



Using a Transition Procedure to Strengthening Student-Teacher Relationships and Reduce Problem Behaviour Occurrences

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Addressing a student's academic and social emotional needs are increasingly viewed as being equally important. Though in practice, efforts to address these critical areas are often treated differently.

Programming designed to support academic goals focuses on what the student will be taught, while interventions to approach social emotional concerns often address what the student is supposed to stop doing. This typically places the emphasis for social progress on the student making specific changes, with staff not always appreciating their vital role in creating not just academic progress, but important social emotional change for their students.

Without the student being taught specific social emotional skills, staff quickly become frustrated at the lack of student progress, and can begin quietly questioning their own professional skills. Equally unfortunate, the student displaying problem behaviours realises the intent of the efforts towards him or her are not to teach or support, but to control. This results in push-back in the form of an increase in the frequency, duration, or intensity of the problem behaviours.

A common area where these problem behaviours occur is during transitions. While certainly challenging at times, transitions offer an exceptional opportunity for teaching desirable social emotional skills and enhancing relationships.

A student's day begins upon arrival, and the quality of this arrival often sets the occasion for the entire day. Consequently, a small amount of time focused on a proactive morning transition can open the door to increased student success while developing a supportive relationship between teacher and student.

The social emotional procedure addressed in this session is designed to help students experience a valid sense of support from staff, while creating predictability for everyone without the use of coercion. This practice also develops an increasingly positive relationship between the student and staff members due to successful outcomes becoming more frequent as everyone learns and practices desirable social emotional skills.

These desirable transition outcomes occur without lengthy conversation, but rather by using brief, unique questions designed to assess if the student is going to have a successful start to his or her day, and to assess if the student has any basic needs or concerns that should be addressed before beginning the school day.

Both students and staff experience this procedure not as something that has to be completed, but as a valuable process which progressively strengthens their mutual trust, and the quality of their problem solving skills and relationships.