



*Dr. Lori's 5 Proactive Behavioral Solutions....*

*That Work!*

1. **Examine and break down instructions:** Insure instructions are clear and concrete. Clear instructions are the cornerstone for a positive classroom environment. Teachers who embed instructions in extraneous information and give long dialogues of instructions can expect students to become confused and exhibit inattention and off task behaviors. Be prepared to break the task or lesson down into smaller parts called *task analysis*. Teachers may incorrectly assume a student has mastered a pre-requisite skill or thoroughly understands the directions yet the student is struggling to stay on task or complete the assignment because he/she does not understand the beginning steps. Know each step for the intended lesson or task and be prepared to break the skill into smaller steps if necessary to accommodate a student by switching to an introductory level or simpler task. It is important for teachers to move seamlessly within the lesson plan to maintain student behavior.
2. **Provide students with a variety of effective prompts.** Prompts are utilized to assist the student in mastering a new skill or maintaining appropriate behaviors. One type of prompt is *modeling* for students the appropriate response. For example, the teacher models the steps for turning in the homework to the yellow file in addition to the verbal instructions.

Another prompt is teacher proximity to the student. Proximity control has been used as an effective prompt by teachers to maintain positive behaviors and student engagement.

Teachers should sit or stand closer to students who are exhibiting mild behavior intrusions, i.e. turning around in seat or fidgeting with materials in desk. This technique should not be used as an act of authority if the behavior is more severe or has escalated to the point of crisis as the teacher should remain a safe distance from the student without direct body confrontation. Another type of prompts includes visual supports to identify classroom expectations. Visual signs for “sit quietly,” “hands to self,” and “eyes on the teacher,” can greatly increase student engagement and compliance. Written checklists are a helpful visual tool for students to review the required steps for completing an assignment. Caution is taken if the teacher is relying solely on verbal reprimands, verbal reminders, or verbal prompts to re-direct a student’s behavior.

3. **Respect all students equally.** It can be very demeaning to a student if a teacher states “he is just too lazy to finish his work,” or “she does not *want* to participate in class.” Applying or suggesting subjective statements to students with disabilities is inaccurate and denies the student important educational supports based on anecdotal opinions. If a student is displaying low-level interfering behaviors, talk to the student directly and discreetly to determine the cause. For example, a student who is off-task with their head on a desk may have experienced harmful bullying during the passing period. Teachers should seek to understand the root cause of the student’s misbehavior. To the extent possible, de-escalate with empathy and provide clear instructions with prompts for the initial steps of the required task. Avoid comments or directions from across the room that are general in nature, e.g. “you kids need to get to work.” Instead, approach the student and with a neutral voice tone state

the instruction, “Open your book to page 52.” Provide assistance as the student begins the task and quickly reinforce for on-task compliant behaviors.

4. **Implement self-management tools.** Student self-management tools are an effective system for monitoring student behavior. Research suggests that self-management techniques teaches students appropriate independent skills and helps to reduce interfering behaviors where students monitor and provide feedback on their behavior. The steps for self-management include: 1.) identifying a behavior or goal for reduction or to increase, e.g. reduce blurting out in class and increase raising hand to request assistance. The teacher may need to demonstrate the appropriate behavior and role-play with the student to practice. 2.) select a recording system and teach the student how to document their behavior, e.g. one tally mark for each time raising hand to request assistance or for a younger child they might circle the sad face when they get out of their seat without permission. 3.) the most important step for implementing a self-management system is identifying goals, reinforcers, and determining the criteria for receiving reinforcement, e.g. how many tally marks does a student need to earn 15 extra minutes on the computer? How many smiley faces does the student need to take a break on the computer? The teacher and student should monitor and evaluate overall success in order for the student to self-evaluate. This type of individualized intervention can be implemented for a short period to teach new skills, e.g. raising hand to request assistance for a two-week period. The program should be altered or faded based on data analysis and student outcomes.
5. **Write a student contract** A student contract includes the behavioral expectations and criteria for earning reinforcement. A contract is clearly written with criteria for student success and it identifies reinforcement for the student. As mentioned, reinforcers do not have

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to be costly or time-consuming. Students may select from a potential list of reinforcers such as reading the school announcements, eating lunch with the principal, listening to music during free time, selecting a game for the entire class, or selecting a tangible item from the treasure chest.

*For more effective strategies for addressing misbehavior,*

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