

# DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Learning to Relate to Each Other

Hidden Hills Elementary School, Arizona • May 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems

Practice: Teach Skills

### Highlights

- Every Monday morning, teachers at Hidden Hills Elementary dedicate 20-25 minutes to social-emotional learning.
- Fifth-grade teacher Joy Rea describes how she uses cooperative learning to help students develop social skills. Students work together using graphical organizers such as Thinking Maps to chart the causes and effects of a positive classroom.
- First-grade teacher Kay Wimmer discusses key social behaviors with her students and very often uses role play to practice what students should do when there is a problem on the playground.
- Ms. Wimmer noted a positive change on campus; students are more respectful and considerate towards others and remind their peers about safe and respectful behavior.

### About the Site

Hidden Hills Elementary School

Phoenix, AZ

## Demographics

70% White

19% Hispanic

5% Black

3% Asian

2% Native American

35% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

8% English Language Learners

Hidden Hills Elementary uses a comprehensive schoolwide approach to provide a safe learning environment and promote students' social and emotional skills and positive character values. The unique strategies used by the school are:

- A schoolwide approach that focuses on positive behavior support and is led and guided by a core team of five to six staff including the principal, social worker, and several teachers;
- Monday class meetings conducted by every teacher to talk about bullying prevention, social-emotional skills, and character values;
- Clear communication and reminders of behavior expectations;
- A web-based system and detailed referral forms to record characteristics of problem behavior, hypothesized motives for behavior, and actions taken; and
- A multi-level positive reinforcement system to acknowledge positive and caring behavior of students and teachers.

## Full Transcript

My name is Joy Rea. I'm a fifth-grade teacher here at Hidden Hills, Phoenix, Arizona.

Rea to classroom: And today, we're going to be talking about a positive classroom.

Rea: Every Monday morning, when the students return from a long weekend, we dedicate 20 to 25 minutes on social and emotional education and just teaching the children how to relate with each other and how to use those skills for every part of the school day in general.

Rea to classroom: Team one, give us one idea that you guys have that is a cause. What causes a classroom to be positive?

Student: Friendship.

Rea to classroom: Friendships. Perfect. How about team two? Did you guys have anything else that is a must-make for the list?

Student: We had responsibility.

Rea to classroom: Okay. Having responsibility. Let's hear your definition of responsibility.

Student: Responsibility, like, doing chores at home. Doing what you're supposed to do, as in chores and completing homework.

Rea to classroom: Okay. Do you have chores in the classroom?

Students: Yes.

Rea to classroom: Okay. Give us an example of one.

Student: Homework.

Rea to classroom: Okay, doing your homework. Anything else?

Student: Doing your work and completing it.

Rea to classroom: Team five, what do you guys have over there?

Student: You can encourage each other.

Rea to classroom: Encourage each other. Team three?

Student: Gratitude.

Rea to classroom: Gratitude. Love that word. What does gratitude mean? Team three, do you want to enlighten us on that? Save us from the dictionary?

Student: To be grateful for what you have.

Rea to classroom: Okay.

Rea: I had a child who was speaking about how grateful he should feel to be in class and to be doing those assignments. And it was just terrific for me to be able to see him connecting that positive classrooms and those types of things are really the gratitude level. I was very impressed by that.

Rea to classroom: What do you guys have there?

Students: Teamwork

Rea to classroom: Great. Teamwork is an excellent cause for a positive classroom.

Rea: Within my classroom, I try very hard to execute cooperative learning groups, Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structures, and I've just found that the team building, the class building that those structures provide is just terrific. I've found that if kids understand up front what the guidelines and expectations are, there's a lot less classroom management issues. There's a lot less disturbances, and the kids are more focused on learning and appreciating each other and working cooperatively if the expectations are set forth

and when they're comfortable working in those cooperative strategies.

Thinking Maps are ways of organizing the children's thinking. They use maps to do just that—to lay out all their thoughts. They're free from teachers' conventions, like we're not sitting there emphasizing spelling or grammar. It's just more about laying out their ideas and their thoughts. The students use them enough at the school that, now, as we learn something, you can say, "Hey, what kind of map should we use to demonstrate that thinking?," and they'll say, "Oh..." For example, like today, the Multi-Flow Map, that shows the relationship of cause and effect, and we use that a lot in, like, social studies to show how an event relates cause and effect."

I try and teach the children the importance of valuing each other's gifts and how each child has a gift that they can offer whether it's in the classroom, whether it's outside of the classroom, whether it's the ability to work well with people, whether it's playing a band instrument well, something. And I really try and emphasize appreciation for each individual student. So, when it comes time to working in a group, they aren't just looking at each other for what they can do in one subject area, that they value each other as human beings, and not just as my teammate, that there is more to meets the eye with each individual student.

Kay Wimmer: My name is Kay Wimmer. I'm a teacher here at Hidden Hills Elementary School in Phoenix, Arizona.

Wimmer reading to classroom: Patty didn't know anyone. She missed her old friends.

Wimmer: We usually focus on one or two specific behaviors at the beginning of the week, and then we talk about the behaviors, possibly do a Thinking Map with the behaviors. And quite often in my classroom, first grade, we do role-playing. And this helps the children to remember what they should be doing when they behave out on the playground and when there's a problem out on the playground, how they should resolve it.

Wimmer reading to classroom: "Can I join your club?" she asked Emma. Emma looked at Sophie. Sophie looked at Haylie. Haylie looked at Rose. Then they all looked at Patty. Emma shook her head, "Sorry," she said, but she didn't sound very sorry at all. "Only real princesses can join."

Wimmer: We have similar types of bullying about private clubs, and "you can't be in my club," and we know that we can ignore them, walk away, or often times my children will come to the aid of the child being bullied. And they will come over and say, "Here, do you want to come and play with me?" or, "Do you want to come over and do this with me?" or, "Here, I will be your friend."

Wimmer to students: You're going to say, "You can't be in our club."

Student (role-playing): You can't be in our club because you have blonde hair or straight hair.

Wimmer to students: Okay, and what about you.

Student (role-playing): You're not going to be in our club since you don't have brown eyes.

Wimmer to students: Okay.

Student (role-playing): You're all right? It doesn't really matter what they're doing to you. You just need to listen to your heart and what it's saying. Would you like to come play with me?

Student: One, two, three, can you please save some for me?

Wimmer to students: Good Job, and what do you say?

Student: One, two, three, save some for me.

Wimmer to students: Thank you, good job. All right, let's give them a round of applause. [clapping,]

Wimmer: I've seen a positive change in this school campus. I've seen students being more respectful towards each other. I've seen students following the rules. I've seen students remind other students that that is not safe or that is not respectful. I've seen students become more caring toward other students and understanding how their behavior affects others. In the classroom, I've seen much more considerate behavior. I've seen the classroom environment and the school environment is a much more happy, positive environment where students are able to learn and much less time is spent on behavior issues.