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**“Classroom Management Strategies for Difficult Students: Promoting Change through Relationships” by Mary Ellen Beatty-O’Ferrall, Alan Green, and Fred Hanna**

**This was an article on how to create a smoother, more focused and structured classroom through promoting several strategies that change student behavior.**

First the article cited research that indicated that teacher’s actions in their classrooms have double the impact on student achievement when compared to assessment polices, community involvement, staff collegiality. It was also noted that classroom management is a large part of teacher actions (Marzano, 2003, Marzano & Marzano, 2003). The article also cited research that found that the middle school years are when pupils were more likely to have a decline in academic motivation and self-esteem (Anderman, Machr, & Midgley, 1999). Other research also stated those declines can be linked to the classroom and specifically to teacher-student relationships (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). **One of the keys to great classroom management was the development of a high quality positive relationship between the teacher and the students in the classroom**. Those with high quality relationships reported 31% fewer discipline problems or rule violations per year.

In dealing with the most difficult students, teachers must be willing to have unconventional approaches. The characteristics of effective teacher-student relationships are not related to the teacher’s personality or whether the teacher is liked by the students. These relationships are formed by the specific behaviors, methods and core beliefs that the teacher shows to students.

The approach discussed in this article states that

**there are three key components for effective classroom management**:

1. **Personal interest in your students**
2. **Have clear learning goals**
3. **Model assertive, fair and positive behaviors**

Some of the most difficult students to reach are those with mental, behavioral or emotional disorders (estimated to be between 12 -22% of all students in school), or other exceptionalities. For the teacher in the classroom, most students will respond to gentle interventions, time for bonding, avoiding punishment and building activities that all students can be successful with. However, teachers will still have difficulties with some students even using these techniques.

**For the most challenging students, four strategies were mentioned:**

1. **Empathy** - Not just caring, but truly placing yourself in that child’s world, for an understanding of their world and passing along that you that understand to the student.
2. **Admiring negative attitudes** - Telling your students that you admire them for what they have achieved, even if their achievement has been avoidance of work or controlling others in a negative fashion. Admiration on the part of a teacher inspires respect and loyalty in the student. Do be cautious in how you state this – bring out the most positive aspect that you can think of for this behavior.
3. **Leaving the teacher’s ego at the door** - Learn how to control your emotions…do not let other’s actions determine what you do – other’s act…but you always chose your reaction.
4. **Multicultural connections** -Be aware of and learn about the cultural connections that both you and your students have so that you may be as unbiased and create connections. You must be aware of the factors of race, poverty and exceptionalities as well as other biases that occur. If you can understand a student’s life experiences and background, this can help to both forge a bond and help in creating lesson plans.