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## Hold Private Practice Sessions

### A Point to Ponder

When a student does something inappropriate in class, he is usually expecting you to react in a certain way. He knows he has an audience (his classmates), and he is often putting on a performance. If you do what many teachers do and deal with him in front of his audience, the behavior will rarely improve.

In fact, a bad situation will usually become worse. But **when you deal with even the toughest of students one on one, in private, most of the toughness fades away.** One of our favorite ways to break a student (of any age) of an inappropriate behavior pattern is to use the following strategy.

### Classroom Solution/Strategy

Talk to the student privately and say, "I noticed that you are having trouble remembering our procedure for raising your hand before speaking. Don't be too hard on yourself for forgetting. I'm an adult, and I often forget things. But I know how embarrassing it can be to forget so often in front of your friends. So here's what I'm willing to do for you. Don't thank me now, but I will give you my recess today and practice with you so that you will be really good at the procedure and won't forget so much. I'm happy

So the student comes in at recess and you say, "Thanks for coming in. Okay, now pretend that we are in class and you have something you want to say. Show me what you'll do." The student slowly raises his hand and you say, "Great! I can give you 15 more minutes of practice. Do you think you need more practice or do you feel you have it now?" The student always says, "I have it." Then say, "Great. See you tomorrow. Oh, if you forget again tomorrow, that's my fault. That simply means I didn't give you enough practice. I'll even stay after school for you if you need. Just let me know."

Now please note that this technique takes less than a minute, so the good news is that you do not lose your recess. And if you teach in a school where there is no recess, you can use this technique between classes, during your planning period, during lunch, etc.

When the student next returns to your class, be sure to catch him *not* talking and thank him. But if the problem becomes chronic again, simply have another private practice session. You can use this for virtually any sort of misbehavior.

One final note is that some teachers ask, "Well, what if the student does not show up at recess?" Our answer is simple. Go and find him and say, "Oh, you must have forgotten that you and I have a practice session. Let's go." And you do this with a smile on your face.

## Bottom Line



The *private practice session* strategy is a simple one that produces amazing results. Anyone who tells you that private practice sessions with students don't work has obviously never tried them. Practice makes perfect, doesn't it? So practice, practice, practice, and watch behavior improve, improve, improve!

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