

Implementing Prosocial Behaviors: Scenario Exercise

Complete this exercise to practice responding to difficult teaching situations by using three prosocial behavior strategies that support getting students back on track and building relationships.

1. **Practicing induction (reasoning that is nonpunitive):** Teachers use reasoning, explanation, and reminders of expectations in a calm (not harsh) way. Induction helps students internalize self-control, self-regulation, and social values, and it makes them more willing to respond to teachers' requests.
2. **Praising prosocial behaviors:** Teachers practice identifying when students exhibit kind, helpful, supportive, and empathetic behaviors and praising them for being so kind. Recognizing students as helpful leads to them internalizing the identity of being a kind person.
3. **Building positive teacher–student relationships:** Students like and respond well to their teachers when the teachers are consistent, sensitive to the students' needs and interests, responsive to emotions, and able to provide students with choices in their day.

Directions

The following three scenarios are situations teachers often experience when working with students. Read a scenario and review the following questions:

1. What is your initial reaction (emotion) to the student in the situation?
2. How would you respond (action) to the student if in your classroom?
3. Thinking back to induction, praise, and teacher–student relationships, what are some strategies you can implement?
4. How are your strategies similar to or different from your prior reactions in similar situations?
5. Which response do you think you would choose in this scenario?
6. Putting yourself in the student's position, how do you think they would feel about your response?
7. What behaviors would you change for yourself in the future?

Scenario 1: Alexia, Karyl, and Carter

It's time for your students to work on a project in groups. They'll use collaborative problem-solving to build a model boat that actually floats. You group Alexia, Karyl, and Carter. Alexia thinks it's unfair that she isn't in a group with her friends, so she doesn't want to participate in the project. As Karyl and Carter start brainstorming ways to build the model, Alexia makes comments like "Carter, your dumb ideas will never work." She then intentionally shoves her chair into Karyl and says, "Karyl, you're so clumsy, watch what you're doing!" You've already noticed tension in the group, so you arrive in time to hear the last two comments. You suspect Alexia has been behaving this way the entire time.

Scenario 2: Graci

Graci arrives 30 minutes late to your first-period class. She throws down her bag and slumps down in her chair. She doesn't look at anyone in the class and ignores your greeting to her. You ask her to join the lesson by taking out her Chromebook and logging into the lesson in Google Classroom. Graci ignores your request and puts her head on her desk instead.

Scenario 3: Dante

You give your students the rest of the class period to work on their math assignment. You walk around the room to give feedback, provide support, and answer any questions. Dante repeatedly holds up his hand for help. You make sure to help him each time, but you observe that he seems to know what he's doing and mainly wants constant attention. You tell him you're going to help some of the other students and will be back to check on him. He begins to yell your name, distracts his peers, and becomes disruptive.

For more information about promoting prosocial behaviors, visit our blog post [Three Social-Emotional Learning Strategies to Support Prosocial Behaviors and Positive Learning Environments](#).