

## Mentoring Minds' Research on the Behavior Guide

Effective teaching and learning cannot occur in a poorly managed classroom. When standards for the guidance of behavior in a classroom are absent, chaotic behavior can result with the students becoming disorderly and disrespectful. Teachers struggle to teach and students, more times than not, learn much less than they would in a well-managed classroom where instruction can thrive.

Researchers, Ornstein and Levine (1981), have recommended that the use of humor by teachers can capture the interest of students and reduce tension. The removal of distracting materials can increase attention and decrease classroom disruption.

Research has found that elementary and secondary teachers who focus on effective practices that manage behavior at the beginning of the year beginning on the first day yield more positive results. Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson (1980) and Evertson and Emmer (1982) reported research findings that show teachers who were ineffective managers of their classrooms at the beginning of the year found difficulty in establishing and maintaining control as the year progressed.

A similar conclusion supported in several studies (Kounin, 1970; Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson, 1980; Evertson and Emmer, 1982) advocated that classroom management plans in place at the beginning of the school year are critical to less student misconduct. The *Behavior Guide* assists teachers as they create an effective learning environment, communicate clear expectations, and develop consistency in enforcing behavior standards.

Research reveals that the teacher is likely the most important factor affecting student achievement (Wright, Horn, and Sanders, 1997). This finding, as a result of a study involving approximately 60,000 students, clearly implies that education can be improved by improving the effectiveness of teachers. Haycock (1998) studied this research, and that of others, leading her to share that differences in student achievement existed between students placed with a highly effective teacher and those placed with a highly ineffective teacher.

Effective teachers must model, teach, demonstrate, and allow students to practice the precise behaviors they expect. Using an approach that includes a variety of communication techniques facilitates the success of all types of learners as they comprehend the "how" of what is expected. Numerous studies were conducted to determine the value of teaching students using their preferred learning styles (Dunn, Griggs, Olson, Beasley, Gorman, 1995). The finding revealed educational interventions matched to the learning styles of the students would favorably impact student achievement.

Discipline is one of the most troubling, universal problems teachers face (Edwards, 1993). A range of inappropriate behaviors from students talking out in class to assault were reported in a 1997 Information Needs Survey. The need to address discipline and consequences, classroom environment, redirection, and misbehavior in general surfaced as a result of this survey.

Long, Frye, and Long (1989) found that effective teachers cannot prevent all discipline problems. Even these teachers will need assistance as they strive to promote a positive approach to classroom management. The potential for problems prevails outside of academics, thus the need to address the parents as part of the plan for behavior management. All teachers need to be aware of triggers that might lead to a negative behavior of a student. The *Behavior Guide* identifies many triggers to assist teachers in knowing what to look for and how to redirect instruction.

Emmer, Sanford, Clements, and Martin (1983), using an analysis of several studies, indicated that teachers should involve students actively in instructional activities. Furthermore, these researchers noted that teachers, who display poor management, mismanage class time and prevent valuable time on task for students. Thus, the *Behavior Guide* includes classroom management, transitions, environment, and time management as areas to address.

One study noted that teachers who effectively manage their classrooms use different strategies with various types of students whereas the same strategies appeared to be used for various situations by ineffective classroom managers. A recommendation from this study by Brophy (1996) was to develop strategies for teachers to use with students in specific situations called “helping skills”. The *Behavior Guide* targets common misbehaviors and provides guidance for teachers on how to handle students who exhibit different types of behaviors.

For the first 16 years of its 22 years existence, discipline was identified as the top problem in the Annual Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools findings. The Phi Delta Kappa 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Gallup Poll (Rose and Gallup, 2006) reported discipline as a continued problem cited by respondents but financial support and overcrowded schools rank above discipline as problems in the nation’s educational system. The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Gallup Poll of Teachers’ Attitudes (Rose and Gallup, 1997) noted a lack of discipline was one of two problems most frequently pointed out by the survey respondents.

A study by Tulley and Chiu (1995) identified 91% of discipline problems experienced by student teachers involved defiance, inattention, and disruption. The most effective strategies used were positive reinforcement, explanation, and change of strategy (e.g., pausing, moving closer, changing the volume of voice). In findings shared by Walker Colvin, and Ramsey (1995), general education teachers need interventions they can implement effectively in the regular

classroom to help all students manage their social interactions. Such findings are reflected in the *Behavior Guide*.

Brophy (1988), in his review of research on the implication of teaching for low-achieving students, concluded that the key to achievement gain was maximizing the time teachers actively engaged the students no matter if they were in a regular or special education classroom.

In studying well-disciplined schools, Short (1988) indicated a student-centered environment which incorporates students and teachers problem-solving together. In addition, the incorporation of activities to promote self-esteem of students and activities that lead a student to feel a sense of belonging are more effective in decreasing behavior problems as opposed to punishment consequences. The philosophy adhered to in the *Behavior Guide* demonstrates collaborative and supportive efforts leading to students becoming self-disciplined to manage their own behavior.

Schools must provide parents with the tools they need to support learning in the home. Parents must receive regular communication about the academic progress of their children. Family workshops must be offered by schools. Parents must have opportunities for family sessions. Lastly, parents must be given opportunities to partake in parent leadership activities on the campus. All of these mandates were made by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (2002). Within the context of the *Behavior Guide*, these factors are addressed.

Gottfredson (1989) found that increasing parent involvement is a critical element in improving order in troubled schools. According to Stright, Neitzel, Sears, and Hoke-Sinex (2001), research supports how crucial it is for parents to be involved with their children. Although the sample was limited, research indicated that when parents support their children the results impact school success favorably. Otherwise, a negative impact could result in attention problems, social problems, passivity, and poor grades. Strong parent support was cited by Rose and Gallup (1997) as one of the factors that affects academic achievement and determines the quality of public schools. A parent section is included in the *Behavior Guide* to emphasize the importance of parental partnerships for student success.

With the 2004 reauthorization of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) came the option, Responsiveness to Intervention (RTI), an approach for evaluating students with specific learning disabilities. The major focus of RTI is to select and match an instructional or behavior-management strategy to an individual student's specific needs. The *Behavior Guide* offers strategies that promote quality classroom management. These suggestions can reduce the likelihood that misbehavior will occur. If students do misbehave, intervention ideas are offered to encourage appropriate, positive behaviors. Each suggestion is coded with letters to make documentation easy to manage.

Children and youth who lack the necessary skills to control their anger and aggression, especially students placed in special learning support programs, are most at risk for school failure. The intent of Mentoring Minds is to provide any educator multiple strategies that promote pro-social behaviors and decrease student anger and aggression, thereby helping all students and their peers to interact in positive ways. Our purpose is to help teachers and administrators to decrease the number of discipline referrals and suspensions and help prevent unnecessary referrals for placement in special education.

Creating a pro-social school environment increases the frequency of positive behavior patterns of students, develops their social skills, and might limit future aggressive behaviors. We, at Mentoring Minds, believe a school-wide climate intervention such as the *Behavior Guide* can serve as a valuable resource to create an effective learning environment.

Hoerr and West (1992) stated that classroom discipline and discipline-related problems are the primary source of stress for novice teachers and a major source of stress for experienced teachers. Significant correlations were found by Hoerr and West between the prevalence of misbehavior and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Hoy and Miskel (1982) noted that teachers who wish to be highly in control viewed student inattentiveness as a huge threat to them. The *Behavior Guide* favors students becoming self-disciplined and educators purposefully seeking to understand student misbehavior so that they employ interventions to promote a safe, secure, positive learning environment for all.

Finn and Rock (1997) studied 1,803 African American and Hispanic students in grades eight through grade twelve who were from low-income homes. One finding indicated that when at-risk students engage in positive behaviors, such as attending school, being punctual each day, coming prepared for class, participating in class work, putting forth the effort to complete assignments both in and out of school, and refraining from disruptive behaviors, academic success becomes attainable. Finn and Rock both found that involving at-risk minority students in school overcomes other influences that might hinder performance, such as low-income and/or living with one parent.

According to Blasé (1982), teachers complained about having to cope with student disregard for classroom and school rules. This disobedience resulted in student misbehavior which interfered with the teaching process and student performance. Cotton (1990), in a synthesis of 57 research studies, noted that over half of classroom time is spent in activities other than those of instruction. The greatest part of the loss of classroom instructional time is attributed to discipline problems.

Written plans and district policies by themselves cannot change behavior. All plans and policies must become part of the school culture and be communicated

clearly and repeatedly to students, parents, and staff. Most importantly, behavior interventions must be integrated with strategies that reinforce social skills, strengthen school climate, and improve student achievement.

Possibly the most important component in prevention of misbehavior is to create and maintain a positive and welcoming school climate. Many researchers agree that the best way to make schools safe is to build effective schools. These schools are identified as those that set high expectations and then give every student the support and guidance needed to reach that standard. For teachers to achieve this goal, they must receive the support needed to decrease disruptive behavior.

The Mentoring Minds' Product Development Team studied findings from the field of literature and research to determine the need for behavior interventions necessary for school success. Roundtable discussions were held to share research and to browse other related reading. Brainstorming sessions helped to determine the framework of a behavior guide. By combining the recommendations from the field of literature, the group brainstorming, and through collaborative efforts, the Mentoring Minds' team of educators developed the product, the *Behavior Guide*, which reflects the findings noted by researchers, teachers, parents, administrators, and other instructional leaders. The *Behavior Guide* provides extensive direction for educators, new and experienced, to establish a solid foundation for school success, to use strategies to reduce disciplinary interruptions, and to follow through with effectively used interventions.

Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) reviewed over 100 studies on classroom management to determine the effects on student achievement. The analysis revealed many findings. One major finding revealed is individual teachers do impact student achievement. The *Behavior Guide* can become the focus of an ongoing school-wide campus study as a school seeks to create an environment where teaching can flourish. Well-managed classrooms do not appear magically as it takes effort and a commitment from every teacher to create effective classrooms on a school-wide level. Studies indicate teachers can learn how to change student behaviors and focus them in a more positive direction.

The *Behavior Guide* is a rich source which can assist all staff as they differentiate the needed strategies to accommodate student learning. An understanding of and use of specific strategies for effective classroom management can adjust the potential level of teachers and students. Research shows that training can change teacher behavior and lead to improved student behavior which affects student achievement favorably. A campus should work collaboratively as staff members seek to increase school performance. "A sustained effort to improve teaching and instruction will likely also result in reducing problem student behaviors," the Educational Testing Service notes in its 1998 policy report, *Order*

*in the Classroom*. "Better teaching, better behavior, and higher achievement are intertwined."

### **Bibliography for Behavior Guide**

Emmer, E., Evertson, C., & Anderson, L. (1980). Effective classroom management at the beginning of the school year. *The Elementary School Journal*, 80, 219-231.

Blasé, J. (1982). A social-psychological grounded theory of teacher stress and burnout. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18, 93-113.

Brophy, J. (1988). Research linking teacher behavior to student achievement: Potential implications for instruction of Chapter I students. *Educational Psychologist*, 23, 235-312.

Brophy, J. (1996). *Working with shy or withdrawn students*. Urbana, ILL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education.(ERIC Document Reproduction service ED No. 402070).

Cotton, K. (1991-1992). Schoolwide and classroom discipline, Close-Up #9. *School Improvement Research Series*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Cotton, K. (1990). *Educational time factors*. Close-UP #8. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Dunn, R., Griggs, S., Olson, J., Beasley, M., & Gorman, B. (1995). A Meta-Analytic Validation of the Dunn and Dunn Model of Learning-Style Preferences. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 353-362.

Edwards, C. (1993). *Classroom discipline and management*. New York: Macmillan.

Emmer, E., Evertson, C., & Anderson, L. (1980). Effective classroom management at the beginning of the school year. *The Elementary School Journal*, 80, 219-231.

Emmer, E., Sanford, J., Clements, B., & Martin, J. (1983). *Improving junior high classroom management*. Paper presented at annual American Educational

Research Association. Montreal. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED234032).

Evertson, C. & Emmer, E. (1982). Effective management at the beginning of the school year in junior high classes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74, 485-498.

Finn, Ph.D., J. & Rock, Ph.D., D. (1997). Academic success among students at risk for dropout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82 (2), Washington, D.C.: Educational Testing Service.

Finn, J. Ph.D. & Rock, D. Ph.D. (1997). Academic success among students for school failure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 221-234.

Gottfredson, D. (1989). Developing effective organizations to reduce school disorder. *Strategies to Reduce Student Misbehavior*, edited by Oliver C. Moles, Washington, D.C., Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 87-104.

*Harvard Education Letter* (entire March/April, 1987 issue).

Haycock, K. (1998). Good teaching matters: How well-qualified teachers can close the gap. *Thinking K-16*, 3, Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust.

Hoerr, W.A. & West, C. (1992). *Teacher burnout and school misbehavior: differentiating sources of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in the classroom*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Hoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1982). *Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Random House.

Kounin, J. (1970). *Discipline and group management in classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Long, J., Frye, V., & Long, E. (1989). *Making it till Friday: A guide to successful classroom management*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Company.

Marzano, R., Marzano, J., & Pickering, D. (2003). *Classroom management that works: Researched-based strategies for every teacher*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Public Law No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002). <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>

(1998). *Order in the Classroom (a report)*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Ornstein, A. & Levine, D. (1981). Teacher behavior research: overview and outlook. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 62, 592-596.

Rose, L. & Gallup, A. (2006). The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, September, 41-53.

Rose, L. & Gallup, A. (1997). The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 79, 41-53.

Short, P.M. (1988). Effectively disciplined schools: three themes from research, *NASSP Bulletin*, 72, 1-3.

Stright, A., Neitzel, C., Sears, K., & Hoke-Sinex, L. (2001). Instruction begins in the home: Relations between parental instruction and children's self-regulation in the classroom. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 456-466.

Tulley, M., & Chiu, L. (1995). Student teachers and classroom discipline, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 164-171.

Walker, H., Colvin, G., & Ramsey, E. (1995). *Antisocial behavior in school: Strategies and best practices*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Woods, D. (2001). *Management and organization, research you can use to improve results*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Wright, S., Horn, S., & Sanders, W. (1997). Teacher and classroom context effects o student achievement: Implications for teacher evaluation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 11, 57-67.