

Learning to work with Students

Walking into the classroom as a new teacher, I used to get frustrated with the students when they didn't listen to what I said. I could feel my stress levels slowly building as my strained voice tries to cope with being pulled in multiple directions at the same time.

I became a fireman instead of a teacher as I put out fire after fire. It wasn't long after I put out the first fire that another one would flare up somewhere else in the classroom. It was very frustrating.

I tried all the things that were used on me as a student, including detention, a raised voice, extra homework and reduced break time. However the more I tried to push the students the more they resisted.

After I finished work I would often walk through the park to try and calm the mind. On one occasion I found a vacant bench where I sat and watched the people drift by. I was lost in my own thought for a while when something caught my eye.

I was watching the interaction between a man and his dog. He was not yelling, he was not threatening and the dog gave him complete attention. I could see him used clear voice, eye contact, consistency and reward....I had an idea.

The next day in the classroom, I set up my expectations. I told the students what I really wanted them to achieve and the steps that we would take to arrive at point where they could be proud. Then I invited the students to tell me what they wanted to achieve from the class.

As a group, we went through the list. I agreed to listen to the students more and we started to work together to achieve a fantastic outcome for both the teachers and the students. Today, this is one of my better classes and I look forward to teaching them each week.