

MAKE YOUR DAY

A SCHOOL-WIDE CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS
TEACHERS TO TEACH AND ALLOWS STUDENTS TO LEARN

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Earl's Corner

A View of the Classroom from the Perspective of Your Difficult Students

When presenting MYD to educators, I always ask the question, "How many of you were good students?" With very few exceptions, they all report that they were good students and/or liked school. This response wouldn't shock our "difficult" students. Being one of those difficult students myself, I can tell you that we (I) take full advantage of your naivety. We know that it is upsetting to you when we disrupt the classroom. We know that it is bothersome when we don't do our work. And, we know that you don't understand why we don't like school.

Much of our time is spent seeking a reaction - any reaction, positive or negative. We assume we can outlast you. We know that many of you will give up and send us elsewhere.

Those of you who set up black and white structures confound us. We rely on the grays. Those of you who don't give us an emotional response frustrate us.



It may come as a shock to some teachers, but students don't have to like school to do well in school. There are no difficult students. There are, however, students who create difficult situations. If we impersonalize our response and follow through with realistic consequences within our structure, those circumstances are minimized. When we can only get your attention through appropriate participation in class, we eventually succumb.

The biggest deterrent to keep us from escalating our behavior is when we are ignored. Some of our parents can't handle us at home so when you call them, we are not threatened.

1-866-MYD
QUESTION

[MYD ListServe](#)

[Website for
Teachers](#)

[Website for
Parents](#)

[My School
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If you get to know us for who we are and not judge us based on our behavior, our behavior tends to become more appropriate. If you see the world through our eyes, you'll understand why we do what we do and be able to predict when we will do it.

Next month - creating the end of the year honeymoon.



Cheryl's Two Cents

So...What Do We Do With Our Challenging Students?

If we can think of behavior in curricular terms such as reading or math, we realize we already have many strategies in our toolbox for differentiating the behavior curriculum. Thinking in terms of "what supports does this student need to be successful" rather than "how can we make/coerce/bribe/etc. this student into changing their behavior" helps us understand that this is simply a student who needs supports rather than a student who is trying to be contrary or defiant.

Step 3½, which is a phone conference with the parent, is incorporated into many behavior intervention plans. Many times this provides the intermediate step that students need to get back on track and maintains parent support because they see we are trying to provide additional supports for their child.

Also, rather than focusing on all necessary behaviors to meet expectations and earn points, behaviors can be targeted individually, one-by-one. The prioritizing of behaviors is a group effort that includes the student. The decision to focus on one behavior to earn points is communicated to the class – as a way to help this student be successful. Once one behavior has improved, the student moves to the next one on the list. Then changing behavior becomes manageable as the student is able to make and meet short-term goals rather than

feeling overwhelmed. Interfering behaviors are still dealt with through steps, but peers and teachers need to be compassionate. For example, if a student must fidget to focus then they should have access to materials that allow them to fidget quietly. If they must tap on their desk, putting a piece of carpet or sponge on their tapping spot eliminates the sound but allows the movement. The opportunity to move back and forth between two locations in the room has also proven helpful. There are students who may need concrete reinforcers to initially motivate them.

The trick is to align this plan as much as possible with what is going on in the classroom so students feel supported by the environment not pushed out. As we all know, students who feel pushed out are likely to demonstrate an increase in nonproductive behaviors.

Final Thought: When we are having a tough day because a student is having a tough day, I always remember a phrase that I heard in a training. "What would it be like to walk in their shoes?" This always reminds me that I need to remember that a student's struggle to stay on track doesn't stop when they go home. It's their life.

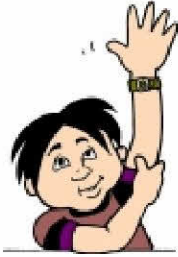
Banner in the entry of Ted Polk Middle School in Texas signed by staff and students.



What Do We Want to Teach Our students?

Seen on the wall in a classroom at Desert Oasis School, the following uncredited quote promotes the teacher's ultimate goal.

"The object of teaching a child is to enable the child to get along without the teacher."



MYD from a Student POV

???

What
About
This
???

Student
Questions

Question from a middle school student: why for myd 1st and 5th period are worth 50 points and the rest is 45 points

Answer: In order for students and teachers to conceptualize that perfection is not attainable, extra points are built into the day for two periods. The classes often chosen for the “extra” points are 1st period because it includes going home, returning to school and the 1st period, lunch because it requires more self-discipline on the part of the students, or specials because those classes are structured differently. The 10 extra points built into the day allow one to make mistakes, which everyone is going to do. Also, for figuring whether one has made their day or not it is very easy to scan across point sheets and determine if more than 10 points have not been earned. Some schools have every period worth the same amount of points and have a total number of points that students/teachers must earn by the end of the day in order to make their day.

SAVE THE DATE

Make Your Day Conference
Wenatchee, Washington

October 9 and 10

On-Line Registration Now Open



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