

19 Myths Of Managing Difficult Students

February 2, 2019 by Michael Linsin

There is a mountain of misinformation about how to manage difficult students.

It's on a never-ending loop.

Cycling through every school. Wafting down every hallway.

And passing from teacher to teacher.

At best, it's confusing, contradictory, and difficult to apply consistently.

It also does little to actually *change* behavior.

Because, you see, most advice on how to deal with difficult students fails to address the root cause.

Instead, it's a band-aid that may mollify behavior in the moment – which is why teachers continue to use it – but is ultimately ineffective.

Much of it is also bad for students and their academic and emotional development.

To set the record straight, and help you recognize harmful strategies when you see them, here are nineteen common myths about managing difficult students.

1. You need to [convince](#) them to behave.
2. You need to give them [more attention](#).

3. You need to give them [choices](#).
4. You need to pull them aside for [pep-talks](#).
5. You need to “[catch them doing good](#).”
6. You need to [put limits](#) on them.
7. You need to [pick your battles](#) with them.
8. You need to [get tough](#) with them.
9. You need to [ignore](#) them.
10. You need to [reward them](#) for good behavior.
11. You need to [send them to the principal](#).
12. You need [them to explain](#) their misbehavior.
13. You need to [praise them](#) often.
14. You need to use [proximity](#) with them.
15. You need them to fill out [reflection forms](#).
16. You need to use [behavior contracts](#) with them.
17. You need to [redirect](#) their behavior.
18. You need to let them know when they have [a good day](#).
19. You need to [treat them differently](#) than the rest of your class.

You

The entire notion that managing difficult students must be stressful, complicated, and a daily struggle is a myth in itself.

So is the idea that they are who they are and thus need to be appeased, manipulated, coddled, threatened, and bribed just to get through the day.

It's all hogwash.

Once you have an understanding of what they *truly* need it becomes not so difficult after all.

You realize that they're just kids in need of direction and recalibration. They're kids in need of someone to restore their dignity and switch on their intrinsic motivational engines.

They're kids in need of someone to unlock the potential lying dormant but churning restlessly inside.

That someone is you.

Note: I included links to make it easier to learn why each strategy is ineffective and **what to do instead**. Keep in mind, however, that in most cases there are several articles that address the problem.