



Don't Tell Students to Stop Misbehaving; Show Them How

By Educator Barnes – April 20, 2021

When students are struggling academically, teachers find ways to help them learn. They might reteach a lesson, provide academic interventions, accommodations, or modifications.

When students misbehave, many times, the teacher's focus is to stop the behavior immediately. This may present itself by the teacher giving the student a verbal command to cease the behavior, the teacher asking the student to go into the hallway, or the teacher calling for assistance to have the student removed. Just as teachers provide strategies to help students learn, the same considerations should be implemented to help students improve their behavior.

When students scream, hit, or throw items, they are in distress. They may not have parents or caregivers that have shown them how to work through frustration and anger. If students do not learn how to work through their emotions, telling them to stop or kicking them out of the classroom will only be a temporary fix. They need de-escalation strategies.

Recently, Butler University assistant professor and author of "Connections Over Compliance: Rewiring Our Perceptions of Discipline," Dr. Lori Desautels, shared some de-escalation strategies that can work for children or adults on social media.

Some of the strategies she shared were:

- Play with a slinky
- Feel a shell
- Feel a smooth stone
- Four deep breaths
- Put on small wrist weights
- Sit on a therapy ball
- Play with and feel a fabric square
- Jumping-jacks
- Draw, color, or any art project
- Push against the wall
- Hold and squeeze a soft pillow

Just like teachers have to try multiple academic strategies to get students to learn academic skills, they might have to try various de-escalation strategies to help students learn to regulate their emotions. Not only will these efforts help in that teacher's class, but students can take and implement the strategies as they continue through school.

Discipline strategies are not necessarily covered in college education courses. School leadership must equip their teachers with these strategies so they can help students curve

their behavior. There is a correlation between students who are constantly in trouble and their academic progress. If students are constantly in the office, they are missing instruction and not learning. If teachers want to meet their academic goals, they have to help students improve their behavior.