



MAKE YOUR DAY

A SCHOOL-WIDE CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS
TEACHERS TO TEACH AND ALLOWS STUDENTS TO LEARN

Earl's Corner

Stop, Look and Listen

When I was in school it was important to me to gain the acceptance of my friends. I wasn't extremely athletic or talented, but I was funny. I recall entertaining classmates and, often, being rudely interrupted by my teachers. They would inform me that I wasn't being funny. I looked around at my classmates and they were laughing. I was funny.



Don't react.



Look at the whole student.



Listen for what's really happening.

Our disruptive students are often telling us something about themselves or their situation. Very few students leave their homes in the morning with the intent of getting into trouble at school. Spontaneous reactions, poorly thought-out responses or following a dare will lead many students into disfavor with their teachers. If we take the time to analyze the event instead of reacting to the student's response, we may gain greater insight on how best to turn the event in our favor. It requires us to **Stop, Look** and **Listen**.

Although, it may be difficult to allow a period of time to pass before we act or react to certain

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the Make Your Day
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Day events.**

**Staff in need of
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locations.**

Kudos to Wenatchee

events, we minimize overreactions and give less credence to what might have been the student's intent. To allow this passage of time requires us to **Stop** ourselves from giving the student what might be our first reaction. If we take the time to **Look** at the event, we gain a greater understanding of why the student may have performed or misbehaved the way they did. In the context of evaluating the event, it's important to view the relevance of the student's response to the activity itself. If we consider what might have occurred just prior to the disruptive behavior of the student, it may tell us about the student's intent. It may give us a greater understanding of how the structure of the current activity might have contributed to the disruption.

Listening to the content of the disruptive behavior and **listening** to the response of the student's peers should shape our own responses to our students. We tend to oversimplify the rationale for disruptive student behavior. Often we attribute disruptive behavior to attention-seeking. While it is certainly true that positive and negative attention may provide the rewards that some of our students are seeking, it may be more important to **Look** at what responsibilities we may share in providing an atmosphere where our students feel the need to be disruptive.

Some of us class clowns don't need a reason and no structure will keep us from disrupting a lesson. But if my teachers had taken more time to see who I was as a person and not judge me by my behaviors, it would have reduced my need for disruption. Our students who are disruptive created Make Your Day. They told us that to be fair, reasonable, logical and predictable would reduce their need to disrupt. They told us that giving them an opportunity to take credit for doing their best work and not comparing them to others would reduce their need to disrupt. Our students who are disruptive disrupt for a reason. Take the time to **Stop**. Take the time to **Look**. Take the time to **Listen**. We as teachers don't always need

School District
for providing MYD
resources
to all staff - at all
times.

~~Check out their
website.~~

~~Website for Teachers~~

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to find the answer. It may be more important to find the question. Ask your students for their help. Don't seek to find blame. Don't look to shame. And, don't worry about retribution.

Next month I'll discuss the importance of educating our parents and successful strategies for developing support at home.

Cheryl's Two Cents

Cueing 101

Definition: 1) *General* - When a group of students transitions from one activity to another, verbal and/or visual prompts are utilized to help students move from one type of activity to another. 2) A reminder given to students who are fully capable of following the expectations. (Examples - "Put the toy/cell phone/PDA away." "Do that again and it'll get you to steps." "Stop _____ (fill in the blank)." "What did I say?"

When is cueing appropriate and productive? When is cueing simply a short-cut and counterproductive? First, let's look at cueing as a needed support. Kindergarteners are initially in need of more reminders and prompts. There are students whose IEP or 504 plan supports specific cues or prompts because of educational need and the team determines a specific schedule or set of cues that will support that student. General cues such as "Clap when you hear me," flashing the lights, ringing a bell, etc. are often needed when students are moving from one type of activity to another.



How do we know when we've moved beyond appropriate cues? When we've established criteria or set expectations and we are certain that each student understands, then cues or reminders are simply an intervention that students are not expecting. Let's look at an example: I say to the class, "If you're interested in earning points, the expectation is to work on AR. Raise your hand if you need help. Questions? You may begin." Dayja blurts out, "What are we doing?" I know that Dayja is fully capable of understanding and following directions. If I say to Dayja, "What did I say about raising your hand?" that would be cueing that is counterproductive. What might be the ramifications of what I just did?

Short-Term Effect

- Dayja raises her hand. The unwanted behavior stops. (for the moment)

Long-Term Effect

- I've added an unexpected intervention, creating an unpredictable environment. How many times am I going to remind Dayja to not talk out before I allow her to go to Step 1?
- Dayja's self-esteem is impacted because the subtext of the cue is that I don't have the expectation that she is capable of raising her hand for help.
- Other students will see that I am not

consistent in following through so I've lost credibility.

- When students say that I'm unfair, they are right because I do not consistently follow through with consequences; therefore, I choose when they go to steps.
- The unwanted behavior will repeat.
- Dayja maintains an external locus of control.

If we would like a classroom in which students are consistently on-task, then we need to provide a consistent, predictable environment. Cueing (aka reminding) does not create a consistent, predictable environment. Cueing forces us to micro-manage rather than allowing students to learn from their mistakes. Wouldn't we rather have our students make those little mistakes with us so we can help them learn that actions have consequences. At a regional training this summer, we were having a discussion about cueing. One of the mentor teachers told the group about an article she had read some years back. It stated that 90% of the prison population has an external locus of control, they had never developed the ability to manage themselves.

Let's go back to Dayja. When she blurted out, she was simply saying, "Can I have a bit of time away from the current activity." When I allow her to go to Step 1, my message to her is that I have the expectation that she has the ability to learn how to manage her behavior. What I always keep in my mind are the following questions:

- Does the student have the ability to

meet the expectation?

- Would it be fair if I didn't follow through?
- And, most importantly, if I don't help this student learn how to self-manage now, what is their adult life going to be like?

Once I've answered these questions, I have no choice but to follow through - for the benefit of the student.

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