What is Misbehavior?

Introduction

Transcript:

Here’s a situation that is probably familiar to many teachers: a student misbehaves in some way, and the teacher does something to address it. However, a short while later the behavior occurs again. Then it happens again, and again, and again.

The reason why is simple. If a teacher’s response to a behavior does not address its underlying cause, then it’s likely to continue (Noguera, 2008).

In this module you will be introduced to a process for identifying possible causes of student misbehavior and then planning interventions that address those causes.
Transcript:

Let’s begin by considering the question: What do we mean when we say “misbehavior”? Take a moment to consider the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Each one of these statements represents a way that some teachers think about misbehavior. They are all problematic because they operate from the assumption that “good” behavior is obedience to the teacher, no matter what (Bondy et al., 2007). This mindset overlooks the purpose of classroom management, which is to create a safe space in the classroom where all students can learn (Emmer & Evertson, 2013).

A more appropriate - and more fair - definition of misbehavior might look like this:

Mindsets

Transcript:

Thought precedes action, so it stands to reason that the way we think about misbehavior tends to determine our response to it (Shindler, 2010).

One common mindset that teachers can adopt without even noticing is to place the blame for misbehavior
exclusively on students themselves. This is when teachers think or say things like “Some kids just can’t behave,” or “I’ll teach the students who want to learn.”

A similar mindset involves blaming someone else for students’ misbehavior. This is when teachers think or say things like “The problem is parents who can’t control their kids” or “My administrators don’t have my back.”

Both of these mindsets take the responsibility for dealing with misbehavior outside of the teacher’s own control, and place it on someone (or something) else (Cothran, Kulinna, & Garrahy, 2009; Milner & Tenore, 2010).

Research

Transcript:

Here’s what we know from research.

Teachers have a huge effect on student behavior; the things they say and do cause students to make decisions about whether to comply with their directives or not (Allday, 2011; Brady, Forton, & Porter, 2012; Milner & Tenore, 2010).

For example, a student may deliberately violate classroom rules to distance himself from a teacher he perceives as disrespectful or uncaring. This is one way in which a teacher may unknowingly contribute to the misbehavior he or she is encountering (Milner & Tenore, 2010; Shindler, 2010).

Students do expect teachers to act with authority and respond to misbehavior when it occurs (Brown, 2004; Milner & Tenore, 2010; Sun & Shek, 2012).

However, they expect teachers to do so in a way that is fair and that preserves students’ dignity (Bondy et al., 2007; Noguera, 2008).
Identifying Causes of Misbehavior

Identify What, When, and Function

Transcript:

To identify the causes of a given behavior, begin by describing exactly what the misbehavior is and when it occurs.

Next, consider its function. It’s important to remember that almost any misbehavior does something for the student. Usually, the behavior either helps the student get something desirable, or avoid something undesirable (Gable, Park, & Scott, 2014).

For this reason, it’s important to consider the ways that our own words and actions may be feeding in to the very behavior we find problematic.

Here are some examples of different functions that a given behavior may serve for a student. Think about whether any of these functions may lie beneath some of the behaviors you’ve observed in your classroom.
Common Causes

Transcript:

Thinking about the *circumstances* in which a behavior occurs and the *function* it may serve can help us identify...
possible causes. The extent to which our response effectively addresses these causes will help determine whether the behavior changes, or continues.

Here is a list of some common causes of student misbehavior.

**Check for Understanding**

**Part 1**

Transcript:

Let’s practice the process of identifying causes of misbehavior and aligned interventions. Read the following scenario, and consider possible causes for the behavior being described.

**Part 2**

Transcript:

You called Sara’s mother to discuss the problem and have started giving Sara lunch detentions when her remarks are especially egregious. If anything, the behavior has only increased. The calling out usually happens during direct instruction, which tends to take up the first 30 minutes of the lesson.
Possible Causes of Misbehavior

Which of the following could be causes of the behavior?
(Select all that apply)

- Boredom/desire for attention
- Academic challenges
- Relationship problems w/teacher
- Problems w/peers

Possible Causes of Misbehavior Feedback

Which of the following could be causes of the behavior?

- Boredom/desire for attention
- Academic challenges
- Relationship problems w/teacher
- Problems w/peers

The behavior occurs during teacher-centered instruction, which is taking up half (or more) of each lesson. The attention gained from peers (and teacher) provides an escape from boredom.

Which of the following could be causes of the behavior?

- Boredom/desire for attention
- Academic challenges
- Relationship problems w/teacher
- Problems w/peers

It is not clear that academic challenges are the cause of the misbehavior. It could be that Sara disengages because she doesn't understand the material, or it could be that she understands it perfectly and is bored.
Possible Interventions

Which of the following interventions could help address the behavior?
(Select all that apply)

- Stay consistent with use of lunch detentions.
- Take steps to get to know the student.
- Plan more student-centered instructional activities.
- Set up a meeting with parent to create a behavior contract.
Possible Interventions Feedback

Which of the following interventions could help address the behavior?

- Stay consistent with use of lunch detentions.
- Take steps to get to know the student.
- Plan more student-centered instructional activities.
- Set up a meeting with parent to create a behavior contract.

- The definition of insanity is continuing to do the same thing and expecting a different result.
- Building a relationship with the student and learning about her experience in your class cannot hurt, and would almost certainly help.
- Planning activities that allow Sara to talk and interact with peers for an academic purpose could help. This could help increase engagement and diminish the need to call out during direct instruction.
Conclusion

Transcript:

Managing a large class of students can be challenging. It can be even more challenging if certain behaviors interfere with your ability to teach, and the ability of students to learn.

The frustration that results from these challenges can lead us into a cycle of punishment and blame that is harmful for both teachers and students.

Just remember: to break this cycle - and manage a student’s behavior in a more positive and productive way - take the time to understand function and cause.