

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Documenting Your Positive Corrective Efforts With Elementary Students



Student's Name: _____

Date of Intervention: _____

Name of Adult Conducting Interview: _____

Step Six:

Exploring Perspectives

Intent: To assist the student in viewing the situation from a larger perspective or context.

Goal: To get the student to see the problem from the viewpoint of others and thus build the quality of empathy.

“ (Student’s name), you’ve done a good job of explaining things from your point of view. I think I have a pretty good idea of what you did and why you did it. Now I’m going to ask you to use your imagination. Pretend you are _____. How do you think he/she viewed the situation?” (Repeat this question, using the name of all other affected parties, including the teacher, and the class as a whole.)

Student’s Responses: (*What the student said about how others may have viewed the situation:*)

Other potentially useful statements:

“I know this is the hard part, but use your imagination. If he/she were here, how would he/she describe it?”

Please note: This step is very difficult for many children, because it forces them to confront the reality that they may have made a mistake. They will likely attempt to avoid this step by shrugging their shoulders or saying, “I don’t know.” Try encouraging a response with, “I know you are smart. I’ll bet you could guess what _____ thought.”

You may end up role-playing the part of the other people involved. For example: “I wonder if _____ was thinking, ‘Why did (student’s name) hit me? I was only kidding!’” or, “I wonder if Mr./Ms. _____ was thinking, ‘I worked so hard on this lesson, but now everyone is paying attention to (student’s name) instead.’”

You may also have to be the voice of the system’s needs, i.e. “If we allow students to hit each other here, everybody will be doing it.” This step is crucial in the method. The facilitator must be imaginative to help give the student a true picture of all the ways his/her behavior affected others.

Step Seven:

Identifying the Problem

(Not the “Why” but the “How” the Student Tried to Solve the Problem)

Intent: To get the student to see that the behavior he/she exhibited was not the most effective way of accomplishing his/her purpose.

Goal: To have the student see that this behavior, while rational to him/her, created more problems than it solved.

“ (Student’s name) , there’s nothing wrong with (*being upset, angry, sad, hurt, frustrated, disappointed, etc. or wanting to stop people from calling you names, cutting in front of you in line, etc.*), **but can you see that doing what you did in the way you did it caused problems** (*or hurt, distracted, disrespected, bothered*) **for both you and** ?” (*Classmates, teacher, bus driver, etc.*)

Was the student able to see how his/her behavior created problems for the other people?

Yes, without additional prompting

Yes, after some prompting

No

Other potentially useful statements:

If the student says, “Yes, but...,” a possible response might be, “I realize that you believe that deserved it. Can you see how hitting him caused both you and him a problem?” or “I realize that you didn’t mean to bother Mr./Ms. ; you only wanted to talk to your friend. But people ended up getting bothered anyway, didn’t they?”

If the student says “no,” a possible response might be, “Sometimes it is hard to admit things didn’t turn out right. I’m not saying you didn’t have a good reason, but can you see that people were bothered by what you did?”

Please Note: It is important to get a “yes” from the student on this step. For the next steps to take place, the student must be able to truly see that his/her choices ended up hurting or interfering with the others and him/herself.

Step Eight:

Normalizing the Mistake

Intent: Acknowledge the student for his/her insight and invite him/her to view the behavior as a common, understandable, and correctable human mistake.

Goal: To allow the student to see that many other people have committed and, by extension, corrected the same mistake.