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The Values Grounded Learning Environment: Developing a Positive School Culture and Student Success

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Values Grounded Learning Environment

A Practical Guide for Educators



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Goals of the Training

- ✓ To provide an overview of the Values Grounded Learning Environment
 - ✓ Highlight key principles of this model and discuss their utility
 - ✓ Vision
 - ✓ Values Grounded Working Model
 - ✓ 5 C's and VPC Approach
- ✓ To introduce Productive Conflict
- ✓ To introduce the Stage System
 - ✓ Developmentally Informed Classroom System helping students Grow Up

BUT I DON'T WANNA
GO BACK TO SCHOOL!
NOBODY LIKES ME!
THEY TEASE ME, AND
PULL MY HAIR, AND
BEAT ME UP!
I HATE IT!

NO ONE SAID
TEACHING WOULD
BE EASY, DEAR.



Role Play

Scenario 1:

Staff: “Good morning, Sam. Please take out your math worksheet and begin working.”

Sam: “Grr, I hate math. It's stupid. I'm not doing that sheet today. You can't make me. . . .”

Staff: (eye rolls) “Okay Sam. Here's the deal. It doesn't matter if you hate math. You **HAVE** to do it. You **DON'T** have a choice. So take out your sheet and get started.”

Sam: “No. I'm **NOT** doing it

Role Play

Scenario 1:

Staff: “It's NOT up to you, Sam. I'm the teacher and it's my job to make sure you do this. You're going to do WHAT I ASK!”

Sam: “Like %@#*! I am. Come over here and MAKE me!”

Staff: “I'm sick of your attitude Sam. You wonder why you are failing ...you will keep failing if you don't listen to me.”

Student: “Whatever This is @#!* I'm out. (walks out of class).”

Role Play

Scenario 2:

Staff: “Good morning, Sam. Please take out your math worksheet and begin working.

Sam: “Grr, I hate math. It's stupid. I'm not doing that sheet today. You can't make me. . . .”

Staff: “I know math isn't your favorite, and that sometimes it can be frustrating. And you're right. I can't make you do it, so I won't try to do that. I will help you through it, though, if you'll take my help”

Role Play

Scenario 2:

Sam: (starting at math sheet and mumbling) “*I hate math*”

Staff: “Please pull out your sheet and start with the problem that seems easiest for you. I'll be around in a moment to see how you're doing and help you out if you need it.

You've been making really good choices lately and you're close to moving up to Stage 3. Think about that and your goal to make fun Friday this week as you make your choice. I'll give you time to decide”

Sam: “Grrr, fine. But I'm starting with the SHORTEST problem and I'm going need help!”

Role Play

Scenario 1:

Staff: “That's a great choice, Sam. Thank you for using respectful words to let me know your plan. I'll be over in the next five minutes. If you need support before then, please raise your hand.”

Sam: (grumbling and begins on the math lesson)

Role Play

Scenario 1:

Student: “He keeps talking smack . . . he thinks he’s all that . . . just wait . . .”

Staff: “Relax . . . You’re making TOO BIG of a deal out of this.”

Student: “DON’T tell me to relax . . . I’M PISSED . . . oohhh, he just flipped me off.”

Staff: “Stop shouting and SIT DOWN!”

Student: “DON’T tell me what to do. You are a *%#@. I’LL SHOUT IF I WANT TO . . .”

Role Play

Staff: “You will do AS I SAY...otherwise....”

Student: “Otherwise WHAT?! These assignments are STUPID . . . just like you.” (*Gets up out of his seat, crumbles up a piece of paper, and tosses it against the wall*)

Staff: “I have had enough out of you. Go to the office (BIP) and . . . by the way, forget about going on Friday Fun Day . . . you just lost the privilege.”

Student: “I hate you and this school.” (*storms out of class*)

Role Play

Scenario 2:

Student: “He keeps talking smack . . . he thinks he’s all that . . . just wait . . .”

Staff: “I can see that you are angry and for good reason. Please take a cool down / time out and we will address this situation then.”

Student: “WHY DO I GOTTA TAKE A TIME OUT? He’s the one who flipped me off!”

Staff: “Your voice is too loud and your behavior is disrupting the class.”

Role Play

Student: “Man . . . I’M GETTING PISSED!”

Staff: “I am not asking you to stop being angry. I am asking you to take a time out to calm your behavior so we can deal with this situation in a good way.”

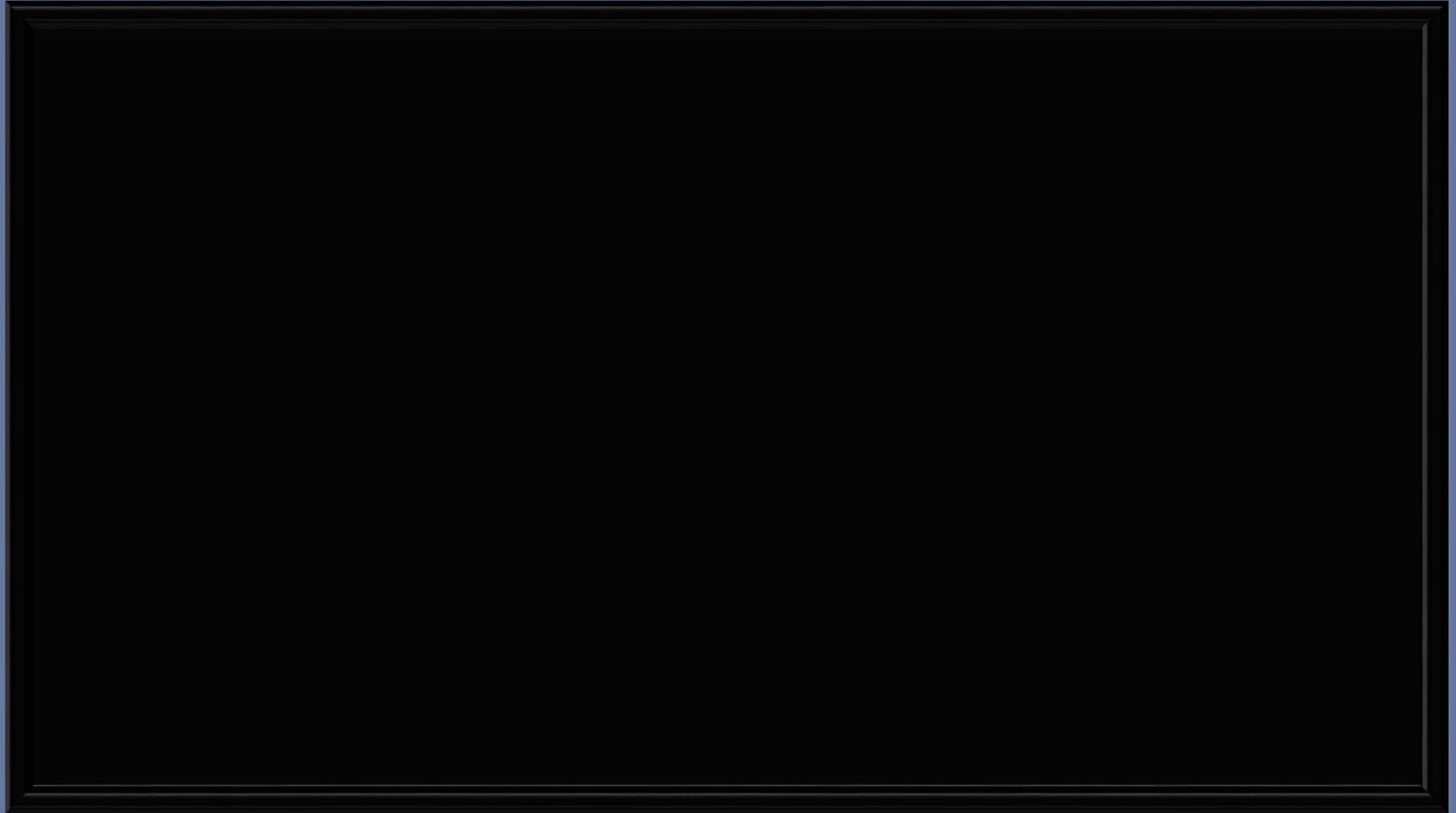
Student: “Man . . .” (*he mumbles as he walks over to take a time out*)

Overview

Productive Conflict Model



Bringing Vision to Life



Visionary & Purposeful Work

Purpose and Vision = *'The Why'* of our work

Staff who have a clear sense of vision and purpose are far more successful in their work with their students than those who just 'show up.'

Successful students = Vision for their education

Effective Teachers = Explain the Why before lessons & help students clarify Why their education is important

Vision of the Values Grounded Learning Environment Model

Vision:

To help students grow up, academically and behaviorally, by teaching and reinforcing positive values that guide successful behavior

To help staff grow up professionally



Gangs



Vision

The power of vision is incredible! Research indicates that children with 'future-focused role images' perform far better scholastically and are significantly more competent in handling the challenges of life. Teams and organizations with a strong sense of mission significantly outperform those without the strength of vision... Vision is the best manifestation of creative imagination and the primary motivation of human action. It's the ability to see beyond our present reality."

-- Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, Rebecca R. Merrill: *First Things First*

“Windshield Thinking” versus “Rear View Mirror Thinking”

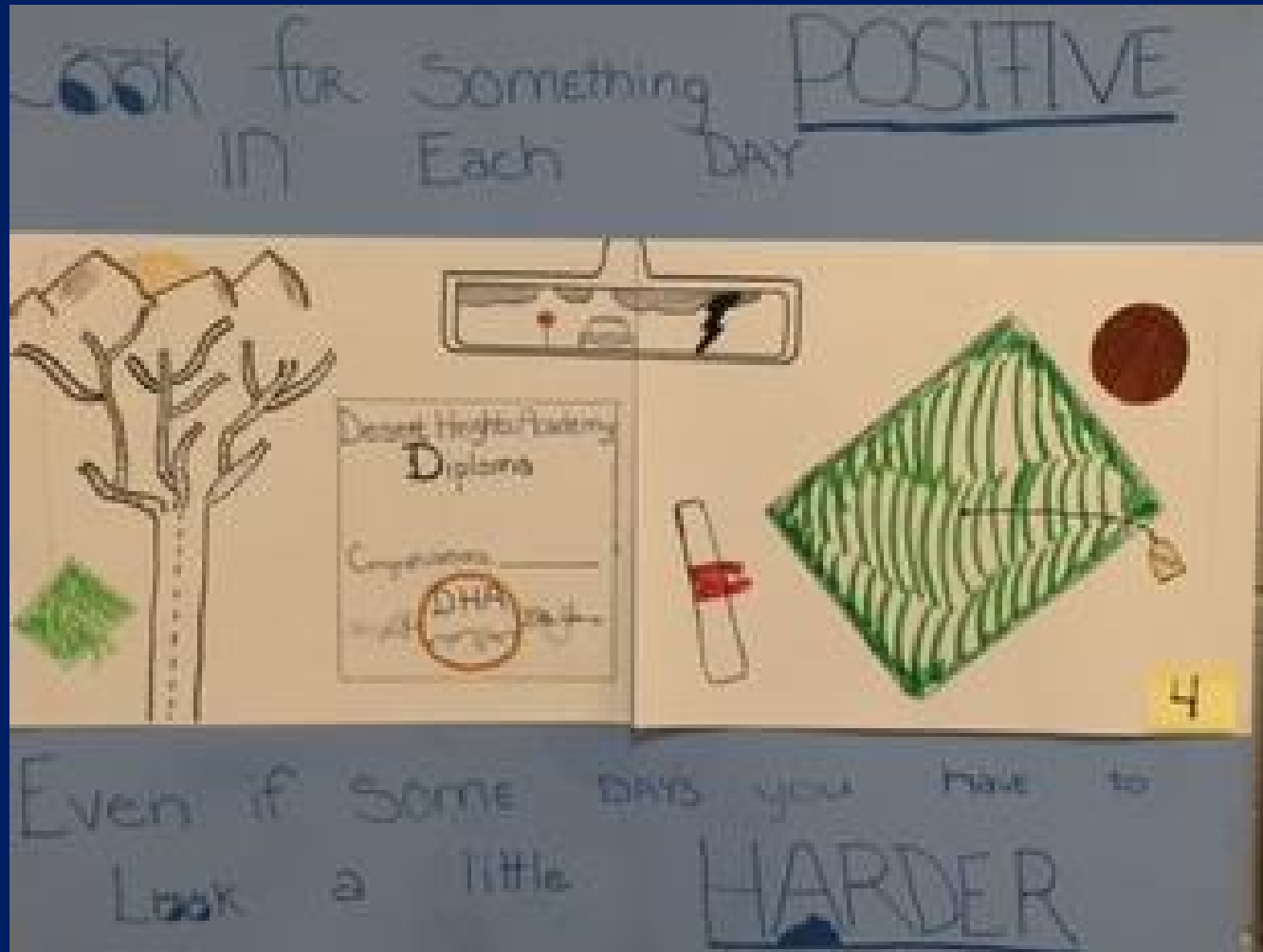
Windshield Thinking promotes *thinking* BEFORE acting –
Thinking with a **direction / positive goal** in mind (**VISION**)



Rear View Mirror Thinking promotes *acting* BEFORE thinking – Without direction

Staying focused on the past

“Windshield Thinking”



Values Grounded Learning Environment

Goal:

Creating an school environment where the **learning process** is valued by **ALL**

Staff use the values to guide their behavior toward students
AND toward each other

The **VALUES** provide the means to accomplish the **VISION** and **Productive Conflict** protects the integrity of this developmental process.

Values Grounded Learning Environment

Goal:

BEHAVIOR = POSITIVE VALUES

Creating an environment where the **learning process is valued by ALL involved**

Staff behavior toward students can add **Value** or **Devalue** the learning environment

What values define your classroom / school?

Does your behavior **consistently** match your values?

Values, Conflict, Mistakes, and Learning

Conflict and **mistakes** need to happen for learning to occur. Values Grounded learning environments promote humility and provide an invitation to learn from one's mistakes.
Gratitude = Humility = Taking appropriate risks

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE MISTAKES AND HUMILITY IN YOUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

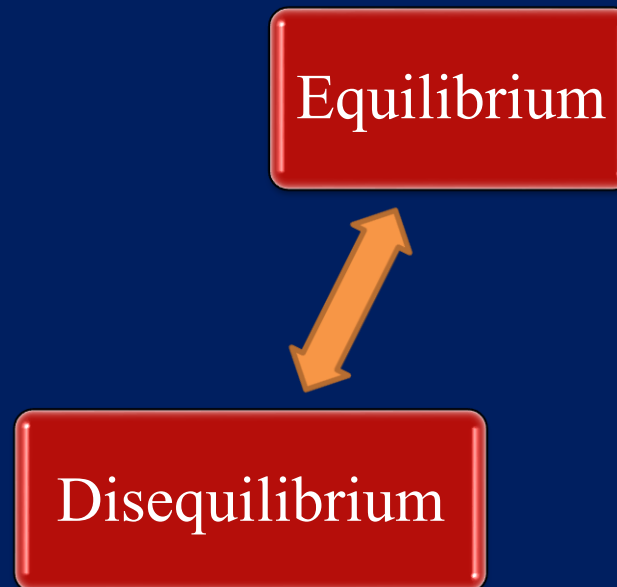
Fear of conflict and mistakes leads to AVOIDANCE

VG learning environments offer reminders and encouragement that conflict can be healthy and leads to growth; mistakes are part of learning.

Conflict: Understanding and Managing

Why focus on conflict as part of learning and growth ?

- ❖ Conflict is a **natural** part of the learning process



Conflict: Understanding and Managing

- ✓ Meaningful learning and growth often involves one stepping outside their **comfort zone**

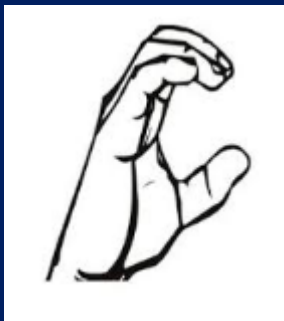


Establish greater comfort with our own discomfort enables us to continue to learn and NOT be avoidant

Yerkes Dodson Curve ... Stress ... Cortisol Learning

Five C's of Positive Behavior Management

1. **Consistency**
2. **Competency**
3. **Clarity**
4. **Consequences**
5. **Calmness**



Limit Setting and Emotional Management Skills

Ways to promote positive emotional expression
& avoid Cortisol Conversations / Dialogue

V **P** **C** approach

Validate

Promote

Consequence

VPC all relates back to Vision and Values


Risk Factors and Impact on Behavior

Risk factors contributing to emotional distress in high risk youth:

- ❖ **Poverty**
- ❖ **Family Violence**
- ❖ **Physical/Sexual Abuse**
- ❖ **Parental Abandonment**
- ❖ **Community Violence**
- ❖ **Substance Abuse**
- ❖ **Discrimination**
- ❖ **Psychiatric Illness in Family of Origin**



Risk Factors and Impact on Behavior

“When experiencing multiple risk factors, youth become more prone to developing psychiatric disorders and acting out in hurtful and aggressive ways, e.g., violence,  substance abuse.”

Tipping Point (Garbarino, 1999)



Multiple risk factors is equated with ‘toxic stress’ (Robert Putnam, 2014)

Adverse Childhood Experience Scale (Felliti, 1998)

Risk Factors and Impact on Behavior

Students bring these risk factors / diagnosis(es) with them to class

❖ Risk factors **compromise** coping skills & challenge staff's / administrator's **Vision**

❖ Increase in **emotional** reactivity

✓ More likely to have outbursts

✓ More likely to personalize

✓ More likely to act before thinking

✓ Soda activity

✓ Water bottle activity



Limit Setting & 5 C's

- ✓ **Be Consistent** – Stay consistent in setting limits / redirecting negative behavior that **disrupts** / **devalues** the learning environment
- ✓ **Clarity** – Use behavior language in stating the desired replacement behavior
- ✓ **Stay Positive** – Remember that consistently redirecting negative behavior protects the integrity of the Values Grounded Learning Environment
- ✓ **Calm** – Use calm tone and do not let student control emotional mood of situation
- ✓ **Consequences** – Limits FIRST...then consequences.

Interventions & Strategies

❖ Key principle to effective classroom management

Manage your environment NOT each student



Otherwise, your environment will manage you!

Limit Setting

Make limits about the **behavior** not the person.

- ✓ Focus on redirecting behavior and not **emotion**.
- ❖ Request **REPLACEMENT** behavior



**Replacement Behavior = Values =
Classroom Expectations**

Conclusion



Value Guided Learning Environment invites unity among staff with the purpose of promoting what is valuable in one another!

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