

Chapter 7: Reflective Practice

Use the following steps to help make the invisible visible in your classroom.

1. Think about the class or classes you teach. Do your students generally have a good sense of their overall academic progress in a consistent fashion? If you are unsure, ask a few of your students, especially those students who are not doing as well as you expect them to.

If you answered *no* to this question, think about how you could incorporate the mark-chart strategy with your class. You can access the template shown in figure 7.1 (page 75) at go.SolutionTree.com/behavior, or you may wish to modify this strategy to make it more contextually specific for the students you are teaching. Whatever strategy you finally choose to enact, the key element to having this impact your students is that you have incorporated structures in your classroom whereby students see their progress at least twice a week.

2. Think about the attendance patterns of your class or classes. If you find that there are students whose attendance is causing them to underperform, think about implementing something akin to the thunderbird attendance poster strategy.

Please remember what you learned in chapter 6 (page 59) about changing habits—small steps, then bigger steps. You may want to create an attendance image for a student that only tracks attendance for one month or, if the problem is significant, even one week. The intention behind the image is to provide a visual prompt on a continual basis so the student can set an attendance goal and see the degree to which he or she has succeeded in meeting it.

3. Think about having your students write down a grade goal they are willing to work to achieve in your class. Be sure to phrase the question along these lines: “What grade are you prepared to work to achieve in this course?” Follow this question with a clear description of what it takes to achieve an 85 percent or an A+, for example. Thus, students can select a grade goal that is realistic.

Next, have students post their grade goal in a public place. This can be on their nameplates if you use these, on a corner of their desks—whatever works given your classroom context.

4. The next time you find yourself negotiating with a student to agree to change their behaviors (be this about attendance, academic performance, or classroom disruption), try using the mimicking strategy. However, remember the instructions given to the Maddux and colleagues (2008) participants who were able to gain a lot of cooperation from their counterparts. In the following, I modified their instructions for teacher use (Maddux et al., 2008):

Successful negotiators recommend that you should mimic the mannerisms of the student you are trying to persuade in order to increase your chances of getting them to cooperate with you. For example, when the student rubs his or her face, you should too. If he or she leans back or leans forward in the chair, you should too. However, it is very important that you mimic subtly enough that the student does not notice what you are doing; otherwise, this technique backfires. Also, do not direct too much of your attention to the mimicking so you don't lose focus on the outcome you are attempting to achieve with this student. Thus, you should find a happy medium of consistent but subtle mimicking that does not disrupt your focus.

5. Think about Kahneman's (2011b) findings in regard to how much better students perform on intuitive tasks when they are in a good mood before the test by having them think happy thoughts. Remember, *student accuracy more than doubled*. The next time you are having your students perform a System 1 task, try establishing conditions that put your students in a good mood, and you will likely see a significant improvement in their performance. This can be as simple as having them remember the last time they laughed really hard or the most recent time they felt really happy. This is a relatively quick and easy way to improve student performance and make everyone feel better at the same time.

Sources: Kahneman, D. (2011b). Thinking, fast and slow (7th ed.). Canada: Doubleday Canada; Maddux, W. W., Mullen, E., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Chameleons bake bigger pies and take bigger pieces: Strategic behavioral mimicry facilitates negotiation outcomes. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 44(2), 461–468.