

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

IS MY MISBEHAVING STUDENT SUFFERING FROM FAULTY PARADIGM FRAMING?

PRIMARY INTERVENTION GOAL – Help student to re-frame their thinking paradigm

FROM: “They are MAKING me do this stupid stuff that I will NEVER use again”

[Result → Student feels powerless, trapped, frustrated and defiant and is much more likely to act up and/or to resort to the avoidance tactics they utilized to get out of work when they were in K-12 school.]

TO: “I choose to temporarily give up my freedom to do what I want to do right now in order to complete the tasks my boss has assigned to me during these next few hours. When I agree to work somewhere, I grant my boss the ability to decide my activities in exchange for a paycheck. I willingly choose to make this sacrifice, because in doing so, I know that I will progress towards creating power, gaining self-respect, and obtaining economic stability along with my paycheck, which 3 items are of far more worth to me than just a few hours of my time today.”

What you can say/do to help them change their defiant attitude towards academic assignments

- Consent to placing the MY JOB CORPS PLEDGE in the upper part of every student’s seat in your classroom. Some will read it and start the wheels thinking in their minds. – Don’t point it out. Don’t make a big deal out of it. Just keep it in front of them – replacing the Job Corps Pledge papers taped to their desktop as needed.
- Have one of your students read this pledge aloud to the rest of the class first thing every morning and first thing after lunch. – Taking turns reading it out loud tends to personalize this statement in the subconscious mind of the student reading it. – The other students will probably listen to their peer more readily. It takes time and is a gradual conversion process, but it has helped make a huge difference in other programs that try to get at-risk K-12 students into college.
- Quietly remind them as needed that this isn’t high school. They have decided to join the adult workforce. Job Corps is their employer now and you are more than just a teacher, you are also one of their supervisory team members. You’re not going to force them to learn anything or to grasp any new job survival skills if they truly don’t want to. But it seems kind of silly to you, for them to have come this far and learned so many helpful job skills only to shoot themselves in the foot now by assuming that they are back in K-12 school and start acting the same way which they did back then. Hint: Try to work a compliment about something you’ve noticed that they’ve done right or point out how they demonstrated a particular ability which would be helpful in {mention a specific career occupation} into the “Job Corps is your employer” reminder somehow, if you can. This approach goes over much better that way.

- Learning is a fragile thing. It causes much stress and anxiety. You have to learn how to think and act in ways that you never have before and you tend to feel super vulnerable whenever you are trying to learn something. So all classmates respecting and encouraging a student, but especially not mocking them in any way as they try to learn or practice a newly gained job skill is crucial to their ability to succeed.
- By far the hardest-to-master job skill that your students will ever be encouraged to learn at Job Corps is how to make themselves complete an assigned, ETHICAL task for the employer when they are on-duty; even though they don't want to work on it right now. This ability to focus and see a project through to completion is the one make or break job skill that will spell the difference between getting a job offer or not, getting a pay raise or not, and whether or not the student will get a promotion after leaving Job Corps.
- Find out what motivated them into joining Job Corps. OR Find out one or more of their career goals. Then when they resist your teaching assignments, use something along this line of reasoning

Ask them, "How bad do you want . {their career goal or their motivating reason}. .?" Then follow this question up with → You have a decision to make right now right here. There is an underlying job skill here that employers need to create power and wealth for a business which I'm hoping you will pick up through completing this task. Most employers make you get a high school education before they will hire you because they badly need the core set of job skills that you have to figure out before you can successfully get yourself through high school. I can't give you this missing job skill and it can't be absorbed through experience i.e. time spent working on the job. You have to figure it out for yourself. Less than 1% of us are born with this core set of job skills so the rest of us have to figure it out for ourselves the hard way and it is not an easy task to do. Unfortunately, it is next to impossible for anyone to teach them to you without you completing the academic assignments yourself, So I ask you again "how bad do you want this goal?", or "how important is it to you to create a better life for your kids than you had growing up?" If you choose to do this task I've asked you to, but you don't learn and also start to apply the key underlying job skill I'm attempting to direct you to find, you have wasted your time. If you are not willing to do the steps necessary for you to reach your career goal then you probably don't want it very much."

- After an act-up has occurred, immediately attempt to get the student to think through what the results or consequences of this incident could mean to their careers if it had happened on the job at another employer. Once you get a felony, you basically can not EVER work in banking, in accounting, in insurance, in the health care field nor in the legal field after that. Your career is over. Is the potential personal price you might have to pay worth the momentary lack of self-control you just demonstrated?

IS MY STUDENT EXPERIENCING A LEARNING HICCUP RIGHT NOW?

Students with poor learning skills will often tend to slide down into a nasty little training trap which faculty members at Bryant Stratton College knew as a “student comprehension hiccup” or just a “learning hiccup”.

If your students are now at this moment feeling frustrated, anxious, discouraged, resentful, angry, overwhelmed, impatient, or downright bored or sleepy, the other most likely culprit besides faulty paradigm framing is that yes, they have unwittingly tumbled deep down inside one of these student comprehension or learning hiccups.

What causes a learning hiccup:

The phrase “strategic business planning” seems to be a huge comprehension hiccup trigger for many people. Close seconds are computer programming projects, beginning accounting courses, writing essays and learning mathematical principles. The mind balks sometimes when it is faced with a seemingly impossible and/or enormous undertaking task which you are not accustomed to performing, and in essence says, “nope, no way, not me”. What follows is some type of a get-me-out-of-here response.

How to recognize a learning hiccup:

Carefully watch their facial expressions, their body movements, and their verbal reactions for any signs of a get-me-out-of-here emotional response as you teach them. Blank stares are the biggest giveaway signal.

How to deal with a learning hiccup.

Whenever one or more of your students slides out into one of these comprehension hiccups, what it means is that you as the teacher now have 15 minutes or less to inject an immediate dose of hope into your student’s outlook via

- 1.) guiding him or her over to an alternative, small-scope task which he or she will immediately know that he or she can accomplish without much effort,

and/or
- 2.) to simply back right off of the topic that you are trying to teach entirely for a couple of minutes and try to get them to imagine something positive in nature, before quietly bring them back on topic again; breaking it down into smaller bites through a variety of teaching tactics for them as you do so.
- 3.) Tell them they might have just experienced a learning hiccup.

NOTE: It doesn't matter whether or not the student actually completes the distracter task you just guided him or her to – in fact they most likely will choose to defy you here. What is important is that they immediately recognize that they could have easily completed the hope injection distracter task you offered.

It helps if your “hope injection task” assigned peaks their interest in some other way. But sometimes, when you attempt to bring them back on topic, they start to become increasingly more resistant, and it seems that any attempt you make to come close to the topic will invoke a get-me-out-of-here! response within the client. In these encounters, the student probably has more than just a comprehension or a learning hiccup. These are times when the student's comprehension hiccup is so big that it can easily become a huge, profit-snagging, stumbling block for both a future employer and also for your student: sometimes the situation is even further complicated by the presence of a full-blown learning phobia for the student. This is where a one-on-one mandatory tutoring session with the tutor or over with counseling would come in handy.

If you are working one-on-one with a student outside of the regular class time

- Attempt to help them reason through personal academic empowerment issues – i.e. learning how to recognize when they are experiencing a get-me-out-of-here emotion, such as anger, frustration, hostility, boredom, or an overwhelming desire to go to sleep – and tracing it backwards to identifying the immediately precipitating emotion which caused it
 - A feeling of vulnerability
 - The learning hiccup triggered when the student's mind began to grasp the full extent of the academic assignment activities that they knew you probably would expect them to complete shortly.
 - Not understanding what the sentence or paragraph they just read meant
 - Recalling a painful experience associated with a classroom episode or a time when they were ridiculed for wanting to do their homework or to learn
 - A sinking feeling that they are too stupid to be able to understand this new and drastically unfamiliar stuff.
- Anger is a choice. Personal power is discovered when you can work backwards to the emotion that occurred a split-second before the anger emotion stepped in and handle the precipitating emotion. Then, help them learn how to exercise self-mastery by identifying specific responsive behaviors they can employ, including learning how to control the get-me-out-of-here-sensation, and learn how to channel it into an ability to stay focused on the task at hand and see it through to completion.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T PROPERLY DEAL WITH A STUDENT'S COMPREHENSION HICCUP?

Whenever I, Miss Stoddard, a financial business stabilization and an office-automation consultant, failed to help my student whom I was tutoring or my consulting engagement

client through one of these comprehension hiccups, things started going downhill from there, and continued going downhill. We could never quite put a finger on the cause, but we never seemed to regain our project's momentum afterwards either. Perhaps it might be that the client now began to associate nearly everything that had to do with whatever project we were working on with their momentary "get-me-out-of-here" emotional trigger and brief moments spent doubting their abilities inside their comprehension hiccup. At any rate, in nearly every case that I have been involved in where the person's comprehension hiccup was not promptly dealt with, we ended up with a less-than-desirable outcome.

Sometimes, my student gave up entirely, and never returned to enroll in a similar course.