Seven Bad Classroom Management Strategy Ideas Someone has Probably Recommend to You in an In-Service: Why They are Counter-Productive, and What to Do Instead

Discussed below are seven classroom strategies that are frequently encouraged by teacher trainers and/or administrators and are assumed to be useful. However, when examined more closely what one sees is that they are actually highly ineffective and tend to encourage negative effects on the classroom climate, students' psychology and level of function and order in the class. We need to therefore stop suggesting teachers use them, and if they have been suggested to you, you might politely decline and instead consider implementing better alternative practices that will get you long-term positive results such as those described below.

Strategy	Why it is a Bad Idea	Good Ideas to do Instead
Negative Recognitions "Brian, I told you to put that away."	When we remind a student to stop doing something that he/she already knows not to do ("Brian!" or "We are waiting for Brian"), we essentially train him/her to 1) keep doing it, and 2) wait for us to remind them to stop, and 3) assume that all he/she needs to do is to tolerate occasional reminders, yet is never required to actually change their behavior. These interventions also add a negative energy into the climate of the room and send the implicit message that the teacher is struggling to promote order in the class.	First, become an expert in technical management, and stop trying to be clever and tricky. Learn to use a clear cue for 100% attention, expect 100% attention, and stop whenever you don't have it, until it is the norm. When a student or a few of them do not understand that expectation, you will likely need to work with them to help them see that they need to find a way to self-regulate asap. And when it is the whole class, such things as clarifying statements (i.e., "We are all giving Maria our 100% attention, and she will wait until she has it.") are useful for bringing positive clarity for what needs to be happening. (See Ch. 4 and 5 of TCM).
"Proximity Control" Standing nearer the Students who are off Task	Much like negative recognitions, using our physical proximity to try to modify student behavior essentially trains students to assume they only need to be on task when we are standing near them and intimidating them with our presence. We make the implicit deal that we need to be close to them or we cannot assume or trust anything good will happen. It is a lose-lose for us and the students. Over time students remain irresponsible and we are never able to feel confident and trusting.	Being among our students is a great idea. Interact, and be involved, but not as a walking patroller, but a teacher. If students are off task, use expectation clarifiers, or purposeful individual interventions. We should be making constant comments related to what quality process investment should look like at any point (i.e., Ask yourself, are you executing your role in a way that is working to the benefit of your group?) If a group is off task, we need to help them self-evaluate and find solutions for being on task
Using Colored Card Chart Behavior Systems	Simply put, this is using public shame to try to coerce students into compliance. It does not deal with the real problems – either related to the student or what is happening in the classroom. So will not lead to real solutions. It focuses primarily on the negative, but in a global and non-specific way, so is not instructive in any way. And in the end it actually tends to encourage students to stay stuck and comfortable at their color level, especially those at the bottom levels.	It is wise to avoiding any public student-student comparisons in all areas but especially with behavior. It only makes everything else in the class worse. However, using an intentional well-constructed system for assessing quality student effort, investment, cooperation, and/or participation can be really effective. Done correctly, it can help clarify what "good" looks like for students in a concrete and specific manner. And it can be used by the teacher to help clarify tasks, process quality, and what high quality behavior looks like for those who need it. (See complete web-article at www.transformativeclassroom.com)

Saying "I like the way __ is __ing" to modify those who are not ___ing.	Manipulative strategies almost always back-fire. When we try to modify one students' behavior by publicly praising another student, we are being insincere and deceptive. It leads to confused emotions in the students, and undermines the sense of acceptance and belonging in the class. When students hear us referring to one group and seeming to direct our attention to another they might ask themselves "Who were we talking to?" "Have they just been compared?" And if so, "Do they care?" Avoiding using the words "I like" unless you are talking about your sincere personal preferences.	The clean clear positive non-personal alternative is a positive recognition. Instead of making it personal, simply help the class see what the quality behavior that you want looks like. A phrase such as "I see groups who have all their equipment out and are determining …" help everyone better see what good looks. Or we can use clarifying statements or questions (i.e., "I might be asking myself or those in my group …. Right now.") to help make a quality task more clear (See Ch 4 in TCM)
Praising desired behavior with personal compliments	When we give personal praise we are giving the student something extrinsic (our approval and affection) for something they most likely see as part of who they are. This creates a shift away from their own sense of agency and intrinsic motivation, and over time makes them more dependent on external praise and promotes insecurity and a fear of failure.	Use positive recognitions, reflective questions or refrain from saying anything. Rule 1 is do nothing to rob them of their intrinsic motivation and sense of internal locus of control. So often just asking a question about how it is going, or finding something interesting about what they are doing shows that we are interested, without a thinly veiled agenda of giving our approval for what we want disguised as something positive.
Saying "thank you" as a way to reinforce wanted behavior	Why would we want to diminish the power of our sincere gratitude and the words "Thank You" by turning them into a knee jerk strategy given for compliance? If we are trying to create an authentic relationship with our students, we want to use our words to reinforce unconditional positive regard (love) and a sane and congruent message. Using caring messages to manipulate undermines that quality.	Say "Thank You" "I like that" or give praise when you are speaking as one authentic human being to another. In the role of the teacher, you need to make it about them, and their growth and how we can all produce quality outcomes, and not about you. So a phrase like "We are getting there, cool" or just saying what is happening positive or negative is respectful. Let them know how they are doing relative to their goals and what is good for the collective. They need useful information, not your blessing.
Giving extrinsic rewards to bribe students into doing things	When we give students something extrinsic for doing something that we would want them to intrinsically value, we are killing their intrinsic motivation and training them to think that the primary reason they would want to do the task is because they are getting something non-educational for it in the end. If we set up this bargain in the form of a bribe, we are helping ensure that our students will do nothing without being given a bribe first. Study after study shows that giving rewards may get an initial response but eventually undermines motivational levels and decreases the likelihood that students display the desired behavior or performance level over time.	If we look into the top classrooms, we see engaging instruction and students who have a sense of internal locus of control and a growth orientation. Engaging learning is inherently motivational. Working with others and solving problems activates our intrinsic motivation. Sharing what we do gives us a sense of pride and self-efficacy. A sense of accomplishment that comes from reaching a goal and persisting through a challenge encourages an even greater level of motivation for the next task. Yet, when we introduce an extrinsic reward into the equation all those internal motivational instincts are suppressed to some degree.