

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Observing Classroom Management and Organization Practices

Everett Area Elementary School, Pennsylvania • May 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems

Practice: Modify Environment

Highlights

- Kelly Waugerman, a fourth-grade teacher at Everett Elementary School, explains her role as a coach for the school's program to improve student behavior and promote student engagement.
- As a coach, she observes her fellow teachers at least monthly and provides feedback on their classroom management and instructional strategies such as cooperative learning.
- Coaches also assist teachers if they have difficulty implementing the proactive management skills and instructional strategies.
- Coaches look closely at the classroom environment for evidence of rituals and routines that facilitate the students' learning (e.g., resources readily available to help them complete assignments).

About the Site

Everett Area Elementary School

Everett, PA

Demographics

48% White

9% Native American

6% Black

7% Asian

10% Hispanic

47% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

3% Special Education

Everett Area Elementary School implements an integrated, broad-based approach to reduce behavior problems and foster healthy social development. Key features include:

- Classroom management strategies to increase student engagement and reduce disruption,
- Teacher collaboration to address needs of students with behavior problems,
- Social-emotional skills instruction in the classroom, and
- Workshops for parents to provide tools on how to manage their child's behavior at home.

Full Transcript

My name is Kelly Waugerman. I'm a fourth-grade teacher at Everett Elementary. I teach science and language arts.

As part of our school's program in an attempt to improve student behavior and to promote student engagement in learning, we have a program, and part of that program involves having teachers serve as a coach. I am designated as a coach, and under me I have nine teachers. My role as a coach involves me visiting teachers and to help monitor their implementation of instructional strategies and assist them in necessary—if they need any help in using those instructional strategies. My responsibilities include regular visits, and a regular visit is at least one time per month, possibly two times a month, and you want to stay for about 20 minutes. During those observations, the first thing we look for is evidence of social and emotional learning. When I go into a classroom, I'm looking for proactive management skills. We're looking for clear evidence that teachers have a routine. We want students to know exactly what they need to do if they need to use the rest room, if their pencil lead breaks, if they need to go to the nurse. Anything that would require routine, we want to see evidence of it.

We want to see how a teacher's controlling misbehaviors. We use the Law of Least Intervention. We expect the teachers to first make eye contact, then we expect proximity control. Everything after that would be a private conference. We also look at the learning environment. The classroom, we expect to see students work hanging around. That helps with the bonding. But in addition, we want to see that that room is used as a resource. Anything that the students could use to aid in their learning can be hanging on the wall, should

be hanging on the wall. That becomes part of a routine. They know where to go if they need help. We want to see our teachers using cooperative learning, not cooperative learning for the sake of cooperative learning, a cooperative learning that has the definite goal, that it's been thought out. We don't expect it be done the same every time. We want to see diverse groups. We want students to have a chance to work with each other. We want to stress as much as how important the product may be, but also it's the effort that's going into the product that is just as important.

To students: I'm going to divide you into some groups. I don't know who you're going to be working with. That's going to be determined by something on your desk. Let's pretend there are three groups. You're going to have to decide what your job's going to be. One of you is going to have to be the recorder. That's the person doing all the writing. Make sure if you're the recorder that you write neatly because, guess what? The reporter—the person that's going to be reporting and doing all the talking—has to be able to read what you wrote. So we have a recorder writing, a reporter that's going to talk, and then you have that third person, and that might be the most important job. The third person is going to be the facilitator, the timekeeper, and the materials person.

Waugerman: As a coach, I'm also looking for interactive instructional strategies. I actually pick three randoms students during a visit, and we use that as a sampling of the class, and we're looking to see that all students are engaged. When I go into a classroom, I do have a checklist that I'm using, and it pretty much has all of those things that we're looking for. If I see evidence of it, I make note of the specific evidence that I see. If I see that there could have been a place to put something, I make notes of that. After each visit as a coach, we try to set up a conference time, and that's where we share our feedback. When you have a conference with a peer, you always start out by asking them open-ended questions so that they can share what they thought about their lesson. If you're going to give any advice whatsoever, it's important that you ask permission. So, I can say, "May I tell you what I saw?" And if they give permission, then we use those check-sheets and we go over. If a teacher is struggling, we try to pick three or fewer things to look at and, again, I use those check-sheets. Usually the teacher picks the one or two things or three, if necessary, that they pick on, and together we sit down and think of ways that they could use it in the classroom. Teachers were hesitant about having people come into their room. However, being that it is a teacher-to-teacher, a peer-to-peer, they are now very comfortable. They know that, as a coach, I'm a resource but, as a coach, I also look at other teachers as a resource. As a coach, I have the privilege of going in and seeing other teachers and, once again, if you get more than one teacher together, you're going to gain a lot of ideas.