



How To Break One Bad Habit And Improve Every Area Of Classroom Management

by Michael Linsin on July 23, 2016

For the past dozen years or so, I've had the opportunity to see many teachers in action.

And there is one particularly bad habit that is common among those who struggle with classroom management.

It's usually not their only bad habit, mind you.

But it's an important one.

It's an important one because it affects nearly every area of effective classroom management.

It is this:

They take their eyes off their students.

Now, I don't mean simply that they glance away for a second or two.

I mean that they turn their back. They look away for long stretches. They become so engrossed in instruction, busywork, helping, guiding, planning, thinking, etc., that they have little awareness of the rest of the class.

What's interesting is that most struggling teachers don't even realize it.

If we were to place a video camera in their classroom, their jaw would drop at the misbehavior going on right underneath their nose.

The truth is, if you want to have a well-behaved class, you must be observant. You must be mindful and aware.

You must be a keen and vigilant watcher of your class.

Here's why:

You'll be consistent.

You can't be consistent if you don't see when your students misbehave. And inconsistency equals increased misbehavior every time.

By the same token, if you're able to catch misbehaving students in the act, and you faithfully hold them accountable, then misbehavior decreases, often entirely.

You'll have the truth.

When you personally witness misbehavior, you have truth on your side. You have [the only proof you need](#) to swiftly and calmly follow your classroom management plan.

Which not only saves time, but it also saves a mountain of headaches trying to get to the bottom of what happened and who is responsible.

You'll avoid arguments.

When a student knows that you saw their misbehavior with your own two eyes, they're far less likely to [argue](#) and far more likely to take responsibility.

In time, as your class realizes that you miss nothing – or next to nothing – they no longer even consider arguing or complaining, let alone misbehaving.

You'll have trust.

Students become resentful when their right to learn and enjoy school is trampled on by misbehaving students. A sense of unfairness pervades the classroom.

Simply being observant, and thus well equipped to protect your students from disruption, builds a deep reservoir of trust, likability, and rapport.

You'll have presence.

When you prove that you're forever watching and on the ball, your students will start believing that you have super powers or eyes in the back of your head.

Which is a characteristic of presence: that indescribable something that engenders confidence in you, your leadership, your instruction, and every word from your mouth.

You'll have respect.

Once you get the reputation for being all-seeing, your students will begin to *feel* [the weight of your steady eye](#) and consistent follow through. So much so that misbehaving will no longer cross their mind.

There is something about breaking rules within the full view of a respected, well-liked teacher that makes students very uncomfortable. At the same time, it makes doing the right thing easy, even pleasurable.

Yes, You Can

We receive a lot of emails from teachers wondering what to do if they don't see the misbehavior or who is responsible.

And we're happy to [tackle this topic](#).

But it's always better and more effective to avoid being in that situation to begin with. It's always better to see the wrongdoing with your own eyes.

But is it really possible? Is it realistic to expect to see everything? While it's true that you can't expect to *never* miss an act of misbehavior, you can come pretty close.

After all, vigilance is a skill you can become expert at over time.

The key is smart positioning, active peripheral vision, and the shrewd insistence on verifying every expectation you set for your students.

If you find you need to help an individual student, and you're not in a position to view the rest of the class, then you would ask the student to meet you at a desk or table along the outskirts of the room.

If you're working with a group, during rotations, for example, then you would rely on frequent, unpredictable, and return glances – as well as a [thorough and highly detailed group preparation process](#).

At all times, however, you must stay in the moment. Keep your students in front of you.

And watch 'em like a hawk.

PS – The Smart Classroom Management Plan For High School Teachers is now available. [Click here](#) for more information.

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