

Finding Time in a World Of Standards

by
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Teaching is in real-time with real people. That makes decision making with students crucial to your outcomes. Madeline Hunter once said that teaching is a stream of decisions. We can add decisions on content and management. The teacher, in today's classrooms is performing two major tasks, curriculum and classroom management, simultaneously. This leads us to the subject of Classroom Management. In fact, that may prevent this reader from continuing any further. However, what if data supported a connection between student learning and nonverbal classroom management? Perhaps that may persuade a reader to continue reading?

Teaching is on-line because it is on your feet and in front of students. There is no place to hide. Based on Miller (1981), Mehrabian (1985), and Burgoon, (1989) most communication is nonverbal. Miller, in fact, found 82% of communication in the classroom is nonverbal. For the classroom this means that the impact of nonverbal communication is as persuasive if not more than the verbal content of the subject. To ignore such a large component of influence in the classroom is to ignore a potential positive impact for student learning. Therefore, teachers are responsible for teaching content while influencing student behavior. The standards movement, public demands, and future employers want students to behave properly while knowing basic information. This is not an either/or problem; it is a proposition. The teacher is charged to do both at the same time.

Nonverbal communication is not new, however the identification of specific skills aligned to the profession of teaching is. Michael Grinder's Educational Nonverbal Yardstick is known as ENVoY. Grinder's work is based on 5,000 classroom observations and delineates 31 nonverbal skills and anchors them into four phases of a lesson:

- 1) Getting Their Attention
- 2) Teaching
- 3) Transition to Seatwork
- 4) Seatwork.

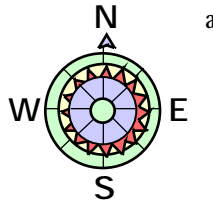
Data being collected indicates that when properly implemented by the teacher,

these nonverbal skills result in;

1. an increase the amount of teaching time on content
2. a reduction in the number of referrals
3. provide more energy for the teacher at the end of the day (Garfield, Block 1999).

In A longitudinal study in Golden, Colorado findings indicated that groups receiving training in Cognitive Coaching and ENVoY significantly increased teaching efficacy and attitudes of teachers in the classroom (Edwards, J. et al., 1996).

Responses from recent California survey of teachers who completed ENVoY training Pre-1996 through 1999 are provided as evidence to support the positive impact effective nonverbal communication can have on teachers and students .



1. "What are the effects that you see, hear, or feel in your classroom that tell you ENVoY is making a difference?" "Students stay focused;" "Sets clear expectations, stable discipline for students, consistency, I don't yell anymore in class."

2. When asked 'how has the classroom environment changed as a result of using ENVoY skills, responses included, "Classes are much more productive" "There is much less chaos, there is more 'on-task' behavior and better understanding by the students.'
3. The most significant benefit from using ENVoY skills included, "Less stress on my [teacher] part and better rapport with my students." Also, "I feel I've found ways to be a more effective teacher as I don't have to spend as much time on discipline. More effective time is gained rather than lost to management issues."

4. Lastly, when teachers were asked to identify the effect on content teaching and student learning, respondents stated that there was "better involvement and increased learning from my students" and "Students learn more effectively when there is consistency and clear expectations, ENVoY provides the consistency and clear expectations."

ENVoY training involves active participation in an engaging, high energy

3 or 4 day workshop. Participants learn the foundation of ENVoY which is centered around seven essential skills called, the 7 Gems. Through effective roll playing and discussion, participants work on changing their habits and moving past the educational paradigm of "over training and under implementation". Graduates of ENVoY leave with a new perspective, seeing what they have never seen before, loaded with a foundational tool kit of 31 nonverbal skills for use in their classrooms. When implemented effectively the result is student compliance while maintaining high student rapport.

Student to teacher relationship is essential to effective student learning. In a recent publication by Dr. Ruby Payne, most communication in schools and homes is passed nonverbally. We are just starting to learn about the importance of nonverbal communication in classrooms. In my years as an administrator, I would ask students why they didn't like the teacher. Invariably, they would respond, "I just don't like him." When continuing the discussion the real answer was the feeling of the student was a result of their interpretation of the teacher not liking the student. When talking to teachers, they would be surprised of the student's view. Dr. James Comer of Yale said, "No significant learning will happen without a significant relationship." If the relationship is strained, learning will be harder to produce.

To find out more about Michael Grinder, his work with ENVoY and scheduled trainings, visit his website at <http://www.michaelgrinder.com/>. You may also contact Barbara Lawson, email: BARBLAWSON@USWEST.NETemail; Bill Sommers, email: WASommers@aol.com; or Kendall Zoller, email: kzoller@sanjuan.edu.

"If you do not take responsibility for yourself, no one else will. It's that simple.

You make a statement of dignity to yourself and the teaching profession when you acknowledge and accept that you make a difference."

Harry K. Wong