



Creating Positive & Productive Classrooms

Review Notes

The Big Idea

Behavior is communication.

Instead of asking:

"How do I stop this behavior?"

Ask:

"What is this student trying to communicate?"

Behavior often tells us that a student is experiencing something they don't yet have the skills or words to express.

Behavior May Be Communicating...

- A need for connection or attention
- Anxiety or fear
- Fatigue
- Overstimulation
- Frustration
- Lack of confidence
- Confusion
- Sensory needs
- Boredom
- Developmental limitations
- Difficulty with emotional regulation

Remember: Students are not always giving us a hard time. They may be having a hard time.

Behavior Looks Different at Different Ages

Toddlers & Preschool

Developmentally appropriate behaviors include:

- Short attention spans
- Separation anxiety
- Difficulty with transitions
- The need to sit and observe before participating
- Impulse control still developing
- Learning through movement
- Emotional regulation borrowed from trusted adults

Elementary

Students are beginning to:

- Compare themselves to peers
- Seek fairness
- Build confidence
- Fear making mistakes
- Value friendships and belonging
- Still struggling with impulse control

Tweens & Teens

Behavior is often influenced by:

- Identity
- Peer approval
- Fear of embarrassment
- Perfectionism
- Desire for independence
- Still struggling with impulse control

Adults

Adults may also struggle with:

- Fear of failure
- Negative self-talk
- Perfectionism
- Comparing themselves to others
- Feeling vulnerable while learning something new

Behavior changes with age, but communication doesn't.

Prevent Before You Correct

The best behavior management happens before the behavior occurs.

Helpful strategies include:

- Predictable routines
- Clear expectations
- Smooth transitions
- Keeping students engaged
- Limiting unnecessary waiting time
- Age-appropriate pacing
- Positive classroom energy
- Consistency
- Building confidence through success

Remember: Prevention is more effective than reaction.

Respond. Don't React

When challenging behavior occurs:

- Pause before responding.
- Stay calm.
- Protect the student's dignity.
- Redirect rather than embarrass.
- Offer appropriate choices.
- Keep expectations consistent.
- Prioritize safety when necessary.

A calm teacher helps create a calm classroom. A majority of the time, the behavior being displayed is not really about you.

Connection Before Correction

Positive relationships are one of the most effective classroom management tools.

Students thrive when they:

- Feel safe
- Feel seen

- Feel respected
- Know what to expect
- Trust their teacher
- Believe mistakes are part of learning

Simple ways to build connection:

- Learn names quickly.
 - Greet students as they enter.
 - Celebrate effort, not just achievement.
 - Notice improvement.
 - Encourage persistence.
 - Create opportunities for every student to experience success.
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Questions to Ask Yourself

Before responding to a behavior, consider:

- What might this student be communicating?
 - Is my expectation developmentally appropriate?
 - Is there something in my classroom that could be contributing to this behavior?
 - Does this student need correction, connection, encouragement, or support?
 - How can I respond in a way that teaches rather than simply punishes?
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Final Takeaway

Whether a student is 3 years old or 63 years old, people learn best when they feel:

- ***Safe***
- ***Respected***
- ***Encouraged***
- ***Capable***

Our goal is not simply to control behavior. It is to create an environment where positive behavior can grow.

Our greatest classroom management tool isn't control, it's connection.