



An Easy Way To Keep Your Cool When Students Misbehave

By Michael Linsin on January 9, 2016

When enforcing consequences, think like a referee.

A referee's job is to make sure players abide by the agreed-upon rules of the game. That's it. They make no judgments or decisions of their own accord.

They have a rule book that lays out the parameters of the game, and they pledge to follow it to the letter.

They watch the action closely, and when they see a foul or penalty, they blow their whistle and apply the specified consequence. It's automatic, something they do without pause or timidity.

A good referee is defined by their calm and consistent adherence to the rule book—the purpose of which is to make the game safe and fair for all participants.

When a good referee is in charge of a game, play is smooth, competitive, and representative of good sportsmanship.

Fans hardly realize they're even on the court or playing field.

When there is an inconsistent referee, however, or when they insert themselves and their personal feelings and biases into the process, they lose control of the game.

Play becomes sloppy and uneven. Players and coaches grow angry and frustrated. Fans complain and throw popcorn.

As an SCM reader recently pointed out, the game becomes unwatchable. In this one way, refereeing is similar to teaching.

Teachers who are inconsistent and enforce consequences based on how the misbehavior makes them feel, who is doing the misbehaving, or the perceived severity of the misbehavior also lose control.

Students grow angry and resentful. The classroom becomes noisy and chaotic. Parents complain and throw popcorn.

The best way to keep your cool when you notice misbehavior is to call 'em like you see 'em.

As soon as a student strays from your rule book ([classroom management plan](#)), follow through like a referee in the Super Bowl.

No hesitation. No Fear. No Anger.

Because when you focus on being a good referee, not only will you have excellent control of your class, but keeping your cool will be easy.