

MAKE YOUR DAY

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

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Earl's Corner

Shortcuts 101

The key to maintaining continuity with MYD is to be certain that we all do it the same way. That, of course, is an unrealistic and unachievable goal. Even during the training, everyone hears what is being said but many hear it differently. Through the years, there have been many positive contributions made by teachers who have found better methods of implementation. Some of these methods may have come from the teacher's desire to seek shortcuts because of time constraints and pressure to perform well on standardized testing. However, in seeking these shortcuts, the critical measure for success is to determine whether the shortcut is philosophically in sync with MYD.

Few teachers have sought to shortcut the implementation of Steps. Many have found Points to be time-consuming and cumbersome so devise methods that eliminate any "wasted" time or effort.



When teachers in the elementary setting run late for lunch, they have done two sets of Points after lunch instead of compromising the time needed for Points.

During Concerns, if there are Multiple Concerns, students listen carefully. If someone in front of them addresses a Concern that is similar to theirs, they are expected to put their hand down. It is also an effective shortcut if the teacher raises their hand during Multiple Concerns and, ideally, addresses the Concerns on behalf of the students. Students are expected to put their hands down once their Concern has been addressed.

The most effective shortcut is following the script that is in the training manual. The biggest reason that Points and Concerns become cumbersome, time-consuming and unproductive is when teachers allow

An example of a shortcut that maintains the integrity of the philosophy was developed by a teacher in Paradise Valley School District, Arizona, with the help of her students. Their school schedule required them to do points every 40 minutes. They created a language of acronyms and abbreviations for behaviors. Some examples were "T" for talking, "O" for out of seat and "SO" for spacing out. Observers were clueless, but the class knew exactly what was being said.

Some classrooms have eliminated the calling of names for Points until Concerns. The students have memorized their position on the roster and quickly offer their point values, validating points earned and points not earned without prompting.

Some teachers have used Popsicle sticks with student names on them to identify the students who are expected to validate points earned. Although, this does not give each student the opportunity to offer validation, all students were expected to give thought to their validation even though only a few were chosen. All students who do not earn full points are expected to describe what kept them from earning full points.

students to argue, ramble or deviate from the expected responses during Points and Concerns.

Shortcuts that are philosophically antithetical and that will ultimately damage the system are 1) asking for general Concerns without identifying students by name, 2) cueing instead of giving students permission to go to Steps, 3) skipping Points and Concerns, 4) directing students to Steps from across the room, 5) assigning point values to specific behaviors rather than allowing students to determine point values e.g. talking out - 1 pt. Step 2 - 2 points, etc., and 6) only asking students who have not earned full points to state their points. (Note: for large special area classes this is an allowable exception.)

There are many shortcuts that have been developed through the years that are philosophically in sync with MYD and have enhanced the system. It would be helpful to us and others if your school would share any shortcuts developed that enhance MYD at your school. Please email them to us at EarlandCheryl@makeyourdays.com and we can add them to the website.

Next month, Rewards and Awards.



Another Good Read...

If your friends and family are asking what you'd like for the holidays, put a couple of Alfie Kohn books on your list. I've encouraged many of you to read ~~Punished by Rewards~~ when you've struggled with letting go of extrinsic rewards. Earl and I are currently working our way through another book by Alfie Kohn, ~~Beyond Discipline From Compliance to Community~~. As usual his thoughts may be provocative and challenging to wrap one's mind around, but...it's worth it.

If you've been listening to your students, his thoughts will make sense to you. If you're still struggling with helping your class become a true learning community, his thoughts will challenge you. Kohn's vision "requires that we transform the classroom, give up some power, and reconsider the way we define and think about misbehavior....In fact, it may be the only way to help children grow into caring and responsible adults." If you want to return from Winter Break with renewed vigor, give yourself the gift of looking at the world through your students eyes.

PS - Next on the list is ~~The Homework Myth~~.

Maintaining a Sense of Humor

As many of you know, MYD Trainers often spend a great deal of time on helping staffs get over hurdles related to choices that students may make. We learn to let go of some notions and habits that have become deeply ingrained in our zeal to make sure students succeed. Inviting students to voluntarily step into the learning process vs. prodding students into learning can feel like a slippery slope to teachers who are acutely aware of meeting AYP. "Get over it" often

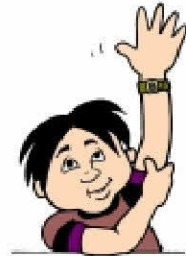


Pam Stokes and Patti Grocott, 4th grade teachers at Mirage Elementary School in

becomes a common refrain during the initial training.

Recently, Cheryl returned to Mirage Elementary School in Arizona for a follow-up meeting. It made her day when Patti Grocott and Pam Stokes opened the meeting with an enthusiastic rendition of "Get Over It" in her honor. What a great way to begin!

Arizona, sharing their enthusiasm and talent as they dance to "Get Over It" by The Eagles.



We're confused...

???
What
About
This
???
Student
Questions

Earlier this year I spoke with a middle school student at a new school. The student had concerns about how Make Your Day was going at their school. I asked the student what would be important for us to tell the teachers from the student point of view. After a few minutes of thinking, the student had three suggestions. **"Explain so we know what to do."** (Clear expectations and a clear understanding of interfering behaviors that result in Steps) **"Pay attention during Concerns and don't let kids use them to bully or get back at other kids."** and **"Don't forget us on steps."**

If you want to know how you're doing, ask your students. They will help you.

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