



## How To Rid Your Classroom Of Student Interruptions

So you've got this great lesson.

You're excited, worked up, really feeling it. Everything is groovy, near perfect. You're telling this cool story and your students are rapt – leaning forward, eyeballs glued to your every move.

It's a special moment. And so much fun. *This* is why you teach.

But before your story can reach its climax, just as you're revving up the crescendo, a student barks out, "Hey, I saw a movie like that once!"

Wamp wamp waaa . . .

Ah yes, interruptions are a momentum killer of the highest order. And although you'll grit your teeth through your frustration, gather yourself, and soldier on like a pro, it's just not the same.

The moment is lost forever.

The truth is, interruptions of any kind, special moments or not, can profoundly affect your ability to motivate and inspire your students.

If you are to do your job well, there is no way around it: you must rid your classroom of student interruptions.

Here's how in three simple steps:

### **1. Make eye contact.**

When a student interrupts, it's easy to fall into the trap of answering or responding to the interruption. But doing so will grant permission to anyone and everyone to barge in and ask, comment, or opine whenever the mood strikes.

So when a student cuts you off in mid-sentence, it's best not to say a word. Instead, stand in place and make calm but steady eye contact. There is no need to glare, sigh, or make obvious your frustration.

### **2. Pause.**

While continuing eye contact, pause for five to ten seconds to allow the weight of the interruption, and the supreme downer it causes, to sink in. Letting students come to their own realization about their misbehavior will make the lesson much more impactful.

A brief pause also underscores the impoliteness of interrupting anyone in your classroom – student or adult alike. The best part is that your message will reach every student in the room, without having to spell it out for them.

### **3. Enforce**

All unwanted behavior, no matter how innocent, must be backed by your classroom management plan. Powerful as they are, the first two steps will prove ineffective if you don't hold your students accountable.

So after pausing and allowing the offending student a moment of reflection, calmly inform her (or him) of the consequence. *“Kate, you broke rule number two and have **a warning**.”* Then move on. Return to whatever you were doing as if nothing happened.

## Freedom

This simple, ten-second strategy will forever eliminate interruptions from your classroom, and in a way that doesn't feel harsh, involve a cutting rebuke, or discourage polite, appropriate means of participation.

Think of the freedom.

Without the ever-present possibility that one of your students will throw a wet blanket over your best lessons, or even your most ordinary classroom routines, you'll be free to really inspire your students.

You'll be **free to laugh**, free to pause for dramatic effect, and free to tell great stories. You'll be free to progress unencumbered through the curriculum and free to give plain old, run-of-the-mill directions.

You'll be free to be passionate or animated or businesslike or silently observant.

In other words, you'll be free to teach