

“No one has the right to interfere with the learning or safety of others.”

“Do what is expected and do it the best that you can.”

This rule and these expectations summarize the philosophy of the Make Your Day program. It is based on the premise that every person within the school environment has the right to complete his or her responsibilities without interference from others. From a student's point of view, this means that they can expect a physically and emotionally safe school environment that is enhanced by a focus on learning. The students are able to communicate directly with those persons who are interfering with their learning in order to effect a change. Students are encouraged to help each other by communicating politely with the other person when an interfering behavior occurs. From the teacher's perspective, all behavioral interventions are couched in terms of interfering with another student's rights or with the teacher's right to instruct.

In order to evaluate if a student is "Doing what is expected and doing it the best that they can," they are provided with the opportunity to be involved in a self-peer-teacher evaluation of their efforts on an hourly basis, which is given substance by the earning of "Points." The emphasis in this phase is on self-evaluation -- the ability to review one's personal effort in order to make a determination as to whether the classroom expectations were fulfilled to the best of their ability. For example, a student whose best effort is 65% accuracy on a given assignment is evaluated on equal footing with the student whose best effort is 98% accuracy. Students are not penalized for learning difficulties and they learn to accept individual differences in themselves and their peers. In order to take advantage of the powerful effect the peer group has on changing behavior, students are allowed to describe concisely to another student how one of that student's behaviors has affected their right to learn or to be safe. A teacher-monitored, brief verbal exchange takes place that allows the students to communicate their feelings and perceptions while resolving the issue.

Every staff member holds each student accountable to established school-wide standards. Consequences are clearly delineated and consistently enforced throughout the school environment. If a student is interfering with the learning or safety of others, they are privately asked to take time away from the current activity in order to process the consequences of their current behavior, its effect on those around them, and engage in problem-solving to resolve the difficulty. After a few minutes, they are privately asked if they need more time to be away from the learning environment. If their answer is "no," the student is given permission to return to the designated activities, whereas a "yes" simply indicates that the student requires additional time to reflect and/or to gather self-control.

If a student is unable to gain self-control or engages in an extreme behavior, they are asked to call their parents for a conference at school. This three-way conference between the staff member, the student, and the parent(s) is structured to give the student an opportunity to assess and take responsibility for their behavior, provide alternative choices for future situations, and indicate a readiness to return to the classroom. These procedures are implemented without blaming, moralizing, or showing anger and the teacher speaks in a quiet, businesslike tone when addressing the student. Throughout the school day, each student is cognizant that the consequences of their behavior, both positive and negative, result from their choices -- not arbitrary decisions by the staff.

Burns (1990) describes the goals of the Make Your Day classroom management program as follows:

- 1.** To assist students in developing a sense of reality regarding the consequences of their behavior: a) to reward and encourage consistent learning behavior and, b) to reduce recognition for inappropriate or poor behavior.
- 2.** To teach and provide opportunities for students to exercise pertinent decision-making skills regarding their behavior.
- 3.** To affect covert as well as overt behavior, thereby helping students develop self-direction or autonomy in the control of their actions.
- 4.** To assist students in the development of, and to provide opportunity for, the use of relevant assertive social interaction skills. (p. 32)¹

At the beginning of the school year, the classroom teacher and the students jointly establish the classroom rule. This is accomplished through a guided examination of the underlying rationale of classroom structure and the consequences of "lawlessness." The outcome of this process is that students have taken an active part in the organization of their classroom, which results in students taking ownership of the classroom and its structure.

Another essential component of the Make Your Day classroom management model is consistent communication with the parents. Parents are encouraged to ask students about their day. If their child "made their day," the parents understand that school expectations were met and that their child gave their best effort. Students who do not "make their day" are required, on a written form, to describe what occurred. The student takes this communication form home, which provides the parents with an opportunity to discuss the choices their child made along with alternative strategies that could be more successful the next time. Parents are encouraged to use this as a time to help their child determine what happened that interfered with their optimum learning. The intent is that the child will learn from this experience. The school does not expect parents to administer a consequence. Students are expected to honestly reflect their efforts in their points, which means that no student will "make their day" all of the time. Educators, parents, and students are encouraged to focus on the "process" of performing to the best of one's ability, rather than the "product" of making their day. Mistakes, both behavioral and academic,

¹ Burns, J. W. (1990). An evaluation of the make your day program of student management. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.

are simply a learning opportunity. After briefly discussing the happenings of the previous day with their parents, parents sign the form, and the student returns it the following day.