

Classroom Management Strategies

A Conversation with Rick Dahlgren, Dr. Johnny Alvarado, and Dr. Randy Boardman

Randy: Hello, my name's Randy Boardman from CPI. The research consistently suggests that most teachers who leave teaching within the first three to five years leave because they're just not prepared to manage disruptive or challenging classroom behaviors. Many veteran teachers also simply get tired, frustrated, worn down by the same students with the same behaviors and the same issues day after day. So in our conversation today, I'd like to introduce you to some of my professional colleagues who might be able to help you. Rick Dahlgren is the president of Time to Teach and Dr. Johnny Alvarado is a principal with the Fresno schools in California. As I suggested, my name's Dr. Randy Boardman and I am CPI, or the Crisis Prevention Institute's, senior training advisor.

So if you're listening today and you want practical research effective strategies to help you tomorrow in the classrooms with difficult and challenging behavior or if you want to be inspired and bring back some of that passion you used to have and many of you still do toward teaching, continue to join us for a conversation about classroom management strategies. So I'm going to lead off and ask and invite Rick Dahlgren in. So Rick, can you start by telling us just a little bit about you, your background, your professional background and then one practical classroom strategy that anybody listening today could use? And lastly in your own words, just one or two sentences, put in layman's terms, what's Time to Teach all about. Rick?

Rick: Thanks, Randy. It's good to be here with you and Dr. Alvarado as well. To tell you a little bit about me, I started my education career over 25 years ago. I started off as an educational psychologist and did a lot of testing and programming for at risk kids and tough kids. And while I enjoyed that, I deduced my yearning was to be in the classroom. So I became an education specialist and started working with at risk kids and kids of all different profiles.



And during that time, we were asked by a small district if we would write a state grant. A couple of professors and myself and so we started to endeavor to write that grant. And we had a lot of graduate students that were helping us just absolutely scour the literature for the best practices in education, specifically to do with how to deal with challenging kids. How do you get the most out of kids? How do you motivate kids? How do you keep them happy? How do you form relationships? And so we did all of that research. We wrote the grant. And as it turned out, Randy, it was rejected. The funding fell through.

This little school district said to us, "Would you still do the training?" So of course we did it and it was very enjoyable and the teachers liked it an awful lot. And we get a call not too long from then, probably about a week later, from Spokane Public Schools, which was a neighboring district. And one of the schools says, "Gosh, we heard about this training you did. One of our teachers said that has a friend in [inaudible 00:02:25] said this is just phenomenal.

So could you do this training here?" And so we went in and did training there and enjoyed that as well. Not too much after that, we get a call from the south. Savannah, Georgia. And a principal was telling us all about this training she heard about. And I was thinking to myself, "My goodness, how did you hear about this?" And it turns out, a teacher had moved, husband was reassigned, went down to Savannah and they were struggling, this charter school, this middle school, with problematic behavior and she asked if we'd come in and do a training. So what happened was we started doing these trainings all around the United States. I was still in the school district at the time and kind of buying days back on my contract because I was out training now nationally because of the success of the program.

Then I started having people come along and help me, some of these phenomenal people I'd met in schools. And essentially if I fast forward to today, we're a team of hundreds of trainers in all kinds of disciplines. And by far and away, our most sought after program is this classroom management course because wherever we go, teachers want to know how to manage kids better so that they can connect with them and teach more. So in a nutshell, Randy, that is my story. And sharing a couple of strategies or a single strategy that might work, that I might suggest...you



know me pretty well, Randy, that's hard for me to just share one so I'm hoping I can change the rules.

Randy: Start with one. Go ahead.

Rick: If I can twist your arm a bit and give you two. Because they're very, they're kind of different strategies in a way. One is to have teachers use what we call diffusers. And I know you've got a nice list of those put together for the listeners here. A diffuser is that thing that you can say when challenged by a student. So for example, how to not take the debate bait. How to, when challenged, elegantly remain the leader in the classroom. How to treat kids with dignity and move on.

So here's an example. If I'm challenged and I hear, "This is boring," I might, rather than saying, "Oh, this certainly isn't boring, John Smith. This isn't boring. This is very important and you're going to need this." See, when a teacher does that, what's happened is teaching has stopped and now there's a dialogue between student and teacher and 27 minds are just sitting there waiting to see, when are we going to move on?

So here's where a diffuser comes in. Rather than taking that challenge, if I hear, "This is boring," I might say, "I understand." and I keep rolling. Here's another diffuser. If I hear, "This is boring," I might say, "Nevertheless," and I keep going. Now there's just two. We've got so many of them that you're going to share with the listeners but in both cases, what I just said is, I said, "I hear you," but I continue to teach. What I want to be really clear here is that diffuser is never said condescendingly. It's always said matter-of-factly, non-condescendingly. So the message you're sending the student is, as a teacher, I hear you, but I continue to teach.

And what we know through researching this and watching master teachers do this is if you use diffusers like this enough, you will extinguish those little behaviors that occur in your classroom. So that's one thing that I might suggest. And then



very briefly, here's another one. That's just to calm the challenging moment, but I'd suggest this. We have a strategy using mnemonics and it'll allow you to memorize 40 to 50 to 60 names in 25 minutes. That's in one of our training manuals.

I would suggest that maybe this kind of strategy that you absolutely memorize the names of every one of your students on day one, so you can meet them by the door on Tuesday when school starts and say, "Mr. Johnson, how you doing? Fred, how you doing today? Samantha, how are you?" Because one of the most powerful signals you can send a human being is that you know their name. They're important to you and you send that signal by memorizing that name. We refer to that as unconditional positive regard. So I just had to give you two, Randy.

Randy: Very good, excellent. So what you're really saying is if we could cut back on some of those debates and challenges, we could recapture some more time and do what teachers want to do and that's teach. And so that's great. Let's invite Johnny in. He's been waiting for his chance to share something practical. So Johnny, you're a front-line person out in the schools. Tell us a little bit about you and then one thing that, if someone's listening today, they could go back as a principal or a teacher and use, okay? Thanks, Johnny.

Johnny: Absolutely. Thank you, Randy. And it's good to join you and also here working alongside Rick Dahlgren. Really quick little brief issue about myself. I've had the opportunity now to be in education for over 20 years and in that timeframe, I've been able to serve as a teacher in elementary school, middle school, high school and at the collegiate level. I've also had the opportunity to administrate as a principal in elementary school and middle school and also as an assistant principal at the high school level.

Today I find myself being able to serve 32 different school districts, hundreds of schools in the capacity of mentoring coaches and also helping schools improve on their climate and culture as a campus. And our county here has actually adopted the Time to Teach system, which we've now trained over 20, 25 schools and many more are on board to be doing that. Really quick little story about how I came to be



involved with this particular organization. About seven years ago, I had the opportunity to assume the principalship at an intermediate school with grades seven and eight. Had about a month and a half transition time. And within that timeframe, formulated a committee of about 15 teachers and asked a very simple question, "What do we want our work to be as we work together?"

What came out of that were, "We want a safer school. We want more consistency in regards to behavior. We want less discipline issues. We want less fights on our campus. And we just want all around, a more safer, positive school climate and culture." What was being talked about regarding that school, with the community, the district office officials, staff members and students, was that it was exactly the opposite of what was going on or what people wanted.

And whether it's perception or reality, Randy, I think one of the things that we have to hold true is that it exists. And so we began to research, what could we do? I was given the task to find something and I came across the Time to Teach system. We researched it. We did a book study. And before we knew it, our school was being trained on the Time to Teach strategies. And hence, four to five years thereafter, our school was recognized with a lot of different awards at the county level, state level, even the national level and even at the international level as we hosted 26 educational ambassadors from Taiwan. It was great. It was a great honor to all of our staff members and our community.

I think one of the strategies that I would offer here is, for especially new teachers and even an entire school system, is to ask this one question, "What are the parameters of our school regarding behavior?" And what I mean by that is the idea of creating consistency and predictability, not only for kids but for us as adults. When we think about parameters, kids live within parameters. Sometimes the parameters are very broad. And sometimes this means a loose, kind of chaotic, maybe school in the terms of behavioral expectations and behavioral management.

What our goal should be is to shrink that scope of parameters to where it's very narrow. Where kids know exactly how the behaviors in the classroom and outside



of the classroom are supposed to be. And what will happen when we step outside of those boundaries. And I think what tends to happen here is that we begin to create an environment of consistency amongst all adults and therefore all kids. And we begin to broach the idea of predictability.

And I'll close with this on this particular section. Even us as adults, when things are unpredictable, it creates stress and frustration. And on the flip side of that, when things are very predictable, we tend to less worry. And less frustration and less stress sets in. So when a kid is misbehaving in the classroom or a student is misbehaving in the classroom and we are being consistent on how we address that, it tends to create an environment of predictability and therefore less stress and less frustration. So that would be one idea that I would share. And as we continue to talk about the Time to Teach strategies, we begin to see how those strategies help support that idea of predictability and consistency.

Randy: All right. Hey, excellent. Some good stuff. This next question, I'm going to open up to either or both of you, however you want to play this. But let's say I am in your class and you're the teacher...and this actually happened to Randy Boardman a number of years ago. I won't exactly state how many. The typical taking of the bait and power struggle. And a student raised his hand in front of...it was 27 other middle schoolers, bright shiny faces...and challenged me and said, "Hey, dude. So like where'd you get your degree anyway?"

And I fell for it. I engaged and it was like he was going fishing. He left me flopping in front of everybody else. Now if you'd have been there, to me as new teacher who was just going to save the world, what would you say? What could I have done differently? A little too late for me, but not too late for any new teachers that can, or other teachers that get caught up in that. That's kind of like what you're talking about earlier, that power struggle. Who wants to go with that, Rick or Johnny?

Rick: Well, I'll jump in and I don't know if Johnny wants to add anything. But it's a typical response, Randy, and that is because these kinds of disruptions that occur,



you know, you've got 26 kids that are in front of you and your main goal as a teacher is to teach well. And that's what all teachers want to do, we know that. And so these kinds of little challenges get in the way and we often wonder, what do we do in this moment?

So just like you, all new teachers, myself as well, and I'm sure Dr. Alvarado as well, we have all taken the debate bait at some point. But we all learn through bettering ourselves, through researching as teachers, that there are ways to handle behavior and then there are ways to handle behavior. So for me, I would in this particular instance, I would either, as I shared a moment ago, I may use a diffuser. And I might pick from one of 75 that I might use. That might be one thing. But I also might use a strategy I call turning the shoulder.

Randy: Okay.

Rick: So all that earns is when I hear it...and let's say it comes from the middle of the room on the left...I'm going to start working with kids. And by showing the shoulder, what I mean is, I take that stance and I now engage with a student. I'm modeling the questions for her. I'm checking on her work and here we go. The quiet signal that I'm sending all the kids is, "Yes, I heard it. But Mr. Dahlgren doesn't engage in those petty arguments." Now a lot of people might be thinking, "Boy, you put up with that?" No, I'm not lowering my standards. All I'm doing is changing my timing.

So folks, if this is a middle school student that says that to me, I show the shoulder. I continue to work with some other students. I continue to model, I continue to teach. But maybe during passing time now at the end of the period, I might be saying, "I'll see you tomorrow, Samantha. Jeff, I'll see you tomorrow. Tony, I need to see you for a moment. Stand over here please." "Well, what's it for, Mr. Dahlgren?" "Oh, we're going to go over the challenge that occurred in class. We're going to figure out a better way to get my attention."



So Randy, what's going on here is I'm going to take care of the behavior but at a time that works for me and my students. And not a time that works for the student, the challenger himself. So the bottom line is these kinds of events are easy to control and it's not, as one of my former students used to say, it's not rocket surgery. It's actually something that's very easy to do and that is, you just change your timing and don't take the debate bait.

Randy: Cool. I could've used you back then but many, yeah...I did survive that and get a little better over time. John, do you want to add anything on that, Johnny?

Johnny: Well, thank you, Randy. And first and foremost, Rick really nailed it on the head. One of the things I think about, first of all, is that this isn't a question whether if it will happen. It's more of a question when it will happen and then how are we ready to address that, right? So one of the things I think about is I think about the idea of changing the narrative on how we do behavior, right? Because the question that's posed is when we're right in the thick of it, when we're right engaged in this particular debate, this challenge that's been posed to us.

So when I think about changing the narrative, I think about this idea. Before we actually even get into the classroom, before our principals, maybe even our superintendents of the school district, before the school year starts, what have to done to ready everybody when a situation like this happens? Or a different situation occurs? And what I mean by that is, if we were to think about three different constructs of behavior...before, during and after...and then we figure out what strategy and what preparations can we include in each of those constructs, then we begin to be better classroom managers in our classrooms.

As an example, Rick talked about diffusers and he talked about staying away from the debate bait. So the question that I always pose to principals, administrators, is this, is that, "What structures, before school has even started, have we developed so that when we actually are in the during phase, when we're challenged with kids, that we readily know what to do?" So this idea of diffusers is a perfect one.



Diffusers can be something that we engage in before school starts, before the year starts. Or maybe even at staff meetings because the school year may have already started. But now when the teacher's engaged in this behavior, they very readily can respond with a diffuser to eloquently remove themselves from that particular situation. Then I also think about this. Another before and also during structure would be our component known as teach tubes. See, the idea of teach tubes is that we're teaching our kids all of the behaviors that we want them to exhibit. And at the same time, we're teaching them the behaviors we do not want them to exhibit.

So if we already know we're going to maybe have challenges like this, we want to be able to teach our kids at the very onset of school...and it can even happen during the school year...that we don't want this to happen so let's take time to teach our kids on the behaviors that again we do want them to exhibit and those that we do not want them to exhibit. And then when they do exhibit the ones that we do not want them to practice, that's when we can readily respond with a diffuser or a refocus opportunity...again another strategy that we can talk about a little bit later. But I really appreciate that question because I think it allows us to think about, "Yes, exactly what am I doing in the terms of before, during and after constructs all around this idea of classroom behavior?"

Randy: Well, great stuff. I love how practical this is. I'm feeling better already because actually 40 years ago, when that happened to me, I felt very inadequate. I thought about quitting teaching and why couldn't I handle this on my own? And you know, I wish I would have had that kind of support. Let me go down another route. And I and I have been to and worked with a lot of schools myself.

And it's not uncommon for me to run into systems that people have gone to workshops and here's what I see happening. I'll see a behavior and I'll see the teacher say something like, "That's one." They'll go over and write Randy's name on the board and put a check mark down. Or, "That's two," and then he gets another check mark. And then, "Don't let me get to three." And the teacher's actually spending so much of their instructional time charting and graphing how



many check marks they have and then usually that turns into an argument with Randy of, "No, how about..." And then we're spending the whole time doing this graphing and charting system. And I'm puzzled by that. Obviously they went to a workshop and for some folks, it may work. But any thoughts about that type of system or suggestions to do better than that? Go ahead, either one of you.

Rick: I've got a short answer which is abolish it. And then I've got a more lengthy answer.

Randy: Abolish it? Okay.

Rick: I've got a more lengthy answer. And I make it a practice, and I know all three of us do, to never talk pejoratively about any other program or person that's really trying to improve teaching and learning. But Randy, our field is riddled with these kinds of strategies. Like, the student's name on the board and checks after it. "That's one," "That's two," and things like this. "Well, how many times am I going to have to tell you?" And that always strikes me as a kind of a funny question, because you're going to tell him as many times as they request you to tell him essentially.

Randy: There you go.

Rick: I think that it's a noble attempt, "That's one," then, "That's two." Or pulling cards or name on the board and checks. I understand what the teachers are trying to do. They're trying to move on in instruction, so I support them in that endeavor. But the trap they've fallen into...and I alluded to this earlier...good classroom management is just about timing. It's not about necessarily the strategies that we have, but when we use them. And so for example, when you say, "That's one," and then, "That's two," and of course the consequence comes after, "That's three," or the third check on the board, Randy, what you really just told the child is, "Go ahead and misbehave twice for free and on the third check or you know, the third number, then the consequence happens."



So Randy, you've just told 28 kids, "Go ahead, misbehave 56 times." And we don't often think about that, but in these kinds of strategies, I call it giving multiple warnings and repeated requests. Now I can't go into it here...and you know it very well because it's a very robust response to this...we have a thing called re-focus. And what that does, it allows the teacher to ask and get what they want on question number one ninety percent of the time or more.

So instead of asking, asking yet again, threatening with, "That's one," "That's two," or name on the board and checks or all of the other things that we try and do to control behavior, folks, there's a more practical way to do it where you can give the student the ability to problem-solve and to have you not giving multiple warnings and repeated requests. So these kinds of things just lead to signaling to the student, "Go ahead, misbehave twice. And on the third try, you'll be in trouble."

Randy: The, "How many times..." reminds me of my dear, beloved son in my own family where I once asked him, "How many times have I told you this, Josh?" And he said, "Well, let me check my records. That's seven times since January." I totally set myself up, but it's exactly right. Johnny, do you want to add anything to that one or we'll go to another conversation?

Johnny: Yeah, the only thing that I'll add is just maybe revisiting a statement that I made earlier, which is, you know, we end up creating parameters in our classroom and in our campus. So that's the first and foremost thing that we always need to think about. And the question we have to ask ourselves is, "What are those parameters that we are creating?" If the parameter is that we want to create a check systems, "That's one," or, "That's two," process, then we're going to do it.

Or if the parameter is that we want our kids to really understand, to truly understand the expectations we have of them on how they should be behaving in the classroom, then that's the parameter that we should be thinking about. And that is the thought process we should be engaging in. And these strategies that we're



talking about today exactly help with narrowing that scope of parameters so that we're not getting into this multiple warnings and this repeated requests for kids, because that becomes trying for everybody, students and teachers.

Randy: Well, that whole consistency piece. And when I was a principal for a number of years, it was frustrating that in about February, I was ready to send out a mass letter or email saying, "Guys, all those rules we established in August, do we still mean them?" And some folks would and some would abandon them or say, "Oh, that's just Randy in the office. I don't do that in my classroom," and that doesn't help people. It actually causes more disruptions.

Let's kind of keep going a little bit further. And again I don't want to do the Time to Teach course, but I know there's at least five major components. We've hit on a couple of them, but I'm going to give each of you a chance to just pick one of the ones, such as classroom design, self-concept. You've mentioned a couple, so each of you pick one and just summarize what that means and put it in simple terms for folks. Do you mind?

Rick: Oh, I'd love to start off with this one. The five core components, and again this isn't the time to teach training, but you'll find these five core components in Marzano's "What Works in Schools" and the bottom line is there needs to be five actions going on by a teacher in a classroom so that that teacher can be the master teacher, can rise to the very top. And one is that you're always giving adequate and timely and fair consequences. Second is that you're teaching to expectations. I'm just telling you the overview here and then I'm going to tell you my favorite. The third is that you're arranging the classroom for maximum performance. The fourth would be that you are not taking the debate bait. We call that self-regulation, that's very important.

And then the last one, Randy...I think those are all important that I just talked about...is one that we call unconditional positive regard and folks, all that means is that you treat the student with a high level of dignity because here's what we know from the research. If a child knows that you value them as a human being first and



a human doing second...doing math, doing science, doing technology, all important, and it's our job...but if you send the signal that you value them as a human being first and a human doing second, here's what the research says. Kids will challenge less and work harder.

So for those reasons, we have a lot of strategies that we teach teachers on how to form relationships with students so that your most difficult students become your best allies. And as I said earlier, it's not hard to do. It just takes effort. The knowhow, the skills it takes, we all have them. The question is, are we going to implement them so we can form those relationships and send a signal to the student that they are a human being first, doing second? That just simply again leads to harder work and less challenges to the teacher.

Randy: Wow, on the front-end, I asked for some practical stuff and I really appreciate you keeping it, both of you, there. Johnny, you want to add anything there to one of the five core components that Rick didn't talk to?

Johnny: Absolutely. And the one I always like taking on is unconditional positive regard during the conversations with principals or staff members. And the reason being is because sometimes when we bring this up, sometimes we begin to think, "Oh, this is a touchy-feely thing. This is where I really have to open up my heart," you know, and I say that non-judgmentally. I say that because the teaching world is hard. It's a challenging, difficult job and a lot of our time is spent on academics, spent on lesson design. It's spent on assessment processing and all of those things are very important. And even if you look at the educational programs that our future teachers are coming from, very little time is spent on classroom management. And why we probably struggle the most in classrooms and in school systems in the area of classroom management.

I like to take on unconditional positive regard because as Rick was speaking of, the five components, when I think of all five components and I think of the first four...not that they should be done in any particular order...but when I'm thinking of self-control and I'm thinking of regulation of ourselves as adults with kids



during times of misbehavior, when I think of teach tubes, the idea of readying our kids on what their behavioral expectations are and I think of classroom arrangements, taking in the best research, more pertinent research on how we should be ready in our classroom, taking into consideration both behavior and academics, and then when I think of the re-focus process, the opportunities to give kids...it's an intervention. It's not saying that kids are in trouble. It's allowing us to intervene with them so that they are not getting into further trouble.

As I think about all four of those, what I see those doing is helping with unconditional positive regard. I see those helping with connection between adults and students. You know, one of the stories I like to share is that when I was a junior in high school...and I was a pretty trying student, you know, I had a pretty difficult, rough background. My English teacher during my junior year, she was fantastic on creating unconditional positive regard, right? Making you know that she knows who you are aside from being her student.

Every once in a while, she'd call up a student to the front of the room and she would present them with a gift. It just so happened that on that particular day, she called me. Now she didn't do this for all kids. She did this I think really for these kids she felt needed to have a different perspective of life. She called me up and instantaneously the room got quiet. And she said, "Johnny," as she reached over to her desk and retrieved a brown paper bag. She said, "Johnny, I present you with this brown paper bag because some day, I do believe you will be helping little old ladies cross the street, carrying their grocery bags."

And I've got to tell you something, I'm pretty sure I threw that brown paper bag immediately when class was over. But I'm 49 years old. This happened when I was 17 and I still think about it today. Because what she was doing is she was telling me that she knew who I was, other than just an English student in her classroom. And it's those kinds of connections that we begin to make with our kids, valuing them as human beings and not just human doers, as Rick so eloquently spoke to a minute ago. That's what makes a difference and that's what helps to build unconditional positive regard and a great rapport between students and teacher.



Randy: Great. I'm going to keep this with Johnny. I've heard the word refocus from both of you. That sounds a little technical. Put it in layperson's terms who haven't been through the program. Let's refocus all about in a nutshell if I'm just listening and haven't read the books or haven't deep-dished it. Talk me like I'm a school principal like I used to be. I'm sorry. That was not intended to be belittling.

Johnny: No, no.

Randy: But make it simple for me.

Johnny: Sure. Absolutely. So the idea of refocus is to do exactly that. It allows everybody to reset. Sometimes the practice on schools and in classrooms is that when a student is misbehaving we might talk, even we might do the that's one, the that's two deal. Then all of a sudden we find ourselves having to go to the next level, which sometimes it's I need you to go wait outside, and five minutes later we remember that we had the student wait outside, and now we've made loss five minutes of instruction. Or sometimes we say, "We need you to go to the principal's office," and there's one sure thing that is always going to happen. The student's going to come right back to us.

So this idea of refocus is it allows the student to rethink about their misbehavior and it allows them to do so in an environment that is familiar with them in the classroom. It might even allow them to do it in a neighbor teacher's classroom, but we really stress that this strategy is something that should always take into consideration that it should be the same subject, and almost always, if not always, the same subject matter so that the student is always engaged in learning. So the idea of refocus is that if a student is having a challenging situation between their behavior and the needs of what the teacher is expecting that we don't automatically say, "I need you to go outside," or, "I need you to go to the principal's office," that this is a strategy we can use to keep the student in our classroom to say, "Look, we believe in you. I trust you're going to make the right decision. Here's an opportunity for you to think about, capture it in writing, and come right back to your seat so that learning can continue."



Randy: Cool. That's good stuff. It reminds me of another piece that I bumped into a while back, and it was about let's focus less on time out, but teaching the young people the skills they need to get that time back in. because they're going to learn more in your classroom than they are sitting in line in the principal's office down the hall. Rick I'm going to kick the next one over to you. Now, you had mentioned earlier Marzano are your books. Is this stuff you just made up as you've gone along, or it's pretty well grounded in the literature? Because a lot of folks, there's a lot of stuff out on the market, depending on which way the wind is blowing. Everything you teach to, everything you train to is well reported in the literature. Is that correct?

Rick: Absolutely, and as I told you, the initial design was we had a lot of graduate students across actually two or three universities that were scouring the literature for best practices. And the interesting thing is today, Randy, that the strategies that successful teachers used 25 years ago, they still hold true today, so for example, providing unconditional positive regard. That's nothing new. Good teachers have always taught to expectations. That's nothing new, but it's those teachers that still employ these kinds of things that are successful today and were successful in yesteryear. So every one of the strategies that we talk about that surround the five core components you're going to find that there's been meta-analyses done by Marzano and of course others on these, and just tons of research has been done on all of the strategies that we talk about. Everything that we provide and present has been in the literature, it's been in peer-reviewed journals, and as I said, it worked 40 years ago and it works today as well.

So you'll find the five core components have been studied well, and people like Marzano who do these massive meta-analyses, they will indicate the same thing, that these five core components we're talking about, need to be operating in a classroom in concert with one another. So it's not enough to just have one of them. So for example, refocusing maybe, or providing a consequence in the right way. You need to have more than that. You need to teach to expectations and develop those relationships and make sure that you have what Marzano would refer to as teacher self regulation and those kinds of things.



So absolutely, these started off as a huge review of the literature, and what we found is that they've held true for 20 some years. Now, does that mean that we don't every year look at this? Do we have pre and post studies going on, doctoral research papers going on right now across the United States? You bet, and I guess I'd say some of the most exciting things that are happening, we're finding that we have an impact now on through these pre and post studies. We have an impact on teacher job satisfaction, student satisfaction score, and Johnny could speak to this one, scores and referrals and all kinds of positive things. So yes, well researched, and have been around for a long time. They're replicable, they've been here for a long time, and they'll be here for as long as you and I are going to be here.

Randy: I think all the emphasis on research based and evidence based and RTI, and if we can't support something with data, it's not going to hold water anymore in today's educational perspective. Johnny, I'm going to push you a little different direction, because you are a practicing principal out there. But if you're a principal or a superintendent that's listening today and you want to make an immediate impact on your school, "I want to change this around. I want to change the culture. I don't like the way it's going," one piece of advice, one practical place where do I start?

Johnny: That's a great question, Randy, and I thank you for posing that. I think one of the things that I would take a principal or a superintendent down in this journey is to ask the simple question that when we articulate our core subject material, in other words, we have science standards and math and language arts and social studies K12 in any school district. You can go and talk to a principal or a superintendent, and they'd be able to tell you, "Yes, here's our curriculum map K12 and the expectations we want our kids to learn."

So I think that's the first thing that I would have people think about. and the second thing I would ask is, what's consistent and what's predictable about behavior that is equally consistent and predictable about the curriculum maps that you have aligned for the core subject material? And then when people begin to think about that,



often they say, "Well, in most cases we aren't consistent or predictable or have an articulated system in terms of behavior." So I think the first thing before we actually go into "What should I use" or "What should I bring into my district" is I think we should pose a question and then really have some deep thought about that question, is it important that we articulate in the idea of behavioral management systems?

And I think that we should cross over from what we do so well. We're pretty good if not really good at lesson design, at assessment analysis all around core curriculum. The thing we have to do is we have to cross that fence and begin the same journey with behavior management systems. And so as we talk about these five components, these become sound structures of how a school district and maybe even a county office of education can begin to shed light on that and to begin to create this dynamic system that's an articulated one amongst schools and even within a school district.

Randy: Great. I'm going to give you both a heads up, because next I'm going to go to asking about a secret, and again, I only spent 27 years in schools, but I've always asked, "Well, what's a secret for classroom management?" In my years working with teachers and students and parents, it isn't really a secret, but the one piece that was most successful for me in my career was it's about creating, sustaining personal relationships with students in your charge, and when I was a building principal of over 1,000 students I took a lot of pride and I had a personal belief and a commitment that I would not meet a student or a parent for the very first time in my office over a different discipline matter. I was relational.

One of the things my teachers would say is, "Randy, I stopped by your office, and you weren't there." And I said, "Good. I was where I was supposed to be walking around my building." And so that's about relations and connecting with everybody in that school climate and that school setting and that school community. If I had a secret that I could share, that's as close as I can come after 40 some years. How about each of you are offered one additional piece of again one secret to managing classroom behavior, and it doesn't have to be a big secret. I took relationship building. Go ahead.



Rick: I would have jumped on that one in a heartbeat, as Johnny spoke about earlier. I think it's the most important piece, but me, I would say the big secret is, and again, it's really not a secret, as you say, but that is not assuming that kids are coming to school ready to learn, and by that I mean we often make the assumption as teachers, when kids are misbehaving we make the assumption that all kids are coming ready to get under task and get to work. And what happens is we have a lot of teachers that get frustrated because the kids don't know how to maybe hang up their backpacks or how to greet a teacher or how to hand in papers to the paper tray or even how to sharpen their pencil. All of us have had that student that starts with a pencil that's nine inches long, and five minutes into your lesson plan it's now a nub. And it's not that it's a bad student. It's that they've not been taught that what we call a procedure or that skill.

So one of the things that we talk about is teaching to expectations, and this is time well spent, Randy, time well spent if we all would not make the assumption that kids knew how to operate in that school environment. In other words, if we take it upon our self to help them be effective learners. Let's teach them, just like we teach arithmetic or reading or writing. We don't assume that they know that. We can assume that they know behaviors, so let's teach them all the rules and procedures that we have in our classroom so that we spend our entire year instead of saying, "What are you doing? That's not right. I told you to do it."

Instead of doing that, if you teach them the procedures just like you do academics, if you take that time, you're going to spend the rest of your year sounding like this instead, "Fantastic, way to go. Good job, Mr. Smith. I like what you're doing." So you can see how it would change the ethos of the classroom if they know how to behave and they're always being reinforced for that. First is the teacher getting after them because they're doing it wrong.

Randy: I'm going to put Johnny on pause, because you have got me, and I've got to get off on something a principal recently told me, and that's in the larger scale on the school. The lady had been a principal for over 20 years. She was sitting in the



training. We were talking about teach students, and she said, "I haven't thought about this for over 20 years, but 20 years ago I had a 5-year-old kindergarten student in my building pulled the fire alarm, and we had the police talk to the student. We had everybody. I talked to him. We had the fire chief. We read him the Riot Act. You don't do that." When it was all said and done, the parent said to her, "Did anybody teach him about pulling fire alarms? She got very defensive and she said, "Until this day 20 years later you've really got my attention." This was a five-year-old in my school for the first time learning how to read. He saw the letters P-U-L, and he pulled it. Wow.

Johnny: I love it.

Randy: Again, and she just said, "This is like, why didn't I know that?" It was a true story. She said, "I got all defensive, and how would he know what a fire alarm does, especially when he's excited about learning the letters P-U-L, and he pulls it?" So just a great idea on expecting people to come. We may have to teach that skill to some of our kids. Johnny, your chance for a secret you want to share with the group.

Johnny: Sure, absolutely. Thank you. I love that story, by the way, Randy. Here's my bit of information. I like asking the question regarding team effort, to what extent is managing classrooms, behavior management, to what extent is it truly a team effort amongst all adults on a campus? And over the years of just being able to mentor principals and work with staffs, that always seems to be the one where it's lacking in terms of behavioral management systems is the team effort.

But again, when we think about academics, we have our professional learning communities. We spend a lot of time. Time is set aside to break down lessons to look at formulating common assessments for data analyses on that common assessment, but when you really think about the team effort that is being energized and put forward to classroom management strategies, it oftentimes is lacking. And I think it's team effort that allows us to establish consistency, predictability, and the parameters that we want to occur on a campus.



And then I'll close with this for all of our administrators listening, is for us to really think about our implementation plan, our implementation process of behavior management. How do we validate and support a consistent system on our campus? How do we celebrate data? How do we celebrate successes? Because there's one thing that I've come to

understand, if the kids see us modeling it. they will follow it, and the modeling is sometimes inconsistent, it's unpredictable, and so the kids end up following in the same regard as well.

Randy: I love your emphasis on consistency. When I'm working with teachers, I will sometimes ask folks, how about speed limits? What's the speed limit in this state? Everybody knows it's 70 or 75. What do we need signs all over the place for? Because folks will always go a little fast, or they'll press it, or when the officer stops them.

It's the same thing. Those rules, those speed limits, those boundaries help everybody stay on the same page and improve your school, so I really appreciate that. We're targeting about 45 to 50 minutes. We're closing in on this. It sounds like we could probably carry on all day, and our listeners are probably saying, "When are they ever going to stop," so let's move toward putting some closure, and what I want to do at the end is I want to thank both of you for making time today. You're very very important and busy people, but one closing thought, one closing comment, and again we want folks that are listening to be done with this podcast and say, "I learned some things that I can use today, and I want to get some more information." So one closing piece you get to add. Now, Rick, I'm down to one on this one, so don't stretch me out to two or three. I know you well enough. Now, that's just one, so go ahead Rick.

Rick: You set the parameters very well for me.

Randy: How was that?



Rick: That was perfect. I would say this, and we all know this saying, "A teacher plants the seed of a tree under which they will never sit." The power of a teacher's hand is immense. So folks, go back to your class. Yes, have rules, have regulations, teach to expectations. Do all of those kinds of things, but I want you to look at the student in the eye, and maybe rather than give a certificate, look at him and smile and say, "Job well done." Let them feel it in their heart. Make that connection that they're a human being first and a human doing second.

What I can tell you from the research and my own experience and probably everybody on this conversation is that when you reach that student's heart they're going to work harder and challenge less for you. So here's an example. Go back and say, "How are your grades in other classes?" And folks, what I'm trying to say here is ask them about their life in addition to teaching. For example, math teacher, algebra teacher, say, "How are your grades in other classes?" Because the signal you're sending right there is I'm interested in you as a human being. When kids hear that, their heart opens and the challenges go down.

Randy: Johnny, guess what, you get to follow that.

Johnny: Thanks a lot. I appreciate it. That's [inaudible 0:17:19].

Randy: Go ahead, Johnny.

Johnny: I think of Death Valley, and Death Valley appropriately named, because nothing grows there. In 2004 there was an incredible flood that took place, and in 2005 in the spring, Death Valley was covered with flowers. The seeds just underneath the layer of dirt there that had been dormant for 30 years received what it needed in order for growth to occur. Now, that's a simple analogy. I do understand that. But my point being is this. When you change the environment, you really do change culture and climate, even on a campus.



And so for those listening today, go back and look at your school, go back and look at your behavioral management system, and ask the simple question, is our environment healthy and is it possible that we're inconsistent, that we're unpredictable in what kids know what to do and know what is going to happen if they go down that road? And if the answer to the question is that our environment needs to be changed, then go for it. Change the environment, pick up on some strategies, think about these core components of the Time To Teach system, and as schools everywhere in California and in other states are benefiting and relishing in the success that they're exhibiting in behaviors of kids, you too can find yourself there as well.

Randy: That's good stuff. I'm going to take the advantage to jump on the environment thing, and when I'm always talking to teachers I remind them, because there's a lot about ecology and environment. I remind teachers we as the adults in these schools are also part of that environment. I wrote a piece a while back called Mirror Mirror on the Wall, and so there's only one person that I have complete and total control over. Every day I step into a school, I have one complete control over my attitude and my behavior and how I treat those young people that are walking in the door. So one last chance to add anything else, and I'm going to put closure on it. Anything else?

Rick: I would just say I thank you for the opportunity to speak to and maybe help some of our fellow teachers. This has been an honor for me, Randy. I just admire you as a person. Of course, Dr. Alvarado, he's a very modest guy. He's had such great success with these strategies in his school that he's really developed not only a national but an international reputation. He would never tell you that, but folks, as I said earlier, it's not rocket surgery, and I say that tongue in cheek. That's a saying from a student.

But these kinds of strategies are easy to do, so try some of them out and connect with those kids and set up the structure, and I would just say thank you so much, Randy, for allowing us to share with your audience.



Randy: Thank you both for also keeping it practical and keeping it real. I hope we shared that was my goal on the front end. So also, if we've piqued some interest from anybody listening today and want some additional resources, Rick's paper about remaining calm, and some of those pieces. There's over I think 60 or 70 of them about ways to deal with that challenging student that wants to put you on the spot like a young man did to me 40 years ago. We also carry several books from Time To Teach now through CPI at our website, and if any of you would like to do a Time To Teach training I'm the point of contact here with CPI. My number is (414) 979-7084, or shoot me an email at CPI.

I don't want to turn this into a commercial, but I am an approved trainer, and thank everybody today. Thanks for listening. Rick, thank you, Johnny, thank you. Go out there, everybody, and make a difference in a student's life at your school. Thanks for your time, folks.

