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Teachers: Could You Use The 10 Best Classroom Management Interventions To Turnaround Problem Behavior?

By Ruth Wells

Unless you work with easy, mellow students, you will love our "Top 10 Best Classroom

Management Interventions to Turnaround Problem Student Behavior." These interventions are taken from Youth Change Workshop's Solution Center (

<http://www.youthchg.com>

). There are hundreds of

strategies on the site, ready to be used by teachers, counselors and youth workers. If classroom or group management is an on-going nightmare, it will take more than these ten new techniques to transform your class or group into a dream, so be sure to check out the web site for methods that are especially designed to rein in even the most uncontrollable students.

1. Teacher Telegram (or Counselor, Therapist... Telegram) A veteran, "world-class" special ed teacher was working with a student when the child suddenly flipped over his desk and fled the room. You won't believe what this teacher had done! She had written on the student's math paper! That child interpreted that help to mean that the teacher thought he was too stupid to do the work himself, and bolted from the room in anger. Of course, had this teacher known that the child would react in that manner, she would have been happy to let the child do the writing, or she could have written on scratch paper instead.

This incident is a classic, common situation that could have easily been avoided if only the teacher had known the child's views. The Teacher Telegram surveys your youngsters to gather the information you need to avoid problems that can perhaps be averted or minimized. Make your telegram have about five finish-the-sentence statements, and include queries like: "Some of the things I like about your class are...", "The one thing I wish you would do differently is...", "The one thing that helps me is...", "The one thing that does not help me is...", and "My other comments are..." You may be pleasantly surprised at how much this little device, done periodically, can reduce or end problems.

2. Studies have indicated that when girls are involved in sports, they are far less likely to become pregnant, drop out or engage in serious misbehavior. To encourage your female students to consider sports, ask your girls to craft collages or posters entitled "Silly Boys, Sports Are for Girls."

3. A Taste of the Real World It can be very hard to convince youth that they will desperately need education. For children who have very poor reading skills, here's an interesting and compelling activity. Create a menu in a foreign language and ask the students to order. To get you started, here are some Dutch dinner items, but you can also go to a page like [and enter English menu terms and have the words translated into German, French or other language](#). You may wish to actually serve some of the items your students order. Select items that are very likely to be viewed as distasteful, so you might consider offering treats like sardines, stewed prunes and liver, foods that might be thoroughly disliked, but are easy to purchase.

Choose Your Dinner Gebakken garnalen (Pan-Roasted Shrimp) Gegrilde lamskoteletten (Grilled Lamb Chops) Vegeratische pastachotel (Vegetarian Pasta) Rijstpudding met frambozencoulis (Rice Pudding)

When your students protest that they can't figure out what to do, let them know that could be their on-going adult experience in the world if they don't learn to read.

4. Education— You Can't Live Life Without It Ask your students to list out the most difficult things that

they may face during their lives. Elicit answers like manage a serious illness or find a job. After reviewing the list, ask the students to identify if education would help or hurt in each situation. Assist students to note that education almost always helps, and never hurts. Assist students to realize: Education— You Can't Live Life Without It.

5. There's Always Welfare Hurry up. Welfare is going the way of the buggy and 8 track tape deck. The number of welfare recipients has dropped a phenomenal 50% in the past six years. Plus, in most cases, you can be on welfare for five years and then you are out for life,— yes, life. The amount of money given out is down by as much as 90% in some places. The average person may live nearly 80 years so welfare may be available only 6% of the time. To convey how tiny 6% is to your youngsters, give 6% of your class a small treat, like a mint. Or, give each student \$300 in play money and then take all but 6% away, leaving each youngster with just \$18.

6. Three Little Lies To convincingly teach students how hard it is to tell and keep a lie, ask each youngster to tell three lies about things that are occurring that day. So, a typical lie might be: "I have pink hair," said by a brunette. Ask students to repeat each lie at least three times an hour all day. The next day, discuss how much energy, concentration and focus it took to maintain those lies, and relate the discussion to actual lies students have told in the past. Include in the discussion: "Who does lying really fool?" Assist students to realize that in many ways, the liar really most fools himself or herself.

7. Pay Attention Adults often expect young people to magically know how to pay attention, but no one may have actually taught the child how to do so. To teach the skills needed to pay attention, teach each of these five skills one at a time: Get your area ready, get yourself ready, watch the action, listen to the action, control your body. You should use pictures, rag dolls or other attention-grabbing devices to teach and drill the skills into habits. But, until you teach the skills, you shouldn't expect them.

8. **Can You Compute?** Internet and/or computer skills are becoming required for almost any job. You may have to scan a badge to clock in at your job, or log onto a network to get your assignments. Have your students strut their stuff by performing internet or computer tasks. Here's one to start: Find where to get bakeapples, and locate a shipper to transport. Answer: Bakeapples are a Newfoundland, Canada food; UPS could provide shipping. Discuss with students where they can hone key internet and computer skills.

9. **Computers Rule** For good or bad, computers are becoming absolutely key to everyday work and living. More and more mail is being sent over the internet, but at the same time, spam is becoming a bigger and bigger hassle. Here at Youth Change, we receive about 300 spams each day. It has gotten harder and harder to spot the real e-mail from the junk e-mail. In fact, an invitation to present our workshop in Europe was at first deleted as our spam deletion program thought it was junk mail. So, save up your real mail and junk e-mail (eliminating offensive or personal items) then ask students to sort through a very large amount of e-mail. Alternatively, create simulated e-mails to use instead. Note how many times important items like bills, renewal notices, and password information, are deleted. Be sure to include bogus virus alerts, e-mails containing "viruses", and deceptive offers in the e-mails you give students to process. When students mishandle items, note that education and computer training can help.

10. **Misbehaved Employees Wanted To** show students that present classroom management problems, that misbehavior won't be tolerated in the adult world, ask them to search the employment classified ads for employers who seek employees with behavior problems.

WANT MORE ANSWERS TO YOUR WORST "KID PROBLEMS?"

A quick Top 10 list is no replacement for having all the skills and information you need to work with youth and children. Based on the recent questions to the Live Expert Help Area of our web site, many professionals struggle with major gaps in their training. Many of you have said that you're uncertain how to rein in rowdy youth, or you wish you had a broader mental health base, or better understood what to do about fragile kids. We're here to help youth professionals help troubled youth. Consider getting our free Problem Student Problem-Solver magazine at our site, link below, or downloading some of our lightning fast, problem-stopping ebooks.

Ruth Wells MS is the director of Youth Change; click here.

<http://www.youthchg.com>

Get free samples

and see 100s more of her problem-stopping interventions at Youth Change's web site. Ruth is the author of dozens of books and ebooks, and conducts professional development workshops

Class Meetings

By Kim Olver

This article describes the process of conducting class meetings with students in a school, however, there is great applicability for office meetings held with employees, and even family meetings as well.

Class meetings should be held regularly and not simply be used for addressing problems, although problem solution is a valid use of class meeting time. The purpose of class meetings is to increase students' positive involvement with school, the teacher and each other; solve class problems; learn to think; build confidence, specifically in verbal ability; and bring relevance and usefulness to classroom instruction.

In a classroom, there are basically three types of class meetings. There is the social–problem–solving meeting, concerned with addressing some social behavior in school or the breaking of some classroom rule. There is the open–ended meeting, which is concerned with useful learning and the open discussion of a stimulating, useful and provocative subject. Finally, there is the education–diagnostic meeting, which is concerned with how well the students understand the concepts of a particular part of the curriculum.

Teachers need to be somewhat directive in the first meeting and thereafter as needed. Rules need to be established prior to the first class meeting or can even become the subject of discussion for the first class meeting. These rules need to be maintained throughout or discussed as a class if a need arises to change or alter the rules. During class meetings, teachers must be warm and enthusiastic, keeping blame, punishment and criticism out of class meeting time.

Class meetings should be conducted regularly—not only when there are problems to be discussed, perhaps three times a week. Meetings should be conducted with students seated in a circle so everyone can see each other interaction is enhanced. The length of these discussions should be appropriate for the age of the students—roughly their age multiplied by two is acceptable. No one should be allowed to criticize or put down another student.

The open–ended meeting should be used most often, even in environments where problems and behavior issues are the rule rather than the exception. Any intellectually important topic, both related and unrelated to school, could be fair game for discussion. Students are asked to discuss any thought–provoking question. This question should have relevance in their lives and could be related to the curriculum.

Educational–diagnostic meetings are always related to the curriculum the class is studying. This type of class meeting can be used by the teacher to assess whether or not the teaching strategies being used are effective. Teachers can ask the students questions to determine how much they know about an area already covered in class. This should never be used to evaluate individual students but only as a way to determine what the students collectively do and do not know.

Educational–diagnostic meetings can be used prior to a unit of study to determine what the students already know; after a unit of study to determine what was learned and ideas for application; to examine the students' perceptions about learning specific information and its usefulness; or to evaluate specific learning or communication skills, possibly vocabulary increase.

Since teachers can have a vested interest in wanting their students to have mastered material the teacher has taught, it might be useful to switch classrooms with another teacher to conduct education–diagnostic meetings to prevent any teacher bias.

During social–problem–solving meetings, students are included in the problem–solving process. The teacher or a student would identify an issue that needs to be discussed and resolved and the students are a major part of brainstorming and contributing to find the solution with the teacher acting as the facilitator and leader. In this way, everyone in the class takes responsibility for problem resolution, while at the same time students are learning valuable life problem solving skills.

All problems pertaining to the class as a whole or to any individual student in the classroom are appropriate for discussion. A student can bring up a problem or the discussion can be initiated by the teacher.

Dr. William Glasser says, "The discussion itself should always be directed toward solving the problem; the solution should never include punishment or fault finding." The teacher conducts the meetings in a nonjudgmental fashion. He or she may reflect what has been said by the group but should avoid giving his or her own opinion. Students are, however, allowed and even encouraged to express their opinions. It is helpful for other students to hear how they are perceived by their peers.

In order for each student to feel important and heard it will be helpful to have a "talking stick" or some other object available. In this way, whoever has the floor to speak will also hold the talking stick. No one else is permitted to speak until the person with the stick is satisfied that he or she has been heard by the others. Then the stick is passed to the next person with something to say.

Class meetings are a wonderful way to give your students the gifts of confidence and problem solving skills. They also help share the responsibility with the students for figuring out solutions to day–to–day situations that arise in the classroom.

Kim Olver has over 20 years experience in staff development and supervision and is an expert in leadership skills, staff relationships and diversity. Certified in reality therapy/choice theory/lead management/quality school concepts, she works with counselors, schools and businesses to apply these ideas.

<http://www.coachingforexcellence.biz/SchoolRT.htm>



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