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Controllers, Friends and Benign Dictators

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The Controller, a hostile response style

Attitudes

- Children should be seen and not heard
- Don't smile till Christmas
- They're just like their parents/it is the fault of society
- If one person gets away with it, they will all do it
- It's a battle and I aim to win it

Strategies

- Tell you what to do and use aggressive language and posture
- Threaten or imply threatening consequences
- Send them to somebody else, delegate responsibility at every turn

Outcomes

- Poor quality relationships
- High quality stress
- They get their needs met, the needs of the student are not met
- Learning and risk taking will be impaired

The Friend, a passive response style

Attitudes

- Students need nurturing like buds on a flower
- Being nice and friendly means students will like you
- May address students as “darling” or “sweetie” in an effort to appear caring
- Classrooms are a democracy where every thing is negotiable
- Planning excellent work will always be enough

Strategies

- Asking, Negotiating, Pleading followed by
- “Why are you doing this to me” (hurt)
- “How many times have we been through this” (frustration)
- “Wait outside I’m fed up” (emotional outbursts)

Outcomes

- Uncertainty leads to insecurity
- Passive/aggressive shrapnel hits other students
- Leadership of the classroom is up for grabs
- Learning and risk taking are significantly impaired

The Benign Dictator, an assertive response style

Attitude

- A teacher's job is to set boundaries with or for students
- Some students will always see it as their job to test the boundaries
- Students should be helped to experience achievement and mistakes are part of learning
- Caring means sometimes being prepared to make unpopular decisions
- The problem is the problem not the student
- Fairness is not giving everybody the same it is giving them what they need

Strategies

- Holds students accountable for their choices
- Creates a culture of praise that focuses on what students do well
- Redirects students towards success
- Applies consequences positive and negative with consistency

Outcomes

- Students learn boundaries with dignity
- The teacher is both leader and coach in the classroom