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ED 619 ~ Behavior Intervention

My definition of discipline:

The art of sculpting/training yourself or someone else in a field or study where practice, consistency and focus are required to obtain a desired result or to reach a desired goal.

I – Identify the problem: M seems to feign ignorance and stalls when faced with her math worksheets.

O – Objective: Get M to quit feigning ignorance and attempt her work with confidence.

S – Solution: Peer to peer teaching. (Group guidance approach).

I – Implementation: Partner K, who is confident in math, with M to work through the math worksheets.

E – Evaluation: This technique has worked in getting M to stop feigning ignorance when working on math and has had a positive effect on how she responds in other subjects. The goal will be to keep using this strategy until M can confidently and independently work on math.

From my November 3rd entry:

One of the students in my host teacher's class is a hard nut to crack. The main behavior issue with her is that she feigns ignorance A LOT. It's been a puzzle as to how to get her to knock it off. I mean, you can't just say, "knock it off." So she's been my project this semester. I tried a few things. Even trying to convince her I wasn't buying her "act" by telling her I believed in her ability to do "it" (math). She didn't care...still stalled, and still acted like she had no idea what numbers were! She has support from the resource room come in and I discussed it with that teacher as well. Her experiences with M have been the same as mine.

Last week I had a major break-through! She came to me for help with her math worksheet (with only her name and date on the paper) while several other students were gathering for help on just one problem because they are used to putting forth the effort and working through as much as they can before seeking out help. One of the students got everything right and was done early. He was eager to also help with students who were stuck because he was done and has great math skills. I was hesitant to turn him loose because I didn't know what kind of help he would offer. (There's another student who thinks helping amounts to just giving his peers the answer). So when M was there needing help with her entire worksheet and K was there eager to help somebody/anybody, I decided I'd try peer to peer tutoring and supervise them while assisting other students.

I kept an ear out and it sounded like K was genuinely helping M with her work. He was not simply giving her the answers but making her think through the problems. She didn't feign ANYTHING with him. I checked in on her body language and facial expressions and she didn't have her normal closed off posture and confused facial expression. She was not dragging it out.

She was engaged and open to K's help and they were making progress through the worksheet at a much more rapid pace than is typical for M. It worked!

For some reason M puts on an act for grown-ups but for her peers (or this one in particular) she doesn't put on the act at all! I plan on partnering her up with a peer through the rest of the school year to see if the math hour goes more smoothly for her. I hope once it's been long enough and she's no longer in the practice of feigning ignorance she'll forget she ever did it in the first place.

Update:

This strategy has been working very well. It's so effective that M has lessened the amount of times she feigns ignorance in other areas. When I've conducted other lessons, like the responsibility lesson and the lesson on quarters, she showed engagement and thinking skills and wasn't afraid to share. I was actually surprised.

This approach has turned out to be a kind of win-win. K struggled with rushing through his work because he wanted to be finished first. He was always disappointed that his rushing resulted in him having to go back and make corrections whether it was on a math worksheet or another draft of his writing assignment. Since adding the "reward" of K getting to work with M on her math, K has slowed down enough to be more careful to get his math right the first time (while still finishing on the early side). This frees him up to be available to work with M who is usually still on the first problem (it's always a word problem). He looks forward to it.

They work next to me while I'm checking other students' work and I continue to be impressed with how K and M work together and how willing M is to try her best. K doesn't just give her the answers. I suspect it's because it makes him feel like a real teacher to use the same types of questions his teacher and I use to get students to think their way through problems. He sort of sounds like us!

The last time they worked together I checked M's math and she had gotten everything right. I commented on how quickly she seemed to have gotten through the worksheet this time. She said, "Yeah, for some reason when I work with K I can do it quicker and it isn't as hard." She's proud of herself and seems satisfied with the result of working like this as opposed to working with the resource aid or me.

It's interesting that that there really is no difference in the type of help she's been getting. It's not so much the delivery as it is the deliverer. Working with a peer allows her to take down those self imposed walls and "acts" and be a more engaged and productive student. It's been good for *her* self esteem as well as K's.

I plan on encouraging this partnership through the end of the semester. Once we're back from winter break I'll try to get M to work more problems independently before pairing up with K. Gradually, she should be able and willing to tackle the entire worksheet with no help. Now that

she's experienced some success, I think she'll be motivated and encouraged to try more on her own. I can't wait to see how this progresses!

This approach is consistent with my philosophy of discipline because it is a practice that helps attain the desired goal of M working independently without the undesirable behavior of "feigning ignorance." This approach is consistent with my philosophy of education because it builds the self esteem of students involved and respects their strengths and weaknesses.