



Low-Intensity Behavior Strategies: Promoting Positive Classroom Environments

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In educational settings, maintaining a positive and conducive learning environment is crucial for the success of both students and teachers. Low-intensity behavior strategies are essential tools that educators can use to manage classroom behavior effectively without resorting to punitive measures. These strategies are subtle, and proactive, and can significantly enhance student engagement, reduce disruptive behaviors, and create a positive classroom culture. This paper explores various low-intensity behavior strategies, their importance, and their application in the classroom. Unlike high-intensity interventions, which may involve direct confrontation or removal of students from the classroom, low-intensity strategies aim to prevent misbehavior before it escalates. These strategies are often preventive, focusing on building positive relationships, setting clear expectations, and reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

Low-intensity strategies for promoting positive behavior in educational settings include behavior-specific praise, pre-correction, active supervision, high-probability requests, opportunities to respond, and choice-making. These approaches enhance student engagement, reduce disruptive behaviors, and create a supportive learning environment without requiring significant time or resources.

****Behavior-Specific Praise**** is a targeted form of positive reinforcement where teachers provide clear, specific feedback on what the student did correctly. Instead of generic praise like "Good job," behavior-specific praise might be, "I really appreciate how you raised your hand before speaking." This strategy helps students understand exactly what behaviors are desirable, thereby increasing the likelihood that these behaviors will be repeated. Research shows that behavior-specific praise not only improves individual student behavior but also contributes to a more positive classroom atmosphere.

****Pre-correction**** involves anticipating and addressing potential behavioral issues before they occur. Teachers remind students of expected behaviors and routines prior to situations where misbehavior is likely. For example, before transitioning to group work, a teacher might say, "Remember to use inside voices and stay with your group." This proactive approach helps students prepare for expected behaviors, reducing the chance of disruption.

****Active Supervision**** is teachers' continuous and interactive observation of students. It involves moving around the classroom, scanning for potential issues, and engaging with students to maintain a presence. This strategy not only deters misbehavior through visibility but also allows teachers to provide immediate feedback and support. Active supervision helps create a structured environment where students feel noticed and accountable.

****High Probability Requests**** involve giving students a series of tasks they are likely to comply with before presenting a less preferred task. This technique builds momentum through a series of successful responses. For instance, a teacher might ask a student to complete three simple tasks (e.g., "Please hand out these papers," "Can you put your book on the shelf," "Sharpen your pencil") before asking them to start a more challenging assignment. The compliance with high-probability requests increases the likelihood of compliance with the subsequent low-probability request.

****Opportunities to Respond (OTR)**** are frequent prompts or cues encouraging student participation. Teachers can increase student engagement and reduce downtime by asking questions, soliciting responses, or prompting discussions. For example, during a lesson, a teacher might pose a question and ask for a show of hands, use response cards, or incorporate clickers for immediate feedback. OTRs help keep students focused and actively involved in their learning.

****Choice Making**** gives students a sense of control over their learning by offering options within the constraints of the classroom. Providing choices can range from selecting which assignment to complete first to choosing a preferred method of demonstrating understanding (e.g., writing a paper, creating a presentation, or building a model). This strategy increases student motivation and engagement by catering to individual preferences and learning styles.

Implementing these low-intensity strategies effectively requires consistency and a positive teacher-student relationship. Teachers must be attentive, responsive, and supportive while maintaining high expectations for student behavior. When used together, these strategies can create a cohesive approach to classroom management that encourages positive behavior, reduces disruptions, and fosters a conducive learning environment.

Behavior-specific praise, pre-correction, active supervision, high-probability requests, opportunities to respond, and choice-making are all valuable tools in a teacher's repertoire. They offer a proactive and preventive approach to behavior management, reinforcing positive behaviors and providing students with the structure and support they need to succeed. By integrating these strategies into their daily routines, teachers can enhance student engagement, promote a positive classroom climate, and ultimately improve academic outcomes.

For additional information:

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bi2-elem/cresource/q1/p01/>

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