Common Mistakes

I am presenting this information as given on the websites.

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Mistake: "**to define the problem behavior by how it looks without considering its function**" (Wikipedia Classroom Management)

Suggestion: "Instead: Define misbehavior by its function … we need to ask ourselves, 'What was the function of this misbehavior?' Or more simply, 'What did the student gain from the misbehavior?'" (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Although some behavior problems are the result of organic issues (e.g., hyperactivity) most misbehaviors function for one of two following reasons: (a) to get something (e.g., attention from another student or teacher, gain a privilege, get a toy) or (b) to avoid something (e.g., schoolwork, teacher demands). … For the attention-seeking student, we could ignore his or her off-task behavior and only give him our attention when he is behaving appropriately. For the academically frustrated student, a change in his or her assignment (e.g., fewer problems to solve, clearer directions) might eliminate the off-task behaviors. Clearly, these misbehaviors serve dissimilar functions and need to be solved differently." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Asking, "Why Did You Do That?"** … Although we are tempted, it is not a good idea to ask our students, "Why did you do that?" First, many times our students will not know the reasons why they misbehaved. Second, we often will not like their answers." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "Assess the Behavior Directly to Determine its Function. … we need to study what is happening in the classroom before and after it occurs. This information-gathering procedure is called a functional assessment. … A functional assessment might reveal that changes in our teaching methods are needed. … For complex behavior problems, a more detailed, multifaceted functional assessment may be needed. At those times, we should contact a behavior-management specialist, school psychologist, or other trained professional for a more thorough assessment. Conducting a functional assessment can be time consuming. However, research shows that behavior-change programs designed from this process tend to be more effective than those begun without the comprehensive information provided by this assessment" (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**for the teacher to become increasingly frustrated and negative when an approach is not working**" (Wikipedia Classroom Management)

along with

Mistake: "**When an Approach Isn't Working, Try Harder** … The problem is that we most often try harder negatively. We make loud, disapproving statements, increase negative consequences, or remove more privileges. This does not do anything to teach appropriate behavior." (Barbetta, Common mistakes) "The teacher may raise his or her voice or increase adverse consequences in an effort to make the approach work." (Wikipedia Classroom Management)

Suggestion: "When an approach is not working, instead of trying harder, we should try another way. Some examples include verbal redirecting, proximity control, reinforcing incompatible behaviors, changing the academic tasks and providing additional cues or prompts. These approaches are more effective, simpler to use, and create a more positive classroom climate than trying harder." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Instead of increasing negative consequences, we should increase the frequency of contingent praise for appropriate student behavior. Teacher praise is easy to deliver and is one of the most powerful tools available to us. **In fact, praise (or some type of reinforcement) should be included in all approaches to behavior change.**" (Barbetta, Common mistakes) [emphasis mine]

"Finally, when we find ourselves making more stop than start requests, we need to reverse our behavior. For example, instead of asking Sam to stop talking, ask him to work on his assignment. When he complies, provide praise." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Violating the Principles of Good Classroom Rules** … Too often, rules are posted at the beginning of the year, briefly reviewed once, and then attended to minimally. When this is the case, they have little to no effect on student behavior." (Barbetta, Common mistakes) "Inconsistency in expectations and consequences" (Wikipedia Classroom Management)

Suggestion: "To avoid this, teachers should communicate expectations to students clearly and be sufficiently committed to the classroom management procedures to enforce them consistently." (Wikipedia Classroom Management)

"To be more effective, our classrooms should have four-to-six rules that could govern most classroom situations. Too many rules can make it difficult for students to comply and for teachers to enforce. … Classroom rules should be simple, specific, clear, and measurable. The degree of rule simplicity depends on the age and ability levels of our students." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Rules are specific when they are clear and unambiguous. For example, the rule 'bring books, paper, and pencils to class' is much clearer than the rule 'be ready to learn.' Clearly stated rules are easily observed and measured." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Another characteristic of effective rules is that they are stated positively. Positively stated rules are 'do' rules. Do rules provide information as to how to behave and set the occasion for teacher praise." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"We consistently need to carry out the consequences and noncompliance of our classroom rules or they will mean very little. … We need to make clear the consequences for following and not following the rules." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"the guidelines for classroom rules include the following: (a) develop 4–6 measurable, observable, positive classroom rules and include students in rule development; (b) teach the rules and subrules directly; (c) post the rules and review them frequently; and, (d) be sure to carry out the consequences for rule compliance and noncompliance." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Treating All Misbehaviors as 'Won't Dos'** … When students misbehave, it often seems as though it is exclusively a motivational issue. At times, this is true. On those occasions, we need to increase the reinforcement for appropriate behavior and eliminate it for inappropriate behavior. However, several misbehaviors are due to a lack of appropriate skills not a lack of motivation. We call these behaviors 'can't dos.'" (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "We should deal with can't do misbehaviors the same way that we deal with student's academic mistakes. When students make repeated errors during our lessons, we make changes in how we teach (e.g., provide more examples, allow students to practice more), and provide more intensive instruction." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"We would be more effective in solving chronic misbehaviors if we moved into the precorrective mode. The following are seven major precorrection steps: Step 1. Identify the context and the predictable behavior (where and when the misbehavior occurs); Step 2. Specify expected behavior (what we want instead); Step 3. Systematically modify the context (e.g., changes in instruction, tasks, schedules, seating arrangements); Step 4. Conduct behavior rehearsals (have students practice the appropriate behavior); Step 5. Provide strong reinforcement such as frequent and immediate teacher praise; Step 6. Prompt expected behaviors; and Step 7. Monitor the plan (collect data on student performance)." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Lack of Planning for Transition Time** … a significant amount of class time is spent transitioning from one subject to another or from one place to another. Without proper planning, transitioning can be one of the most frustrating times of the day for teachers. … Why? At times students are not ready for the transition. Inconsistent expectations cause transition problems. Furthermore, because we are often transitioning with the students, our attention is diverted away from them, making transitions longer and inviting even more misbehavior." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "Transition problems can be reduced significantly by following a few practical procedures. First, it is best that our transition expectations are consistent, meaning the same rules apply for each type of transition. Consistency begins by developing transition rules with our students (e.g., quietly put materials away, keep your hands and feet to yourself.)" (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Once we have developed our transition rules, we should teach them to our students." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Ignoring All or Nothing at All** … Ignoring can be a valuable tool in reducing misbehaviors when used with behavior-building strategies. However, it's difficult for many of us to determine which behaviors to ignore and which to give attention. We tend to take ignoring to extremes by ignoring almost all misbehaviors or none at all. Neither approach is effective." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "We should only ignore the behaviors motivated for our attention. … when behaviors are attention seeking we need to ignore continuously (every single time). As soon as we begin to ignore our student's misbehavior, he or she will seek it elsewhere, most likely from peers. It can be difficult for peers to ignore misbehaviors. Therefore, ignoring misbehavior should be a classroom rule that receives powerful reinforcement. Also, we need to plan for the misbehavior to get worse (happen more often and more intensely) before it improves. When this happens, we must continue to ignore." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Ignoring must be used in combination with behavior-building strategies, such as reinforcement of appropriate behaviors, teaching replacement behaviors, and reinforcing peers. Ignoring teaches students what not to do, but does not teach them what they should do instead." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"There are occasions when ignoring is inappropriate. These include when there are concerns for observational learning of misbehaviors, when our students are engaging in extreme or dangerous behaviors, and, as stated earlier, when the misbehavior is not attention seeking." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Overuse and Misuse of Time Out** … Time out occurs when a teacher removes a student for a specific time from a chance to receive reinforcement." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "we must remember that time out is not a place. Instead it is a process whereby all opportunities to get reinforced are withdrawn. Consequently, for it to work, the time-in area (the activity) must be more reinforcing than the time-out area." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Despite our frustrations, we should administer time out with a calm, neutral tone of voice. We should also give our students a brief explanation for the time out to help build an association between the misbehavior and the time-out consequence." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Inconsistent Expectations and Consequences** … Students are often given mixed signals as to what is expected and what will happen if they do not meet these expectations. Inconsistent expectations cause student confusion and frustration. Inconsistent consequences maintain misbehaviors and can even cause the behavior to occur more frequently or intensely. In addition, we find ourselves

constantly reminding and threatening which, in turn, enhances our frustration." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "Have Clear Expectations That Are Enforced and Reinforced Consistently … Expectations are clear when they are identifiable and consistent. Reviewing expectations and rehearsing rules help build routines and minimize the potential for problems. We can do this by asking our students to read the expectations prior to each activity." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Expectations are pointless if they are not backed up with reinforcement for compliance and reasonable negative consequences for noncompliance. For rule compliance, positive consequences should be applied continuously at first (every time the student is appropriate) and then intermittently (every so often)." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"On the other hand, negative consequences (punishment procedures) are most effective when applied continuously." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Viewing Ourselves as the Only Classroom Manager**" (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "Include Students, Parents, and Others in Management Efforts … Fortunately, there are many others who can assist in our behavior management efforts, including students, their peers, fellow teachers, administrators, parents, and other school personnel." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"When including administrators in behavior management, we tend to make two mistakes that are at opposite ends of the support spectrum ... We either send students to them too frequently or we wait too long to get them involved. It is best to resolve as many behavior problems in our class and only involve administrators for more serious situations, such as physical aggression." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Missing the Link Between Instruction and Behavior** … Perhaps our lesson is too easy or difficult, ineffective, or nonstimulating, which can lead to student misbehavior" (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "The first line of defense in managing student behavior is effective instruction. Good teachers have always known this and research supports this notion. … when teachers demystify learning, achievement and behavior improve dramatically." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"Effective teaching practices include (but are not limited to) instruction that is fast paced, includes high rates of active student responding, involves modeling new behaviors, and provides guided practice and positive and corrective feedback." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Mistake: "**Taking Student Behavior Too Personally** … When students misbehave, it often feels like a personal attack, and for good reason. Some of our students are very good at making it feel personal. When we take students' misbehavior personally, we tend to lose our objectivity, look for quick management fixes that rarely work, and get emotionally upset, which takes time and energy away from our teaching." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

Suggestion: "Take Student Misbehavior Professionally, Not Personally … When we take misbehavior professionally, we view behavior management as our responsibility. Professionals know the importance of having a sound management system in place that deals with classwide [sic] issues and individual student problems. Professionals have realistic expectations for improvement in behavior and know that there are no quick fixes with lasting effects. Most importantly, confident professionals ask for assistance when it is needed." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

"When we are more effective, we're calmer and less likely to react personally to student misbehavior. Although some student misbehavior may appear to be targeted toward us, these behaviors may be an outcome of their own wants and needs, lack of skills, or emotional difficulties and frustrations. The time and energy wasted being upset at our students' misbehavior is better spent celebrating our students' success." (Barbetta, Common mistakes)

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The following pages are presented as they were published. I thought they were good advice from experienced teachers.

Ten Worst Teaching Mistakes by Felder and Brent (ncsu lockers 1 and ncsu lockers 2)