

Strengths Based
Classroom Management
with

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Difference is not a deficit 

In this packet you'll find the following tools to help you (re)set and (re)establish your classroom management after a break:

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Steps for (Re)Establishing Classroom Community

*Calm, well-managed and low stress environments are necessary for deep learning.
Follow these steps to “re-launch” your learning environment...*

1. Outline your **vision**. What does student learning look and sound like? How does your classroom community look, sound, and feel to you and to the students?
2. Reflect on **areas of strength and growth** (what is working and what’s not). You might begin by mentally walking through each day of the week and making notes in your planner. Notice patterns around transitions, subject areas, student groupings, routines, instructional methods, materials, time of day, etc.

Strength

Describe moments when students are learning and engaging positively with each other and with you.

Growth

Describe moments when learning is not happening, or negative interactions are occurring.

3. Craft a **plan** to achieve your classroom vision. Review the classroom management checklist (see next page) and choose two or three high impact strategies to add to your toolkit. Establishing expectations and logical consequences that relate to them, along with using quiet signals, are high impact strategies.

- How will you introduce new expectations or routines?
- How will you build relationships with individual students and the class as a community?
- How will students practice? How often, for how long? (For your reset to “stick” plan on significant amounts of practice: every day for at least a week, then every other day. You may need to revisit one expectation or procedure every day, indefinitely, to support students adequately. That’s ok! You will more than make up the instructional time.)

4. Monitor your **progress** and celebrate success. Revisit your vision regularly, and notice any growth on your checklist. Are students learning more? Are they engaged?

- ➔ *Tip!* Share your goals with someone. An administrator, a trusted colleague, or even a non-teaching friend can help you recognize little wins and examine what’s not working.

Simple Classroom Management Checklist

Expectations/norms/rules are ...

- explicitly taught and reviewed regularly
- positively worded, i.e. state expectations like “walk”, rather than “don't run”
- clearly posted and signed by students
- co-created by the students

Positive/appropriate student behaviors are...

- acknowledged more often than inappropriate behaviors (for individuals and the whole class).
- celebrated in large and small ways every day that connect actions to outcomes

I respond to behavior that does not meet expectations...

- with quick, direct, and private logical consequences or redirection (or ignoring minor inappropriate behaviors)
- without issuing multiple “warnings”
- with a calm voice and body language, even if I have to pause first

I give directions ...

- clearly and succinctly, with a visual support for multi-step directions
- when all or almost all students are quiet with still bodies and eyes on me
- by getting attention with a quiet signal (e.g. chime or silent raised hand; call and response or clap and response)

Most importantly, I also

- support students in self-regulating their own behaviors
- demonstrate genuine interest in students' well being
- use respectful and direct verbal and non-verbal language

My students ...

- know the classroom/school expectations and the reasons for them
- have many opportunities for meaningful choice throughout their day
- are engaged in lessons that are appropriately challenging

This checklist is grounded in a positive behavior supports for learning framework and influenced by the Responsive Classroom approach.

Classroom Management Checklist

Self-Assessment

<i>What's rockin'?</i> <i>(successes)</i>	<i>What's floppin'?</i> <i>(challenges/barriers)</i>

My plan to use successes to address challenges:

Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior

Teacher-Student Connection

- Learn about your student's interests, values, perspectives (this will help with the personal connection, too)
- Brief but regular check-ins: feeling cards or questions, baggage cards
- Non-contingent attention, e.g., "meet & greet"
- Teach strategies for asking you for help

Setting a Purpose for Learning

- Authentic audience: peers, family, government, public
- High interest materials
- Meaningful assessment
- College & career relevance
- Explicit connections

Personal Connection to Learning

- Provide options & choices
- Student-directed and collaborative learning
- Link to students' interests & real-world problems, issues, or applications
- Experiential learning: fieldwork, labs, interviews, simulations, role-plays...
- Learn from a practitioner's perspective (Think like a _____; imagine yourself as a _____, what would you do?). Bonus: Academic language!

Opportunities for Movement

- Write & post on a sticky wall or whiteboard
- Vote with your feet

- Alphabet game
- Vocabulary statues
- Ask students what kind of movement they like/use and why

Transitions

- Post announcements
- Music, lights or other attention getter (visual/auditory/hands)
- Do Now/Party Starter
- Silent or journal reflection
- Entry/Exit tickets
- Minimize rushing - watch your time (visual timer) i Classroom meeting (e.g., *Responsive Classroom*)

Self-Regulation

- Self-awareness (a pre-requisite for):
 - Self-monitoring
 - Self-reinforcement
 - Self-talk
- Teacher models self-awareness and goal setting through think alouds
- Chunking tasks (task analysis)

Positive Behavior Supports Principles:

- All behavior has meaning
- Self-determination and independence
- Clear and consistent expectations
- Focus on preventing challenging behaviors: proactive - Provide alternatives/replacements
- Small, medium, & large reinforcement

Sources

- Kauffman, J. M., Mostert, M. P., Trent, S. C., & Pullen, P. L. (2006). *Managing Classroom Behavior: A Reflective Case-Based Approach* (Fourth ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Lieber, C.M. (2009). *Getting Classroom Management Right*. esjr.com
- Responsive Classroom: www.responsiveclassroom.org*

Start Here: **Student Strengths***

What are strengths of your student/child? List as many as you can
(At least 25. Seriously, 25!):

How can you leverage those strengths to support or teach positive behavior?

*Hint: Teachers, do this before meeting with parents about a challenging behavior. Use these strengths not just to make a “praise sandwich”, but to find the most effective strategies to support positive behavior. If this exercise seems impossible, call Alexis and we’ll brainstorm.

From Exhaustion to Empowerment: Another Look at Behavior “Management”

Purpose

To reframe our understanding of behavior in order to help children develop positive behaviors, with more calm and less chaos.

Party Starter (a.k.a. “Do Now”)

1) One challenging behavior I encounter in my practice/home is:

>> Is the description observable and measurable, not a judgment?
Hint: Would a stranger know what you mean?

Set the Stage

What are your hopes and dreams for your child/student?
How does addressing this challenging behavior serve those goals?

What is “behavior”?

Behavior is _____ . All behavior has _____ ,

such as _____ , or _____ , and is often a way of _____ .

Dig Deeper

What's really going on with these challenging behaviors?

Strengths: “Build on the best” with a strengths-based approach

Hint: Dig deep!

In the challenging behavior I identified above, I also see these strengths:

How could this “problem” (for me) actually be a solution (for the child)?

In another context, how else could we interpret this behavior?

Function: What problem is the child solving? What need is being addressed?

Hint: Observe before/during/after challenging behaviors. Ask the student.

I wonder what the student is trying to communicate, avoid, or get?

What is happening before, during, or after the challenging behavior?

Flip it: What is happening before, during, or after the student is engaged?

So What?

That's nice. But these behaviors really are causing problems. Now what?

Proactive: Go backward to go forward and start with prevention.

Does the child have the skills or knowledge to be successful?

Are the expectations clear? Is there a way for children to ask for help?

Find a way to say “yes” to the child's need.

Responsive: Follow a clear, logical, and well communicated plan.

Do consequences build relationships, repair harm, and teach?

Challenging Behavior: A “problem” or a solution?

Challenging Behavior (<i>Observable</i> Description)	Function: What “problem” does it solve for the child?	Strength: What skills is the child demonstrating?
Strategies		
<u>Proactive</u>	<u>Responsive</u>	

Resources

snipsf.org/tips-tools/

“Rethinking Behavior,” “The Power of Positive Messages,” “Classroom Community 2.0”

baytreeblog.com/zenofbehavior

Podcast by Dr. Filippini

iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bi1/

“The Acting Out Cycle” and more!

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