

Introduction

Off-task behavior in the classroom costs so much in terms of time on task, not to mention the emotional cost on teachers and other students in the classroom. About 98% of the behavior problems in the classroom are identified as simple off-task behavior. While the problem can be considered minor in terms of today's kids, the amount of lost learning time is not minor. Off-task behavior includes everything from pencil tapping, sleeping, talking to neighbors, and passing notes, to not paying attention. Most of these behavior problems can be prevented through a series of brain-compatible procedures carried out by the classroom teacher. We know, through brain research, why the brain pays attention and at least some of the reasons why we lose student attention.

The purpose of this book is to look at the various types of behavior problems in the classroom, possible root causes, and ways to deal with the problems effectively. The material is not intended to provide a quick fix, but rather to guide the classroom teacher as he or she works to help students become aware of their own behaviors and to be responsible for them. Good classroom managers are easy to spot because they have characteristics that lead students to become good self-managers. In the chapters to follow, we will look at seven ways to prevent simple off-task behavior, as well as what to do when the behavior is more than just off task.

We will also view behavior in terms of brain research. Of the three systems of the brain, the self-system has the greatest effect on student success. This is also the system of the brain that controls whether we pay attention, whether we involve

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ourselves in the learning, and whether we tap into intrinsic motivation. A wise teacher uses this system of the brain to turn her students on to learning.

Sometimes, behavior problems go beyond the simple off-task variety and must be addressed immediately. When that occurs, it is important that the teacher respond appropriately in voice and in body language to get the student back on task as quickly as possible. Some specific techniques will be provided in the pages to come.

Working with urban learners can be challenging to the teacher who does not know or understand that the cognitive structures will not be in place until students specifically understand the hidden rules and until they feel accepted in the classroom. Students must know that the set of rules for the classroom and the workplace is different from the rules for the street. They need to know how to survive in each.

The teacher who has a plan for behavior will be better able to control impulsivity in students and is more likely to maximize the learning time and the quality of learning.

Meta-analysis studies have proven that teaching vocabulary first helps students to learn and has a strong impact on making students successful. With that in mind, I am providing a list of the vocabulary related to this book. In Form 0.1, write what you already know about the vocabulary words. After you have read the book and reviewed the glossary, come back to your original list and see if you want to change or add to your earlier definitions. I am also providing a pre-test for you to help you determine your level of expertise in advance.

Form 0.1 Vocabulary list for Classroom Management and Discipline

Vocabulary	Your Definition	Your Revised Definition
<i>Assessment of behavior</i>		
<i>At-risk</i>		
<i>Body language</i>		
<i>Classroom management</i>		
<i>Cooperative learning</i>		
<i>Corporal punishment</i>		
<i>Efficacy</i>		
<i>Emotion</i>		
<i>Emotional intelligence</i>		
<i>Hidden rules</i>		
<i>Impulsivity</i>		
<i>Modalities</i>		
<i>Poverty</i>		
<i>Rewards and punishments</i>		
<i>Self-management</i>		
<i>Study groups</i>		
<i>Temporary groups</i>		
<i>Thinking systems</i>		
<i>Voices</i>		

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