

Ineffective and Effective Teacher Responses to Student Misbehavior

Review the table and reflect on the ineffective and effective responses and the positive reinforcement regarding the misbehavior. Consider the strategies you have taken to address such misconduct.

Example of Misbehavior	Ineffective Teacher Response	Effective Teacher Response	Positive Reinforcement	Your Reflection
A student runs down the hall.	<p>"You know better than that! Stop running!"</p> <p>Outcome: Student feels put down and ashamed.</p>	<p>"Remember, walk down the hall!"</p> <p>"I see students running down the hall."</p> <p>Outcome: Students are reminded of the rule and know what to do, especially after the teacher models the appropriate behavior.</p>	<p>When the student walks in the hall, celebrate in the classroom: "I was so proud of you for walking!"</p>	
Students are too noisy.	<p>"Stop talking so loud!"</p> <p>Outcome: Students receive the message "Do as I say, not as I do."</p>	<p>"Remember, use your inside voice."</p> <p>"How quiet should our voices be when we are inside?"</p> <p>"I hear really loud voices."</p> <p>Outcome: Student is reminded of the rule and knows what to do.</p>	<p>When students talk at an appropriate volume level, celebrate and acknowledge with specific praise: "You certainly know how to use your inside voices. It sure makes learning fun and possible."</p>	
A student leaves a book or other materials in his or her locker.	<p>"Go back to your locker and get it."</p> <p>Outcome: The student then misses part of the instruction and context of the class. (Some students purposefully use this excuse to get out of class.)</p>	<p>"You may borrow our classroom copy or share with a peer until next time."</p> <p>Outcome: The focus remains on learning, not being distracted by details or excuses that just waste time and energy.</p>	<p>Affirm students the next time they bring materials to class: "I'm so proud that you remembered all your materials!"</p>	

Example of Misbehavior	Ineffective Teacher Response	Effective Teacher Response	Positive Reinforcement	Your Reflection
<p>Students are having sidebar conversations at inappropriate times, such as during a lecturette, teacher-focused demonstration, or activity.</p>	<p>“Be quiet!”</p> <p>Outcome: The whole class is pulled off task and off topic. Energy and flow of the classroom focus on the negative behavior instead of the expected behavior.</p>	<p>“Summarize what I just said.”</p> <p>“Come up with an example of the learning being addressed.”</p> <p>“Write two questions on a sticky note and share them with the class.”</p> <p>Outcome: Students often try to make connections with sidebar conversations because they feel lost or confused. Involve all students in the content and turn the side conversation into an opportunity to reflect.</p>	<p>Teach students to honor responses from their peers even if they say something with which they disagree:</p> <p>“Share a comment you heard from your classmate.”</p> <p>This reflection from a peer reinforces the important contribution made to the classroom.</p>	
<p>Students have a strong emotional reaction to an event (for example, a pep rally, holiday, bad news, or a fight) that has potential to derail the class.</p>	<p>Ignore the reaction.</p> <p>Outcome: Students have the event on their minds and are distracted throughout class.</p> <p>“Look, you’re in my class now. That was before class, straighten up.”</p> <p>Outcome: The teacher tells the student to stop feeling sad, angry, or hurt, and the student feels uncomfortable and remains unengaged in class.</p>	<p>“Are you all right?”</p> <p>Outcome: Students are able to decompress and connect with the teacher.</p> <p>“What emotion are you feeling? Share your thoughts with a peer.”</p> <p>Outcome: Even seemingly insignificant issues can consume students’ minds. Honoring students’ feelings upfront ensures the problem does not escalate and allows them to move on instead of remaining off task.</p>	<p>Allow students to talk about the situation to show empathy, build trust, and open the door of communication. Show students that whatever they are experiencing is OK.</p> <p>Reinforce students’ comfort levels through talking to them and allowing them to tell the real story.</p>	

Example of Misbehavior	Ineffective Teacher Response	Effective Teacher Response	Positive Reinforcement	Your Reflection
<p>After the teacher calls on a student, the student shrugs his or her shoulders and says, "I don't know."</p>	<p>"Well, you know the rule! Call on someone."</p> <p>Outcome: The teacher's demeaning and impatient tone offends the student. Demanding an answer right away, moving to another student, or answering yourself encourages a "faster is better" mode of thinking. Thinking deeply takes time.</p>	<p>"You may answer, partially answer, or pass the question to another student."</p> <p>Outcome: The teacher's calm restatement of the established procedure or rule encourages the student.</p> <p>"If you did know, what might you say?"</p> <p>Outcome: The additional question allows the student to think through a response.</p>	<p>Affirm that it is acceptable to take the time to formulate thoughts, because it is an opportunity to learn: "Write down how you might answer the question. Then, turn and talk to a peer and share your possible answers." Then, call on students again.</p> <p>Ask students to reflect on why they say "I don't know." Celebrate when "I don't know" moments turn into learning moments.</p>	
<p>Students give partial answers to a question.</p>	<p>"You know you know more than that. You have got to explain that better."</p> <p>Outcome: The teacher's frustrated and impatient tone offends students.</p>	<p>"Turn to a partner and write down your thoughts about this question."</p> <p>Outcome: The classroom works together to construct an appropriate response. Ask probing questions or remind students of certain events to help trigger the correct response.</p>	<p>Model answers and offer specific comments on student responses that are effective.</p>	