



3 Big Mistakes Teachers Make When Enforcing Consequences

by Michael Linsin on August 1, 2015

Last week we talked about [how to be consistent](#) with your classroom management plan.

Which is especially important to begin the school year.

This alone will go a long way toward creating the learning environment you really want.

Once you've conquered this challenge, however, there is another pitfall looming around the corner.

You see, *how* you enforce your plan in no small part determines how effective it will be.

Get it wrong and you risk nullifying the many benefits of being consistent. Get it right and it's smooth sailing.

What follows are three big mistakes teachers make when enforcing consequences.

You'll do well to avoid them.

1. Showing displeasure.

It's normal to occasionally feel disappointment or frustration when a student misbehaves, particularly if it interrupts the class. But you must never show outward signs of it.

Sighing, glaring, frowning, and the like create friction and animosity, which takes the focus off the student and their misbehavior and makes it a personal feud between you.

So instead of reflecting on their misbehavior, taking responsibility for it, and vowing to never do it again, they'll grumble under their breath and seethe in anger at you.

2. Waiting for a response.

Another common mistake is to enforce a consequence and then wait for a response. Most teachers do this because they want the student to verbally answer for their misbehavior.

But this isn't what your classroom management plan says. Further, waiting for an explanation – or coming right out and [asking the student why they misbehaved](#) – is an invitation to argue.

It provides an opening for the student to justify for their misbehavior, point the finger elsewhere, or try to convince you that you didn't see what you just saw. It's also a stressful and monumental waste of time.

3. Adding your two cents.

The final big mistake usually crops up when the teacher decides to escort the student to time-out – which is a no-no. It may also come later while checking on the student in time-out.

Instead of allowing the consequence to work, the teacher will express their disappointment in the student. They'll tell them how they should feel, what they should think, and how they should behave the next time.

But this interferes with the student coming to these conclusions on their own, which can be a powerful experience and **the very point of time-out.**

How To Enforce

[Enforcing consequences effectively](#) is a quick and painless process.

As soon as you witness misbehavior, calmly approach the offending student, look them in the eye, and deliver your line:

"You have a warning because you broke rule number two and left your seat without raising your hand."

Then turn and walk away.

When a student misbehaves, your only job is to inform. It's to hold accountable in the least disruptive way so your classroom management plan can do its good work.

This way, you safeguard your relationship with the student. You allow them to ponder their mistake and take responsibility for it.

You empower them to learn and mature and leave their misbehavior behind them