

Dealing With Disruptions in the Classroom

When a minor disruption occurs in your classroom, you have to decide if it is worth stopping what you are doing to deal with it. Minor disruptions frequently build into more troublesome ones. Therefore, they need to be addressed with the least amount of disruption to the class. Think of things you could do to stop the unwanted behavior without giving the offender the “power” of bringing the class to a halt. If that solution works, that is great. If it does not, move to step two, and so on. Try non verbal communication first. Consider the following discipline plan:

Begin with nonverbal communication by:

1. Observing the behavior. Make a mental note to observe that student.
2. Looking at the offender. Establish eye contact.
3. Walking toward the offender. Stop walking when the student stops the unwanted behavior.
4. Standing next to or behind the disruptive student.
5. Putting your hand on the offenders chair.

If the student does not respond to non verbal cues:

1. Ask if help is needed and quietly resolve the problem.
2. Direct the student to work at a table alone. After five minutes, give the student a choice to return to the group or remain alone.
3. Direct the student to explain the disruption either orally or in writing, and say what should be done.
4. Make a file on each disruptive student by writing a short description of the problem.
5. Give the student a realistic choice, “Will you get to work or will I have to telephone your parents?”
6. If the child does not cooperate, call and discuss the problem with the parents. Document the conversation, and put in the student’s file. Make sure you follow up on any arrangements made with the parents.

Dealing with major disruptions:

1. Send the student to the office with a note or a behavior referral form describing the behavior.
2. Set up a conference with the parent, the principal, and the student to resolve the conflict.
3. Continue to document and follow school policy for disruptive students.

Remember to be:

1. Consistent
2. Respect the basic human needs for belonging and self esteem. When basic needs are threatened, individuals fight back and the problem escalates and becomes more difficult to resolve.
3. Distinguish between minor and major disruptions. Minor disruptions are those that can be dealt with inside the classroom.

