WAYS TO HANDLE DISRESPECTFUL STUDENTS

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Dealing with disrespectful students is one of the challenges that a teacher faces whether a neophyte or experienced in the field. Taking disrespectful behavior personally is a mistake. Linsin (2009) in his article “How to Handle Disrespectful Students” stated that when you take disrespectful behavior personally, two things are likely to happen: You will desire to get even, to show your students who is boss and you will be inclined to scold, lecture, or react with sarcasm. Both actions will encourage more disrespectful behavior from your students.

Being a teacher for more than a decade, I learned that there are certain ways to handle disrespectful students. For newly-hired teachers, some of these might help if you encounter the same thing:

1. Never fail to use kind words. When we help students to feel good about themselves, this may lead to positive change in their behavior in the classroom.

2. Remain calm. Anger and frustration will lead you to do things which are against to the Child Protection Policy. Try to set everything in a positive tone and model an appropriate response. Model the behavior you expect from your learners. Be considerate and you should feel for them.

3. Explain well the misbehavior. Make sure that your students understand that it is the misbehavior that you do not like and not really them. Do not blame them so easily.

4. Establish rapport. Control your anger and try to remain courteous. If you show your students that you care about them, you will earn their respect.
5. Be fair at all times. Treat ALL students nicely. Be consistent and do not favor certain students.


7. Never label. Avoid labeling students as “bad”. It is better to describe their behavior as acceptable or not but labeling them will not help. It is not because Juan showed rudeness yesterday, he will do it again today. Give your students the benefit of the doubt.

8. Recognize acceptable behavior.


10. Understand. Try to extend an extra mile in knowing the background of the student. Where is the behavior coming from? What if the student is distressed by family problems?

These are just 10 ways to handle disrespectful students. As an English teacher in a public school, I realized that it takes patience to deal with them. Students come in different packages. They are all unique. We must therefore manage negative feelings by developing sympathy through understanding. Who knows? What you do today will soon make a difference.

References: