



**The New Teacher Support Program  
Wilson County Schools  
Terry Edwards, Consulting Teacher**

# TIP OF THE WEEK!

Issue #5

**“The teacher is just a boat to take the student over the river.”--Gautama Buddha**

## **DEALING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS IN THE CLASSROOM**



**Building a sense of order, respect, and trust in your classroom is essential. Without these underlying dynamics, the real business of teaching and learning cannot take**

**place. Here are ways that some educators are meeting the challenge, and using positive reinforcement to transform undesirable behavior in their students. Try them and see if they work in your classroom!**

1. **BEHAVIOR:** Rambling -- wandering around and off the subject. Using far-fetched examples or analogies.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Refocus attention by restating relevant point.
- Direct questions to group that is back on the subject
- Ask how topic relates to current topic being discussed.
- Use visual aids, begin to write on board, turn on overhead projector.
- Say: "Would you summarize your main point please?" or "Are you asking...?"

2. **BEHAVIOR:** Shyness or Silence -- lack of participation.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Change teaching strategies from group discussion to individual written exercises or a videotape
- Give strong positive reinforcement for any contribution.
- Involve by directly asking him/her a question.
- Make eye contact.
- Appoint to be small group leader.

3. **BEHAVIOR:** Talkativeness -- knowing everything, manipulation, chronic whining.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Acknowledge comments made.
- Give limited time to express viewpoint or feelings, and then move on.
- Make eye contact with another participant and move toward that person.
- Give the person individual attention during breaks.
- Say: "That's an interesting point. Now let's see what other other people think."

4. **BEHAVIOR:** Sharpshooting -- trying to shoot you down or trip you up.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Admit that you do not know the answer and redirect the question the group or the individual who asked it.
  - Acknowledge that this is a joint learning experience.
  - Ignore the behavior.
5. **BEHAVIOR:** Heckling/Arguing -- disagreeing with everything you say; making personal attacks.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Redirect question to group or supportive individuals.
  - Recognize participant's feelings and move one.
  - Acknowledge positive points.
  - Say: "I appreciate your comments, but I'd like to hear from others," or "It looks like we disagree."
6. **BEHAVIOR:** Grandstanding -- getting caught up in one's own agenda or thoughts to the detriment of other learners.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Say: "You are entitled to your opinion, belief or feelings, but now it's time we moved on to the next subject," or "Can you restate that as a question?" or "We'd like to hear more about that if there is time after the presentation."
7. **BEHAVIOR:** Overt Hostility/Resistance -- angry, belligerent, combative behavior.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- Hostility can be a mask for fear. Reframe hostility as fear to depersonalize it.
- Respond to fear, not hostility.
- Remain calm and polite. Keep your temper in check.
- Don't disagree, but build on or around what has been said.
- Move closer to the hostile person, maintain eye contact.
- Always allow him or her a way to gracefully retreat from the confrontation.

- **Say: "You seem really angry. Does anyone else feel this way?" Solicit peer pressure.**
  - **Do not accept the premise or underlying assumption, if it is false or prejudicial, e.g., "If by "queer" you mean homosexual..."**
  - **Allow individual to solve the problem being addressed. He or she may not be able to offer solutions and will sometimes undermine his or her own position.**
  - **Ignore behavior.**
  - **Talk to him or her privately during a break.**
  - **As a last resort, privately ask the individual to leave class for the good of the group.**
- 8. BEHAVIOR: Gripping -- maybe legitimate complaining.**

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- **Point out that we can't change policy here.**
  - **Validate his/her point.**
  - **Indicate you'll discuss the problem with the participant privately.**
  - **Indicate time pressure.**
- 9. BEHAVIOR: Side Conversations -- may be related to subject or personal. Distracts group members and you.**

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- **Don't embarrass talkers.**
- **Ask their opinion on topic being discussed.**
- **Ask talkers if they would like to share their ideas.**
- **Casually move toward those talking.**
- **Make eye contact with them.**
- **Comment on the group (but don't look at them "one-at-a-time").**
- **Standing near the talkers, ask a near-by participant a question so that the new discussion is near the talkers.**
- **As a last resort, stop and wait.**

## The ABCs for First Year Teachers

- Admit your mistakes -- and learn from them.
- Be firm but flexible.
- Communicate with parents.
- Develop a homework policy -- and stick to it.
- Empower your students; don't just lecture to them.
- Find time to attend after-school events.
- Get to know all the teachers in your school and make friends with the cooks, custodians, aides, and secretaries.
- Have the courage to try something else if what you're doing isn't working.
- Institute a clear discipline policy -- and enforce it consistently.
- Just listen -- both to what the kids are saying and to what they're not saying.
- Keep a journal.
- Learn your school's policies and procedures.
- Model desired attitudes and behavior.
- Non carborundum ignorami. (Don't let the imbeciles wear you down.)
- Overplan.
- Prepare interesting lessons.
- Quit worrying and just do your best.
- Remember that you teach students first, then you teach whatever academic discipline you learned.
- Stay alert.
- Take pictures.
- Understand that the learning process involves everyone -- teachers, students, colleagues, and parents -- and get everyone involved.
- Volunteer to share projects and ideas, and don't be afraid to ask others to share their ideas with you.
- Work within your limits.
- Xpect the unexpected -- and plan for it!
- Yell if you need support.

Zero in on your strengths, not your weaknesses. (Remember -- nobody's perfect!)

### **\*\*\*REMINDER: INSERVICE ON PARENTS**

**TEACHERS & PARENTS AS PARTNERS on Thursday, September 14, 2006 at the Wilson County Teacher Training and Resource Center. 2 hours inservice credit/register online or to [edwardst@wcschools.com](mailto:edwardst@wcschools.com)**

### **\*\*\*NEW TEACHERS OF THE WEEK:**

**Congratulations to these members of the New Teacher Support Program:**

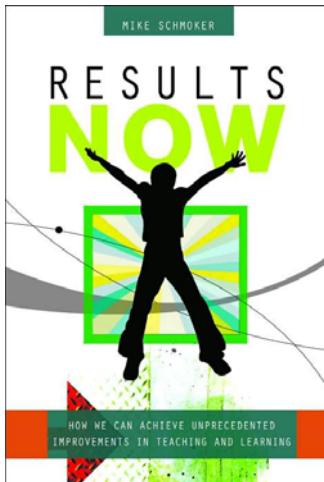


Left: **LINDA BARNES**  
CARROLL OAKLAND ELEMENTARY  
FIRST GRADE TEACHER  
WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*"I did not always want to be a teacher. I worked with my children at home before they started school. I enjoyed working with them and teaching them. It wasn't until my own children started school did I realize that is what I wanted to be. I tutored other students in elementary school in reading and math. I enjoyed seeing the children succeed when they began reading or understood a math concept. That is when I realized I wanted to be a teacher."*

Right: **KIMBERLY BLACKABY**  
MT. JULIET HIGH SCHOOL  
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR  
WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*"I became a school counselor to help support students in their academic, career, and social growth. I see my role as one that supports what is going on in the classroom by helping relieve some of the outside stressors that life can throw students. I work with teachers to help students to develop holistically- mind and emotions. I also enjoy supporting the parents and teachers of these students by being a listening ear, a go-between and an advocate for the students."*



## OFF THE BOOKSHELF:

### **Results Now: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning**

by Michael J. Schmoker

According to author Mike Schmoker, there is a yawning gap between the most well-known essential practices and the reality of most classrooms. This gap persists despite the hard, often heroic work done by many teachers and administrators. Schmoker believes that teachers and administrators may know what the best practices are, but they aren't using them or reinforcing them consistently. He asserts that our schools are protected by a buffer a protective barrier that prevents scrutiny of instruction by outsiders. The buffer exists within the school as well. Teachers often know only what is going on in their classrooms and they may be completely in the dark about what other teachers in the school are doing. Even principals, says Schmoker, don't have a clear view of the daily practices of teaching and learning in their schools.

Through strong teamwork, true leadership, and authentic learning, schools and their students can reach new heights. *Results Now* is a rally cry for educators to focus on what counts. If they do, Schmoker promises, the entire school community can count on unprecedented achievements.



"How come they've never done a 'Survivor' show from school?"

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