

Behaviour Strategies

HELP FILE

Swearing

Set **ground rules** for class behaviour. Ask any class and swearing will come up every time as one of the most important classroom issues – to treat people with respect. Discuss how you convey respect; what is disrespectful and what isn't allowed. You can mention bad language. How you speak conveys respect or disrespect, care or disdain etc.

State the rule: In our classroom we have a rule about respect and I expect you to use it.

Refuse to get hooked in: Student may counter with "Oh but we use this kind of language all the time." My Mum and Dad don't mind etc.

Teacher's response: Maybe that is so but when students enter this class, they change their language. We do not speak like that.

Managing attitude: Take aside and state expected behaviour. "I don't use that kind of language with you. I don't expect you to use that kind of language here in this classroom. Okay? Thank you".

Don't make a big deal about it at the time. Non-verbal messages can be quite powerful – raised eye brow. Or "I don't think I heard that ... I know you don't use that kind of language...!" A little humour can send the message while defusing a situation. Follow up – take aside a little later as in "Teacher's response", above.

A little values clarification exercise can be helpful. If the opportunity allows suggest to a language teacher that a discussion be held on e.g. swearing – what message is it sending? How should we speak? How can we convey respect through language?

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