



Santa Maria-Bonita
School District

Practical Ideas for a Blissful Classroom

Welcome

- * Starting Year 32 in Education
- * 17 Years in High School
- * 12 Years in Middle School
- * Fourth Year as the History

TOSA

- * Head Basketball Coach
- * Athletic Director
- * Campus Culture Director
- * Husband
- * Father of 5
- * Grandfather of 3
- * Always Chasing Better



Agenda

- Welcome
- Who are we?
- Let's Play
- The Amygdala Adventures
- How do we outsmart the Amygdala?
- Setting learners up for victory
- Be human



Learning Intention: I will begin to understand the complex task of managing a classroom.

Language Objective : I will be able to talk to my students in a calm way to achieve the desired behavior of students on my campus.

Success Criteria : I will be ready to set the tone of the learning environment in my classroom.

Our Beliefs

- We believe each person has inherent value and deserves respect.
- We believe all people belong, have a voice and can contribute.
- **We believe every person has the power and responsibility to take action and make a positive impact.**
- We believe equity is essential for all persons to thrive.
- We believe honesty and integrity build trust.
- We believe physical and emotional safety is foundational for personal fulfillment.
- **We believe excellence comes from curiosity, experience, and perseverance.**
- We believe that developing empathy inspires a kind community.
- We believe service is an act of love.
- We believe that there is strength and power in cultural diversity.
- We believe that a unified community inspires hope and faith.

Parameters

1. We will make decisions based on what is best for students.
2. We will welcome all people with dignity and respect.
3. We will practice responsible stewardship of all our resources.
4. We will embrace, practice, and model integrity.
- 5. We will not compromise our commitment to excellence.**

Our Mission

The Mission of Santa Maria-Bonita School District, as the unifying force that cultivates and enriches our diverse community, is to ensure every student flourishes by discovering their passion and purpose, exercising self-determination, and **developing the skills to reach their maximum potential** through a student-centered culture distinguished by

- a whole child approach,
- an inclusive environment,
- community and family engagement,
- **transformational innovation,**
- and highly effective staff.

Objectives

Every student will...

- Discover who they are, their passion and purpose, through meaningful educational opportunities.
- Be empowered with self determination to have ownership and joy in their learning.
- Be prepared for limitless possibilities and achievements using their unique gifts and talents to develop skills to reach their maximum potential.

Strategies

1. We will engage families and community to fulfill our mission.
2. We will recruit, support, and retain high-quality people.
3. We will provide structures and facilities to support inclusive learning experiences.
4. We will nurture the whole child.

Let's Play

- Find a partner that has the same number of siblings you have.
 - What was the most difficult course you had in college?
- Find a partner who was born in the same month as you.
 - What has you most excited about teaching?
- Find a partner that you have not been a partner with yet.
 - What scares you the most about being a teacher?

Each round:

- 1. Introduce yourself/Grade you will teach**
- 2. What college did you attend?**
- 3. Where is your hometown?**

Play
Trust
Learn

The Blueprint for a Blissful Classroom

Harmonizing the biology of behavior with the architecture of classroom management.

A practical playbook for K-12 educators.

The Historical Perspective

Core Philosophy: Trying to “make” students behave.

The Result: Over-dependence on reactive procedures, punishment, and role-bound authority (“Get to the office now!”).

The Trap: Holding out for simple solutions or wishing the problem away.

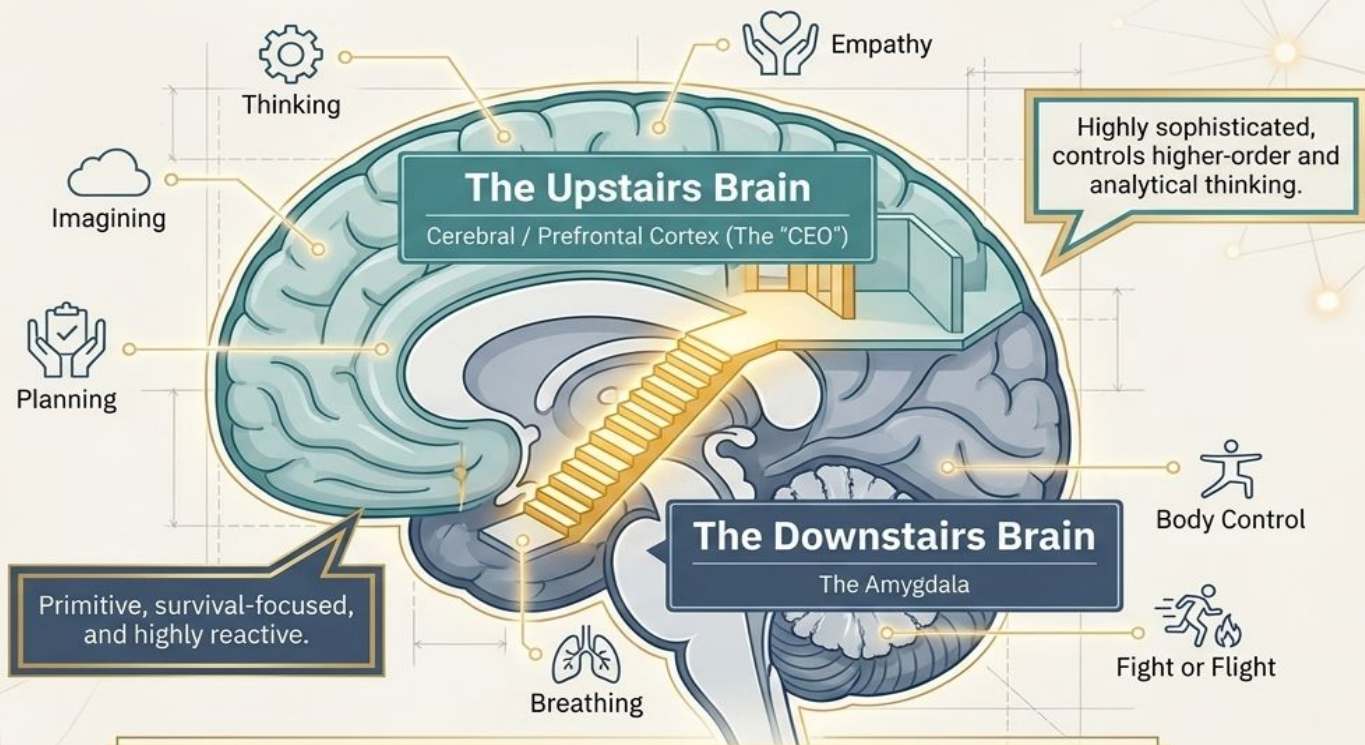
“Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority... and tyrannize their teachers.” — Socrates, 400 B.C.

The Biological Perspective

Core Philosophy: Understanding that misbehavior is driven by biology.

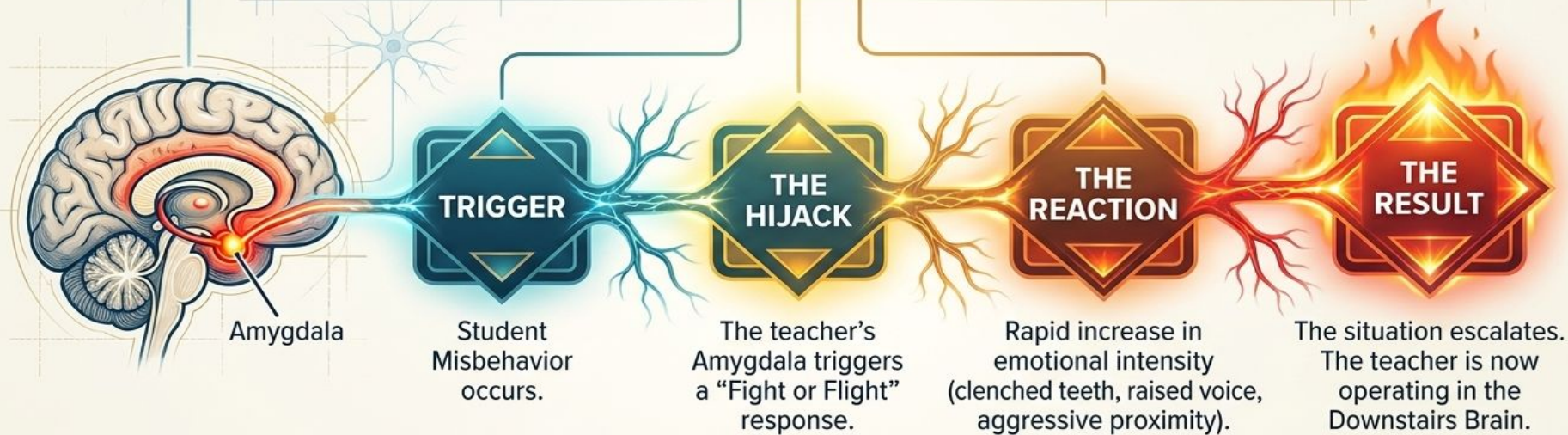
The Result: Shifting from taking behavior personally to viewing it as a structural and neurological breakdown.

The Goal: Rewiring the brain over time through consistent environment and skills practice.



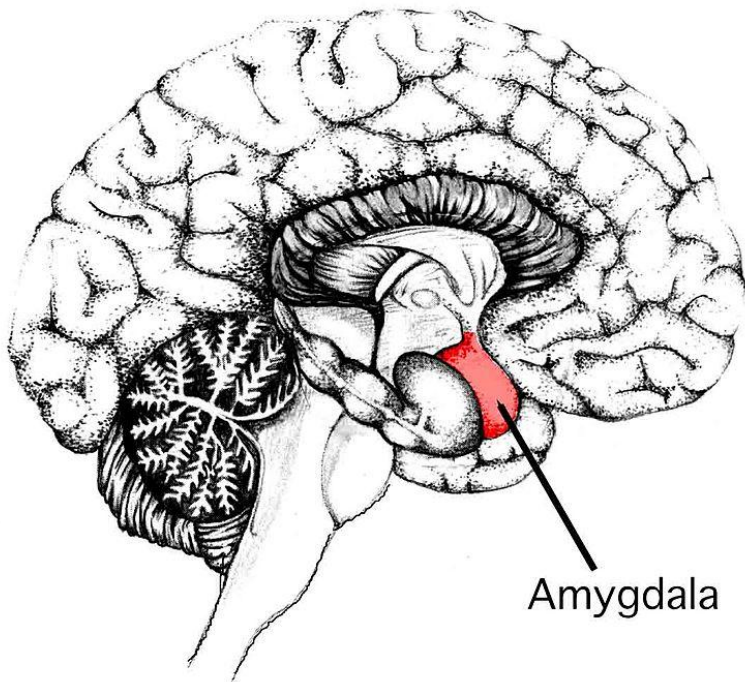
The goal of classroom management is to keep both the student and the teacher on the upper floor, and to clear the stairway connecting them when someone drops downstairs.

The Amygdala Hijack



Why is behavior management so difficult? Because misbehavior drives our amygdala! We cannot pull a student up the stairs if we are standing at the bottom.

The Amygdala Made Me Do It!!



Why is good behavior
management so difficult?

Because misbehavior
drives us!

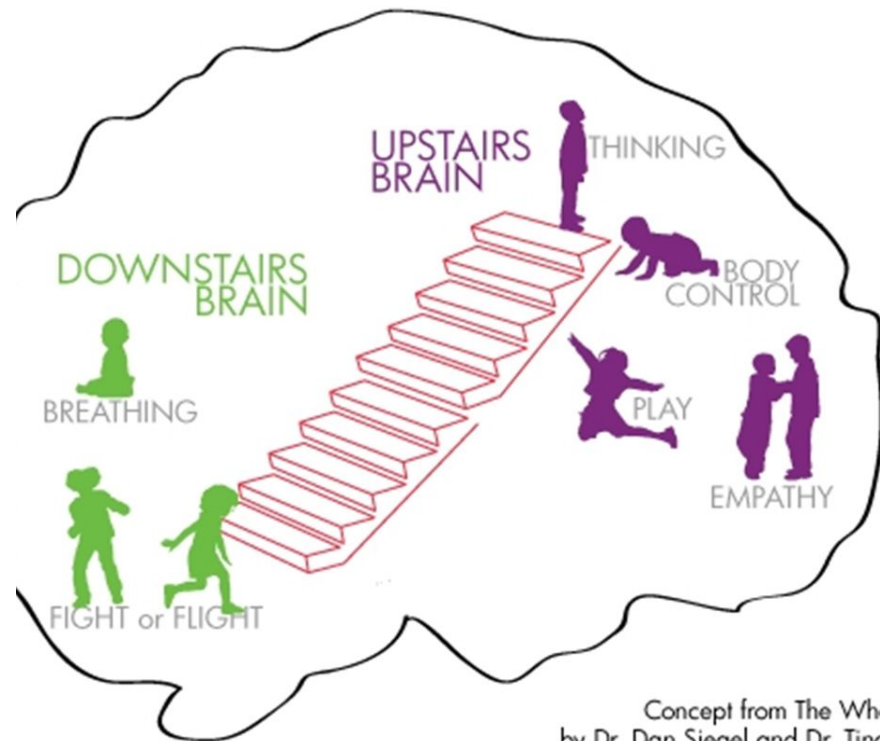
Who said this?

“Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love to chatter in all places of exercise. They no longer rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, before company, gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.”

--Socrates 400 B.C.

The Upstairs Brain

- Cerebral cortex and other various parts
- Has evolved more over time than your downstairs brain (primitive)
- Thinking, imagining, and planning (more intricate mental processes)
- Highly sophisticated, controlling some of your most important higher-order and analytical thinking
- Prefrontal cortex (CEO of the brain) develops at what age?
- Best guess??



Concept from The Whole-Brain Child
by Dr. Dan Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson

Amygdala

What is
your
reaction?



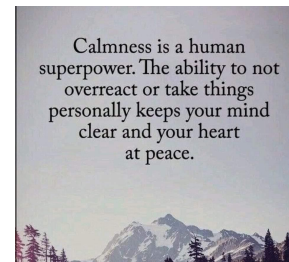
What do you do in this situation?



Amygdala: It has more control than you think!



A Historical Perspective



- Behavior Management has typically consisted of trying to “make” students behave.
 - The world has told us that is our job to “make” kids behave and learn.
- The attitude leads to an over-dependence of reactive procedures.
- Reactive procedures are not bad or wrong, they are simply ineffective in changing behavior.
- They make us hold on to “simple solutions.”
- The Amygdala
 - Triggers your fight or flight response (Math Teacher)
- An Increase in emotional intensity (Teeth talking, raising your voice, quick increase of proximity)
- An overdependence on role-bound authority (Get to the office now!!)
- An overdependence on punishment.
- Wishing and hoping (I heard he is moving, I heard she lives outside our boundaries, I hope Todd is absent today)

What do we do?



We can rewire the brain
and clear the stairway
connecting the
downstairs and upstairs
brain! Practicing good
skills layers itself onto the
amygdala.

The Biological ROI of Relationships



Relationships before anything else!

- Spend time to get to know your students.
- Greet them at the door
- Talk to them about stuff other than school
- Call home for positive reports
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Build community
- Be real
- Fail in front of them
- It is ok to say “I don’t know”
- Laugh with them
- “Learners do not learn from people they do not like.” –Rita Pierson



“The more you connect, the less you correct!”

Ratio of positive interactions (3:1)

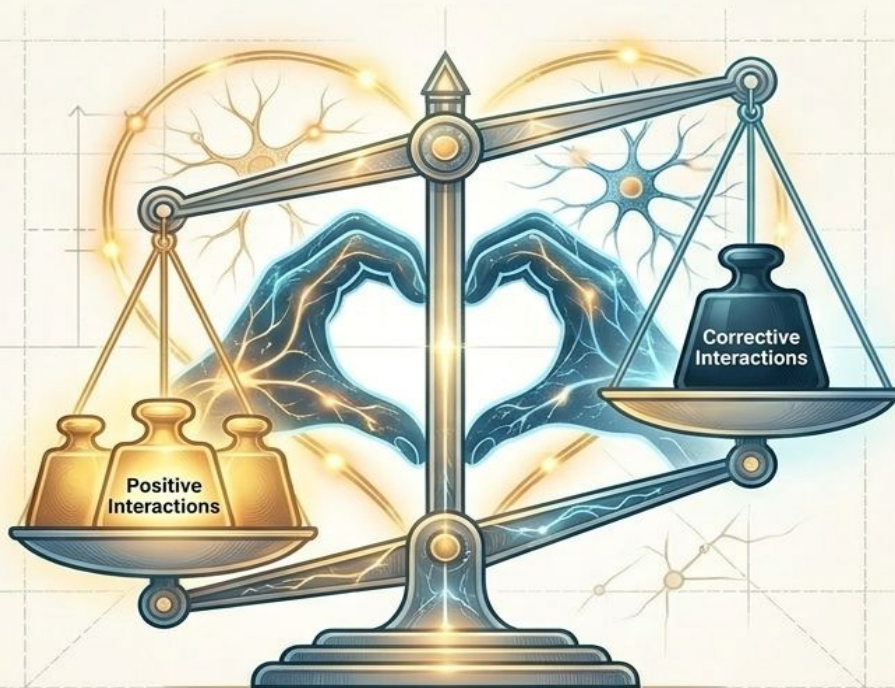
This is the single more important strategy adults can use to improve overall behaviors and increase connectedness!



The Golden Ratio of Management

The 3:1 Target

The most important strategy adults can use to improve overall behaviors is maintaining a ratio of at least **3 positive interactions for every 1 corrective interaction**.



The Rule of Connectedness

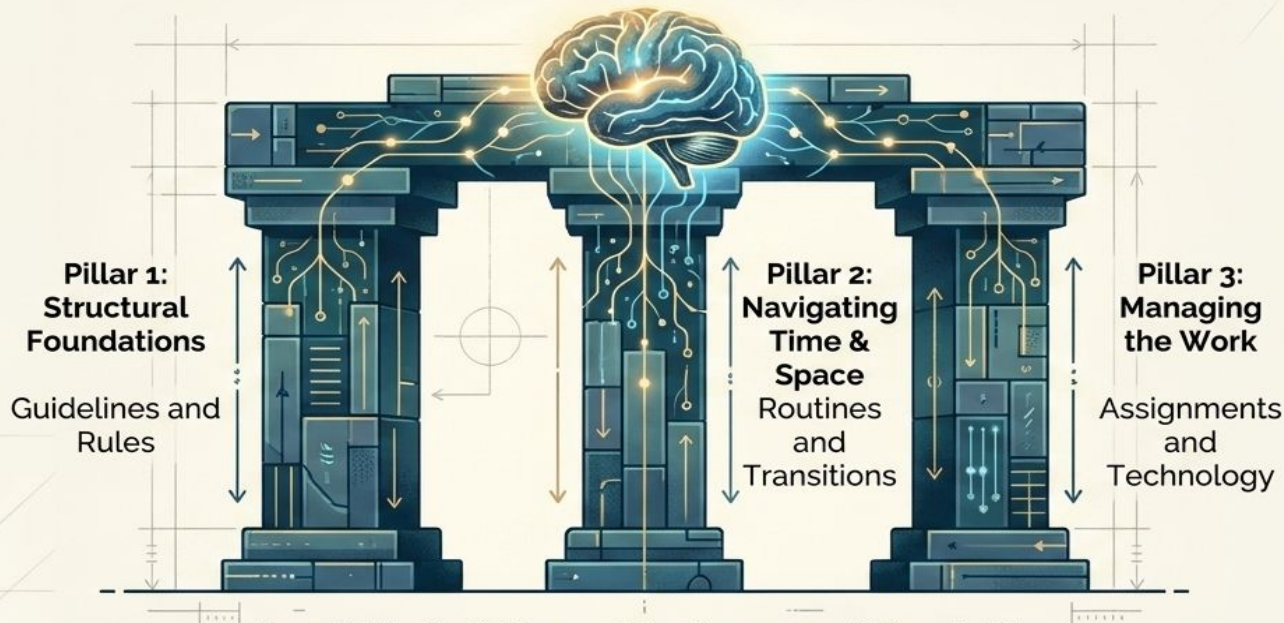
The more you connect, the less you correct.

Frequency of positive feedback must structurally outweigh negative feedback.

Implementation Note: This requires deliberate tracking—identifying student strengths, providing descriptive/contingent feedback, and using unpredictable celebrations.

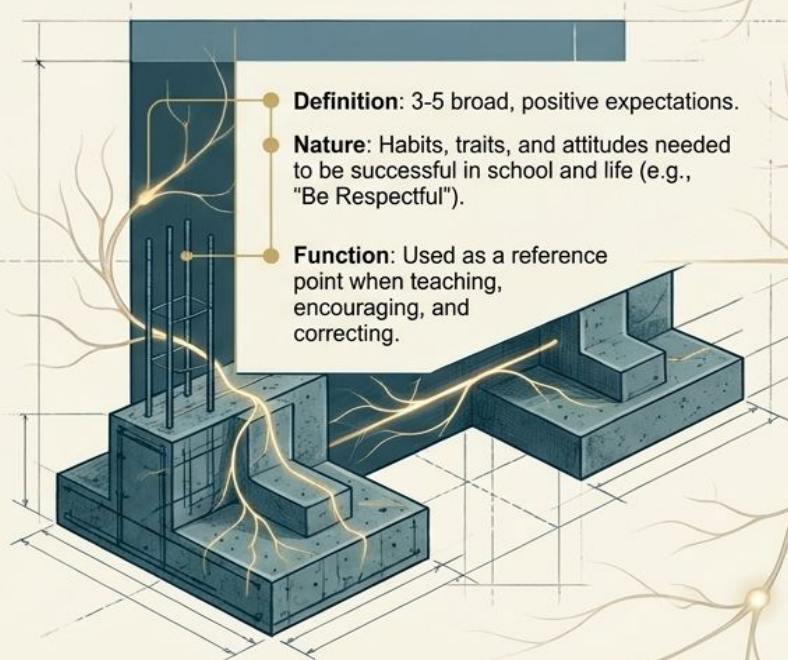
Moving from Biology to Blueprint

A calm, connected teacher is the foundation, but maintaining an "Upstairs Brain" environment requires rigid, proactive architecture.

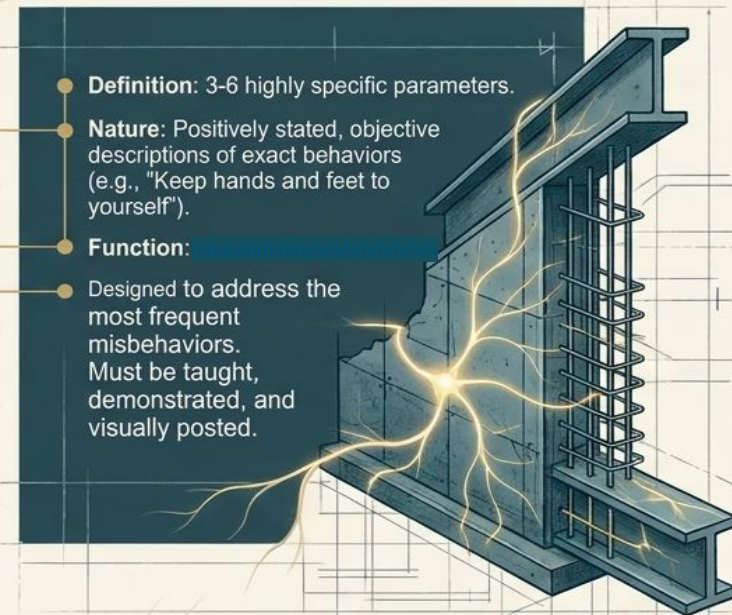


If we fail to build the architecture, we will inevitably fall back on reactive, emotional punishment.

The Foundation: Guidelines for Success



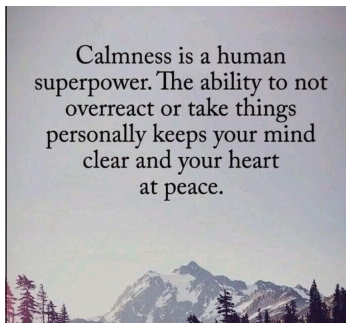
The Load-Bearing Walls: Posted Classroom Rules



Misbehavior Corrections

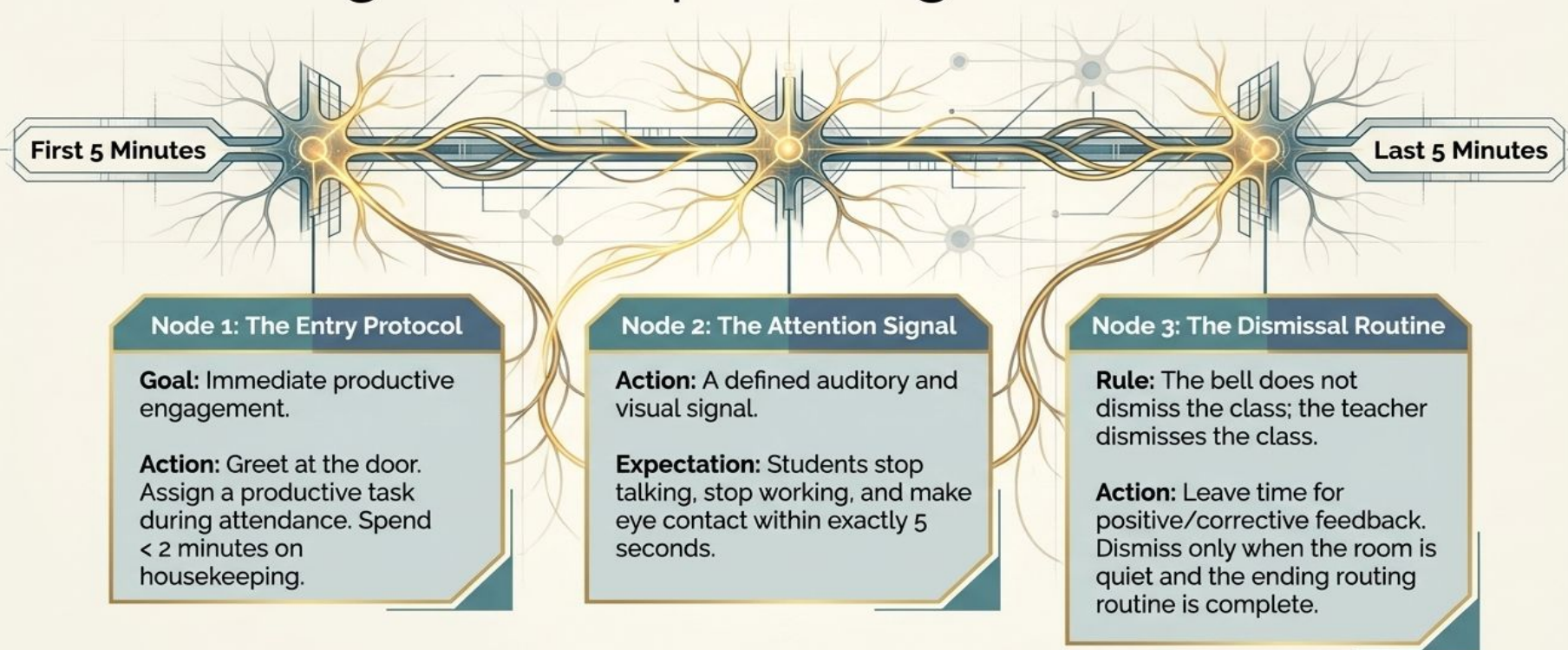
“It is not personal”

How does an
effective teacher
handle
misbehaviors?

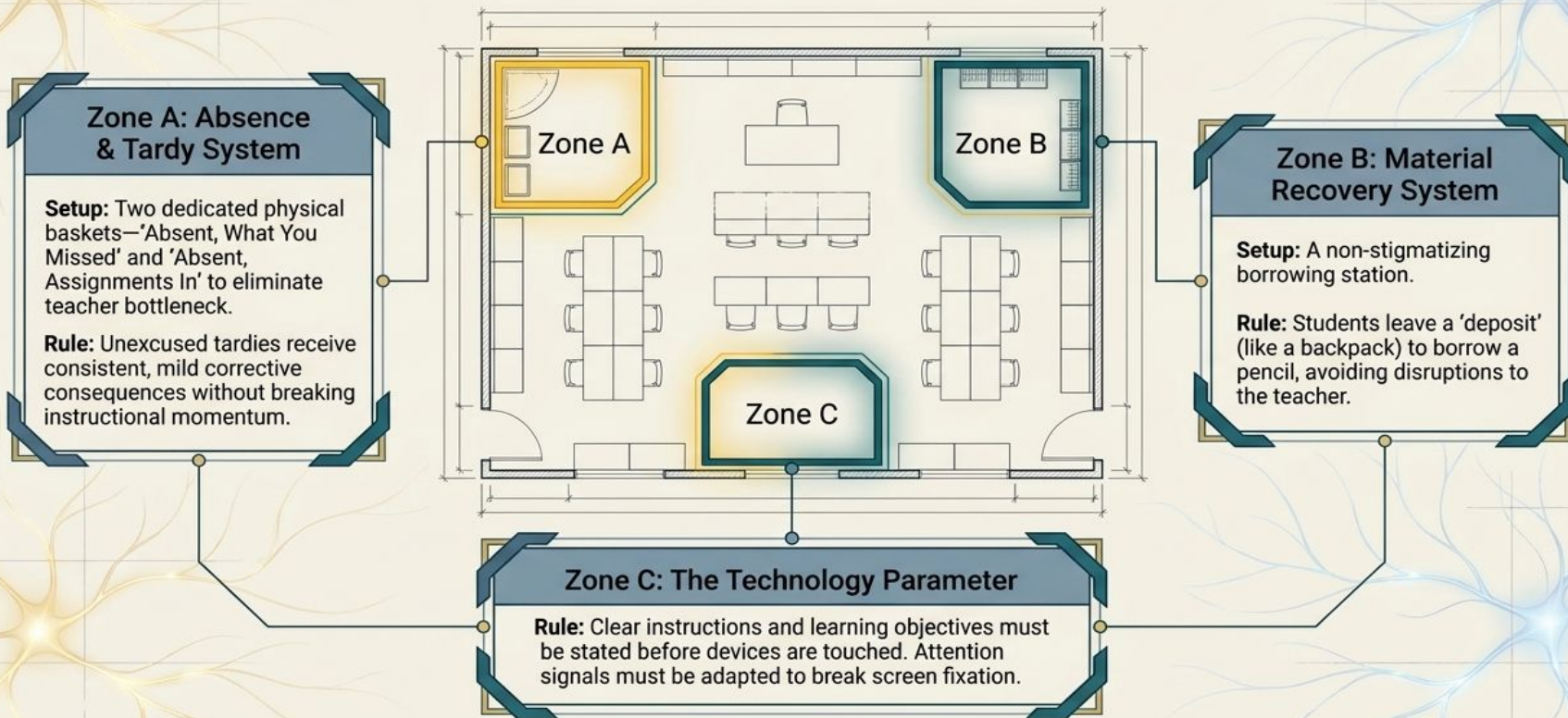


1. Consistently
2. Calmly
3. Respectfully
4. With a Menu of productive responses/corrections.

Mastering Time & Space: High-Stakes Routines

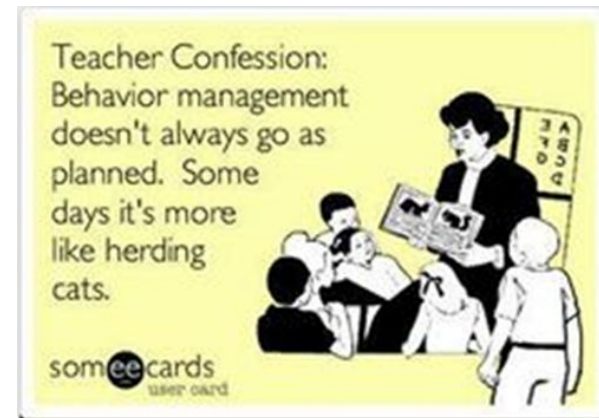
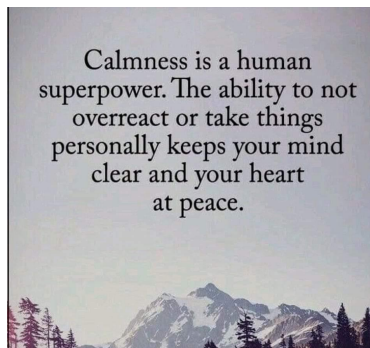


Managing the Work: Friction Points



The first week and beyond!!

- Mindset Matters!! You are a teacher :)
- Plan to correct rule/expectation violations in an *instructional* manner.
- Correct misbehavior by providing instruction about the rule and how to follow it.
- The most effective error corrections are direct, brief and explicit.
- Remember that your room is unique - a behavior that may be unacceptable in your room, may have been acceptable in the student's classroom last year or last period.
- View misbehavior initially as an honest error, not as an intentional or wilful attempt to push the limits.
- Correct these errors with informational corrections rather than corrective consequences.



Menu of Correction Strategies

- For misbehaviors such as.....

- Talking
- Calling Out
- Brief off-task
- Playing with items
- Sitting in a seat incorrectly
- Non-aggressive touching of others
- Making noises
- Not following directions

- Use

- Pre-correction
- Proximity control
- Gentle verbal reprimand
- Semi-private correction
- “Hit and Run”
- Non verbal gestures and cues
- Discussion
- Humor
- Apology

The Menu of Early Corrections

View initial misbehavior as an honest error, not a willful push of limits. Use **informational corrections** rather than **consequences**. Behavior unacceptable in your room may have been acceptable in their last class.

Pre-correction

Reminding before the activity begins.

Proximity control

Moving near the student without speaking.

Non-verbal cues

Eye contact, gestures.



Hit and Run

Quietly stating the expectation and immediately walking away, preventing argument.



Gentle verbal reprimand

Brief, semi-private correction.



Humor/Apology

Defusing tension while resetting the boundary.

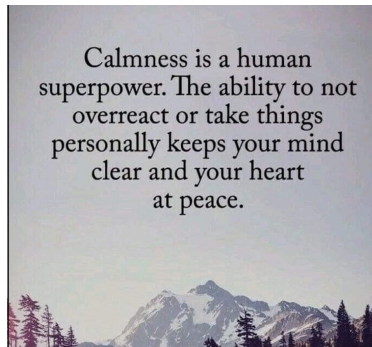


They know the rules!! What now?

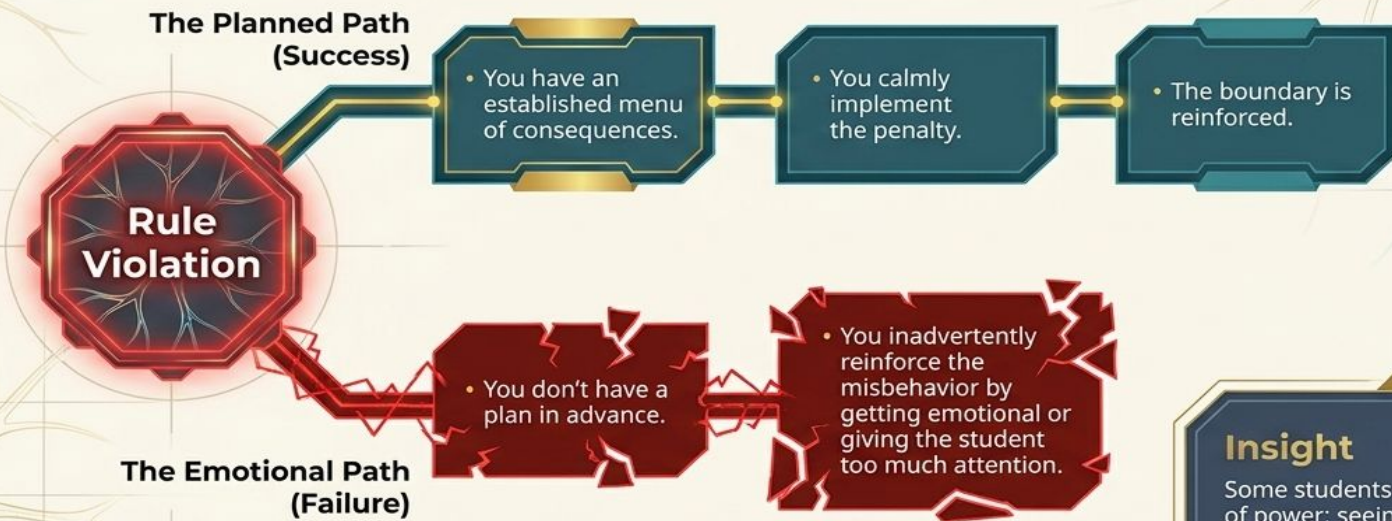
Establishing Corrective Consequences for Rule Violations

Once students fully understand your classroom procedures and your classroom rules, calmly implement consequences when rules are violated.

- Plan to move from informative early-stage corrective techniques to consequences that impose a penalty for breaking a rule
- If you do not plan in advance what your response will be, there is a high probability that you may inadvertently reinforce a misbehavior by being emotional or by giving too much attention to the misbehaving students.



Handling Rule Violations



Insight

Some students seek a sense of power; seeing an adult frustrated is highly satisfying to them.

What Doesn't Work

Avoid rhetorical questions.

Don't give directions from a distance. Give directions from 18 to 36 inches away.

Don't yell.

Don't demand eye contact.

Don't expect immediate compliance.

Don't give multiple directions.

Don't respond emotionally.

Don't plead or cajole.

Don't ask the student to do it because he or she likes you.

Don't use guilt.

Don't use sarcasm or ridicule

Don't use humor if you aren't naturally funny

Don't tell students what NOT to do



The Superpower of Calm

Use a Quiet Voice

Calm, controlled, soft, slow, and firm. Meaning comes from tone and rate, not volume.

"Calmness is a human superpower. The ability to not overreact or take things personally keeps your mind clear and your heart at peace."

Keep it Brief

Address it at the time of the misbehavior and move on.

Do Not Argue

Refuse to engage in a debate about the rule.

Do Not Over-Explain

Simply state the rule and the consequence. Explaining your reasoning transfers power to the student.

CALM

Calmness is a human superpower. The ability to not overreact or take things personally keeps your mind clear and your heart at peace.

What does work?

- Not all strategies work in every situation
 - These strategies will work with approximately 78% of student misbehaviors.
- It is important to get to know the 22%
- Remember—Physical distance is critical (especially for students in stress or trauma)
 - Don't invade the students personal space
 - Avoid correcting or giving directions from across the room.
- Be aware of body language
- Give students time to comply
 - Give students 5-10 seconds to comply after giving directions
 - Shift your attention away from the student

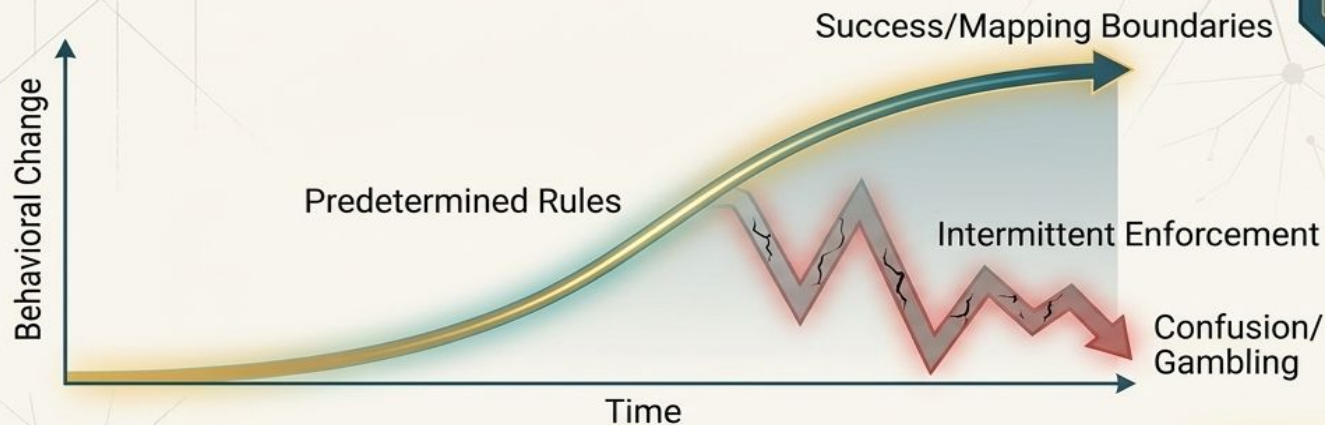


Consistency: No other way

- For corrective consequences to reduce or eliminate purposeful or habitual misbehavior, they must be implemented consistently.
- If you implement a consequence only some of the time, it is not likely to change behavior.
- Teacher emotion sometimes controls classroom consequences, but consequences should be controlled by a series of rules.
- **When a consequence is not delivered consistently, it is difficult for students to know what is and what is not acceptable behavior.**



The Consistency Mandate



1

The Core Concept

To reduce purposeful or habitual misbehavior, consequences must be implemented consistently.

2

The Trap & The Shift

If you implement a consequence only some of the time, you are teaching the student to gamble. Consequences must be controlled by predetermined rules, not teacher emotion.

3

The Impact

When a consequence is not delivered consistently, it becomes impossible for students to map the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

Take the emotion out of it!!

- Some students have learned that there is a high probability they can make adults frustrated, hurt, or angry by misbehaving.
 - Anger on your part may reinforce the misbehavior
- If a student is seeking a sense of power, seeing an adult frustrated can be highly satisfying.
- Strive to implement corrective consequences emotionally so your reactions do not give any students the idea that they can have power over you by misbehaving.

- Use a quiet voice:
 - Calm, controlled, soft, slow and firm
 - Much of your message's meaning comes from your tone, rate of speech and volume.



Take the emotion out of it!! -Cont.

- Interactions
 - Brief
 - Without argument
 - At the time of the misbehavior
- Simply state the rule and the consequence
 - Common mistake is to explain and justify
 - If your rules have been taught (over time) then no immediate explanation is necessary.
- Explaining your actions, consequences, or reasoning transfers power to the student and lets them know that they can disrupt class by misbehaving and making you explain yourself.
- Although keeping interactions brief may be a difficult habit to develop, you will find that it allows you to keep your focus where it belongs – on teaching and providing positive feedback to students who are meeting expectations.
- Remember - frequency of positive feedback must far outweigh your negative feedback.



The Blissful Classroom Ecosystem

It Is Biology, Not Personal

Misbehavior is driven by the downstairs brain. We are humans first, teachers and students second.



Connection is the Currency

Real behavior change happens over time, funded by the 3:1 ratio of positive interactions and noncontingent attention.

Structure Allows Peace

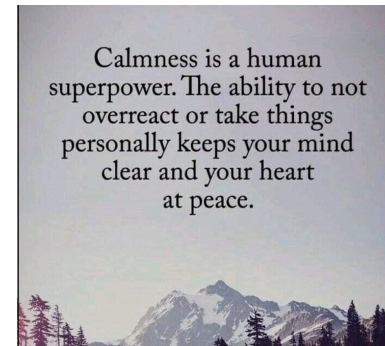
Calmness is a human superpower. Emotionless consistency and proactive CHAMPS routines clear the stairway to the Upstairs Brain.

People want to do the right thing. **Build the architecture, manage your emotions,** and design a space where **every student flourishes.**

Thank you!

Key Learning:

- It is biology, not personal.
- We are humans first, and teachers and students second.
- Maintain your emotions.
- Goal is to change behavior over time.
- People want to do the right thing.
- Think about what you are going to do, before you do it.
- Take the emotion out of it!



Please reach out for help if you need it. Todd Sanders History TOSA
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