

Course: Surviving your rookie year of teaching: 3 key ideas & high leverage techniques

Assignment 2: parent call plan

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Step 1: Describe your phone call routine

The context this assignment is operating in is that of a physics class in the lower three years of the pre-university track of secondary education in the Netherlands. The school is relatively small for Dutch standards (around 700 students) and is situated in a large city in the Western part of the country. Classes are sized around 28 students (average) and consist of predominant of Dutch origin with an equal boy/girl distribution. Students in this class are on between 11 and 15 years old. The social economic background of the students is just above average. I currently teach 7 different classes (two 1st year classes and three 2nd and 3rd year classes). 1st year students have 2 lessons/week (1 lesson = 70min) and 2nd and 3rd year have 3 lessons/week.

During my regular work schedule there are three moments which are suitable: in between lessons (only on Tuesday and Thursday from (10:00 to 10:30)), during the lunch break (every day from 12:30 to 13:00) and after classes (every day with times starting ranging from 14:10 to 15:30 (schedule varies between days) till around 17:00 (building closes usually around 17:15)). I have a personal preference for the last option (after classes) as there are no students around that can come with questions (happens sometimes at the other moments) and it is not in my lunch break (I also have to eat). Furthermore, I am more likely after classes to focus on the call instead on upcoming lessons. Also, parents are more likely to answer (some parents work in the morning while their children are at school) compared to other the other moments presented here. The phone numbers of the students' home are available and accessible by me

Given an average of 5 min/call the goal is to make 5-7 calls each day in total. In the beginning the ratio between praise and correction calls should be 5:1 (to build a relationship with the parents). After a few months I would like to bring this to an average ratio of 3:1. The audience for the calls is the parents of my students. This is to make them more aware about how their child is doing and because they still have influence over them.

Step 2: Develop a script for a praise call

The subject for an upcoming praise call is Lisa. Lisa usually does not draw too much attention on herself. When asked to answer a question she usually gives answer but does not often raise her hand to volunteer to do so. Recently, she did volunteer to present her project during the last lesson we were working on a project when no one else volunteered. She presented her project really well and as a result of this there were several others who wanted to present their projects as well.

The script will be as follows: *"Dear Sir/Ms X I would like to speak to you about Lisa. Two weeks ago while we presented the result of our bridge building project Lisa volunteered to present her result to the rest of my group. She showed a good understanding of the concepts that were presented in this project and*

how to apply them in practice. Lisa presented these results very well and pointed out some very good features in her design such as the triangular reinforcements underneath the bridge. Furthermore she talked very enthusiastic showing engagement with the topic. As a result of her actions several others students wanted to present their results as well as taking the fear for presenting in front of the class away from them. I hope she continues to keep up this initiative by speaking up in the future as she is clearly enjoys it."

Step 3: Develop a script for a correction call

The subject for an upcoming correction call is Elisabeth. Lisa sometimes start talking to her neighbor while I am explaining new content. If I ask her why she is doing so she tells me she asked her neighbor a question. I rather have her raise her hand so I know immediately there is a question which I (alone or with the rest of the group) can solve to make sure she follows the lesson. Furthermore, it disrupts the lesson for other students.

The script will be as follows: *"Dear Sir/Ms X I would like to speak to you about Elisabeth. Today Elisabeth choose to start talking to her neighbor when I was explaining new content. When I asked her about it she told me she was asking her neighbor a question about it. As other students might have the same question I think she and others can benefit if she poses a question. Together with the knowledge of each other, I and the students can then solve this problem. If Elisabeth chooses to ask the question only to her neighbor instead of the whole class she takes away a learning opportunity from others. Therefore, I would like to ask you to talk to Elisabeth about the fact that asking question is not bad. I will then pay some extra attention to her to see if she has a question."*