

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING

The typical messages teachers send when confronting students fall into three general categories:

1. Solution messages
2. Put-down messages
3. Indirect messages

SOLUTION MESSAGES

There are five different kinds of solution messages:

- a. *Ordering, Commanding, Directing*
"Spit out that gum."
"Sit down this minute."
- b. *Warning, Threatening*
"If you don't line up, I'll leave you standing out there all day."
"One more time, young man, and you'll stay after school."
- c. *Moralizing, Preaching*
"You should know better than to do that."
"Fourth-graders should know what is right."
- d. *Teaching, Using Logic, Giving Facts*
"Assignments don't get finished when you dawdle."
"Books are for reading, not marking."
- e. *Advising, Offering Solutions*
"If I were you, I'd get back to work."
"Visit during recess, not in class."

PUT-DOWN MESSAGES

- a. *Judging, Criticizing, Disagreeing, Blaming*
"You're always the one who starts trouble here."
"You're being naughty."
"You're a pest."
- b. *Name-calling, Stereotyping, Ridiculing*
"You're acting like wild animals today."
"You're a bunch of hippies."
- c. *Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing*
"You have problems with authority."
"You're doing that to get attention."
- d. *Praising, Agreeing, Giving Positive Evaluations*
"You have the brains to be a good student."
"When you put forth the effort, you do such good work."
- e. *Reassuring, Sympathizing, Supporting*
"It's hard to sit still on such a hot day, isn't it?"
"I realize the game is tonight, but let's not forget you're in school until three o'clock."
- f. *Probing, Questioning, Interrogating*
"Just why are you out of your seat?"
"How do you expect to pass this course when you talk in class so much?"
"Why didn't you put your materials back in the cupboard?"

INDIRECT MESSAGES

Included in the *indirect message* category are kidding, teasing, sarcasm, digressions, and diverting comments.

"Your shoes *look* better than they *sound*."

"I've never taught a class of monkeys before."

"I suppose I'd be foolish to call on you today."

"Could we wait for our little clown to stop showing off?"

"When did they make you principal of our school?"

"I hope you grow up to be a teacher and have a hundred students like you."

"We'll go on now that the comedy hour is over."

YOU-MESSAGES

In teaching the T.E.T. course over the years, we discovered another way of thinking about and classifying confrontation messages. Most teachers find it easy to understand and extremely helpful as they try to change their own confronting habits in the classroom.

Notice that all of the twelve roadblocks either contain the pronoun "you" or, due to the structure of our language, the "you" is implied, as in, "Empty the trash," a message which carries the message, "You empty the trash." Teachers are usually surprised to discover that almost all their confrontation messages are "you-messages."

You stop that! (*Ordering*)

You had better quiet down or else! (*Warning*)

You ought to know better! (*Moralizing*)

You can do it if you try. (*Logic*)

(You) Do it the way I showed you. (*Providing Solutions, Ordering*)

You're not thinking maturely. (*Criticism*)

You're acting like a baby. (*Name-calling*)

You're trying to get even. (*Analyzing*)

You're usually a very good student. (*Positive Evaluation*)

You'll feel better tomorrow. (*Reassurance*)

Why did you do that? (*Probing Question*)

You're another Albert Einstein. (*Sarcasm*)

I-MESSAGES

Because we want to focus on the consequences the behavior creates for us, rather than on the behavior itself, an I-message generally has three parts. It can be constructed by following these steps:

1. Describe the *behavior* which is interfering with you. (Just describe; don't blame.)
"When you don't call or come home after school . . ."
2. State your *feeling* about the consequence the behavior produces for you.
". . . I worry that something might have happened to you . . ."
3. State the *consequence*.
". . . because I don't know where you are."

In summary, an I-message generally refers to three elements of a situation:

1. Behavior
2. Feeling
3. Consequence

A simple procedure, or formula, is helpful in constructing many I-messages. Think of stating an I-message by using the following phrases:

1. When you (state the *behavior*),
2. I feel (state the *feeling*),
3. because (state the *consequence*).

"When I find papers left on the floor . . ."

"When I see new books with torn pages . . ."

"When I can't find materials I left on the table . . ."

"When I get interrupted while I give instructions . . ."

"When you jump up and down . . ."

"When you push Johnny on the playground . . ."

"When you interrupt me . . ."

"When you leave the door unlocked [*nonjudgmental description*] things of mine sometimes get stolen. . . ." [*tangible effect*].

"When the paints are not returned to the cupboard [*nonjudgmental description*], I have to waste a lot of my time collecting them and putting them away. . . ." [*tangible effect*].

"When you have your feet in the aisle [*description of behavior*], I'm apt to trip over them [*tangible effect*] and I'm afraid I'll fall and get hurt [*feeling*]."

Assertive Discipline

Verbal Limit-Setting

Eye contact, gestures, use of name, and touch, are all useful in increasing the effectiveness of your verbal communication. To help you learn how to use these skills, we have developed a simple exercise. Find another individual to try this exercise with. Sit, or stand, and face one another. You begin by sending the message "stop disrupting" according to the directions that will follow. Then you reverse the roles and receive the message from your partner. Go through all of the steps first, then repeat them.

1. Say "stop disrupting" while looking over your partner's shoulder. Make sure not to make eye contact.
2. Say "stop disrupting" looking your partner right in the eye.
3. Say "stop disrupting," gesturing with your hand towards your partner, while still looking her in the eye.
4. Include your partner's first name before your demand, i.e., "Susan, stop disrupting." Continue to gesture and use eye contact.
5. Utilize all aspects of #4—eye contact, gesturing, and first name—but, this time put your other hand on your partner's shoulder.
6. Repeat #1—looking over your shoulder.
7. Repeat #5—eye contact, pointing, name, hand on shoulder.

Positive Assertions

Sit or stand, looking at one another. You begin by sending message, "I like the way you are working." Then reverse roles, and you receive the same message from your partner. Then, go through the rest of these steps:

1. Say, "I like the way you are working," while looking over your partner's shoulder. Be sure not to make eye contact.
2. Say, "I like the way you are working," looking your partner right in the eye.
3. Include your partner's first name before you deliver the praise, "Susan, I like the way you are working."
4. When delivering the message, utilize eye contact, first name, and, in addition, touch your partner in a manner which will communicate your approval (i.e., put your hand on her shoulder).
5. Repeat #1, looking over your shoulder.
6. Repeat #5, using eye contact, name, and touch.

T.E.T. (Teacher Effectiveness Training) MODEL

The Teacher's Behavior Rectangle

