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Behavior Management Strategies for Middle School

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Keep middle school students safe and engaged with behavior management.

As middle school students progress through their tumultuous adolescent years, teachers struggle to establish and maintain classroom control. While managing a group of middle school students is undoubtedly difficult, it can be successfully and painlessly accomplished through the implementation of interactive and thought provoking behavior management strategies that both remind students of the proper behavioral procedures and allow them to reflect upon the importance of rule following behaviors.

Acting it Out

Don't just tell students the rules, ensure that they understand by providing them with the opportunity to act out the positive behaviors that you are trying to get them to exhibit. Get your students out of their seats, and ask them to show you what it would look like if they were following each rule. By acting it out, you allow students to engage in kinesthetic activity, and you ensure that they fully understand the rules in question.

Refocus Sheet

When a student violates a rule, provide him time to consider his negative behavior and make plans for modification by giving him a refocus sheet. Create a form for your students to fill out. The first part of this form should ask the student to reflect upon what he did. The second section should require him to explain why he did what he did. The third should ask him to say why what he did was a problem. The final section should ask him what he plans to do in the future. When you ask a student to leave your room, give him the form and require that he fills it out. Once he has filled out the form and cooled down, discuss his responses with him and prepare a plan for him to follow in the future to ensure that he does not get in trouble again.

Group Reward

As students follow rules, rewards them as a group for the positive behavior. By using group instead of individual rewards, you can harness the power of peer pressure. Create a system that allows the class to earn points based on the behavior of all pupils. Students will begin to self monitor their behavior as their peers encourage them to follow rules so that they can receive the offered reward.

Meaningful Consequences

Replace arbitrary consequences with meaningful ones to ensure that students see a connection between the rule and the punishment. Instead of simply handing out a detention every time a rule is violated, create distinct consequences for your students. If, for example, a student steals another student's pencil, require the stealer to compose an essay about the punishment for theft. As students complete their punishment, they will both learn about the topic at hand and see why the rule is an important one.

References

- ProTeacher: Behavior Management
- Education World: Classroom Management

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