*, gives us surprising statistics from his research, including the fact that 40–50 percent of what teachers teach, students already know!

- **GIVE STUDENTS A VOICE:** Students are motivated when they are given autonomy in their tasks—that is, they determine when, with whom, and how they complete the work.

This quote from Allan Greenbank at Stuart High School in South Australia shows how to extend students by giving them greater agency IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

89

*over their learning using the Ralph Pirozzo Matrix: After I have model ed the use of this tool I teach students how to construct their own. In this way they decide what aspects they wish to explore and what learning styles they wish to employ. From there they are also taught to use assessment rubrics.*

*This combination engages students and al ows me to introduce the South Australian outcomes to the students in a more meaningful way. Once the students realise they have the power and decision-making capability to construct their own learning, determine their own assessment strategies and share this with their classmates in group or individualised work efforts then the curriculum becomes inclusive and attainable by al . The cooperative learning activities assist those students who are at risk in their learning or have social justice issues causing them to devalue their schooling. By working together students are able to model to each other and the use of peer mentors and learning experts in the class becomes acceptable even to teenagers.*

- **STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING:** Include learners in decisions about how and what they learn, and how that learning is assessed. Take account of learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and experiences. Treat learners as co-creators and partners in the learning process; show students that you are also

learning with them.

- **STUDENT FEEDBACK:** Find out what students are actually learning by giving them opportunities to reflect on your teaching and their learning. You could provide the opportunity for regular feedback at the end of a session. Ask questions like: How clear are the lessons? Was the lesson engaging and easy to understand? Did I give feedback in a timely and useful format? Hattie ranked feedback to the teacher as one of the most significant factors impacting student achievement. Make the learning visible to the teacher!

- **ADAPT AS YOU GO:** Guide your planning and make on-the-spot adjustments as needed, so that the learning is meaningful and tailored to the students' progress. Dylan Wiliam, Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at University College London, has researched extensively and devised simple formative 90

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

assessment classroom tools, like paddle pop sticks to call on students, miniature white boards for quick answers, and coloured cups or cards to gauge student need for teacher assistance and when you may need to reteach a concept.

## We Learn

*10 percent of what we read*

*20 percent of what we hear*

*30 percent of what we see*

*50 percent of what we see and hear*

*70 percent of what we discuss*

*80 percent of what we experience*

*95 percent of what we teach others*

*William Glasser*

## **USE VARIETY TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AND TEACH MORE EFFECTIVELY**

Variety is the spice of life...and the key to engagement in the classroom.

Use this checklist to see how many different strategies you use.

Demonstration

Small group instruction

Drill and repetition

Song

Guest speaker

Surveys

Deconstruction

Test

Debate

Verse

Diorama

Video

Drama

Whole class

Drawing

Workshop

Examples

Work stations

Excursion

Group work

Experiment

Hypothesise

Explanation

Immersion

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

91

Games

Interviewing experts

Graph

Improvisation

Investigation

Inquiry

Chalkboard

Letter writing

Whiteboard

Maps

Lecture

Memorisation

Discussion

Memory pegs

Worksheet

Metaphor

Text book

Mistakes

Shared reading

Mind maps

Individual reading

Model making

Teacher questions

Multiple intelligences

Problem solving

Music

Charts

One-on-one teaching

Poster

Oral report

Audio

Panel discussion

DVD

Partner work

TV

Peer teaching

News

Plan

Media

Play

Computer

Play dough

Internet

Practice

Action research

Pre-test

Art/craft

Project

Biographies

Power point presentation

Brainstorm

Puppets

Case study

Reader's theatre

Circle time

Reflection

Class meeting

Research

Cloze activity

Role play

Cooking

Self-directed learning

Dance

Simulation

92

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **MoTIVATION**

If you are like most teachers, you will often be on the lookout for ideas on how to motivate and inspire your students, especially those hard-to-reach students.

Daniel Pink, in *Drive: The Surprising Truth about what Motivates Us*, examined the business model of motivation and discovered that humans are motivated by three factors. Each of them are highly applicable to the classroom.

#### —— AUTONOMY ——

One of the benefits of teaching is the autonomous nature of the profession. You have the freedom to be creative, deciding how you will teach.

Autonomy and a sense of control are highly motivating. To increase autonomy for your students, give them a choice in what, when, and how

they complete tasks. Consider learning styles, provide opportunities for them to work to their strengths, as well as incorporating their interests into the learning. Pink describes various business practices such as those of the Australian software company Atlassian, that introduced a day of autonomy for their employees. In this 24-hour period, employees could work on anything that took their fancy, as long as they reported back about what they had done. In the time allotted, more remedies for problems were developed, and more new ideas were generated than at any other time. The key was autonomy.

### ———— MASTERY ————

A couple of years ago, I took up art as a hobby. I have never been good at drawing or painting and was in awe of anyone who was. Because of all the YouTube clips I could access that lead you step-by-step through the techniques, I felt confident that I could follow their “How Tos”. I learnt that the more time I spent creating artworks, the more skilled I became. I felt motivated to continue because I could see myself getting better. (I am no Picasso by any means, but I did surprise my children and my partner.) IT’S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

93

For students, this means learning to do something they couldn’t do before and having multiple learning opportunities to practise and master the skills rather than skimming over content.

Skilbeck and Connell (2004) stress the importance of teachers focusing on depth of understanding, knowledge, and skills rather than “covering the ground” of a predetermined syllabus. It is about refraining from the “mile-wide inch-deep” type of teaching, despite the perceived demands of a content-driven curriculum.

### ———— PURPOSE ————

Prolific author and inspirational life coach Tony Robbins says that one of our basic human needs is contribution. Dan Pink’s research demonstrates clearly that people are motivated by giving to something beyond themselves. I have seen primary-school students highly engaged when they were part of a choir, singing to people in retirement homes



or hospitals, and I have witnessed disengaged high school students demonstrate high levels of leadership when working with students at special schools.

Giving to others and feeling like what you are doing makes a difference to someone's life can be a powerful motivator. People will often do more for others than they will do for themselves. Linking learning to the community and providing opportunities for students to give, creates stronger connections with others, making students less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour (CASEL).

### **reflection questions**

**What opportunities do you give your students to be independent, self-directed learners?**

**How are you teaching your students to work collaboratively?**

**In what ways can you incorporate autonomy, mastery and purpose to motivate your students?**

94

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

## **CASE STUDY**

A beginning teacher had the lowest-level Year 9 boys' English class. She was having a very difficult time, as the students were extremely unmotivated and she was despairing of them completing any work. We worked together to devise a learning matrix (McGrath & Noble, 2005) based on the novel *The Outsiders*, which they were studying at the time.

She then enlisted the support of their PE teacher, who was also their football coach and who had a very positive relationship with the boys, to present the newly designed work tasks.

After the first lesson with the new format, the teacher left the classroom almost floating on air, she was so excited by how engaged the boys were. She even had the two worst-behaved boys coming in at lunch time to work because they were so motivated to complete the tasks!

A learning matrix is a planning tool that can combine choice in activities as well as some compulsory learning tasks. It helps the teacher to be more creative in the tasks set for students while giving students control over what they produce and when. See an example from the work of Ralph Pirozzo, and Helen McGrath & Toni Noble below.

### **When.is.self-directed.learning.not.appropriate?**

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

95

#### **Learning Matrix**

Taken from the work of Ralph Pirozzo, and Helen McGrath & Toni Noble.

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**Kinaesthetic** I enjo

**Interpersonal**

**Intr**

**96**

### **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

When students find it difficult to access the learning for any reason, they can lose motivation. You can make changes to: • your teaching methods—e.g., lecture, discussion, commentary, students as teachers, whole-group work, small-group work, media, audio, games,

simulations, memory tricks

- the type of assistance you provide for a student (e.g., one on one, small group, peer mentoring, student as expert, pre-teaching concepts)

- giving extra time for a student to complete a task • provide access to yourself or a teacher's aide to read information and scribe what the

student says

- provide access to audio text books

- use of a laptop to complete tasks rather

than writing

- changing font size and amount of text on a task • breaking tasks into smaller, achievable steps • voice recognition software for writing and print to speech software for reading text

- videotaping lessons so that students can access them multiple times
- oral assessments
- out-of-class projects
- independent research
- cooperative groups/paired work

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LEARNING

97

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The four components of an effective learning environment are: positive relationships, relevant curriculum, engaging pedagogy, and high expectations.
- Relationships are central to learning.
- Employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies to motivate and inspire your students.
- Explicitly teach students how to work cooperatively.
- High expectations for student behaviour and academics must be combined with high levels of support.
- Teacher expectations are often conveyed through non-verbal communication.
- Engage students by making the curriculum relevant to their needs.

98

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### CHAPTER 5

### **CREATING CONNECTIONS**

*“I have learnt that people will forget what you said,  
they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how  
you made them feel” —Maya Angelou*

Making the effort to build relationships  
with students can mean the difference for  
your wellbeing and job satisfaction. It **William Glasser**  
can mean the difference between loving  
**identified love and**  
what you do, being juiced about your  
**connection as one**  
work, and excited to go to school every  
**of the five basic**  
day, or feeling overwhelmed, stressed,  
**human needs.**  
and that none of what you do matters. It  
can mean the biggest difference when the  
going gets tough.

There were times when my colleagues and I would teach all day, conduct  
parent/teacher interviews after school till 7 or 8 o'clock at night, then  
rock up to school the next day to do it all again! It would take a week of nights  
to get through all the interviews, which always seemed to **CREATING  
CONNECTIONS**



happen during the dead of winter! What kept me going was that I was doing it for students I cared about. I cared about their learning and I cared about sharing the students' successes with their parents. The interviews were also a chance for me to learn more about my students from their parents.

We all want to be connected. We want and need to feel connected to our families, to the people we work with and to our friends. Our students need to feel connected to us as their teachers so that they can learn effectively. Most learning is directly affected by the way students feel about their teacher (Marzano, 2003a).

Consider how you felt when you had teachers who cared about you, who went out of their way to get to know you and were interested in what you had to say. I know it made the world of difference to my learning when I felt that a teacher knew me and cared about me as a person.

Building positive relationships  
is the cornerstone of a teacher's  
work. When we create positive  
connections with students, we  
provide a motivation for them to

**“Schools are social**

learn and a safe space in which

**centres and students’**

to learn. John Hattie says that

**academic engagement and**

student-teacher relationships are

**success is dependent on**

**their capacity to develop** important because students need

**positive relationships with** to feel safe enough to fail. They  
**peers and their teachers.**

need an environment where it

**A student's level of social** is accepted and expected that

**competence and their**

they will make mistakes. Today

**friendship networks**

we have students coming into

**are predictive of their**

**academic achievement”.**

kindergarten who are afraid to

**McGrath & Noble**

take risks with their learning

and make mistakes. But when

you are learning something

new it makes perfect sense that

you don't get it all right on the

100

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

first go. If a student is getting everything correct then that means they are not learning anything new. That makes sense, right? Think about adult life. Mistakes are the arena where you develop and grow as

an individual.

## HOW TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

### WITH STUDENTS

## The Basics

Building relationships with students is not rocket science, but there are purposeful and strategic steps that can give you success more quickly and effectively.

- **LEARN STUDENTS' NAMES.** This may seem obvious, but you would be surprised at the teachers who fail to do this, call students by the wrong name or don't use their names at all, and undermine their own authority. When I was working as a relief teacher I would challenge myself to learn all the students'

names by recess. And I did it! My survival as a casual teacher relied on my knowing and using their names. With younger students, if you don't use their names, they will not respond to you; they don't know that you

are speaking to them. Older

students will not take notice

of you, nor do they take you

### **Quick Tip: Use photos,**

seriously if you don't even know

### **memory pegs or**

who they are. If you have ever

### **games to learn**

spoken to a student who was

**student names quickly.**

surprised that you knew their

**Surprise them by**

**knowing their names**

name you will know what I

**after the first lesson!**

mean. They feel special that you

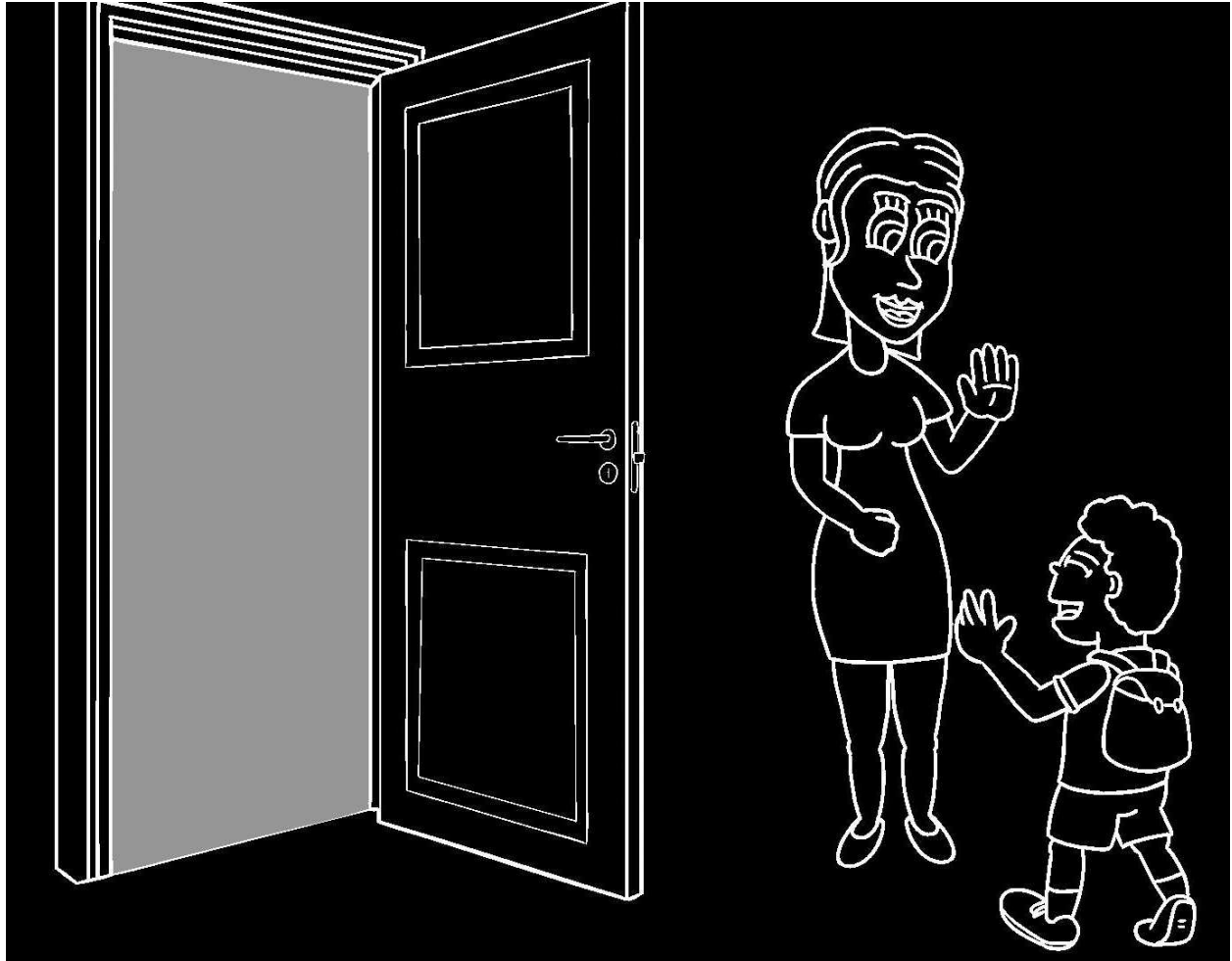
know them and consequently

are less likely to behave

inappropriately in your class.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

101



- **USE STUDENTS' NAMES.**

Aim to speak to every student in the class at least once during the day or the lesson. This is

**Dale Carnegie, "...**

**a person's name is**

particularly important for the more

**to that person the**

marginalised students, those with

**sweetest and most**

few friends and who lack social

**important sound in**

skills, and students who may have

**any language”**

behaviour issues. The attitude of

the teacher can make the biggest

difference for a student who is

not popular, creating a climate of

acceptance for all students in the class.

- **GREET STUDENTS AT THE DOOR.** Standing at the door and greeting students as they enter your classroom sets the tone for the day. Your obvious joy at seeing your lovely treasures arrive to class will ensure that they are excited to see you AND

excited about the learning (and that is what you want!).

102

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**Go Deeper and Really**

**Get to Know Them**

- **LISTEN TO YOUR STUDENTS.** Take the time to find out what students are interested in, what music they like, movies they watch, and the games they play. Use playground duty, school excursions, before and after school times to work on relationships with kids and get to know them. Playing “get to know you” games during class time at the beginning of the year is another

effective way to gather information about students and for students to get to know each other.

- **FOLLOW UP.** When you know a bit about what is happening in your students' lives, then you can ask interested questions like "How was your brother's birthday party?" or "How did you go at soccer?" This really helps build rapport with students. How special will a student feel when you take the time to ask them about something other than school? If your memory isn't the greatest, you could develop a simple database with photos to remind you of student interests.

- **SHARE YOURSELF.**

Tell your students about your life, your interests, and your family. Letting students know that you are human and have a life and interests outside of

school is part of building positive relationships with them. Kids love to know about what their teachers

**'Will kids work**

do away from school. I know a

**harder for someone**

teacher who used to write a letter

**they feel cares about**

to her new class at the beginning

**them? Duh!!'**

of the year telling them about her

**Jim Mahoney,**

family, about her favourite food,

## ***“Creating Highly Effective***

### ***Teachers”***

favourite music, and then asking the students to reply to her letter and tell her about their interests.

This is a great way to get to know

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

103

students and (incidentally), gives you insight into their literacy skills.

- **2x10 STRATEGY.** For students who may not respond to your usual relationship building strategies, try this one. Spend 2 minutes with a student for 10 consecutive days just chatting about anything they like. Teacher and psychologist Raymond Wlodkowski researched the use of this technique and found an 85 percent improvement in student behaviour!

There may be times when you feel that you have built a relationship with a difficult student and then something goes wrong. Teachers can be very hurt when a student seems to turn on them for no reason, swearing, refusing to work, and speaking disrespectfully.

This is when it is most important to remember that “It’s not always about you!”

Students have all kinds of reasons why they act the way they do, and mostly it is because something is going on for them. This can be difficult to understand, because when you become emotionally invested and think that you have a good relationship, it can feel like the student has treated you badly. It helps to remember that students are still learning how to behave, how to relate to others and may be testing to see how genuine you are, because they have been let down many times before.



While I was working as a welfare teacher, a psychologist explained to me how students from a chaotic background will sabotage positive relationships with teachers to make it fit their model of the world.

They will act in ways that can cause the teacher to be angry or abusive to them because they feel more comfortable in that situation. When they see the difference between how the people who say they love them treat them, for example, their parents, and the adults at school, it can feel painful and confusing.

Students can act out for many reasons. They may: • be tired, hungry, thirsty or physically uncomfortable • misunderstand social cues

104

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

- misread other people's actions • feel like they cannot do the work
- have had a disagreement or argument with their family or friends
- not trust you
- be bored, lonely, unhappy or confused

## CASE STUDY

A student who refused to take off his hat in class was sent to the principal for disciplining. He still refused to take off his hat when he was threatened with suspension.

When a welfare teacher discussed his behaviour with him, it

turned out that he had been given a very unflattering haircut by his drunk father and he was extremely embarrassed.

Why is it okay for us to insist that students comply with our every demand, even when those demands are only to satisfy our own perceptions of what is acceptable or not?

I have seen no research to prove that wearing a hat impedes learning yet there are teachers who will die in a ditch over a student refusing to take off their hat!

### **reflection questions**

**What can you do to build more positive relationships with your students?**

**Why is it important to be “friendly” but not “friends” with your students?**

**How do you build relationships with tricky students?**

CREATING CONNECTIONS

105

## **CASE STUDY**

A Year 5 student, who was in foster care, had irregular attendance, struggled academically and often displayed violent and aggressive behaviour, came to school with a special artwork-decorated hat that had been given to him by his uncle. The student showed the hat to his teacher and his class and was obviously proud of his possession.

When he wore it onto the playground, the deputy principal told him to take it off and sit on the verandah because the hat wasn't part of the school uniform. The student

consequently became angry and went on a destructive rampage through the school and ended up being given a long suspension.

From the school's perspective, the student was in the wrong, firstly because he wore a hat that was not part of the school uniform and subsequently caused damage to school property when he became angry. The school rule clearly stated that students were only to wear the school hat while at school.

From the student's perspective, the school was being unfair and unreasonable causing him to feel angry and lash out. His behaviour was about accessing a tangible—i.e., the hat and the feelings of pride and belonging that went with wearing that hat. How can we remain consistent with our expectations and also take student circumstances into account?

**What are the difficulties with zero-tolerance policies and**

**inflexible expectations of students?**

**If we make exceptions for students, does it look like we**

**are “giving in” to them?**

106

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**SURPRISING HABITS THAT BUILD**

**POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationship building also occurs in ways that may astonish you. Your consistency in showing that you know your students, you understand how they learn, and take their personalities into consideration go a long way to building trust.

When you are planning units of work and how you are going to present them to your students, consider how you can foster relationships with students in the following ways:

- Incorporate your students' interests to make the learning

relevant, meaningful, and engaging. A history teacher made the statistics from World War I meaningful to his students by comparing the statistics to ages of friends and numbers of students at school or in their class.

- Give students choice in their learning, showing that you value their input and perspective. Let them choose topics to study, even if it is only a choice between 2 possibilities.
- Give them opportunities to voice their concerns and their point of view about matters in the classroom and the school. Set up class meetings where students can discuss anything that is bothering them and come up with solutions to problems either with social or academic issues.
- When dealing with inappropriate or unhelpful behaviour, demonstrate respect for your students by speaking in a calm, reasonable manner and separating the behaviour from the student. Students will remember the way you treated them, so use it as a “teachable moment” and model the behaviour you want to see.
- Differentiate the learning according to preferred learning styles, skill level, and varied assessment tasks.

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

107

- Foster independence in your students by providing scaffolding and explicit teaching and support. Demonstrate high expectations for your students by giving them opportunities for self-directed learning.
- Make your classroom a student-centred learning environment. Increase the student talk time and reduce teacher talk time—the ideal ratio according to Hattie is 3:1  
in favour of the students.
- Reduce student anxiety. Don’t put students on the spot by asking questions that may humiliate or embarrass them.

The latest neuroscience reinforces the need for reducing

anxiety, which inhibits learning, and providing students with safe, supportive learning processes.

- Create a warm classroom climate by being upbeat, excited, and enthusiastic. Focus on the positive. According to Tony Robbins, “What is wrong is always available, so is what is right.” What you focus on will increase in intensity and frequency.

## **HOW TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

### **WITH PARENTS**

## **Powerful.Partnerships**

Parents are a child’s first teachers, and they usually know them better than anyone else. They love their child and, of course, want them to succeed. When parents and teachers work together, are on the same page, using the same language and with congruent values, the results can be immeasurable. Building a relationship with parents is worthwhile, so that when you need backup with a student, they already know that you have their child’s best interests at heart.

108

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **CASE STUDY**

## **HIGH SCHOOL**

A high school conducts a yearly “phone home” initiative. Every home-room teacher calls parents to introduce themselves or reconnect at the beginning of the year and let the parents know whom to contact when they need help.

The calls add to a positive school culture, parents appreciate them, and teachers gain additional information about the

students and then feel more prepared for future communication with parents.

## **How.do.you.overcome.initial.fear.and.reluctance.to.con parents?**

### **CASE STUDY**

### **PRIMARY.SCHOOL**

I had built a positive relationship with a mother of one of my students, through interactions at parent/teacher interviews, through her being a parent helper and having chats after school. When her youngest child displayed some serious signs of bullying behaviour, I knew that I would need to have a difficult conversation with her. No one wants to hear that their child is a bully! I prepared carefully for the meeting, considering my words and having specific examples of the behaviour. I began by saying how much I enjoyed having her daughter in my class (which was true) and that I had her best interests at heart. I then explained why this behaviour was detrimental to her daughter and how it would affect her friendships with other students and her relationships with others in the CREATING CONNECTIONS

109

future. Although the mother was very disappointed, she was not surprised. She was extremely honest and revealed to me that her daughter was displaying the same behaviour at home with her older sister. We then devised a plan to teach her daughter alternative ways of relating, combined with positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour. The plan was made all the more powerful because the student was receiving the same messages at home and at school.

Often parents are already aware of their child's behaviour and are searching for ways to manage at home. This is the perfect opportunity to work together and achieve much more than either of you could on your own!

**Parents. want. to. know. what. their. child. is. doing. at. school.**

**and.they.have.a.right.to.know.if.their.child's.behaviour.is.of.**

**concern,.sooner.rather.than.later...**

It is relatively easy to build relationships with parents of students who are achieving and behaving well. However, when you have to contact parents about a student's inappropriate or challenging behaviour, you need to be more strategic, diplomatic, and focused on solutions.

You can reduce parental anxiety, which often leads to defensiveness and denial, by employing the following strategies.

- **ACKNOWLEDGE.** Concede to the parents that it may be hard for them to hear negative feedback about their child.

Like any parent, they feel responsible for their children and want them to do well at school. The situation may also bring up personal issues they may have had at school and cause them to feel guilty about their parenting, making it even more challenging for them to listen to what you are saying.

- **ASK QUESTIONS.** Be curious about how things are going at home before you launch into a litany of what the child has done at school. You may discover that similar behaviour is occurring at home, or that there are contributing factors of which you are unaware. This is the perfect time to find out 110

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

what else is happening in the student's life and how that may be affecting their learning.

- **ACCEPT THAT THEY ARE THE EXPERTS ON**

**THEIR CHILD.** You can learn a great deal from parents about your students,

and if you accept their specialised knowledge, you will be a more effective teacher. This is particularly important if the student has difficulties at school either because of a diagnosed disability or social issues.

Classroom teachers are generalists and cannot be experts in all areas of learning difficulties and disabilities, so learn what you can and enlist parental support. If you listen to parents and respect their knowledge, they are more likely to listen to you when you have an issue to discuss.

- **MAKE IT RELEVANT.** When discussing a student's behaviour, let parents know that you are concerned about the student's learning, socialisation, and well-being. Telling parents that their child is disrupting the learning of others may not be meaningful to them. It is much more powerful to discuss how their child is being affected by their own behaviour. It also gives them the language to discuss the issue with their child: for example, "If you continue to hit other children, no one will want to play with you".
- **COMMUNICATE.** Let parents know what is going on in your class. Use newsletters, emails, parent information nights, and parent/teacher interviews to keep parents up to date with what is happening. Some schools use online tools to keep parents in the loop with students' assignments.
- **REGULAR MEETINGS.** Set up weekly or fortnightly meetings with parents when you are working on a behaviour issue. Keep meetings short and to the point showing that you value their time. Students respond very well to seeing parents and teachers coming together to discuss their progress, and they are more likely to see both parties as working together.

Face-to-face regular communication enhances the home-CREATING CONNECTIONS

111

school relationship and reinforces the notion of both parties being on the same team.

- **COMMUNICATION BOOK.** Students with behaviour issues may benefit from using a daily communication book to convey information about elements that may impact on the student's behaviour at school such as sleep, mood, anxiety or stress about school, eating habits, or illness. Information



going home to parents can include any of these issues as well as positives about the day. Students rate contact with parents as one of the most effective behaviour-management tools.

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** When you want parents to support you with a behaviour plan, ensure that what you expect of them is achievable and sustainable. Make their part of the plan simple but effective. You may encourage them to spend special time with their child (e.g., read a book or play a game together) rather than spending money on tangible rewards. There is a double benefit to this strategy: the parent/child relationship will be enhanced, and a young person's behaviour at school may be positively affected by being given more adult attention.

- **CONTACT WITH POSITIVE NEWS ASAP.**

This is particularly important for students who have had behaviour issues in the past. When you contact parents to let them know their child has had a great start to the year, you show that you care about their child and give the student much-needed positive feedback. The flow-on-effect is that the student receives positive affirmation from their parents, and you lay the groundwork for a future time when you may have to call and have a more difficult conversation.

- **SHOW YOU CARE.** Demonstrating to parents that you know their child, care about their child, and want the best for their child assures them that you are all on the same side.

Parents are much more open to hearing what you have to say when they know you are coming from a place of concern, not judgement or condemnation.

112

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

There will always be difficult parents who will not come on board or who fail to see your point of view. The best way to deal with this is to seek support from executive, plan meetings carefully, and don't take their behaviour personally. Even though it may seem like it, even parent behaviour is not about you!

## **CASE STUDY**

### **YEAR.4.STUDENT**

**BEHAVIOUR:** Arriving late to school, which then led to: refusing to work, crawling under desks, leaving the classroom, absconding from school, inappropriate comments to peers

**FUNCTION.OF.BEHAVIOUR:** Work avoidance, avoiding adult attention, avoiding/accessing peer attention

#### **PLAN.FOR.SUCCESS:.**

1. Following discussions with the parent who reported that the student was difficult to ready for school in the mornings, the teacher set up a reward program for the student based on getting to school on time. He worked towards time with a friend outside playing with a ball.
2. The teacher focused on developing a positive relationship with the student by taking a small group of students for social-skills lessons and allowing him to take the lead.
3. The teacher organised for an executive staff member to conduct Circle Time in her class to address some classroom issues. This allowed the teacher to be part of the group and continue to build the relationship with the student by working closely with him.
4. The teacher set up weekly meetings with the parent where the teacher reported on the student's progress and the parent relayed any pertinent information. Seeing his parent and teacher conversing had a positive effect on the student.
5. The teacher ignored the student's avoidance strategies as much as possible and focused on engaging him in work by providing him with tasks related to his interest in geography.

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

113

### TIPS FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

#### WITH COLLEAGUES

It makes sense to build rapport with your work colleagues. After all, they are the people with whom you spend most time in your working week, and they are the ones who understand what it is like to find out you have an extra playground duty on a day when you are still recovering from the flu...

- **SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE.** Teachers are usually wonderful at helping others. Sharing resources, time, and ability is wonderfully productive and helps everyone feel valued. There have been times when I have been in staff rooms where teachers who sit only metres away from each other are working independently preparing the same work for their students. When I first started teaching, I worked with two other young teachers, and we shared all the planning. That meant we could spend time planning effectively and thoroughly, but we didn't have to do every part of it ourselves. It was a fabulous support, especially in the beginning years of teaching, and works particularly well when your personal educational philosophies align.

- **SPEND TIME IN THE STAFF ROOM OR COMMON**

**ROOM.** Going to recess and lunch breaks in the staff room can greatly enhance your relationships with other staff members. It is a time to chat about what you did on the weekend, what you watched on TV, and, perhaps, what others are doing in their classrooms. Productive professional discussions can often happen informally.

- **SOCIALISE.** This doesn't mean you have to spend every weekend with your work colleagues, but spending time in an informal social situation means you will get to know each other better and then be willing and able to support each other more effectively at work. Sharing fun times together builds morale and comradery.

114

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Some teachers just do not want to work collaboratively or share their work. That is their choice, so don't put energy into trying to get them to change. Work with those who are happy to share, and accept that people are all different and that's okay.

## **USING.RESTORATIVE.PRACTICES.IN.YOUR.CLASSROOM.TO.**

## **BUILD.RELATIONSHIPS.AND.SOLVE.PROBLEMS**

The purpose of Restorative Practices is to build, maintain, and repair relationships.

As Vic and Liz O'Callahan at Restorative Practices Australia state *The most profound learning occurs when there is a healthy relationship between teacher and student. Restorative Practices assists teachers, students and parents to maintain and restore relationships. Restorative Practices will help build capacity to enable students to self-regulate behaviour and contributes to the improvement of learning outcomes.*

*The model recognises that consistency in response to behaviour has the potential to create a safe learning space. When teachers, students and parents respond to wrong doing in the same way, that is, seeing aberrant behaviour as an opportunity for learning, then a passionate and peaceful learning environment is created.*

## **CASE STUDY**

Student: "I have been rude to the teacher"

Student: "I haven't been doing any work in class"

Student: "I haven't been listening to the teacher"

Teacher: "I could make the work more interesting"

These are some of the comments the students made when I conducted a restorative circle with a Year 8 science class that had become increasingly unruly. Behaviours included students talking over the teacher, kids leaving the room, and refusing to work or follow teacher directions. The students were prepared for the Talking Circle by having individual conversations with the head teacher. He chatted with the most disruptive students **CREATING CONNECTIONS**

115

to let them know what was going to happen and get their buy-in for improving the situation in the class.

The students and the teacher came up with ways to improve the class and committed to a class agreement. This was signed by all members of the class and followed up with another class meeting to gauge progress.

**How. do. you. encourage. students. to. take. responsibility. .  
for.their.actions?**

**What.is.the.value.of.giving.students.a.chance.to.voice.t  
feelings.and.opinions?**

**How.do.you.feel.about.hearing.unflattering.feedback.a  
your.lessons?**

**What. will. your. students. learn. from. your. willingness. to. .  
be.wrong?**

The power of the restorative circle never ceases to amaze and astound me and also touch my heart. I find that most participants are open, honest, and authentic because there is an atmosphere of no blame, no confrontation, and everyone has the chance to be heard.

Restorative practice in schools has its origins in the juvenile justice system. Victims of crime felt they did not have a voice in the courts and that they rarely got to tell their story; they had no closure.

Conversely, perpetrators of crime often lacked empathy for those they had harmed and found it difficult to take responsibility for their actions

Peta Blood and Margaret Thorsborne promote restorative practices in school as the basis for building, maintaining, and repairing relationships. It is about being authoritative rather than authoritarian, working with students, rather than doing things to them or for them. It is about always coming from a place of treating others with respect, even if their behaviour is difficult to manage.

“Expert” teachers treat students with respect, recognising them as people as well as learners (Hattie, 2009).

116

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Students who are subjected to more relationship-based discipline accept correction more readily and act more responsibly in that teacher’s class (Lewis, 2001, cited in Lewis et al., 2005).

**The Four Teaching Styles** When teachers are **authoritarian**, and try to control students through yelling, intimidation, and threats, they are taking a punitive approach. In a punitive classroom, the teacher makes the decisions, students do not have a voice, and the situation often feels unfair and unjust. Students in this type of environment often take the first opportunity to act out or not follow the rules and will challenge other teachers’ authority.

A **permissive** teaching style can lead to complete chaos in the classroom due to lack of clear boundaries, with the teacher doing everything for the students and fostering learned helplessness.

Individual students have poor problem-solving abilities and low levels of resilience. In a permissive environment, students do not learn to cope with

challenges or take responsibility for their actions.

A **negligent** teacher is not available for the students. There is little, or no, interaction and students' needs are not being met. Teachers may be in this place if they are stressed personally or professionally and are struggling to meet their professional responsibilities.

When a teacher is **authoritative**, the emphasis is on high expectations, high levels of support, and a firm belief that students can achieve (Payne, 2012, in Thorsborne and Blood, 2013).

Relational teachers have clear, fair boundaries and processes to repair any harm caused to relationships, such as restorative conversations between students or between student and teacher. By giving all students an opportunity to tell their story, they encourage them to reflect, take responsibility for their actions, and help them find ways to avoid doing the same again.

Restorative practices focus on repairing harm to relationships, developing empathy and compassion, teaching students social and emotional skills, and supporting all students.

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

117

The philosophy is demonstrated in the types of questions we ask when an incident occurs (Zehr, 2002).

### **Traditional**

### **restorative**

### **Punitive Approach**

### **Practices approach**

What rule was broken?

Who was harmed?

Who broke the rule?

What are their needs?

How do we punish the person

How can we repair the harm?

who broke the rule?

How can we do better next time?'

## **CASE STUDY**

When a Year 8 male student was chatting in class, the teacher demanded that a student move to sit next to another female student. The student refused and despite the teacher pleading, threatening, and, finally, yelling, the student would not budge.

Later when the teacher had calmed down and reflected on his behaviour, he went to the student and asked to speak with him.

In the calm and privacy of the office, the student was able to reveal that the female student had a very public crush on him, and he would be very embarrassed to sit so close to her.

When we make demands on students, we need to think about their rights to feel safe from ridicule and teasing.

### **reflection questions**

**What style of teaching is most like you?**

**Are there situations when you may use a different teaching style?**

**How does the restorative-practices approach challenge your beliefs about student behaviour?**



## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Students work harder for teachers that they feel care about them.
- Building positive relationships with parents supports your work with students.
- Positive relationships with colleagues can provide practical and emotional support.
- An authoritative teacher works with students rather than doing things for them or to them.
- Restorative practices is a relational approach that aims to develop empathy, compassion, and personal accountability.

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

## CHAPTER 6

### THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM

### COMMUNICATION

***“It is vitally important that we do not think and talk about children being naughty but as ‘learning how to behave in school.’” –Sue Roffey***

Clear communication is the key to a stress-free classroom, and don't we all want that? Clear communication can prevent off-task behaviour by providing distinct guidelines that leave students in no doubt about the behaviour you expect.

While I advocate making the teaching and learning relevant,

engaging, and purposeful to reduce behaviour problems, an effective teacher also has specific management skills that they hone and adapt to different situations. According to Robert Marzano and Jana Marzano, in *The Key to Classroom Management* (2003), one of the most important characteristics is what they call appropriate dominance. Dominance is defined as “the teacher’s ability to provide clear purpose and strong guidance regarding both academics and student behaviour”.

120

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### COMMUNICATION HABIT #1: SET THE GAME UP TO WIN

## **KNOW.THE.RULES.OF.THE.GAME**

If I had to give a teacher just one tip to make their life easier in the classroom, it would be this: set the game up to win! Make sure students know what you want at every point—when working in the classroom, when they go on excursions, when they are in the playground, when they are in assembly, when they are using specialised equipment or a varied learning structure. Don’t assume that students already know how to behave no matter what their age or experience! There are a variety of ways that you can do this effectively.

Even adults need to know what is

acceptable behaviour in different

circumstances. In my workshops,

I make the expectations explicit

### **INSIDE/OUT**

around listening to each other,

**Begin with yourself to** use of mobile phones, and

**affect change. Setting** participation in the exercises.

**up the foundations of a** While we all know that students

**classroom could seem like a waste of time and energy,** work better in a secure, structured,

**when you have a heavily** safe, and supportive environment,

**content-driven curriculum,** how do we set up students for

**but establishing a strong,** success? How do we make the

**positive culture, taking the** boundaries clear? How do we

**time to build relationships,** support students to learn when

**and developing effective** they don't stay within those

**processes and procedures will improve productivity in** boundaries?

**the longer term.**

I recently read an article about

the Bridezilla phenomenon,

**Stephen Covey,**

where usually rational, easy-

*7 Habits of Highly Effective People* going women turn into monsters

when organising their weddings.

One wedding planner made the

THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

observation that the happiest brides are the ones with the fewest rules.

It's the same in the classroom.

Having consistent, clear expectations reduces uncertainty and anxiety for students and teachers, increasing opportunities for academic and social success.

Build a positive classroom culture with clear communication:

- **NEGOTIATE CLASS EXPECTATIONS.** Conduct a class meeting and give all students a say in how they think the class should operate. If your school has an agreed-on set of school values, use them to guide the development of your class expectations. For example, if respect is a school value, how will that translate into your classroom? What does that mean in terms of how we treat each other, how we interact, and how we look after our environment?

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Have a maximum of 3–5 class expectations.

- **USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE.** State expectations in positive, observable language—i.e., NOT say “Don’t call out” BUT

encourage students to “Raise your hand to speak.”

- **EXPLICITLY TEACH YOUR EXPECTATIONS.** Time is well spent establishing and organising classroom routines. It means students know exactly what is expected of them (Wong & Wong, 2009). Use simulations, games, role playing, written tasks, and visual arts to teach the behaviour you want to see.

Give students opportunities to practise the behaviours in a variety of settings.

- **DISPLAY EXPECTATIONS PROMINENTLY.** Display class expectations prominently in the classroom with visual cues to remind everyone what is important in this classroom. Consider how stop signs on the road or “quiet” signs in hospitals remind adults of expected behaviours.

- **REINFORCE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR.** If you want the behaviour to continue, give students specific praise. This 122

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

reinforces the target student and prompts others to do the same. An individual reward system and/or whole-class reward system used strategically builds morale and class cooperation.

- **NEGOTIATE FAIR, RESPECTFUL CONSEQUENCES.**

Discuss with your students what will happen when they don't follow class expectations. Use natural consequences as much as possible and keep responses low key. Have a clear hierarchy of consequences that are meaningful, restorative, and that teach students the skills they need, to get along with others and work productively in the classroom. See more about consequences in chapter 9.

- **RETEACH EXPECTATIONS.** There will be times when student behaviour deteriorates, or you allow standards to slip because you are busy or plagued with lots of interruptions, or when everyone is just plain tired! Reinvigorate yourself and the class by revisiting and reteaching class expectations. Never assume that teaching a skill once is sufficient.

**The behaviour**

**you focus on**

**will increase in**

**intensity and**

**frequency.**

THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

123

**CLASS EXPECTATIONS SELF REFLECTION SHEET**

**no**

**partially**

**yes**

I have negotiated 3-5 class expectations. Class expectations are positively stated.

Class expectations are prominently displayed.

Students have stated their expectations for me.

I explicitly teach the behaviour I expect to see.

I positively reinforce appropriate behaviour with specific feedback.

Class expectations are revisited prior to learning tasks and activities.

I refer to class expectations when students are displaying appropriate behaviour.

I refer to class expectations when students are displaying inappropriate behaviour.

Class expectations are linked  
to school values/expectations.

Possible consequences of  
following/not following class  
expectations have been discussed/  
negotiated in advance.

I have explicitly taught students the  
processes for transition times.

124

**HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

**WHAT DO I DO WHEN STUDENTS**

**WON'T DO WHAT I ASK?**

## **A.HIERARCHY.OF.CONSEQUENCES**

Threats of punishment do not work for 20–25 percent of students.

Many schools have a level system that increases the degree of punishment as the behaviour escalates. While that approach works with 80–85 percent of the population, the student with behaviour-management issues will not respond to increased negative penalties.

Some students require more support to be on task and focused on the learning, and the role of the teacher is to provide what individuals need to be able to access education.

You could design a series of appropriate responses to behaviour in collaboration with your students and then make sure they all understand how the process will work by role playing and simulating the classroom situation.

I have provided a sample hierarchy below. Since every classroom situation is different, and every teacher has their own style; you must find a process that suits you and also complements your school behaviour management procedures.

You will notice that the response from the teacher moves from very subtle reminders to a more focused approach to the behaviour.

### **SAMPLE HIERARCHY**

The success of any corrective feedback is in the delivery. You must keep the tone of your voice friendly and calm. Avoid sounding threatening, sarcastic, or whiny. If you have a positive relationship with the student, you can use genuinely encouraging statements such as, “I know you will make a good choice” or “I know how well you can work”.

1. When you notice a student is off task, use proximity, move in closer.
2. If the student does not respond, give a whole-class reminder of expected behaviour.

### **THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION**

125

3. Give a quiet individual redirection to the task, “What question are you up to Jo?”
4. Give a binary choice in a calm tone—e.g., “Jo, you can stay here and work here with your friends or you can work at the desk near the window.”
5. Walk away and allow take-up time.
6. If they get on with the work, make a positive feedback comment—e.g., “Thanks for starting your work, Jo”.
7. If they do not start work or move, speak to them quietly and give the direction to comply with what you think will get them back on task—e.g., “You have not started work here, so you need to move to the desk near the window”.



8. If they comply and get on with the work, give positive feedback: “Thank you for starting your work, Jo”.

9. If they will not follow your direction to move say in a calm, matter-of-fact tone of voice, “Jo you will need to stay behind after class to discuss your [lack of work]

with me”

10. Ignore secondary behaviours such as muttering under the breath, rolling eyes, muttering to other students.

11. Follow through by keeping the student back and discussing what occurred. State why the behaviour is an issue, and work out how to move forward.

12. Contact parents if the behaviour is an ongoing issue or if the behaviour is unusual for the student.

13. Contact your executive teacher to discuss ongoing behaviour issues and decide when it is appropriate to enlist their support.

As part of your class expectations you also need to develop...

126

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### TIME-SAVING ROUTINES

Have you ever wondered why some classes always seem to know what to do and how to do it and everything seems to run like clockwork?

Is it because the kids are just better at organising themselves or is it something else?

What it usually means is that the teacher has invested time and energy into teaching the students the routines that they need to follow. This means that the teacher has decided on the behaviour they want to see in the classroom and designed processes that will work for the particular class.

Having planned, well-taught routines and structures enables you to run your classroom more smoothly, encourages students to take responsibility, and saves valuable time (Wong & Wong, 2009).

1. Decide what is important to you in the classroom and what routines and procedures will support a smoothly functioning classroom. You could do this in collaboration with the students to give them ownership of the expectations.

2. How will students:

- Ask to go to the bathroom?
- Enter the room?
- Ask for help?
- Submit homework/readers/assignments?
- Move between activities
- Transition from one space to another
- Move between classrooms
- Pack up equipment at the end of the lesson/day
- Comment, ask questions, and

## **DECIDE, TEACH**

participate in discussions? Will you

## **AND REINFORCE**

**the routines you**

use “hands up”, or will you use

**want in your class.**

cold-calling techniques?

- What will they do when they

finish their work?

## THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

127

3. Practise how to follow these routines by using role playing and simulations in the setting you want the behaviour to be demonstrated—e.g., if the class is expected to walk quietly down the hall to assembly, have them practise in the hall.

4. Create visuals for each of the routines. Students can make posters, signs, and pictures to remind class members.

5. Positively reinforce students with specific praise for following the routines. Decide if you want to use a reward system to embed the behaviour based on the needs of the students.

6. During class meetings, review how the routine structure is working. Are there any routines that are not working or need to be tweaked? Allow students to give feedback about how they feel and what is working well for them.

7. Give students responsibility for the routines—e.g., students collect workbooks and put them away.

8. Ensure that you include routines for transition times.

Moving from one activity to another, going out for breaks, and entering the room, can all be times when order can rapidly descend into chaos due to lack of procedures.

When you create a positive classroom climate that supports all students in learning, cooperating, and caring for each other you are teaching and modelling vital social skills. You also contribute to students feeling calm and confident and, in the future, becoming productive, well-adjusted

members of society.

## **ROUTINES FOR STUDENTS TO ACCESS**

### **TEACHER ATTENTION OR SUPPORT**

Have you ever heard your name called so often in class you threatened to change your name just so no one could call you? Teaching your students alternative ways of accessing your attention will contribute to the smooth running of the classroom and save your sanity!

128

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

Students who don't know what to do, need prompting, or extra support to get started can easily become disruptive and off task causing behaviour issues in your class. Setting up clear workable systems or procedures to gain your attention can prevent disruptions.

Try these sanity savers:

1. Red/green/orange cups. This Dylan Wiliam formative assessment strategy shows you clearly which students need further instruction. Students display either a green cup (I'm ok), an orange cup (I need some help) or a red cup (I have no idea!). Having such a system reduces the need for students to raise their hands or call out to the teacher. Set up a process with the students that guarantees they will receive assistance within a given timeframe. Make sure you follow through.
2. Cue cards on student desks. This is less obtrusive than the cup system, especially for high school. Create a structure using cue cards to alert the teacher to students who require assistance, for example, a pink card means I need help, a yellow card means I am finished my work.
3. Students who need your help write their names in a list on the board then go on with other work while they wait for the teacher. You then work your way through the list of names.
4. Provide the students with sticky notes so they can jot down key words

while they are waiting so they don't forget what they wanted to ask.

5. Visual cues. Provide posters with visual cues for what students can do while they are waiting for the teacher—for example, do easier parts of the work, read, draw, or write in their journal.

6. Visual instructions for the task including an example/

exemplar/rubric. Students check with the visual instructions before seeking help from the teacher. Depending on the age and ability level of the students, consider using illustrations in addition to text.

## THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

129

7. “3 Before Me”: Students are taught to seek help in 3 ways before coming to you for help. This can include another student, using the Internet, looking in a book, reading the visual instructions. Practise using this strategy with the class before putting it into place.

### **TRANSITIONS: THE DO-NOW ACTIVITY**

**(A HABIT TO DEVELOP INDEPENDENCE)** When students come to your classroom, either from another subject or from the playground, their minds are swirling with whatever has been happening in that setting. It is effective practice to provide a short task that orients them to your subject and the learning. This will become the classroom habit of Do Now.

The beauty of the Do-Now activity is that it becomes the routine at the beginning of the lesson. Students know that as soon as they walk in they need to begin. There is no need for them to ask, “What do we do?” because you always start with the Do Now. This means that learning begins immediately, reducing wasted time and giving you time to greet students at the door and check in with anyone who may need extra assistance.

Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* identifies four critical components to the effective, efficient Do Now. I have added a fifth element.

1. The Do Now is always in the same place, so that it becomes a habit of all your students. You can write it on the board—either in the same place every day written on a piece of butcher’s paper or posted on the Interactive White Board. You could have the Do-Now activity printed on a worksheet, and students collect them as they arrive, or you could put them on each student’s desk before they enter.

2. Students must be able to complete the Do Now independently without any direction from the teacher, without any discussion with their classmates, and, mostly, without any other materials, save what you provide. If the Do Now calls for reference to additional resources, then that information should be positioned somewhere easily visible to all or copied onto the worksheet. If 130

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

you have to provide assistance or instruction for the Do Now, it defeats the purpose of establishing self-directed learning habits.

3. Students must be successful with the Do Now to begin the lesson on a positive note and provide the impetus for continued learning. Open-ended tasks are useful in this regard.

4. The Do Now should take three to five minutes to complete and require some writing. In this way, you can check for understanding and address common mistakes. While it is not a test, and you do not want your students to view it this way, it will provide you with helpful formative assessment.

5. The Do Now should generally either preview the day’s lesson by acting as a stimulus (you are studying amoeba and you provide a magnified picture of a subject and ask students to brainstorm as many ideas for what it may be) or review a recent lesson.

## **Beware**

Don’t let the Do Now activity go on too long so that it becomes the lesson. It is meant to be short and snappy so use a timer and stop after 5 minutes!

Don't try to review too much content. It is better to review a small amount of knowledge or skills well.

Teachers love lists of ideas, so I have collated some examples of generic Do-Now activities that you can adapt for any subject or grade: **DO-NOW ACTIVITIES FOR**

### **ANY GRADE LEVEL**

- List 3 things you learnt/found out last lesson • List 3 things your neighbour learnt last lesson • Summarise this character/scene/chapter in 5 bullet points
- Summarise the topic in five sentences; reduce it to five words; reduce it to one word
- Identify the key points of the last lesson from anagrams **THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION**

131

- Sixty-second challenge: sum up knowledge of text or write down all the words you can think of to describe....
- Break the code to identify the three main points from last lesson • Write 5 top tips/golden rules for...
- Create a miniature poster to illustrate the spelling strategy you have learnt
- Create a mnemonic which reflects the meaning of a new word or term you have learnt
- Write dictionary meanings for new terms learnt last lesson • The answer is XYZ—now write the question. N.B. The question must begin with the words, "What is..."
- Spot missing words in cloze summary of learning • Word search containing key words or information learnt during lesson
- Take one minute to compose two statements in your head to explain what we have learnt and how we have learnt it • Answer the question set at the start on a Post It note. Stick on board and review

- Where can you apply the skills you learnt in the last lesson in your homework or other subjects? Give 3 examples • Choose from 5 statements on the board. Which 3 best reflect. .
- Sequence the 5 factors/ influences/events-justify your choices • Prediction. What do you think will happen next? Why do you think this?
- Brainstorm the conventions of the text type studied.

Aim for 5 or more

- Use the style to tell a story in the style/genre being taught • Self-assessment/target-setting: choose from a list of suggestions on the IWB
- Answer questions on the IWB without using yes or no 132

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

- Teacher shows extract from previous year's work—students identify 3 strengths and provide advice for redrafting • Write the epitaph for a character you have been studying • Write a short blurb for a new book jacket • Group 'show and comment' on what was learnt • Change role—student as teacher. What questions would you ask the class and why?
- Set 'who wants to be a millionaire' questions for your neighbour or other groups
- Quick-fire oral quiz to review/revisit learning • Match pictures/cartoons—which would you put with the day's learning and why
- Pictionary—draw the word without speaking or writing • Tension chart—give score out of 5 for tension at various points in text. Plot on graph and review findings • Simple timeline of events in chapter/scene • Drama activity—freeze-frame summary
- Label a diagram or illustration one word in each box • Brainstorm or mind map of what has been learnt during last lesson • Look at the main objects/props representing ideas from the lesson and put them in priority order. Put the reasons for your priority order on the cards and place in front of the objects • Draw a character cloud with key vocabulary to sum up the main



points about the character

- Design a cloze exercise for your partner to fill in, leaving gaps to describe the main points about a character, plot or setting
- On the blank envelope write “Guess Who”. On the small pieces of card inside write key words or objects connected with a main character. Pass to the next table to guess the character from your clues

## THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

133

- Graphic summary of lesson—steps, flowchart
- Write an important key quotation from the text on your paper or whiteboard. The class composes a statement to introduce the key quotation
- On the shades of meaning cards write a range of weak to strong words to describe a topic or feeling
- In the circles of paper provided quickly sketch a symbol to represent the key ingredients of the poem studied today. Be prepared to answer questions about your symbol design
- On the coat of arms shapes provided, sketch in very quickly the key features to represent the character, place, novel etc.

and add quotations to the coat of arms to show why you have chosen particular images

- On the green leaf shapes, sum up the content of the poems studied in the lesson. Present to the class and then add the leaves to the class poet tree
- Write three “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire”-type questions based on the content of the last lesson with four different answer options in each case
- Make up three headlines to sum up three different views of the content of today’s lesson
- Compose three questions for or against the character making a decision in conscience alley
- Make a drawing of the setting of the novel studied and define the space used

- Design a writing frame to support the writing task set for homework
- Compose a word bank to support the homework task set by the teacher
- Draw a pyramid of power for the text studied in the class today
- Compose some clever sentence starters to support the 134

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

homework task set by the teacher • Compose a letter fragment from one character to another in order to encourage the class to predict what is contained in the “whole letter”

- Make up five sounds to represent setting and atmosphere in a novel, poem, play studied. The remainder of the class to be asked to identify the textual clues used to provide your ideas • Write an acrostic to sum up the main themes of the text you are studying
- Make a picture used in text from the lesson. Write about what is occurring
- Write three subheadings for the main areas explored in the lesson today. Be prepared to say how they summarise different parts of the lesson
- Write five sentences beginning “what if” to change events in a story you have read
- Write ten hot tips for writing this particular text type next time • Compose a timeline for the main events of poetry, drama, or novel and explain the references to the main events from the text • Make up a mini-saga of 25 words summing up the best features of stories read in your class
- Pose a problem at the end of the lesson about a text for other pupils to solve ready for the next lesson
- Make a list of questions to evaluate a website at the beginning of the next lesson
- Set up the class with some interview questions to prepare for your speech in the next lesson

- Compose arguments against the main points put forward in the last lesson
- Make up an evaluation sheet to assess the strength and weaknesses of a piece of writing

## THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

135

- Write three sentences of good advice for attempting the homework
- List some unusual items to add to a story and suggest ways of introducing the unusual items
- Make up sentences on the card provided to answer the homework set. Put the most relevant sentences close to the question, less relevant sentences further away and put the irrelevant points on another table
- Design a very quick outline on your whiteboard of a board game for the book you have been reading with some key places to be shown from the text and some key complications in the plot to be resolved
- Compose five newspaper headlines to sum up the content of the chapter you have just read
- Make up five labels to describe an artefact in different ways, for example a belt could be an accessory, a fashion accessory, a support or a threat
- Write down five reasons for reading the book you have just finished
- On the Post It notes provided compose individual sentences to make a paragraph, discuss and rearrange the order to fit the writing purpose. Explain your choices/discussion to the remainder of the class
- Annotate the passage on IWB to show how a national curriculum level 5 could be awarded to this piece of writing
- Provide eight paragraph headings for your storyboard plan and invite the class to discuss the content of each one
- Compose three powerful sentences for opening a story
- Compose three powerful sentences for closing a story
- Using your story prop box make a flow diagram/plan for your narrative writing

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### CASE STUDY

When I first started teaching Year 1, I had many experiences that taught me what not to do!

I was excited to use group work with my students because I had read all the literature about the benefits of social learning, and I was convinced my students were going to love the cooperative learning strategy.

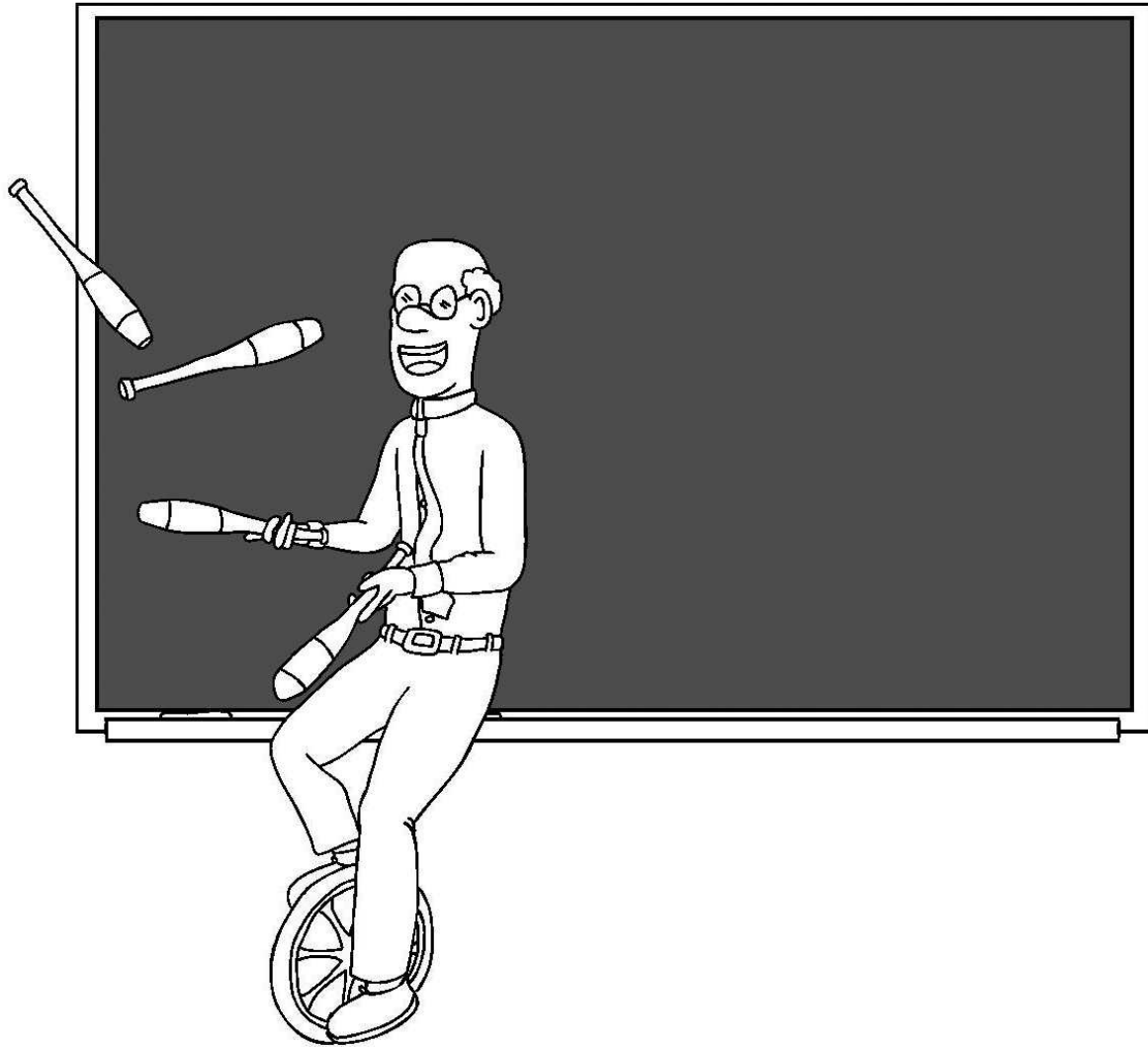
In my naivety, it all ended in a complete mess! There were kids rolling around on the floor, some were bossing the others around, and some went off on their own to read in the reading corner. It was an unmitigated disaster!

I learnt that I needed to be well prepared and set the students up for success by:

1. Explicitly teaching, practising and reinforcing clear expectations for the behaviour I wanted to see during group work.
2. Allowing the students to work in pairs first (using “think, pair, share”, paired tasks and peer tutoring) before introducing group work. Pairs are easier to manage for students who are still learning how to listen, take turns, work with different people, and listen to another’s point of view. Barrie Bennett and Peter Smilanich, in *Classroom Management: A Thinking and Caring Approach*, recommends that students work in pairs with every person in the class before attempting group work.
3. Giving students roles within the groups, teaching them what each of the roles requires in cooperative learning, and giving them opportunities to practise using role playing and simulations.

THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

137



## COMMUNICATION HABIT # 2: CALL TO ORDER

### THE.BAT.SIGNAL

Good teachers use efficient and effective ways to gain student attention.

Having a pre-arranged signal saves time and the teacher's voice.

Use the following steps to make your call to order effective.

- **EXPLICITLY TEACH YOUR CALL TO ORDER.** Either decide in advance what you will do to get your students attention or let them be involved.

High school teachers often choose to stand in a particular spot in the classroom, and may raise their hand to signal to their students. There are numerous ways to gain student attention: clap a sequence, a noisemaker such as a bell, a visual cue such as lights or standing very still.

You can make this fun for the students by allowing them to brainstorm ways to get their attention. A friend who taught Year 2 had a sequence she did with her class. She would say “a wop bop a lula” and the class would reply “a wop bam boo”.

Do something that reflects your own personality.

138

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

- **USE MUSIC.** Used extensively in shopping centres and restaurants to create mood and ambience, music is underused in education. Music can be used to increase dopamine levels and create a feel-good mood, making the brain more receptive to learning. Use music as a cue for transition times, coming into the room, packing up, and to gain student attention (Allen, 2013).
- **PRACTISE YOUR CALL TO ORDER.** Simulate an activity where you would need to get the students’ attention. Have the class move around and talk, then give the signal and wait. Give students feedback on their performance, then practise again.
- **WAIT.** Give your call to order signal and wait. Don’t repeat it and don’t speak unless it is to give positive feedback to the students who are ready. This can be the hardest thing to do.

especially when you first start teaching because it can seem like you are waiting an eternity.

- **SCAN THE ROOM.** Make eye contact, smile, and nod at students who are ready. Continue waiting for those who are not yet ready.
- **POSITIVELY REINFORCE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR.**

Thank one or two students who are ready by name, and use your reward system

if appropriate.

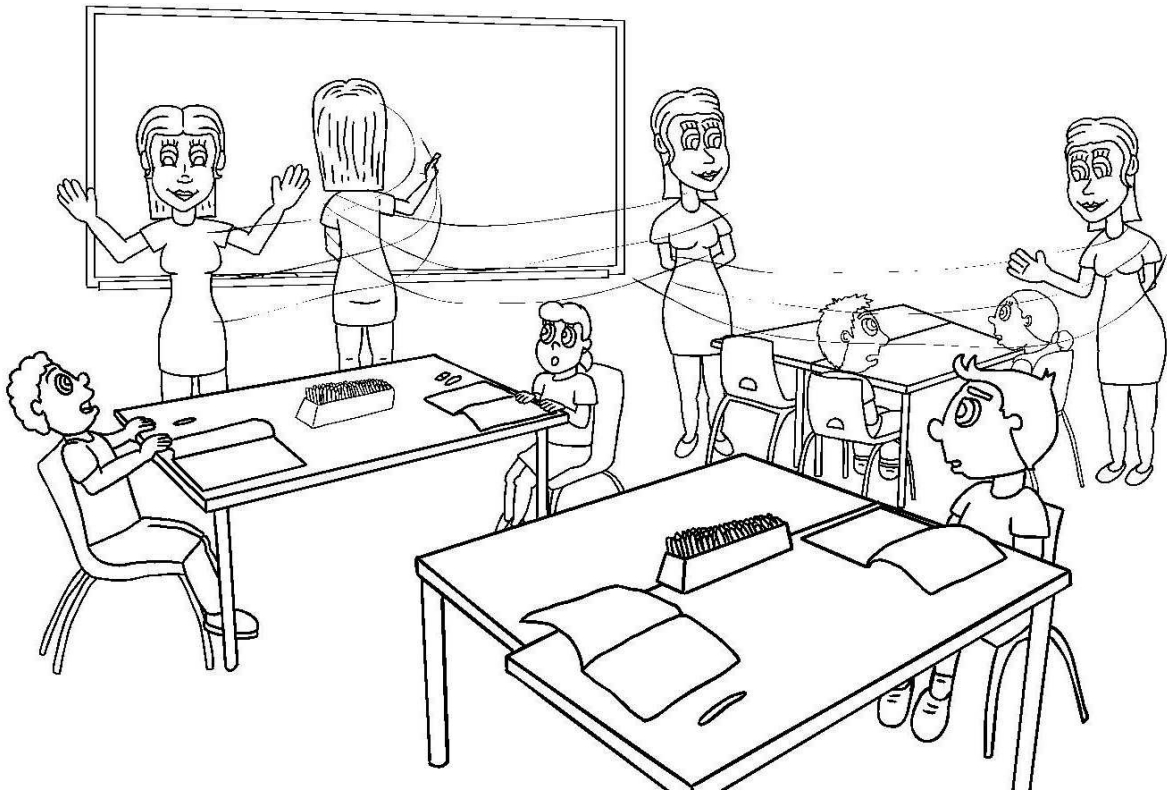
- **100 percent ATTENTION.** When you have 100 percent attention (and only then), thank the whole class and proceed with instructions. If you begin teaching when you don't have the whole class's attention you undermine your own authority because you show that you don't mean what you say.

**NOTE:** Teachers sometimes ask what to do when they have a student in their class who never responds to their call to order, no matter how long they wait. Such a student needs a private conversation about their behaviour and perhaps an individual plan that includes an agreed cue between you both, and a regular check-in at the beginning of the class. Always assume lack of skill rather than insolence or disobedience.

THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

139





### **COMMUNICATION HABIT # 3: HAVE EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD**

## **KEEP.YOUR.BACK.TO.THE.WALL**

For students to be able to learn they must feel safe in your classroom (Marzano, 2003b). They need to know that you know what is going on in the class at all times, and that you will deal with any inappropriate behaviour. Bullying can go unnoticed in a classroom where the teacher is not “with it”.

Christine Richmond refers to this skill as scanning. It has also been called “withitness” (Kounin, 1977) and keeping your back to the wall.

It is about positioning yourself at all times so that you have clear vision of what is happening and if you do need to turn your back to the class, you are attuned to their voices and changes in class dynamics.

Using this skill effectively means that you:

- **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** Scan and make eye contact with

students while giving instructions to check for understanding. This could be combined with a formative assessment strategy where students give thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs to the side indicating their level of understanding.

- **POSITIONING:** When working with groups or individual students, position yourself so you have full view of the class.

140

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Use non-verbal strategies to give positive feedback to students who are on task and cues to students who are off task.

- **INTERVENE EARLY:** Use scanning to recognise when students are starting to become disruptive so that you can intervene early using low-key strategies, such as proximity, redirecting, or non-verbal cues.

## COMMUNICATION HABIT # 4: ONE AT A TIME

### GIVE.CLEAR.DIRECTIONS

Giving clear directions can mean the difference between effective learning and time-wasting confusion! It means that tasks will be completed correctly. It means students will experience success more frequently, and it also means less frustration for you, the teacher!

- **PREPARE IN ADVANCE.** This might seem like overkill, but you may be surprised at how difficult it is to break down the steps of a task on the spot. This is especially important when you are giving instructions for the first time. Prepare what you want to say in advance (write it down if you must). Keep sentences short and to the point. Avoid unnecessary waffle.

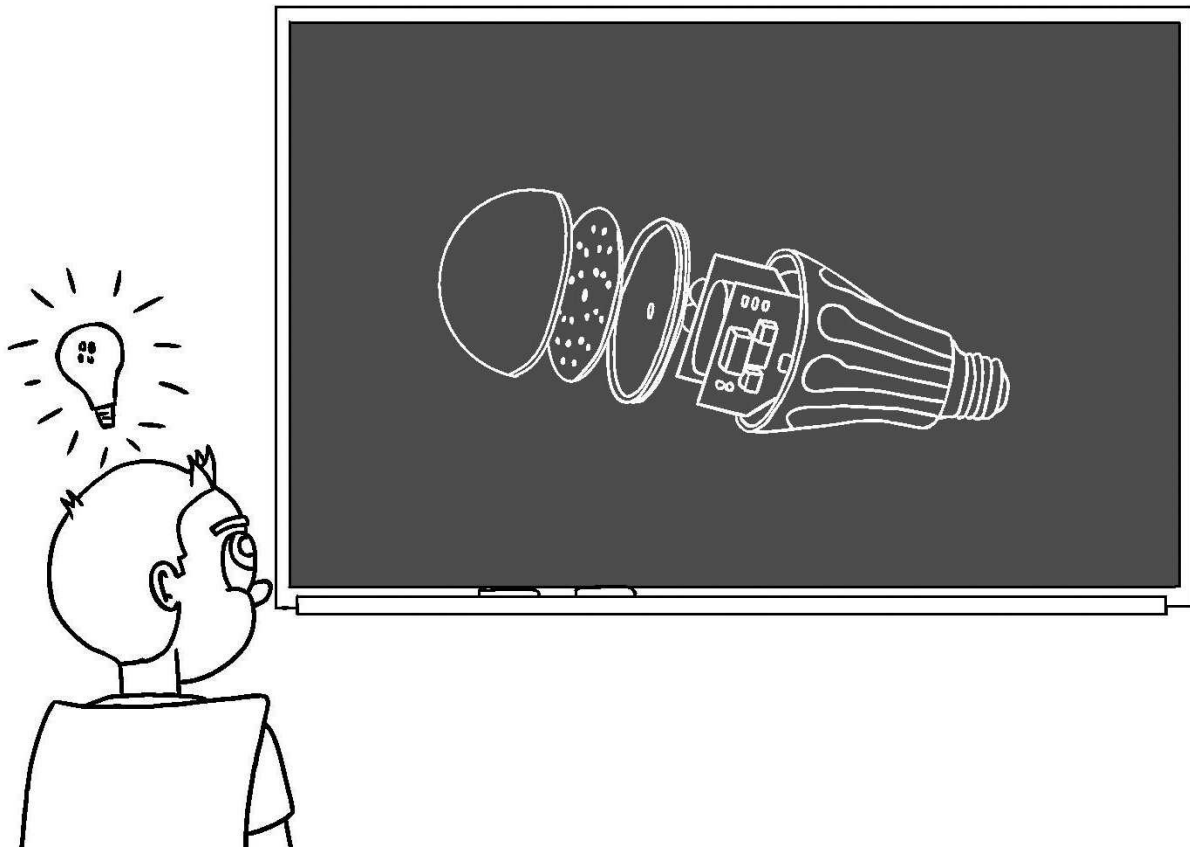
Give one instruction and then stop speaking and wait for students to comply.

- **ONE AT A TIME.** Richmond recommends keeping instructions to a maximum of three. Giving one or two instructions at a time increases the likelihood of successful completion of tasks. Experienced presenters of adult training advocate giving one instruction at a time and waiting for

compliance, as it helps people feel comfortable and less anxious.

- **BEGIN WITH A VERB.** Many people only hear the first word or first few words you say, so if you begin an instruction with a verb (for example, write, stand, sit, pick up, move), you are providing more opportunities for success by giving effective clues about what you want them to do.

THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION



- **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING.** Scan the class while you are giving instructions, and ask clarifying questions to check whether students are listening and following directions (for example, “Hands up if you are in Group 2”).
- **USE VISUALS.** How many times have you taught a concept, described it in detail with relevant examples, and given what you thought were clear and precise instructions only to have one, two, or three students come up and ask “What do I have to do?”. On the other hand, who has been in a meeting or a PD and the presenter or the principal has given you a task, and you had to ask, “What do we have to do?” Visual learners make up approximately 65 percent of the population.

This type of learner is best at collecting information with their eyes. This includes visual images or reading text. Visual learners usually prefer graphics, illustrations and charts. Giving students a visual prompt and written instructions for a task, increases the likelihood that they will complete it correctly, and reduces the number of times you have to repeat yourself.

- Set up areas of your classroom (either displays or in tubs) where students can access instructions for tasks they may do more often, encouraging them to become independent learners.
- If you incorporate using visuals as one of your habits, your students will stop asking that question!

142

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **COMMUNICATION HABIT # 5: THUMBS UP**

#### **DON'T.SAY.MY.NAME**

While your name may be the sweetest sound on earth to you, when it is overused in a negative tone, there is no sweetness!

As part of your repertoire of behaviour management strategies consider how to purposefully use non-verbal signals.

85–90 percent of our communication is non-verbal.

Only about 7% of meaning is derived from the words we use.

55 percent is what we do with our body.

38 percent is tone of voice and intonation.

When you communicate with students, be aware of the subtle messages you give through your body language and tone of voice. You may be communicating frustration, annoyance, even anger, which means that is what the students are picking up on, rather than your words.

This skill incorporates all intentional non-verbal and minimal verbal cues, including thumbs up, smiling, nodding, making eye contact, which can acknowledge students who are on task and respectfully remind others to return to work.

I have heard teachers use a student's name over and over in a vain effort to

have them comply with directions—to stop or start doing something.

The teacher's voice becomes white noise. The target student is not listening, and the rest of the class is annoyed and also switching off.

Being creative about other ways to gain student attention can avoid this pitfall and save your voice:

- **PROXIMITY.** Never underestimate the value of this strategy in managing student behaviour. Barrie Bennett likens the power of this skill to the effect of seeing a police car when you are driving. Even if you are not speeding, you slow down or check the speedometer! A teacher moving around the classroom and strategically positioning themselves can prevent and remedy a multitude of minor issues.

## THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

143

- **THE LOOK.** Strategic use of a raised eyebrow or lingering eye contact can let a student know that you are aware of their behaviour and persuade them to comply with expectations.

Be wary not to turn it into an intimidating stare, as you will only alienate your students.

- **TAP OR POINT.** Tap on the desk or point to the work.

Again, use this strategy carefully. It is not tap, tap, tap in an agitated fashion, but a quiet, low-key reminder of what the student needs to be doing.

- **EYE CONTACT.** Making eye contact with students while giving instructions helps you check for understanding and lets students know that you are aware of them.

- **VISUALS.** Point to visual displays of class expectations.

(Self-explanatory!)

For younger students and those who are not adept at recognising social cues, you

may need to explicitly teach non-verbal cues. Simulate situations in your classroom and practise with your students.

Alternatively, or additionally, practise using the strategies in a small group or individually. Work out with a target student a set of agreed-on cues that you will use when you need to get them back on task, or to signal to them that their behaviour is inappropriate.

### **reflection questions**

**Are your behaviour expectations clear and unambiguous?**

**Are there any routines that you could implement to ensure smoother transition to lessons?**

**Can a “call to order” be overused?**

**What can you do to ensure that your instructions are clear and easy to follow?**

**How do you maintain “withitness” in your classes?**

**How can you include non-verbal communication to reduce teacher talk in your classroom?**

144

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Clear communication is the key to the smooth running of a classroom.
- Set your students up to win by having clear behavioural expectations.
- Use non-verbal cues to reduce the amount of teacher talk.
- Position yourself strategically to have full view of the class, at all times.
- Give clear instructions, one at a time.

- Develop a call to order to gain students' attention.
- Explicitly teach, practise, reinforce, and reteach all expectations, procedures, and routines.

## THE SECRETS OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

145

### CHAPTER 7

#### THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.* – Aristotle

If you have ever had to walk on eggshells around someone because you never knew what to expect, you will have some idea of the damage it can do to relationships. For your students to feel safe physically, emotionally, and psychologically, consistency of practice is vital.

When I first started teaching, being consistent in managing behaviour was one of my biggest challenges. There are competing demands on a teacher's time and energy: colleagues with different standards and values; parents with a range of demands and expectations, and then the wide variety of students from different backgrounds and with varying motivation and challenges. In the early days of my career, I struggled to comprehend what consistency meant.

Consistency does not mean being exactly the same all the time. Nor does it mean being a robot and not reacting to circumstances, or 146

#### HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

showing your real feelings. Consistency does mean that students are fairly certain of what they can expect from you. They know, for example, that you will not get angry with them today, about something you laughed at yesterday. They know that if you make a mistake or fail to follow through, you will apologise and take responsibility for your behaviour. They also



know that when they mess up—and they will!—you will treat them with respect, while you hold them accountable and help them learn from their mistakes.

Consistency of practice depends on a number of principles that can make a difference in how you feel when dealing with student behaviour, and, consequently, the actions you take. And it doesn't necessarily mean the same approach for every student.

## **CASE STUDY**

Mr. D, the science teacher, was stressed because of his personal situation, and it was impacting his teaching. He was disorganised, often unplanned, and gave the students work that was too difficult because he did not provide scaffolding.

When students arrived at his class they never knew what mood he would be in. Some days he yelled at students as they came in the door; other days he greeted them warmly. He became agitated when students did not understand the work, blaming them for not listening properly, and often the class had to sit tests for work they had not been taught.

**What.are.the.repercussions.of.the.teacher.being.**

**emotionally.inconsistent?**

**How.difficult.is.it.to.be.consistent.when.you.are.stressed?**

**How.does.teacher.mood.affect.student.learning?**

THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

147

**CONSISTENCY HABIT #1 BE PREPARED**

# THE.BOY.SCOUT.MOTTO

This is the golden rule of teaching. Many behaviour issues can be avoided by planning and preparation: providing relevant, interesting tasks for students with clear learning intentions and using engaging pedagogy.

Off-task behaviour can often result when students are not engaged in meaningful activities or are left too much to their own devices.

Students perceive this as lack of control and authority.

Preparation for the learning means that you: • **GET TO CLASS ON TIME:** Getting to class on time prevents students from becoming bored and restless while waiting for you.

- **SETTLE STUDENTS.** Employ settling strategies like a Do-Now activity (a quick quiz, a puzzle, a short reading, or a lateral thinking exercise. See chapter 6) when students enter the room to orientate them to the learning, get them focused, give you time to check in with students, and get them excited about the learning.

- **BE FLEXIBLE:** Thorough planning also means being adaptable. You may have spent hours planning a wonderfully exciting lesson, but if it is not working there is no point ploughing on. That's why being prepared also means having contingency plans, having something up your sleeve to use for when the technology fails you, half the class is away, or what you planned is way too hard.

- **HAVE RESOURCES READY:** Be prepared for your classes by having all materials ready and organised ahead of time. The quickest way to lose control of a class is to spend 5 minutes getting the IWB working and putting your notes in order.

Ensure your resources are accessible and appropriate to the students' abilities and interest levels.

- **USE APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGY:** Consider the most relevant and engaging teaching strategy for the content.

## **CONSISTENCY HABIT #2:**

### **DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU WILL DO**

## **FOLLOW.THROUGH**

When you follow through with what you say, you build credibility and trust with your students. You give them certainty and assurance that you are reliable and dependable. You also reinforce their appropriate behaviour when you follow through, and your consistency will determine the effectiveness of any intervention to change behaviour.

Unfortunately, there are times when this can be difficult. You promise the class a game at the end of the lesson, and you run out of time. You say you will talk to a student after class, and you remember just as you pour your coffee in the staff room. You tell a student you will follow up on an incident in class, and a week has gone by before you do anything.

While it may feel too hard sometimes, following through is what students remember, and it builds positive relationships with students, particularly for those students with behaviour issues.

When dealing with inappropriate behaviour: • **KNOW IN ADVANCE WHAT YOU WILL DO: HAVE A PLAN.** Decide what you will do when a student does not follow class rules. What will you do when a student calls out?

What will you do when a student is out of their seat? What will you do when a student refuses to do the work? If your school does not have a system of support in place, for example, buddy teachers and executives to call for help, then you need to organise a procedure for yourself. You may be able to ask a colleague whose classroom is nearby, or a teacher you know has a good relationship with your students.

- **GIVE STUDENTS A BINARY CHOICE:** Having some planned choices will prevent you giving unhelpful choices or ultimatums and backing yourself into a corner. If a student
- THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

is not completing their work, despite reminders and low-key strategies, the next step is giving a choice—e.g., “you can complete your work here with your friends or at another desk”. Teach this process to your students. When you develop the expectations for your class, work through the strategies that you and the students can use. Remember that you are developing the students’ skills, and if they have not been given choices before, they may not recognise them, or trust that you mean what you say.

- **HAVE A HIERARCHY OF CONSEQUENCES:** Give yourself a graded series of responses to follow when students do not comply with your instructions. If you threaten to send a student to the principal when they will not do their work, then you have nothing left for high-level behaviours.

In-class strategies like redirecting, offering assistance, or having the student work with a buddy need to be employed before resorting to outside help (see Chapter 6 for more ideas).

- **USE YOUR BODY LANGUAGE TO FAKE CONFIDENCE:** Fake it till you make it! Even if you don’t feel calm, students will feel reassured and safe if they know that you are in control, you know what is going on, you know what to do.

When students do not feel that the teacher is in control, the learning environment is compromised (Richmond, 2007).

Follow through with positive experiences

as well as consequences. When you

promise students a fun activity or a break from their work, ensure that you give it to **As John Holt says,**

them. Be credible and trustworthy. Don’t

**‘Children learn by**

be the teacher who offers a game or an

**doing. There is no**

activity to students and then fails to follow **other way'**

through because you run out of time or it

### ***How Children Learn***

isn't convenient.

150

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**CONSISTENCY HABIT # 3: BE PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE**

## **PLAN.FOR.SUCCESS**

Teaching students social skills can help

minimise behaviour issues, prevent

conflicts, and support effective learning.

Knowing how to get along with others,

### **TIPS FOR MANAGING**

how to treat people with respect, how

### **STRONG EMOTIONS**

to disagree respectfully, and how to

### **Take a deep breath**

repair relationships are social skills we

### **Count to 10**

all need. You may know some adults

### **Go for a walk**

who still do not have these skills!

### **Ask for time-out**

## **Have a drink of water**

While most students will have the social

skills to act appropriately in the school

environment, some will not. Teachers

can use the situations that arise in

a classroom or on a playground as

“teachable moments”. That is, we use situations of conflict or inappropriate behaviour to teach students the skills they need to get along with others.

- **EXPLICITLY TEACH SOCIAL SKILLS.** Teach and model for students how you want them to behave in paired and group situations by giving them plenty of opportunities to practise. Scaffold the tasks by giving them boundaries, roles, and protocols.

- **USE THE “TEACHABLE MOMENT”:** When there are disagreements and problems between students use the incidents to teach students ways to manage their own behaviour. Problem-solve with the students to find appropriate ways of dealing with strong emotions. Come up with suitable strategies that will help prevent the situation from escalating into conflict.

- **INTERVENE EARLY:** When you notice that a student is off task, be proactive by offering additional assistance, scaffolding

**THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY**

the work, or giving them a choice to avoid behaviour deteriorating further.

## **CASE STUDY**

A Year 2 teacher developed a process that helped deal with the myriad of problems that can occur on the playground.

She used the playground incidents as “teachable moments”.

When students came in from the playground with friendship or conflict issues she would sit the children in a circle, brainstorm ideas for what students could do, and then role play a desired outcome. This strategy was extremely powerful because the examples were true to life, in situ, and the students developed problem-solving skills.

If your students find social situations challenging, teaching these skills may take up quite a large amount of time. However, if you are prepared to invest time and energy into developing social skills, you will find that learning and academic achievement will eventually increase.

**How.do.you.use.“teachable.moments”.to.improve.student.**

**social.skills?**

**CONSISTENCY HABIT # 4:**

## **START FRESH EVERY DAY**

**IT’S.A.NEW.DAY**

***“Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it***

***will kill your enemies.”– Nelson Mandela***

When there have been behaviour issues with a student, while you can be affected, they may also feel vulnerable, that they have let you down, and that the relationship has been destroyed and will never be the same again.

Allowing the student to start again develops trust that 152

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

you mean what you say and that you are able to separate the behaviour from the student. You demonstrate that you don't hold any grudges, that you know they are learning how to behave, that they are learning how to manage their feelings and that everyone makes mistakes. It gives students the message that when things go wrong, there are strategies they can use to make things right again. It shows them they are worthy and deserving of your time and effort.

- **RESTORE THE RELATIONSHIP:** Depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour, a discussion between the teacher and the student to repair the relationship needs to occur for both parties to be able to move on.
- **CHECK YOUR BELIEFS:** Your ability to give students a fresh start will be dependent on what you tell yourself about their behaviour—for example, if you see problem behaviour as a lack of skill, you will take a pedagogical approach to behaviour.
- **TREAT ALL KIDS THE SAME.** Treat your worst kids the same way as you treat the best kids. Research has demonstrated that teachers have less patience and tolerance, and give less positive attention to students who push their buttons. While it may feel difficult to do, it is our job to treat all students with respect and care, regardless of their behaviour.
- **CHECK IN/CHECK OUT:** A quick check-in with students at the beginning of the day or lesson to determine how they are feeling, if they have necessary equipment, if they need food, drink, or space cultivates the relationship. It can also prevent issues from occurring by addressing any concerns that could contribute to inappropriate behaviour. A check-out with a teacher or mentor at the end of the day gives students the chance to reflect, congratulate themselves for things that have gone well, and figure out ways to do better next time.

## THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY



## **CASE STUDY**

The librarian in a high school was having difficulty with the Year 7 students who would not listen to her or cooperate in her class. She asked me to run a restorative circle with the class so that she could participate. Following the script, I devised collaboratively with the teacher, I named the behaviours of concern and then asked for the teacher and all the students to say how the disruptive behaviour was affecting them. Some students recognised that they were causing disruption in the class and owned their behaviour and the whole class decided on practical ways they could improve the situation in the class. The teacher felt she had been heard, and the students had been given the chance to problem solve issues in their class and be accountable for their own behaviour.

They drew up a code of conduct for the teacher and students to follow and referred to the code at the beginning of every lesson. While student behaviour was not perfect, it certainly improved, and students showed the teacher that they understood that she was impacted by their behaviour by taking the chance to apologise.

### **CONSISTENCY HABIT # 5: DON'T TAKE**

#### **THE BEHAVIOUR PERSONALLY**

## **KEEP.YOUR.SENSE.OF.HUMOUR**

Not taking others' behaviour personally is a habit of highly effective people. It is an extremely useful trait that can help you avoid unnecessary heartache. When you see your students' behaviour as a result of

what is happening for them you can be compassionate and empathetic rather than offended, disrespected, or hurt.

154

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



Ask yourself “What else can this mean?” when you find yourself on the end of unpleasant or seemingly disrespectful behaviour. If you maintain calm and don’t take student behaviour personally, you are in a better position to address the student’s needs and devise plans that will assist them to develop appropriate social skills.

When students act out:

- **IT’S ABOUT THEM:**

Teachers who are less affected by their students’ behaviour tend to explain difficult behaviour

**Why can angels fly?**

as being due more to external

**Because they take**

factors rather than reading it

**themselves lightly.**

as a personal attack. Resilient

individuals tend to think the

**G.K.Chesterton**

“difficult” student is under a

lot of stress, or perhaps going

through personal problems.

THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

155

- **USE SELF-CARE STRATEGIES:** If you can feel yourself personalising a student’s behaviour and feeling like you are under attack, take a moment to breathe and count to 10. Tell yourself that it is not about you (though it may feel that way!).

Even when the behaviour is directed at you, it is not about you!

- **FOCUS ON THE BEHAVIOUR:** Don’t focus on the emotion (yours or theirs) but consider what the behaviour means and what the student needs to learn. Model calm behaviour and discuss the inappropriate behaviour at another time when the student is de-escalated and calm.

- **KEEP IT LIGHT:** A sense of humour can help defuse a tense situation and keep things in perspective. Teaching is a tough gig, so it is important to be able to keep the situation light. This is great modelling for students, and humour is an effective behaviour-management tool.

Making a joke at the right time can keep small problems small, help maintain positive relationships and can take the pressure off. However, steer clear of sarcasm, which younger or less mature young people may not understand and which can be offensive.

### **reflection questions**

**Do you notice times when it is harder for you not to take student behaviour personally?**

**When is it more difficult to start the day with a fresh slate? How can you manage this?**

**How do you keep your sense of humour?**

**Have you noticed the difference in your classes when you are well prepared?**

**What are some of the challenges in following through on student behaviour?**

**How can these challenges be addressed?**

156

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Consistency gains trust and respect from students.
- Consistency does not necessarily mean the same thing for every student.
- Being prepared for your lessons with equipment and interesting tasks will prevent most off-task behaviour.
- Not taking student behaviour personally is an essential skill.
- Give students a fresh start, recognising that they are learning how to behave.
- Following through on what you say builds credibility.
- Teach the social and emotional skills students need to manage their behaviours

at school.

- Planning what you will do about difficult behaviour helps you to be consistent.

## THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY

157

## CHAPTER 8

### REINFORCEMENT

#### RULES

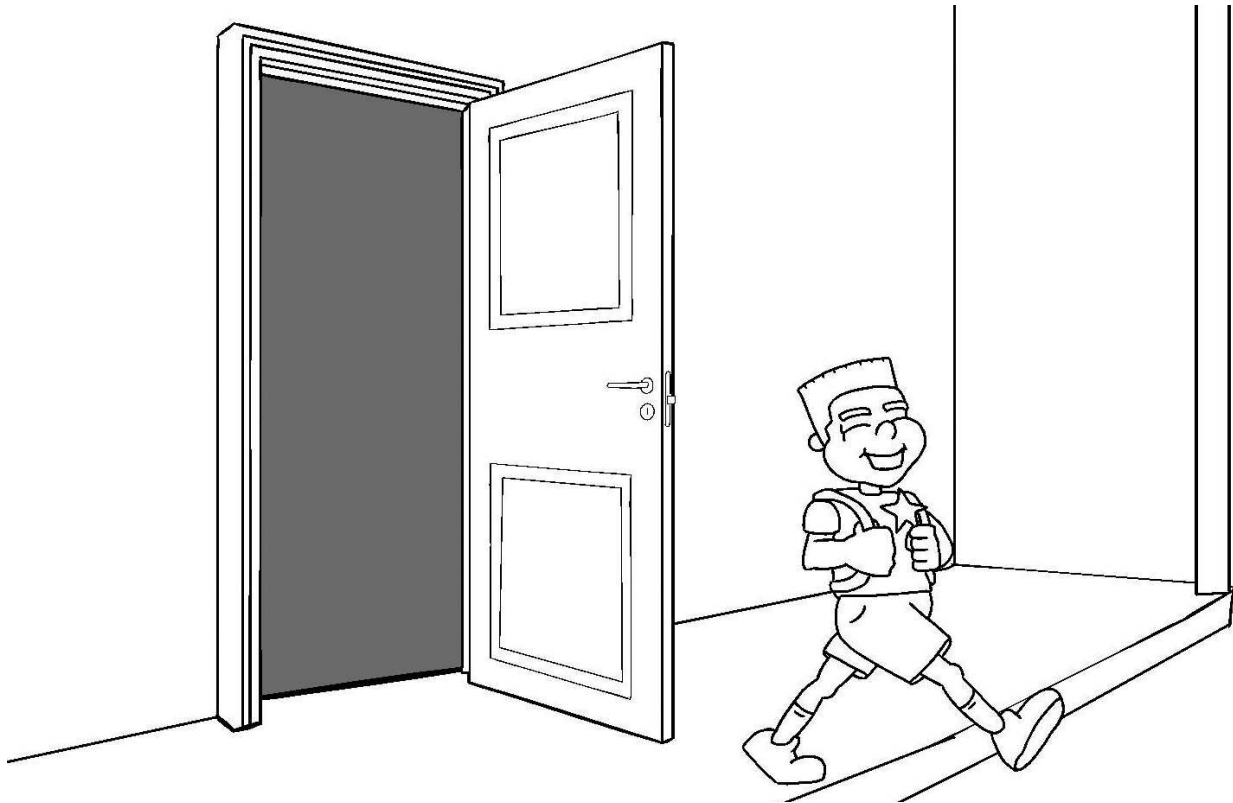
*“Where attention goes, energy flows” –Tony Robbins*

#### FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Several years ago, after my sister extolled the benefits of an exercise boot camp to me I took the plunge and enrolled in one at my gym. I wanted to change a few habits by getting up an hour and a half earlier than usual and incorporating running into my exercise routine. Throughout the gruelling process, I learnt quite a few things about myself; one of the most surprising was how powerful positive reinforcement could be, even for adults. I was genuinely astounded at how much it meant to me when one of the trainers would enthusiastically yell “Go Marie, you can do it!” *I ran harder and faster!*

Positive reinforcement works. And by “works”, I mean it increases the likelihood that a particular behaviour will be repeated. Can you think of a time when you made a change in your life and adopted new behaviours, like exercising more regularly or trying to eat well? If you were given positive feedback about your progress from 158

#### HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



a parent, partner, or friend, you would feel more encouraged to continue. Most likely, any positive feedback you received meant that you repeated that behaviour.

### **reflection questions**

**Think about a time when you were given positive reinforcement.**

**What things did you remember?**

**What made the most impact?**

**What is positive reinforcement?**

“Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a pleasurable or desirable consequence for behaviour” (Haring and Phillips, 1972) that increases the probability that the desired behaviour will occur again.

Positive reinforcement can present in a variety of forms: grades on a report card, verbal praise, non-verbal acknowledgment, specific feedback, as well as tangible rewards.



Teachers have differing views on what positive reinforcement is, and whether they should or should not use it. Some feel that it is bribery and coercion and that students need to develop intrinsic motivation.

But the debate can be muddled by misunderstandings about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When a person is intrinsically motivated, they

### REINFORCEMENT RULES

159

are doing something because they want to, they enjoy it, or they have had success with it in the past. They gain pleasure from the successful completion of an activity.

No one can give you intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation, conversely, means being motivated by something outside yourself. That could be praise from a teacher, a high mark, parental approval, or rewards such as chocolate, stickers, or a pay cheque.

Teachers will often say students should be intrinsically motivated, and while intrinsic motivation is optimal, some students may not have developed the skills or the drive.

A teacher's role is to assist students in experiencing success so that intrinsic motivation can develop. For students who have experienced repeated school failure, this will mean using extrinsic reinforcers such as praise, tokens, or stickers. (Sloane et al., 1979, in Downing et al., 1991). The use of positive reinforcement has been shown to increase the development of intrinsic motivation (Cameron, Banko, & Pierce, 2001).

Fostering the individual strengths of each student and allowing them to be the expert, for example, as “the new-ideas guy” or “high-tech girl” can build students' self-esteem and confidence, enabling them to take risks with their learning and change their perception of themselves as learners. If you can help them discover the positive contribution they can make to the class, they will be less likely to become the expert in disrupting the class, refusing to work, and missing school.

Applying the principles of positive reinforcement to the classroom means

focusing on what students are doing well, with the intention of increasing the behaviour (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). What you give attention to will increase in intensity and frequency. The reality is that 80–90 percent of the time our students are doing the right thing, but our attention is grabbed by the off-task, negative behaviour. Teacher praise has been proven to be one of the most empirically sound teacher-management skills (Maag & Katsiyannis, 1999). The irony is that because teacher attention is so effective, it is used more often when students misbehave. It is easy to be sucked into the negativity trap.

160

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **THE ABCs OF REINFORCEMENT**

**(or, Are you inadvertently reinforcing negative behaviour?)** Behaviour is positively reinforced by anything that causes it to recur. This means if you cause a behaviour to recur, you are reinforcing that behaviour, even if you are “punishing” a student.

### **CASE STUDY**

#### **PRIMARY.SCHOOL**

A Year 2 student who was constantly getting into fights on the playground, was regularly sent to lunchtime detention. In detention, he escaped the hot, noisy playground, he gained the attention of the teacher and many of his friends were in detention too. Needless to say, attending detention did not change his behaviour.

**How.could.you.support.a.student.to.get.along.with.others?**

### **CASE STUDY**

#### **HIGH.SCHOOL.**

A student in Year 7 who had a history of academic failure, would constantly talk, call out, and distract others. When he gained the negative attention of the teacher for this behaviour, he was being reinforced, and his behaviour continued. He had learnt to cover his academic problems by being the kid who gets into trouble, because it was better to be in trouble for being off task than to reveal that he could not do the work. Kids with a history of academic failure are skilled at distracting us from the true cause of their behaviour.

## REINFORCEMENT RULES

161

**Do.you.know.students.whose.behaviour.is.an.issue,.who.also.lag.behind.academically?**

**How.do.you.address.their.learning.needs.in.a.way.that.means.they.can.save.face.and.not.look.“dumb”?**

Behavioural interventions are based on the premise that behaviour is influenced by what occurs immediately before (the antecedent) and after (the consequence of) the behaviour. The behaviour may be triggered by the antecedent or reinforced by the consequence.

By understanding and manipulating, changing or avoiding the antecedent and/or consequence for a problem behaviour, teachers can help students learn and maintain new behaviours, increase appropriate behaviours, and decrease inappropriate behaviours. (Downing et al., 1991).

## SAMPLE.SCENARIO

Sammy yells at the teacher and throws his pen when he is asked to write information in his book. The teacher then gives him detention, where he works one on one with the teacher.

**POSSIBLE.SOLUTIONS.TO.CHANGE.THE.ANTECEDENT:.**

Adapt the task. Provide a handout with the information provided and have the student highlight important points or fill in missing words.

Agree on a plan. Make an agreement with Sammy to help him as soon as the class is settled to work.

Prepare the student. Pre-teach the content to Sammy so he feels confident and able to complete the task. Pre-teaching may sound onerous, but it can mean simply giving the student the heads up about what the next lesson or topic is going to be.

162

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **ANTECEDENT**

### **BEHAVIOUR**

### **CONSEQUENCE**

The teacher asks

Sammy is given

Sammy yells

Sammy to write

detention, where he

at the teacher and

information in

works one on one

throws his pencil.

his book.

with the teacher.

**EXERCISE:.**

In the following scenarios, identify the problem behaviour, then the antecedent and consequence.

**SCENARIO.1**

Jo is not completing her English work, which she finds difficult. The teacher tells her to get on with the work. Jo yells at the teacher, who tells her to go to the deputy principal. Jo leaves the room and spends the rest of the lesson sitting outside the office on her phone.

**Antecedent.**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Behaviour.**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Consequence.**\_\_\_\_\_

How could you change either the antecedent or the consequence so that the negative behaviour is not being reinforced?

**SCENARIO.2.**

Rachel’s teacher asks her to put away her phone. Rachel refuses by saying “no” and continues playing with her phone. The teacher asks two more times without success and then goes to the front of the class to continue the lesson.

**Antecedent.**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Behaviour.**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Consequence.**\_\_\_\_\_

How could you change either the Antecedent or the Consequence so that the negative behaviour is not being reinforced?

**REINFORCEMENT RULES**

### SCENARIO.3

Billy is off task and talking to his friends. The teacher tells him to get back to his work and then walks away. Billy keeps on chatting, and the teacher gets on with helping other students.

**Antecedent.**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Behaviour.**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Consequence.**\_\_\_\_\_

How could you change either the Antecedent or the Consequence so that the negative behaviour is not being reinforced?

**Reticular Activating System** Have you ever noticed that when you buy a new car you seem to see that car everywhere? Similarly, when you are pregnant you notice pregnant women much more. It is not because the sales of those cars have suddenly gone up or that there are more pregnant women around. It is because these things have become more meaningful to you. A part of your brain called your Reticular Activating System seeks them out and gives them attention. There is so

much stimuli in our environment

that if we gave attention to

everything we would never be able

to focus on anything. The mind

**“If we treat people as they are, we make them worse.**

is a pattern-seeking machine, and

**If we treat people as they** what you focus on will fit into this

**ought to be, we help them** pattern of recognition. As a visual

**become what they are**

analogy, think of the mind as if

**capable of becoming.”**

it were a clothes hanger, and that

**Haim Ginott**

we tend to hang new information

onto the old hangers with which

we are already familiar.

164

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**EXERCISE:.**

Look around the room you are in, and find as many red objects as you can.

Look closely and try to remember as many as possible.

Now close your eyes

How many brown objects did you see? (That is not so easy to do!) Whatever you focus on, you will see...

When you give attention to appropriate student behaviour there is a twofold effect:

- You will notice positive behaviour more often.
- Positive student behaviour will increase.

You win both ways!

You can take this to another level by

helping students create a personal vision of excellence. Give them feedback

that helps

them see themselves as even more capable.

### **Reinforcement**

As long as you give genuine, authentic

**must be so attractive**

**that students would**

feedback you will encourage students to

**rather gain the prize**

strive and improve. For example, “Josh,

**than not.**

I have noticed you seem so much happier

at school lately. You seem to be more

confident and relaxed and your work is getting better too.”

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR USING**

### **REWARDS AND REINFORCERS**

- Discover the most effective reinforcers for your students by asking them and discussing appropriateness.
- Decide how the reinforcers will be provided. Will they be doled out by the teacher or will students self-regulate?
- Take pre-and post-data to determine the effectiveness of the reinforcer and the level of change. Collect data on the REINFORCEMENT RULES



frequency of the inappropriate behaviour before you introduce your plan, and then after a period of time, to measure the plan's effectiveness.

- What natural consequences will reinforce the behaviour, and will extrinsic rewards be necessary?
- Decide on a system that will be simple enough for you to use consistently.
- Decide if you will use whole-class rewards, individual rewards, or both

### **Whole-Class Reinforcement Strategies/Reward Programs**

Having a simple program of positive reinforcement (think raffle tickets or a points system) linked to your expectations, gives students immediate feedback on their behaviour. It encourages students to behave appropriately by raising their awareness of the behaviour you value, and ensures that all students are recognised. Giving students positive feedback about their behaviour promotes relationships, develops a healthy classroom climate,

and helps students build the

social and emotional skills of

collaboration and cooperation.

### **Grandma's Rule also known Low-cost or no-cost rewards.**

**as the Premack principle:** Brainstorm a list of rewards with

Students can be rewarded with

primary or secondary classes

a preferred activity for

with a focus on little, or no,

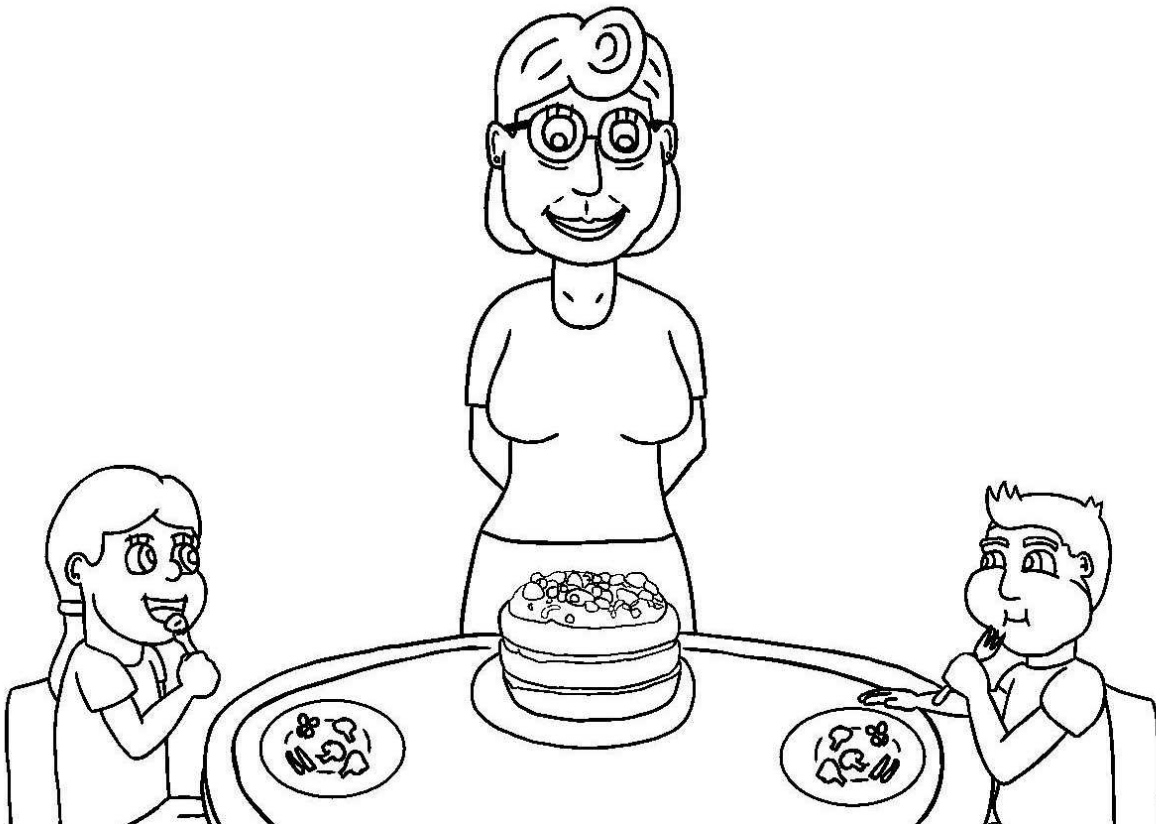
completing an activity they do

cost. Kids often feel rewarded not like as much (e.g., when you have eaten all your vegetables

by being given privileges in the  
you may have ice cream).  
class, spending special time  
with an adult in the school, or  
being allowed to do something  
*different* from the normal routine.

166

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



Whole-class rewards such as free time, listening to music, a board-game afternoon, movie, class party, mufti day or dress-up day are easy to implement.

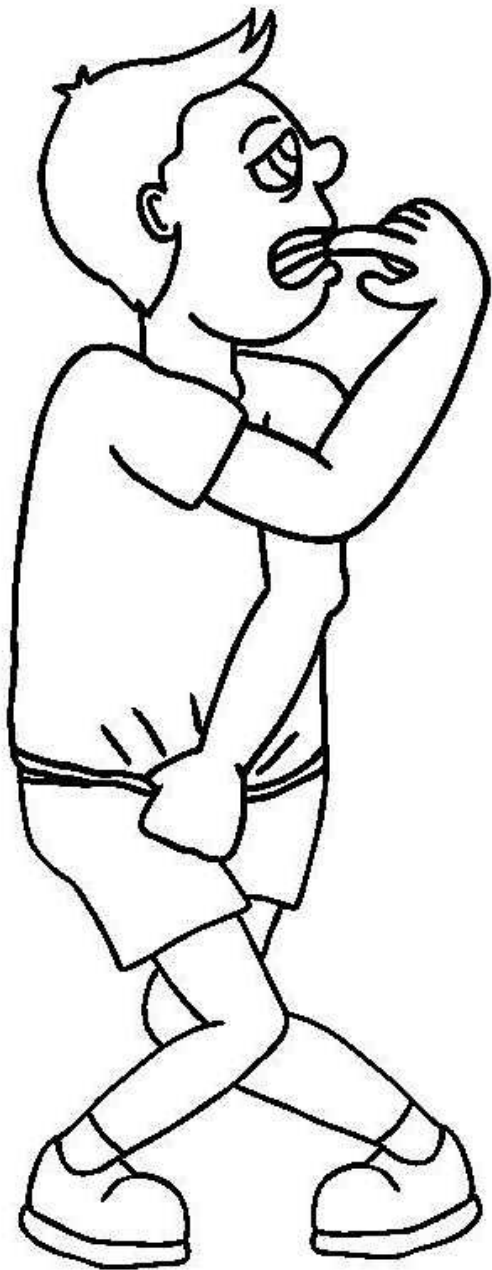
A variety of reward systems could be used in your classroom: token economies, behaviour contracts, table points, class points, marbles in the jar, chart moves, lotteries and raffles, 100s square charts, mystery motivators, or a compliance matrix.

The best reward systems are gradually reduced over time, or more effort is required to gain the same reward. The reward can be re-introduced if the behaviour needs to be re-taught.

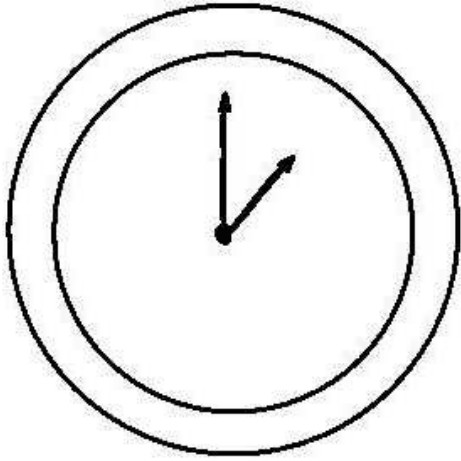
**Individual Reinforcement Strategies /Reward Programs** When a student does not respond to your whole-class expectations and is displaying inappropriate behaviour, they may benefit from an individual reward program linked to an individual-behaviour contract. This would be specifically designed for the student, with a clear behaviour goal, additional learning experiences, and incorporation of rewards that are meaningful for that particular student.

If there are a number of behaviours of concern, decide on one to target and ignore the other behaviours as much as possible. Of course, if a behaviour

REINFORCEMENT RULES







is dangerous or highly disruptive, that is the behaviour you must choose to work on.

As Laura Riffel (of [thebehaviordoctor.org](http://thebehaviordoctor.org)) teaches, for every year that a behaviour has been in place, it takes at least a month to change. Think of it as the Pantene promise: “It won’t happen overnight but it will happen!”

Often, when one behaviour is targeted, other problem behaviours may lessen because the needs of the student are being met.

## **CASE STUDY**

When my youngest son, Tim, was 3 he developed a urinary infection whereby he would go to the toilet every 10 minutes or so.

He was given a course of antibiotics to clear it up, but even after he had completed the

medication, he was still going to the toilet constantly. I was very worried and thought

that the infection must still be there. The doctor gave me a set of stickers and a chart to use for Tim when he held on longer than

10 minutes.

I did exactly what the doctor said. Within a week, the constant toilet visits had reduced significantly, and by 3 weeks he had returned to his normal routine.

For downloadable individual behaviour contracts, go to [www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com/book-resources](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com/book-resources) **WHAT IF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

## **DOESN'T WORK?**

Teachers will say that positive reinforcement does not work for some students. If the reinforcer you are using does not increase the desired behaviour, then it is not a positive reinforcer for that student. You need to recognise and remedy this quickly.

168

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **CASE STUDY**

A Year 5 student stopped working, ripped up his paper, and made a derogatory comment when he was praised by the teacher. Verbal, public praise did not work as a positive reinforcer for that student in that situation. When the teacher began using non-verbal cues such as thumbs up and a pat on the shoulder, followed by a positive text to mum and dad, the student's behaviour improved.

Sometimes a reward will work for a time and then lose its effectiveness.

It becomes less reinforcing for the student. Consider the economics Law of Diminishing Returns. The tenth chocolate does not taste as good as the first. When the reward no longer works, revisit the plan and come up with a new system or different reinforcer, including the student in a conversation about what they value and what will work as reinforcement for them.

According to psychological research, employing an intermittent or varied schedule of positive reinforcement can make this a more powerful strategy. So, that means not every time, but often (Barnett & Simmering, *Reinforcement Theory*).

### **REINFORCEMENT HABIT #1: DESCRIPTIVE**

### **FEEDBACK: YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER**



## **THE.MAGIC.RATIO:.FIVE.POSITIVES.TO.ONE.NEGATIVE**

The relationship expert John Gottman recommends the magic ratio of five positive interactions for every negative interaction to maintain a healthy relationship. That means when you have a negative interaction with a student, it takes five positives to get the relationship back into balance. Since relationships are the basis of teaching, giving positive feedback to your students is a skill well worth developing.

## **REINFORCEMENT RULES**

169

As a part of her Balance Model, Christine Richmond calls such positive feedback “descriptive encouragement”.

Make your feedback effective:

- **BE GENUINE.** Your praise must be real. Kids know!
- **PRAISE EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT.**

In Carol Dweck’s research, students who were praised for their ability (“You must be smart at this!”) lost heart and enjoyment for more difficult tasks, compared to students who were praised for effort (“You must have worked real y hard”). The ability-praised students’ performance deteriorated when given further tasks, while the effort-praised kids improved.

- **BE SPECIFIC.** Describe the positive behaviour using clear descriptive language—for example,

“I can see you are ready to listen Madeleine, because you are looking at me and you are sitting still” or “When I said it was time to work, you cleared your desk, got out your equipment and started work immediately.”

- **ACKNOWLEDGE BEHAVIOUR.** Give verbal or non-verbal acknowledgement of appropriate behaviour (e.g., “Thanks for getting your book out Emily”, or nodding and smiling at a student who is ready to listen).
- **PAIR WITH REWARDS.** Give verbal feedback in conjunction with

the agreed reward to make it more powerful.

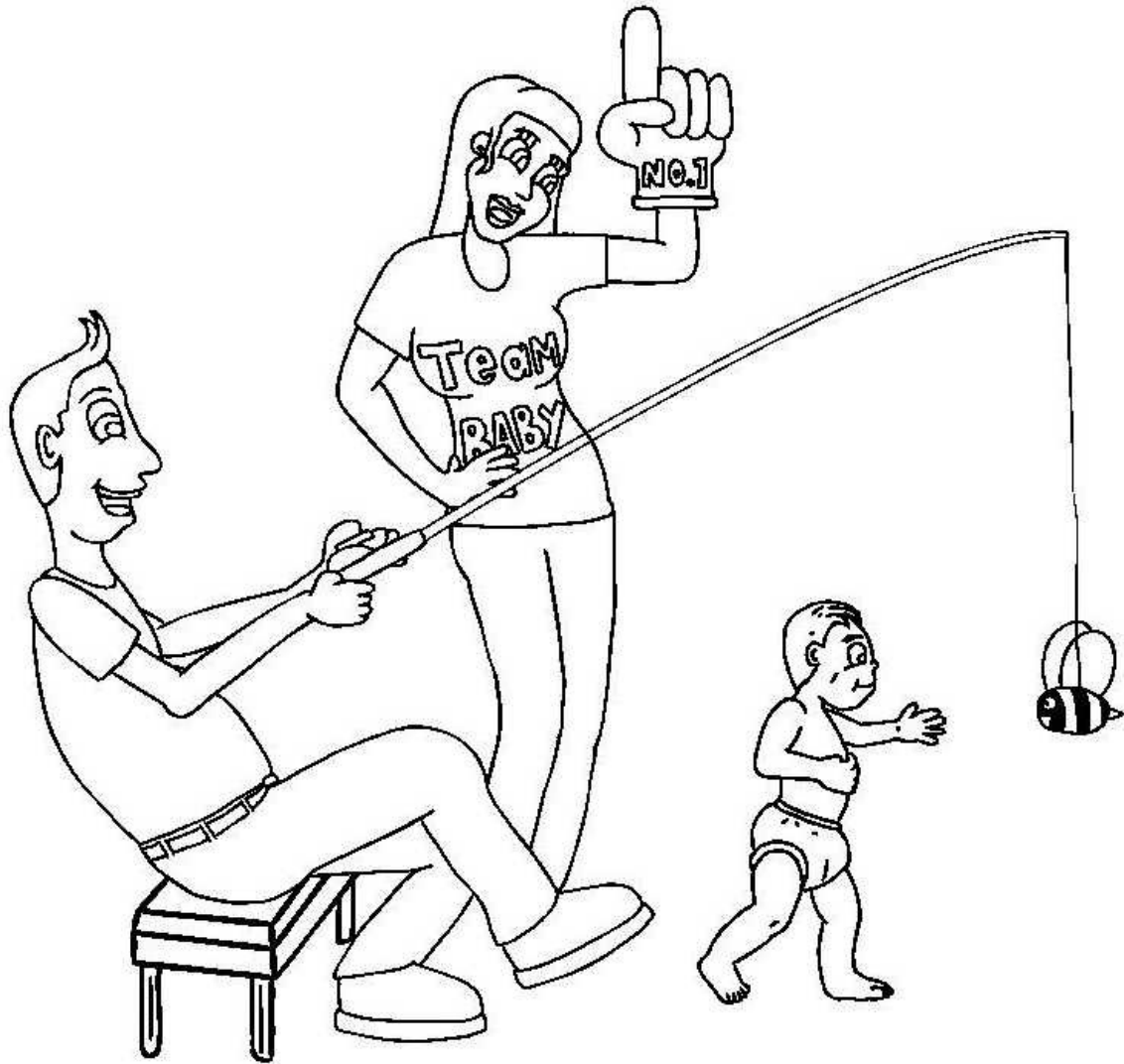
- **REINFORCE APPROXIMATIONS OF THE**

**BEHAVIOUR.** While students are learning new behaviours, reinforce approximations of the behaviour—i.e., give praise or reinforcement when the behaviour is partially occurring; don't wait till they do it perfectly. Think of a baby learning to walk.

Every time that child stands or attempts to put one foot in front of the other the parents are there, giving encouragement and affection. They don't wait until the baby can run around the block before cheering!

170

**HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**



## WHEN POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

## WORKS IN A SURPRISING WAY

**How positive reinforcement can help students behave** You can improve student behaviour 80 percent of the time if you use positive rather than negative feedback.

Don't believe me?

A psychologist friend recently told me this remarkable story of research showing how positive reinforcement can work to improve student behaviour.

Positive reinforcement refers to anything that increases the likelihood that you will repeat an action. And you can be positively reinforced in any number of ways: your own feeling of success, other people recognising your behaviour and commenting favourably, enjoyment in the activity, and any positive flow on effects from the action.

## REINFORCEMENT RULES

171

The story of the research was told by Tim Lewis, Professor of Special Education at the University of Missouri, at a Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS) conference.

A PBIS school in California had spent two years implementing universal strategies across the school. Universal strategies refer to the systems set up across the school to support all students. It is the whole-school approach to developing optimal school and classroom culture that provides clear behavioural expectations, teaches students how to access support and assistance, reinforces positive behaviour, establishes clear processes and procedures across the school and classrooms, and provides explicit teaching for the behaviours expected across various school settings and situations.

Despite the implementation of universal strategies, office referrals for inappropriate behaviour were still at a high level, approximately 40 percent.

The school behaviour team decided to collect data on the use of classroom management skills. The data revealed that the use of positive reinforcement by teachers was low. The recommended ratio for PBIS is 4:1 positive to negative comments to students. Observation of teacher-student interactions showed a ratio of about 1:1.

The school then provided professional learning for the teachers in how to raise the use of positive reinforcement in their interactions with students and collected data.

The ratio improved to 2:1 and office referrals reduced to 30 percent.

This was still not the desired rate of success necessary to move to the next level

of PBIS.

The school provided additional professional learning for staff and redoubled their efforts to improve the ratio of negative to positive.

When data was again taken across the school it had increased to 5:1, and office referrals had decreased to 20 percent.

Who would have thought that by increasing levels of positive reinforcement office referrals for inappropriate behaviour would decrease?

172

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Why did it work?

- Interactions between teachers and students became more positive, improving the relationships. The relationship expert John Gottman uses the ratio of positive to negative interactions as an indicator of the health of a relationship.
- Students were hearing additional reminders of appropriate behaviour when teachers reinforced other students and described their behaviour
- When teachers increased the ratio of positive to negative feedback, the climate of the classroom became more positive, enhancing students' sense of belonging and creating a flow on effect to student behaviour.
- When teachers were more focused on the positive behaviour they saw, it increased in intensity and frequency.

The lesson here is that we don't get less inappropriate behaviour by focusing on the students' inappropriate behaviour.

Let's focus on what students are doing well and let them know!

## **REINFORCEMENT HABIT # 2: POSITIVE PROMPTING**

### **FOCUS.ON.WHAT'S.WORKING**

Early in my teaching career, three of us took 90 kindergarten students (5 year

olds) to the school hall for Christmas concert practice. They were all chatting, wriggling around, and generally acting their age, and I wondered how on earth we were ever going to get them all listening and ready to practise. An experienced teacher stood at the front, and quietly began acknowledging the students who were looking at her. In no time at all she had the whole group in the palm of her hand.

Adults respond to the same technique. At a conference I attended recently, the presenter thanked the participants who had turned off their phones. Everyone who had not done so (me included!) quickly complied.

## REINFORCEMENT RULES

173

When I started using this strategy with my own class, it worked like magic and it felt so positive! All I had to do was praise one or two students and the rest fell into line. Early childhood teachers are experts at using this skill but it is rarely, if ever, used in higher grades.

We can improve behaviour by up to 80 percent simply by pointing out what one person is doing correctly; however, we use this technique less than 10 percent of the time. Why?

We get busy teaching.

Use a tool to remind you . . . a beeper, a reminder on your phone, a student monitor, paddle pop sticks in a jar. Set your phone or an alarm to go off at random times in the day and every time it does, look up and reinforce a student who is on task—It could be a focus behaviour, or perhaps a focus student. Use the Focus Behaviour Game or Secret Student (instructions below).

Give most of your attention to the students who are on task, rather than reinforcing negative behaviours by giving attention to students who are off task.

When using positive prompting with older students, it is better to refer to the group—

for example, “Thanks to everyone who

**You can catch more**

has their books out”. It is important to **flies with honey than**

have a supportive classroom culture and

**with vinegar.**

ensure that you use a positive tone of voice when using this skill . You must be wary of

making a student or group of students into

a target—i.e., “goody-two-shoes”.

174

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**FOCUS BEHAVIOUR GAME:** You can use this for a specified amount of time each day eg one session or one lesson.

1. Decide on a focus behaviour for your class for the week.
2. Set your phone to go off at random intervals throughout the day.
3. When the alarm goes off, look around the room, and if all students are displaying the focus behaviour, then you place a marble in the jar or a point on the board.
4. When the jar is full have a class celebration (movie, game, free time).

### **SECRET STUDENT:**

This is similar to the Focus Behaviour Game, but the teacher is focused on the behaviour of one student.

1. Decide on a focus behaviour relevant for the class or for the particular student. Tell the class the focus behaviour.

2. Write the name of a student on a slip of paper and place it in an envelope. Do not reveal to the name of the secret student!
3. Set a timer on your phone to go off at random intervals throughout the day.
4. When the alarm goes off look around the room and if the secret student is displaying the focus behaviour make a visual tally using a marble jar or number chart.
5. At the end of the day or session tell the students if the Secret Student has been using the focus behaviour. If they have, then you reveal who the Secret Student is and then celebrate. If they have not been successful, simply say “the secret student did not display the focus behaviour today, so we will try again tomorrow”.

From Intervention Central.org

## REINFORCEMENT RULES

175

### **REINFORCEMENT HABIT #3**

#### **PICK YOUR BATTLES**

#### **STOP.WHACKING.MOLES**

Maintaining the flow of the lesson by giving minimal, or no, attention to low-level behaviours is the mark of an effective teacher. If the behaviour of a student is not unsafe or highly disruptive to the learning, then use distraction, diversion, and redirecting strategies.

A high school teacher went on and on about a student wearing a hat in class, till the student eventually swore at them and walked out. When the teacher’s behaviour causes more distraction and disruption than the student, then “Houston we have a problem!”

I think of this skill as refraining from being caught up in “mole whacking”. You know that arcade game where the moles pop their heads up randomly and you see how many you can hit? You can spend your time in class



“whacking moles” by continually getting caught up in “stop talking”, “sit up straight”, “take your hat off”, “sit still”, “look at me”, “stop wriggling”. Don’t waste your time whacking moles. Get on with teaching!

176

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### **Forty-five.strategies.to.manage.low-level.**

#### **classroom.behaviour.**

Sometimes you need a list of strategies to deal with the constant, annoying button pushing, low level behaviours. Here it is!

1. Redirection
2. Distraction
3. Diversion
4. Refocus the whole class
5. Change the direction of the lesson
6. Use the student’s name
7. Make eye contact
8. Use a signal
9. Listen to the student
10. Smile at the student (genuinely)
11. Make a positive comment about the student (must be genuine)
12. Ask a question about the work
13. Refer to the class rules
14. Use proximity: move closer to the student
15. Ask what you can do to help

16. Provide a movement break
  17. Give a binary choice
  18. Remind the student of the task
  19. Offer assistance
  20. Use humour
  21. Have a private conversation
  22. Focus on the students who are doing the right thing— “thank you Madeleine for getting on with your work”
  23. Give students time to chat
  24. Offer an incentive—e.g., “Finish the task and we will have a game”
  25. Take a break—go into the store room, look out the window and breathe deeply,
  26. Reteach your expectations
  27. Run a class meeting to discuss behaviour issues
- REINFORCEMENT RULES

177

28. Reduce teacher talk time and give students more opportunity to speak
29. Provide a choice of activities
30. Provide a clear schedule for the session/lesson
31. Focus on positive behaviours of the target student; notice when they are on task
32. Address learning needs
33. Provide alternative ways to complete tasks and demonstrate learning
34. Give the student one-on-one attention

35. Give the student responsibility
  36. Allow the students to work in pairs or groups
  37. Scaffold the task
  38. Break the task into smaller, achievable chunks
  39. Stop everything, play some music and sing or dance
  40. Send the student for a drink or to do a job
  41. Get the student to help you
  42. Change the task to make it more open-ended
  43. Get the student to help someone else
  44. Acknowledge that the task may be boring, but you will do something more exciting next time or later on
  45. Send the student on an errand to another teacher or to the front office
- I am sure you can think of many more. Get creative and put your problem-solving hat on!

## **CASE STUDY**

A high school teacher had decided to “choose her battles” with a particular student and not insist that he remove his hat in her class. She was working on building a positive relationship with the student, and he would leave the classroom when confronted by any teacher about his hat. She felt that it would be more beneficial to keep him in the classroom, develop trust and a working relationship and then, if necessary, address the hat issue.

178

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

During one of her classes, the Deputy Principal came into the classroom and confronted the student, reiterating the school rule and demanding that he take the hat off. The student, who had been participating in the lesson, promptly swore and left the room. The teacher’s authority had been undermined and the trust had to be rebuilt.

There are a number of issues at stake here.

- While I firmly believe that high standards need to be set and maintained, I also believe it is necessary to provide appropriate support for all students to achieve those expectations. Forced compliance only creates anger, resentment, and a sense of powerlessness that can lead to further disruption and disengagement.
- If a teacher is not complying with agreed-on school policy, executive staff need to demonstrate respect by discussing the issue with the staff member in private to find out what is going on. What may look like laxity from the teacher may be an attempt to bring a student on board.
- When a teacher decides to use a different strategy with a student, it is probably best to discuss it with an executive teacher and explain the situation. If the executive teacher is reasonable, a well-timed conversation could head off potential misunderstandings.

**Does your school have a collaborative, consistent policy for behaviour management?**

**Is there scope for teachers to make decisions about how they implement the policies?**

**reflection questions**

**Do you ever find yourself “whacking moles”?**

**On a scale of 1–10 how would you rate your belief in, and use of, positive reinforcement?**

REINFORCEMENT RULES

**How do you positively reinforce your students when they are learning a new behaviour?**

**How can you remind yourself to positively reinforce your students?**

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Focus on the positive. What you give attention to will increase in intensity and frequency.
- Positive reinforcement causes the behaviour to occur again.
- The magic ratio for healthy relationships is five positives to one negative.
- Give encouragement for approximations of the desired behaviour.
- Use positive prompting for on-task students to encourage others to comply.
- Pick your battles. Give little or no attention to low-level behaviours in public.

180

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **CHAPTER 9**

#### **BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES**

#### **THAT MAKE SENSE**

*When a child can't read . . . we teach them*

*when a child can't multiply . . . we teach them*

*when a child can't swim . . . we teach them*

*when a child can't behave . . . we . . . (punish?)*

*–John Herner*

When I was in primary school, it was common for kids to be hit with a

thick leather strap, either on their bare legs or hands if they didn't do the right thing. And that could be for something as simple as not answering the bell immediately or talking while in lines. I distinctly remember a boy named Roy, who sat next to me in Year 3, coming back from getting the strap: the tears in his eyes, the humiliation at crying in front of other kids, and the unfairness of being hit repeatedly by an adult. He was the kind of kid who was always getting the strap and, though he could be annoying, in that moment I felt really sorry for him, and I knew that this would not help him change his behaviour. Even at eight years old I could tell he was a "wiggly" kid—he could barely sit still and listen, and he was always asking me for help with his work.

## BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE

181

The belief at the time was that children had to be physically punished so they would learn to behave correctly: "Spare the rod and spoil the child".

In those days, schools controlled students through fear, which often involved using the cane, the strap, public humiliation, and shaming.

While we have moved away from these Draconian behaviour-modification strategies, some of the approaches that schools call "consequences" are still punitive in nature. It's just like Shakespeare's "rose with a different name" . . . only not smelling as sweet! In many schools, "consequences" are still "punishments" in disguise. But it needn't be the case. Let's explore this further.

Punishment literally means to inflict a penalty as retribution for an offence. While consequences in school are still imposed, and designed to make the offender suffer in some way (miss out on something they enjoy or be excluded from school), then despite the name change they are still punishments. This includes removal of a student from the classroom or playground, in-school and out-of-school suspension, detention, and restitutive

activities which can make the

school safer for other students

but do little to improve a student's social skills, or teach them how

**Effective consequences**

to behave appropriately. Studies

**are not designed to**

have shown that the predominant

**be a deterrent for**

**inappropriate behaviour** teacher response to disruptive

**but to provide students** student behaviour is reactive and

**with the tools they need** punitive rather than proactive and

**to function emotionally,** positive. A reactive approach does

**physically, and cognitively** little to reduce disruptive student

**in the classroom**

behaviour (Clunies-Ross et al.,

**and beyond.**

2008; Kameenui & Sugai, 1993).

**John Maag, 2001**

Punitive responses don't change

behaviour in the long term

because they work in repressing

inappropriate behaviour in most

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

of the population, but they don't teach appropriate behaviour, and the behaviour is likely to return when the punishment is no longer present.

Punishment is not conducive to learning and turns teachers into "police" rather than facilitators of learning. When teachers are coercive, demanding compliance, they do nothing to develop self-regulation skills in students and can create a climate of fear. Punitive responses have been shown to increase levels of violence in schools (Hyman and Snook, 2000). Children who are hit learn to hit others as a way of dealing with conflict. Students who are punished are more likely to harbour resentment towards those who punish them and consequently lash out, due to feelings of powerlessness or anger.

### **hAVE A PLAN**

As the well-known behaviour expert Bill Rogers says, "It's about certainty rather than severity."

Even with every prevention strategy in place, there will be times when your students are off task and/or disruptive. If you have ever been stuck for what to do in the face of difficult behaviour, you will understand the significance of having a planned response for classroom behaviour. A plan will help you feel confident and calm.

Having a plan is more effective than trying to work it out on the spot and perhaps reacting in a negative or threatening way. It also prevents you from having an extreme reaction.

Most student behaviour is low level and more annoying than dangerous, so knowing what you are going to do will help you maintain the flow of lessons and keep your responses appropriate and respectful.

Decide in advance and teach your students explicitly what you are going to do when they display inappropriate behaviour. Better still, work out the plan with your students and allow them to have a say in how the class will deal with off-task behaviour. Use of a restorative circle could be part of your classroom



management plan, giving students the opportunity to talk about their behaviour and offer suggestions for how they can repair any harm.

## BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE

183

**Building a culture of using circles** Preparation for using circles: Build a cooperative approach to respectful relationships by running simple circles with a checkin and a cooperative game and a check-out before discussing any problems or issues. During these circles stress one person speaking at a time, no put-downs and everyone has the right to pass.

## SAMPLE PLAN FOR SOCIAL

### AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING LESSON

**preparation:** Write up lists of feeling words, provide cards with pictures of people showing obvious feelings, or use pictures of animals. There are excellent resources available for use in SEL lessons, with feelings cards, strengths cards and conversation building cards from St Luke's Innovative Resources at [www.innovativeresources.org](http://www.innovativeresources.org)

**Checkin:** How are you feeling? Go around the circle for each person to state their name and answer the question.

**Cooperative game:** The Big Wind Blows. This game mixes students up and encourages them to sit next to students other than their friends.

**Central Activity:** Share a time when you felt angry, what you felt like doing and what you actually did. Divide students into groups of 3. Brainstorm ideas for what you can do when you feel angry at school.

**Debrief:** Go around the groups and share ideas with the whole group.

**Energiser:** Up Down Up. This is a game that encourages laughter and movement to raise energy levels.

Go around the circle and give everyone the opportunity to answer the question.

**Check Out:** Name one thing you learnt today about how to deal with anger.

184

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



### LOW, MEDIUM AND HIGH LEVEL

#### BEHAVIOURS

Decide what you will do to respond to low-level student behaviours, such as being out of their seat, calling out, chatting, and interrupting. Use strategies such as selective attending, redirection, diversion, or distraction.

The more effectively you manage the low-level behaviours, the less likely it is that a student's behaviour will escalate because you will be proactively addressing the students' needs.

Decide what behaviours are medium level such as continued refusal, yelling,

climbing on furniture and running around the room and require you to consider giving a choice, using a planned script, or a time-out.

Decide what behaviours are high level such as tipping over desks, hurting other students and leaving the room and would require that you call for assistance, evacuate the class, or remove the student.

**BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE**

185

Example of a class behaviour response plan (not a comprehensive list)

**BEHAVIOUR**

**TEACHER RESPONSE**

Positive behaviours: on task,

Praise, reward system, refer

hands up, listening, discussing

to executive for positive

work, beginning tasks

reinforcement,

Distract, redirect to work,

positively reinforce students who

Low-level behaviours: out of seat, are on task, rule reminder with calling out, talking out of turn,

take up time, check for under—

phone out of bag, arguing

standing of work, change tempo

of lesson, incorporate movement,

provide a work break

Distract by giving responsibility,

Medium-level behaviours:

provide a work break, give

continuous low-level behaviours, rule reminder with take-up time, yelling,  
running around the

speaking to the student privately,

room, refusal to follow

give a binary choice (you can

teacher directions

complete the work on paper

or on the computer)

Model calm to other students,

High-level behaviours:

call for assistance and removal

continuous medium-level

of student (removal of class

behaviours, fighting, hitting,

if safety issue), with follow-up

punching, kicking, threatening

conversation with class

to harm a teacher or student

teacher. Debrief with class

and with colleague

186

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

When you are delivering consequences, use a calm tone of voice.

Convey the consequence in a neutral tone, referring to the class or school expectations (e.g., “the school agreement is phones in the bag or on the teacher’s desk”, then walk away and give take-up time).

Sometimes assuming the best can help keep student behaviour low level. One principal I know says to students who are on the phone during class time, “That must be an important text because you know the rule about phones. Finish your message then put the phone away.” This approach demonstrates respect to the student while still firmly insisting that the rules be followed.

Being creative is a bonus. Another teacher negotiated the use of phones with his class who agreed to put their phones in a box at the front of the classroom at the beginning of the lesson and retrieve them at the end.

## CONSEQUENCES AS A TEACHING TOOL

Threat of punishment works as a

deterrent for about 80 percent of

the population, but the remaining 20

percent need a different tactic. So, if our goal is to change student behaviour, we

**Any consequences you**

need to use an educational approach.

**use need to be part of**

The jails are full of people for whom

**your holistic strategy**

the threat of incarceration does not

**to teach students**

work so why do we think that loss of

**appropriate behaviour**

recess or suspension will change a

**and reduce incidences**

student's behaviour?

**of inappropriate**

**behaviour.**

Because threats only work for

approximately 80 percent of the

population we need a different

approach for the remaining 20 percent.

A student's behaviour is often their

**BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE**

187

best effort at that time. Teachers must look for opportunities to teach students to be successful and the purpose of consequences is to help them learn appropriate behaviours and to support them to adopt these behaviours.

When students display inappropriate behaviour they need:

### **Additional.explicit.teaching.of.appropriate.behaviour..**

This means additional instruction for targeted behaviours, either in small groups or individually. It may involve teaching a student how to calm themselves when they are upset, how to ask for help, how to access teacher attention, how to make friends, or how to lose in a game. Ideally this would be conducted by the classroom teacher, rather than a head teacher, school counsellor, or year coordinator, so that the teacher builds a stronger relationship with the student.

### **Individualised.support.to.display.appropriate.behaviours.**

As part of an individual plan, devise agreed-on cues between a teacher and a student to indicate off-task behaviour; regularly check in with the student to gauge their need for space, provide food or assistance with school work or equipment; collaborate on goal setting for their behaviour and their work; develop supportive relationships with other adults in the school setting; and create a time-out card for use when the student is feeling overwhelmed or anxious.

### **Increased.positive.reinforcement.**

Don't wait till the student is perfect at the desired behaviour; give praise liberally for attempts. Use praise, natural consequences, and an individual reward program linked to the class reward system.

For example, every time the student is successful, a primary class may gain a point, a marble in the jar, or a high school class gains an extra minute of free time at the end of the lesson.

188

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

### **A.well-considered.response.when.they.act.inappropriately..**

This is often when teachers struggle with what to say and do. That is why having a plan can help.

If a student is off task and needs to calm, you may say, "I can see you



are restless, Jo, how about you \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.” At this point, you can give the student a binary choice which you have pre-taught. For example, “You can go to the calming space or sit quietly with the rest of the class.”

Following a behaviour incident, instigate a discussion where the student is given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, with a trusted adult. This process is designed to help the student understand the repercussions of their actions, specifically how their behaviour affects others. As discussed in the stages of escalation, the timing of any discussion is relative to each student and must be conducted when all parties are calm.

This may be a time to revisit the plan and make adjustments if it is not working.

It is important to keep the response private to maintain the dignity of the student and the teacher.

## **CASE STUDY**

A Year 8 student who was constantly suspended and at risk of dropping out of school was given a second chance by a teacher who, at the end of her tether, decided to try something different.

She built on the relationship she had with him through a common sports club and decided to give him a leadership role in her class.

The role meant collecting data and being solely responsible for an important part of a class project. The student responded by stepping up to the task, and his behaviour in her class changed for the better.

## **BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE**

189

Some teachers felt giving the student a leadership role was rewarding poor behaviour.

**What. are. the. benefits. and. potential. problems. of. giving. .**

a. student. with. challenging. behaviour. a. position. of.  
leadership?

How.could.any.issues.be.prevented?

## **FAIR AND RESPECTFUL CONSEQUENCES**

Consequences need to be FAIR. Full stop. End of story. Your students have a keen sense of “fair”, and you owe it to them to make sure you satisfy their need to feel comforted by the fairness with which you operate your behaviour management.

**FAIR MEANS RELEVANT:** Relate the consequence to the behaviour— e.g., If a student is displaying inappropriate behaviour in maths, it does not make sense that they miss out on sport. They need to learn how to behave in maths. Investigate the reasons why maths is a problem (is it the time of day, the work expectation, or the student cohort?). Teach and reinforce appropriate behaviour in the context in which it occurs. Look at the function of the behaviour.

What is the student gaining or avoiding by their behaviour?

190

## **HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

Examples of Relevant Consequences **BEHAVIOUR**

### **TEACHER RESPONSE**

A student makes a

The student cleans

mess with paint

up the paint

A student hands an

They lose a percentage

assignment in late

of the marks or discuss with

the teacher why they were late

Give a binary choice:

“Tommy, I can see you are

A student is talking when the

having trouble listening.

teacher is talking

You can either stay seated with  
your friends or move to another  
seat, so you can listen”

They complete it at another

A student fails to complete  
time or discuss with the teacher

class work

why they were unable or

unwilling to do the work

A student speaks

The student and teacher discuss



disrespectfully to a teacher

the behaviour, and the student

thinks of a way to make amends

A student is working towards a

They don't receive the reward

reward and doesn't complete the

but are given the chance to

necessary task

work for the reward next day

or next lesson

‘Time Out’ for the student

Extreme disruption—i.e.,

or evacuation of the class,

unsafe or loud and aggressive

followed by a conversation

behaviour

with the teacher and/or

executive, when the student

and teacher are calm

**BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE**

191

Romi and Qui (2005) recommend minimising the use of aggressive disciplinary techniques as well as increasing the frequency of recognising productive behaviour (however rare) and gaining understanding by giving students a voice.

*Note: If any of these behaviours are an ongoing issue, then you need to investigate underlying causes and design an individualised success plan with the student* **FAIR MEANS KNOWN:** In an environment where expectations are

clear, the consequences also need to

be understood and expected. Teach

consequences ahead of time. Negotiate

the consequences with your students

**In a positive**

as part of your class expectations. If a

**classroom**

student has an individual behaviour

**environment,**

plan, teach the consequences to the

**students know**

student before you need to use them.

**that they will be**

**heard, that they**

**FAIR MEANS SUPPORTIVE: If will have to accept**

we accept that the purpose of any

**responsibility, and**

consequence is to help students

**that they will be held**

to learn more socially acceptable

**accountable for**

**their actions.**

behaviours, then support includes:

positive reinforcement for appropriate

behaviour; arrangement of secret cues

to let students know when they are

off task; and agreed-on cues for the

student to let the teacher know when

they need help.

Pre-correction (re-stating expectations immediately prior to any problem

situation), and regularly checking in with the student, is supportive and preventative.

Keep any consequences short and to the point. As soon as possible, give the student the chance to have another go at doing the right thing and get back to learning.

192

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

### CASE STUDY

A student in a juvenile justice facility would push her chair back from the table and fold her arms when she needed teacher assistance. This meant that she was feeling frustrated and angry.

As part of her individual plan, the teacher agreed that she would then move near the student and ask what question she was up to.

No one else knew that the student was unable to do the work so she could save face, prevent becoming aggressive, and progress academically.

**FAIR MEANS CONSISTENT:** Consistency does not necessarily mean that the consequence is the same for every behaviour or for every student. Fair does not necessarily mean “the same”.

It does mean is that your approach is consistently proactive, caring, and supportive; that you take into account the student’s background and needs; that you will listen to their side of the story; that you will maintain the dignity of all students; that you will start fresh every day with them; and that you will maintain high expectations combined with a high level of support and nurturing.

Consequences must be **RESPECTFUL**. Treating students with respect when they have had a behaviour incident helps them to recover, as well as demonstrating what we believe as educators; that all students deserve respect.

**RESPECTFUL MEANS PRIVATE:** Maintaining positive relationships with students is paramount, so humiliation and belittling of students can be extremely detrimental to the student-teacher relationship, as well as damaging to the student's long-term self-esteem. Furthermore, humiliating students by public shaming can produce resentment in the student and cause disruptive behaviours to continue.

## BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE

193

Allow students to save face by having private conversations and make it a point to listen to the student, as well as having your say. This allows you to maintain your dignity and prevents further escalation and the appearance of secondary behaviours.

If you are feeling angry, consider having the discussion at another time. You can model appropriate behaviour by saying, "I am feeling very angry right now. We will discuss this later when both of us are feeling calmer."

## **RESPECTFUL MEANS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY:**

Consequences are our opportunity to work with the student to get a different outcome next time. Students' inappropriate behaviour can be a learning opportunity for teachers (about the student), and for the student (about their environment).

Off-task or disruptive behaviour is information about the needs of the student and can show us what we need to teach them or how to assist them in adopting more productive behaviours.

Students with behaviour issues require explicit teaching, so any planned consequences must consist of additional social skills lessons, including modelling and practising of appropriate behaviour in a variety of settings.

## **CASE STUDY**

Many schools have a thinking seat or table, where students go

to “think” about their behaviour. In one school, there was even a “thinking room”. Students were sent to this room to contemplate what they had done.

A Year 8 girl had been given an English test sheet even though the teacher knew that she had missed most of the work and lacked the reading skills to complete it. The student swore at the teacher and walked out of the classroom. The student was understandably angry but had reacted in an inappropriate way and was sent to the thinking room by the Deputy Principal.

194

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**When.would.thinking.time.be.a.useful.strategy.for.a.student?**

**What.might.a.student.with.anger.management.issues.**

**need.instead?**

**reflection questions**

**What consequences have you put in place in your classroom?**

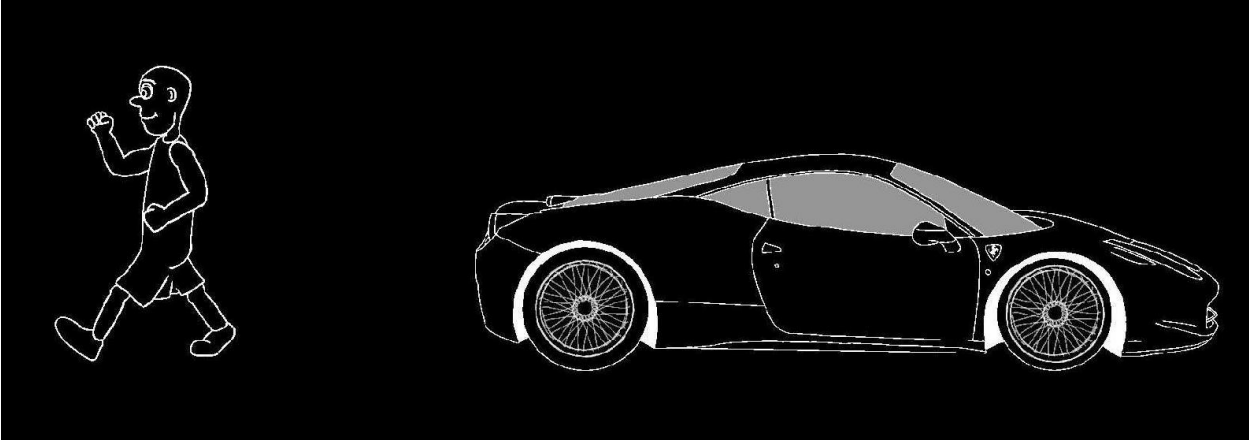
**Could your consequences be considered punishments by your students?**

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Effective consequences are designed to teach and support a student to behave appropriately.
- Consequences must be fair and respectful.
- For consequences to be successful they must be paired with positive reinforcement.
- Consider the function of the behaviour when determining consequences.

**BE LOGICAL-CONSEQUENCES THAT MAKE SENSE**





# CHAPTER 10

## CHANGING YOUR HABITS

*“Motivation is what gets you started.*

*Habit is what keeps you going.”– Jim Rohn*

Recently I read Robin Sharma’s *The Monk Who Sold his Ferrari*. I found the book so riveting that I stayed up all night reading and taking notes about ways to improve my life. It is a parable about a high-flying lawyer making a seven-figure income who sells everything and treks to India to find the secrets of a fulfilling life. It outlines a series of practices that, if included in your daily routines, will expand your mind and increase your effectiveness and happiness.

196

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

I took copious notes and was determined that I would adopt the simple practices in the book so I could dramatically improve my relationships: be a better partner, better mother, better friend, and an all-around better person.

Of all the strategies I read, meditation was the only one that I even started. At the point of writing this book, I have embedded **none** of the practices. Even though I know that it would be so good for my life!

As Shawn Achor, in *The Happiness Advantage* says, “Information is not transformation”. In other words, you must take action.

Have you ever made a New Year’s resolution to lose those last five kilos, to exercise regularly, or to take up a musical instrument only to find that all your good intentions have fallen by the wayside by January 10?

Looking back at times when you have been successful in adopting a new habit can give you some clues as to what works for you.

I did make a positive change to my exercise routine a few years ago, by

adopting certain principles. I had always exercised in the afternoon and evenings, for years considering myself not to be a “morning person”. I decided to change my routine and begin exercising in the morning after reading the research supporting better cognitive and emotional outcomes.

*Ideas don't work without you doing the work.*

—Robin Sharma

A couple of things helped me commit. I began by signing up and paying for an expensive group boot camp three mornings a week. I knew that I wouldn't want to waste the money I had paid, so I made a pledge to myself, and my partner, that I would be there every session. I then made it easy for myself to be on time in the morning by having my gym gear next to my bed so that I only had to get up, put my clothes on, and go. I was very pleased with myself that I did not miss one session of the boot camp, and I now consider early morning exercise part of my life.

This story of success leaves clues about ways to incorporate new habits into your teaching practice. You might even identify success stories of your own that were transformative for you.

## CHANGING YOUR HABITS

197

Start simply:

- **Build on existing habits.** Tweak strategies you already use to make them more effective. For example, if you have class expectations but they are not positively stated, revisit them with the class and get the kids to rework them.
- **Make it easy to adopt a new habit.** Have any equipment ready in advance; be prepared with what you will say when a student displays inappropriate behaviour; set up your reward system ready to go. If you make the processes as simple as possible, incorporating them into your practice will be easier.
- **Introduce one new habit at a time.** Rather than trying to do everything

at once, take one new management technique per week and include it in your repertoire. See how it works for you, making adjustments according to your personality and your class. Give yourself time to feel comfortable using the skill before you introduce another.

- **Tell a colleague the new strategy you are using.** This will commit you to action and may also inspire them to try something different. You will be considered a leader before you know it!
- **Get feedback from a colleague.** Ask a trusted peer to observe your classroom management practices and then discuss how you think it all went. Teachers are often isolated in their classrooms and are rarely given helpful feedback about their performance.
- **Identify barriers to improvement.** Recognise the factors in the environment that may stop you achieving change. If the teachers with whom you work have negative attitudes towards students, it may be difficult to implement positive behaviour-management strategies because they may undermine your practices and beliefs. Remember that all teachers are at varying stages in their careers and the best 198

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

thing you can do for your students is to implement effective classroom management. You never know, the other teachers might be asking you for your secret!

- **Celebrate small wins.** Don't wait until you do something perfectly before you give yourself a pat on the back.

Congratulate yourself if you make any change, knowing that next time you will do it better.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Identify what works for you when adopting new habits and repeat the formula.
- Recognise the obstacles that can get in the way of trying a new approach.
- Think of mistakes as learning opportunities.

## CHANGING YOUR HABITS

199

200

## RESOURCES

I have put together a list of some resources that I use and recommend to teachers.

### **Behaviour Management**

*10 Micro Skills*, by Christine Richmond Christine Richmond worked in Queensland, Australia, and her work on the essential skills of a classroom teacher has been adopted in a number of Australian states. Good teachers clearly follow and embody the ten skills.

*Classroom Management: A Thinking and Caring Approach*, by Barrie Bennett and Peter Smilanich

This is a really useful book, full of real-life examples from the classroom and helpful, practical, positive strategies.

*You Know the Fair Rule*, by Bill Rogers Bill Rogers is the guru of behaviour, and it is easy to see why. His advice is based on years of experience working with teachers, and he is realistic rather than prescriptive. He provides very clear and specific advice for what to say when dealing with problem behaviour.

*The New Teacher's Survival Guide to Behaviour (Second Edition)*, by Sue Roffey As the title indicates, this is a great book for new educators. From how to build relationships to looking after your own wellbeing, the work is very comprehensive.

Sue Roffey combines the practicalities of the classroom, with empathy and caring for students with behaviour issues.

202

## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

**Understanding.Challenging.Behaviour** *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School*, by Ross Greene These excellent books by Ross Greene delve into the issues facing students from difficult and chaotic backgrounds and provide a problem-solving approach for working effectively with these students.

### **Learning**

*Resources for Developing Thinking Skills*, by Ralph Pirozzo  
I love Ralph Pirozzo's work, and if you ever get the chance to see him in action as a speaker, grab it! His enthusiasm and energy is infectious and inspiring, and his processes for differentiation and engagement are amazing.

*Kagan Cooperative Learning*, by Spencer Kagan and Miguel Kagan  
Cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to work in pairs, threes or groups to complete a task, learn a concept or discuss ideas. Working cooperatively means that they learn valuable social skills as well as mentoring and teaching each other. The Kagans provide clear boundaries, frameworks, and learning strategies for simple set up in any classroom.

*The Rock and Roll Classroom*, by Rich Allen Rich Allen is a teacher, keynote speaker, and story teller as well as a musician. He is a master of his craft and has an engaging and inspirational approach to working with students. He has a PhD

in educational psychology and promotes brain-based learning strategies and effective use of music to improve learning. His research-based approach is motivating and easy to implement

in classrooms.

resources

203

*How Children Learn* and *How Children Fail*, by John Holt

I think everyone studying teaching should read these two books!

They document John Holt's experiences as a teacher and his relentless enthusiasm for his students. He has a unique way of looking at students, and his curiosity about the way kids learn has yielded very interesting perspectives for the classroom.

*27 Ways to Improve Classroom Instruction*, by Gary Phillips and Maurice Gibbons

This is a wonderfully practical and easy-to-read book with plenty of user-friendly examples of how and why to teach students to be self-directed learners.

*8 Ways at Once*, by Helen McGrath and Toni Noble Using Bloom's taxonomy, Helen McGrath and Toni Noble have written a useful and practical guide to differentiated teaching and learning.

*Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, by Eric Jensen Though this is not a new book, it is a useful publication and contains updated information about the brain and effective brain-based learning strategies.

### **Reinforcement**

*Rewarded by Punishment*, by John Maag This seminal article demonstrates the reluctance of teachers to use positive reinforcement because they think it is coercive but have no compunction about using punishment. An affirming and interesting read for anyone on the positive-behaviour approach journey.

204

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

*Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*, by Daniel Pink Daniel Pink is an inspiration! He writes in an engaging and easy-to-read style, backed up with current research. While his focus is often business, the precepts are useful and highly applicable to education.

*Mindset: How We Can Learn to Fulfil our Potential*, by Carol Dweck This is a ground-breaking book detailing results of years of research about how mindset determines what you can achieve. For teachers, Carol Dweck's work reveals that what we say to young people affects how they view themselves and consequently how well they learn.

*Encouraging Expected Behaviour*, by Tim Lewis This easy-to-read article details effective use of positive reinforcement with lots of practical ideas.

## **Restorative.Practices**

*Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools*, by Peta Blood and Margaret Thorsborn

Peta Blood and Margaret Thorsborn are the acknowledged experts in the field of Restorative Practices, and this book examines the issues of implementing those practices in schools and the importance of a whole school approach led by the top.

*Just Schools* by Belinda Hopkins This book provides a step by step approach to developing a whole school approach to Restorative Practices and contains a number of reproducible resources to gauge teacher understanding and commitment.



resources

205

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## HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

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211

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212

HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS



At [www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com) you will find loads of useful resources to help you:

- Set high expectations for all your students so that they reach and exceed their

potential

- Create a positive classroom culture where students feel safe to learn and make mistakes • Develop self-directed and independent learners who make choices for themselves and progress their own education
- Improve your students' social and emotional skills so that they get along with each other, take responsibility for their actions and make reparation when necessary
- Manage disruptive behaviour in ways that are respectful and maintain the dignity of students and teachers
- Adopt simple wellbeing practices that you can share with your students to show up each day as the best version of yourself. For information about workshops, coaching, school consultation and more go to

**[www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com).**

For resources and workshops about teacher wellbeing go to **[www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com](http://www.thehighlyeffectiveteacher.com)** For more about **Marie** go to **[www.marieamaro.com](http://www.marieamaro.com)** 215

# Document Outline

- [Foreword](#)
- [Welcome](#)
- [Chapter 1 How Beliefs Shape Your Teaching](#)
- [Chapter 2 Oh, Behave!](#)
- [Chapter 3 The Ineffective Teacher](#)
- [Chapter 4 It's All About the Learning](#)
- [Chapter 5 Creating Connections](#)
- [Chapter 6 The Secrets of Classroom Communication](#)
- [Chapter 7 The Power of Consistency](#)
- [Chapter 8 Reinforcement Rules](#)
- [Chapter 9 Be Logical-Consequences That Make Sense](#)
- [Chapter 10 Changing Your Habits](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [References](#)