**How To Improve Classroom Behavior In One Lesson**

by Michael Linsin on October 3, 2009

I’d like to share with you a uniquely powerful classroom management strategy, one that, when used correctly, stands above the rest. This particular strategy never fails to make an impression and can be used as often as you wish.

And the best part is, you will see immediate improvement in your students.

I call it the “how not” strategy. It’s a close but rebellious cousin of detailed modeling. If you’re not familiar with [detailed modeling](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2009/06/07/supercharge-your-classroom-management-plan-through-modeling/), read the linked article. If you’re interested in a complete explanation, I’ve devoted an entire chapter to it in my book, *Dream Class*.

**The “How Not” Strategy**

The “how not” strategy is so powerful because it clarifies for students exactly what unacceptable behavior looks like, and they’ll immediately recognize it. In fact, when you use this strategy, you’ll find your students laughing and nodding their heads knowingly.

Some of its power comes from its entertaining qualities. When you use the “how not” strategy, your students will be fully engaged. They may even clamor for you to teach it again.

**How It Works**

After using detailed modeling to demonstrate a specific part of your plan, or a certain classroom procedure, model *how not* to do it. For example, let’s say you’re teaching your students how to line up for lunch. After showing them how to do it properly, you would then model for them *how not* to do it.

If you’ve been teaching even for a short time, you can predict the most common ways students line up incorrectly. For example:

* Leaving chair out
* Talking in line
* Cutting in line
* Pushing

To use this method, you would pretend to be a student lining up while engaging in one or more of these behaviors. Choose a few students to be extras in your mini-sketch and have them waiting in line the correct way. Choose another student to play the part of the teacher, giving you the signal to line up.

Start the modeling session by sitting at a student’s desk, waiting for the line-up signal. When the teacher—acting student—gives the signal, line up how you’ve seen your students doing it improperly. Except, ham it up and have fun with it.

The more you exaggerate the unwanted behavior, the more memorable it will be for your students.

In fact, they’ll never forget it. And few will behave in the way you modeled ever again. They’ll be embarrassed to. The “how not” strategy works so well because it points out the absurdity of poor behavior.

**Poor Behavior Is Absurd**

As much as possible, create a classroom environment where poor behavior is looked upon as absurd.

I was at a museum in Europe several years ago, waiting in line to see an exhibit, and a man and a woman cut in line, positioning themselves near the front. Those of us behind were astounded at their rudeness and demanded they go to the end of the line. Given the environment, their behavior was absurd.

The reverence toward learning in your classroom must be held in the same regard as art is viewed in a museum. That isn’t to say that students must always be silent or speak in hushed tones. Fun, after all, is an important element of a successful classroom. But learning must always be held in the highest regard.

The “how not” strategy effectively gets this message across to students.

Seeing things from a different perspective changes the way students view their world. Allow your students to see what their poor behavior looks like and how it affects others, and it will hit home like no other classroom management strategy.

If you haven’t yet signed up to be a member of this site, I invite you to join us. It’s free! [Click here](http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=SmartClassroomManagement&loc=en_US), enter your email address, and start receiving new articles in your email box every week.

[7](http://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.smartclassroommanagement.com%2F2009%2F10%2F03%2Fhow-to-improve-classroom-behavior-in-one-lesson%2F&media=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.smartclassroommanagement.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2009%2F10%2F1049903_22807171.jpg&guid=LrJ06sL81Fyo&description=How%20To%20Improve%20Classroom%20Behavior%20In%20One%20Lesson)

Related posts:

1. [How To Use ‘The Power Of One’ Strategy To Improve Behavior](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2010/09/04/how-to-use-the-power-of-one-strategy-to-improve-behavior/)
2. [How To Use The Preview Strategy To Improve Behavior](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2012/06/23/how-to-use-the-preview-strategy-to-improve-behavior/)
3. [How Your Classroom Environment Can Improve Behavior](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2011/10/08/classroom-environment/)
4. [How To Improve Classroom Management By Talking Less](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2011/04/16/improve-classroom-management-by-talking-less/)
5. [How To Manage Classroom Behavior During Assemblies](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2011/01/15/classroom-management-during-assemblies/)

Tagged as: [absurd behavior](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/absurd-behavior/), [classroom management](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/classroom-management/), [detailed modeling](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/detailed-modeling/), [effective teaching](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/effective-teaching/), [high expectations](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/high-expectations/), [how not strategy](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/how-not-strategy/), [lining up](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/lining-up/), [teacher modeling](http://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/tag/teacher-modeling/)