



# SeeMeTeach<sup>®</sup> Teacher Challenge

Misbehavior in the Classroom and  
the Teacher's Reactions

## *SMT Teacher Challenge*

### *Misbehaviors in the Classroom and the Teacher's Reaction*

The minimal required training to complete this challenge includes:

Training 1: SMT Observation Setup

Training 2: Qualitative Comments Mode

Training 3: Quantitative Data and Analysis Mode

Training 4: Student Misbehaviors and Teacher Reactions – (M Codes)

*Data collection should focus on M codes while utilizing the seating chart. Demographics could be designated for this Teacher Challenge as well.*

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### *Introduction*

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Dealing with misbehavior in the classroom is one of the leading factors of teacher burnout and, if not dealt with properly, can be one of the aspects of teaching that drive teachers out of the classroom. Many factors can contribute to a student's misbehaving, including but not limited to:

- The material the students engage with is too high, leading to a lack of understanding.
- Students are unclear about what they should do in a particular activity.
- Students are bored and unengaged during a particular lesson segment and therefore choose to misbehave out of frustration.
- To fulfill the need to belong, students misbehave in a manner that can be identified and responded to in one of four ways: attention seeking, power, revenge and/or fear.

Depending on the quantity and type of misbehaviors, a teacher may have a skewed view of the issue. For example, they may think that their entire class is out of control when only a handful of students are creating the issue. On the other hand, they may feel that misbehavior is not an issue when spending over 50% of a lesson dealing with misbehavior. To accurately understand what is happening regarding misbehavior in the classroom, teachers can use SMT to gather and look at data such as how the class begins, lesson type, or transitions affected student behavior. Or they can see if a certain table of students, a specific classroom area, or one specific student generates most of the misbehaviors in class. Knowing this type of information is very powerful because it can take an overwhelming aspect of teaching and make it into something that can easily be understood, handled, and modulated to create a more productive and healthier classroom environment.

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### *The Challenge*

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This *Teacher Challenge* focuses on minimizing the impact of student misbehavior on student learning, thereby increasing student engagement and positive contributions from all students.

## Challenge Steps

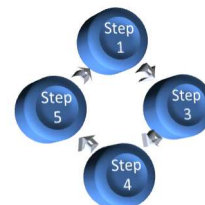
- 1) **Teach a Lesson:** First, capture the video and audio of the lesson. Make sure to teach the lesson as you normally would, as this lesson will be used for your baseline data.
- 2) **Complete the Required SMT Training:** If not already done, complete the required training to learn how to collect the specific data required for this challenge. The minimal required training recommended includes:
  - a. Training 1: SMT Observation Setup
  - b. Training 2: Qualitative Comments Mode
  - c. Training 3: Quantitative Data and Analysis Mode
  - d. Training 4: Student Misbehaviors and Teacher Reactions – (M Codes)

*Note: The cheat sheets accompanying these trainings provide a comprehensive summary of the trainings and are excellent resources to keep on hand while you code your recorded lessons.*

- 3) **Collect Data:** Use the SMT teacher observation app to collect baseline data specifically focusing on student misbehaviors for individual students and groups (if applicable).
- 4) **Document and Analyze Data:** After you have collected your baseline data, utilize the *Small Groups* data analysis page to plot the pertinent data on the *Data Summary and Change Chart*.
- 5) **Revamp Your Teaching:** Implement one change to how you approach mitigating misbehaviors in your classroom. It is recommended to:
  - a. *Only implement one change or one strategy at a time to determine what is making the difference in student behavior.*
  - b. **Recommended:** Fill out the "[My Plan of Action](#)" google form to document your observations and progress through this teacher challenge. This can be used for your personal development or as evidence for a yearly observation or pre-service teacher certification program.

*Note: See the *Implementing Growth and Change* section in this teacher challenge for additional suggestions on implementing specific changes to your teaching.*

- 6) **Repeat Challenge Steps 1, 3, 4, and possibly 5:** One cycle through this process might achieve the desired results, but more than likely, it might take more than one cycle. Teaching is complex, with many variables in play, but know that sometimes a very small change can have a noticeable and sometimes very large effect on the learner or the learning environment.





**Lesson Distribution of Misbehaviors:** Look at the *Lesson Summary Timeline* in the *Management Summary* data analysis screen to note the general distribution of M codes in the lesson. Where in the lesson (start, end, transitions) did M codes occur most (if at all)? Was there an even distribution of M codes? In which lesson type (color-coded backdrop of the *Lesson Summary Timeline*) did most of the M codes occur?

Lesson Distribution of Misbehaviors	
Observation 1	
Observation 2	
Observation 3	
Observation 4	

**Classroom Distribution of Misbehaviors:** Use the *Seating Chart Heat Map* to note general observations of trends and patterns of where in the classroom misbehaviors were occurring and if a specific subset of students/group was contributing to the issue:

Classroom Distribution of Misbehaviors	
Observation 1	
Observation 2	
Observation 3	
Observation 4	

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## *Data As Indicators/Questions to Ponder*

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- How many of the classroom management events were not addressed by the teacher?
    - (Note: if  $(M10 \text{ events} + M12 \text{ events}) > (M11 \text{ events} + M13 \text{ events})$ , the teacher is probably ignoring some of the student misbehaviors, either intentionally or unintentionally.)
  - When looking at the *Seating Chart Heat Map*, were the behavior issues proximal or distant to where the teacher is located? Did the teacher move around the classroom, and how did this affect misbehavior?
  - At the beginning of the lesson, how much time was needed to get all the students settled and begin the lesson?
  - Was there anything about this lesson that might have contributed to more or fewer management issues?
  - When using the *Seating Chart Heat Map* and the *Demographics* toggles, what can you determine about behavior issues regarding select groups of students?
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## *Implementing Change and Growth*

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*Note: Misbehavior is one of the most prominent ways classroom activities can become unproductive. While it is important to address the misbehavior at the moment, it is also important to dig a little deeper to uncover the root cause(s) of the issue to determine the best plan of action to address and mitigate misbehaviors in the classroom.*

### Strategies to Mitigate Misbehavior in the Classroom

- **Strategy #1) Engaging Students During Lecture/Note-taking** - Most misbehaviors occur when students are bored or when too much material is introduced, and they become overwhelmed and/or don't understand the content. When listening to someone speak, most people generally have an attention span of 10-15 minutes before their mind starts to wander and they start to think about other things. Students are not any different. And the younger they are, the shorter their attention span is. Their age is a great rule of thumb to use as a guide for how long a lecture segment should last. For example, a five-year-old student could probably handle five consecutive minutes of lecture/notes. In contrast, a student 15 years old could probably pay attention during lecture/notes for 15 consecutive minutes. A great way to help break up a class dedicated to lecture/notes and help students reset and re-engage is to add "breaks" where students can interact with each other, the teacher, and the material. These breaks could be as short as one to two minutes, but it helps the students stay engaged; when they are engaged, they don't have time or energy to misbehave. (Note: During breaks, it is best to try to engage the group rather than one or two students so that all students have a chance to re-set and re-engage for the next section of lecture or note-taking.) Some ideas of "breaks" include:
  - **Think-Pair-Share** – The teacher pauses the lecture and asks a question to the class. Students turn to a partner to discuss the question for 60 seconds. Then, the class comes back together, and

the pairs share their responses. All pairs may not share with the class, but every student is engaged during the break while discussing with their partners.

- **Using Interactive Lectures** – Making the lecture interactive is a great way to increase student engagement and decrease misbehaviors. There are a variety of ways to do this including:
  - **Using Personal Devices** - If students have personal devices, using a platform such as NearPod is an easy way to insert short activities throughout the lecture. While students follow along on their devices, these activities give them time to practice and engage with the material between lecture sections.
  - **Using Whiteboards** – Students can use whiteboards either during a lecture to answer short check-in questions, after the lecture as a longer review, or both. Using whiteboards is a quick way to get all students engaged with the material by having them complete practice problems, answer a set of questions, or make predictions. *(Note: Guidelines and expectations for using the whiteboards may need to be discussed and practiced before using them. Many students get carried away with drawing or doodling on the whiteboards, which could lead to further misbehavior issues.)*
- **Strategy #2) Begin the School Year with Solid Expectations and Procedures** - *Note: These can also be used throughout the year as well, but they are more powerful when implemented at the beginning of the year.*
  - **Create a Seating Chart** – Seating charts help to establish routine and organization when students enter a classroom. It also prevents friends, who may prefer chatting over learning, from sitting together and gives the teacher some control over the classroom regarding who sits where and when.
  - **Class Contracts** – Class contracts are a great way to lay out student expectations at the beginning of the year. Expectations are different from rules as classroom rules often result in consequences, whereas expectations do not.

Expectation	Rule
No Consequence. The expectation of how students should conduct themselves in the classroom as responsible young adults. Example: Wait to sharpen your pencil until everyone is done talking.	Consequence result if the rule is broken due to the severity of the action or any safety issues that could arise from not following the rule. Example: Always wear your safety goggles in the lab.

Class contracts are normally created *with* the students at the beginning of the year. Each class creates its contract, normally written on a large piece of paper or poster board, and each student agrees to the class contract by signing their name at the bottom. The agreement is displayed on the wall as a reminder of the group expectations and can be easily referenced throughout the year. Class contracts are great because it gives students some say in how they feel the class should be run, and it helps them learn how to be a positive part of a community. *(Note: Normally, it is necessary to have a teacher-curated list of non-negotiable rules with consequences that are in place to address some of the more serious behavior aspects of the classroom.)*

- **Assigning a Limited Number of Bathroom Passes** – One type of passive misbehavior that can occur is students asking to go to the bathroom every class period, students leaving for an extended amount of time, or multiple students asking to leave in one period. This causes numerous

disruptions during a class period and often interrupts the natural flow. An easy way to handle this situation is to give students a limited amount of bathroom passes to use in a quarter or a semester. The students can use the bathroom passes if needed, but if they run out, they have to spend the time they missed in class with the teacher before school, after school, or during lunch. Students who do not use their bathroom passes receive extra credit at the end of the quarter or semester. This not only helps to decrease misbehaviors but also teaches students to manage their time during passing periods.

- **Teach Students Routines and Procedures** – When students are taught certain routines and procedures, the classroom can become self-automating on certain levels. Once a routine or procedure becomes a habit, the students will likely not deviate from the routine for the rest of the year. *(Note that this strong adherence to routines and procedures makes them more difficult to change mid-year.)*

Examples of Routines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Picking up handouts upon entering the classroom.</li> <li>● Handing in work at a particular time during class.</li> <li>● Submitting work to a particular place in the class.</li> <li>● Entering and exiting lab.</li> <li>● Checking out classroom books/supplies.</li> <li>● Binder or notebook setup.</li> </ul>

It is important to introduce one to two routines or procedures at a time and let them practice for a few days before adding in another. Most students will easily forget what is expected of them if they are not allowed to practice and make the routine a habit.

- **Create a Rapport with Students at the Beginning of the Year** - This is by far one of the most powerful ways to decrease and mitigate classroom misbehavior. Knowing the quantity of content that needs to be covered, most teachers jump right in and begin teaching on the first day. However, taking 2-3 days to help students get to know the teacher and each other will help to build a nurturing and respectful classroom environment and establish student-teacher relationships as well as student relationships. Increasing rapport in the classroom ultimately helps to build mutual respect among everyone in the classroom, and when everyone is and feels respected, misbehaviors are less likely to occur. Some examples of icebreakers include playing the name game, two truths and a lie, and classmate bingo/scavenger hunt.
- **Strategy #3) Maintain Proximity** – An easy way to address misbehaviors is proximity to a specific student or set of students who are the main cause of the issue, as most students will stop misbehaving if the teacher is in close proximity. This can be attained by circulating the classroom throughout the lesson or creating a seating chart to place students most likely to misbehave near the area that the teacher is normally in.
- **Strategy #4) Change Seats** – Changing seats is another easy way to decrease misbehaviors and can either be done in a predicted manner, once every quarter or on the fly, moving one or two students if their behavior is causing an issue. Sometimes misbehaviors can occur due to students either not getting along or perhaps getting along too well. Simply changing who they sit with or next to may remediate the situation.



- **Strategy #5) Assign a Role or Job** - For some misbehaving students, assigning a role or job can make a big difference. Many times, simply helping these students to feel useful or valued decreases misbehaviors.

Examples of Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing out or collecting papers.</li> <li>• Watering plants.</li> <li>• Organizing safety goggles or library books.</li> <li>• Taking care of the class pet.</li> <li>• Setting up or taking down lab supplies.</li> <li>• Taking inventory of class supplies.</li> </ul>

- **Strategy #6) Assign a Behavior Grade** - For whole class misbehavior issues, a daily/weekly behavior grade can be a simple incentive for the student to behave better. One strategy is to have a seating chart on a clipboard that is easily accessible. The students start the day or week with 10 points (100%). If they misbehave, they get a tally mark (or two or three) by their name on the seating chart. Each tally mark indicates a misbehavior resulting in a point lost from their overall behavior grade for that day/week. At the end of the specified time period, tallies are totaled, points are deducted, and a grade is entered into the grade book. The teachers who have tried this found that there is a quick turnaround once students see the grades being entered in the gradebook. After a while, all it takes to settle the class down is simply the action of reaching for the clipboard.
- **Strategy #7) Discourage Inappropriate Cell Phone Use** – Non-school related cell phone use is becoming one of the main battles that teachers have to fight in the classroom. Students have not been taught how to separate themselves from the distraction of notifications and are often times addicted to the technology. There are a few methods of dealing with cell phones, such as:
  - **Teach students tips and tricks for using/having their cell phones in class** - Most of these students were never taught easy ways to minimize distractions from their phones, such as:
    - Putting the phone in "Do not Disturb" mode
    - Disabling notifications
    - Putting their phone in their backpack and setting a time limit for a period of work before they could check their phone.

Cell phones are a technology that will not go away in the near future, so helping students learn how to healthily engage with them is another life skill teachers can instill in their students.
  - **Have students put their phones in a cell phone holder for the class** - These wall-mounted holders can be purchased fairly cheap at Walmart or Amazon. Each student has a numbered cubby, and when they enter class, they put their phone into the holder. When they leave, they take their phone.
  - **Use locking pouches** - For students who refuse to part with their phone, there are other methods available, like Yondr, which is a pouch that locks, and only the teacher has the key fob to open the pouch. At the beginning of class, students place their phone in the pouch and lock them so they can still have their phone with them, but they cannot access or use it until it is unlocked at the end of class. Some schools have implemented this in a school-wide fashion, so phones are in the cases all day until the last bell rings. Specifically, students put their phones in the pouches and lock them at the beginning of their first block or period, and the teacher in the last block or period unlocks and collect the pouches from the students before they leave to go home.

- **Tie improper cell phone use into a behavior grade** – Tie in improper cell phone use as a tally on the clipboard method explained above in Strategy #6.
- **Strategy #8) Reach Out to Parents** – If you have tried everything you can think of to handle the misbehavior issue in the classroom and nothing has worked, try reaching out to the parents/guardians of the student(s) parents/guardians. Most parents/guardians like to know what is happening with their children and are more than willing to try to help rectify the issue. It often helps to have a Misbehavior Documentation record to explain what happened, when, and what you have already tried. Teachers shouldn't feel that they have to deal with everything by themselves. Sometimes with some students, multiple staff members need a coordinated effort to get them on track.
- **Strategy #9) Reach out to Guidance/Administration** – Similar to reaching out to parents, if nothing is working, try reaching out to guidance or administration. They may have additional information on the student that may help you in your attempts to curb misbehavior in the classroom. For example, maybe the student's parents are going through a divorce, the student was recently diagnosed with a mental health issue, or they were just kicked off the baseball team. These external factors will influence how students act in the classroom and knowing this additional information can be immensely helpful.
- **Strategy #10) Teach Students How to Behave by Incorporating Behavior into the Lesson** – This may seem like an odd suggestion. Still, sometimes good behavior is not intuitive for some students as they were never taught or had a model for how to behave in the classroom. Incorporating and practicing social skills in lessons is great for building character and fostering good behavior in any class of any age. First, choose a skill relatable to the age group you're teaching. For example, young students may focus on "listening politely," while older students may work on "constructing coherent and concise arguments." Then, at the beginning of class, create a T-chart (like the one below) on the front board and write the skill being practiced on the top of the "T." On the top of the left column, write "Looks Like" and on the top of the right column, write "Sounds Like."

Social Skill: <i>(insert social skill here)</i>	
Looks Like	Sounds Like

As a class, fill out the T-chart making sure to thoroughly model the expectations. Then, have them practice the social skill during the activity. These skills can be scaffolded and built on throughout the year and graded on a pass/fail/in-progress spectrum.