

Providing Ongoing Support

Transcript for Video 2

Note: Some dialog edited for clarity.

[Previn Butler, a campus director for the Groundwork for Youth after-school program in Brooklyn, New York, talks with his AmeriCorps homework help coaches at a weekly team meeting.]

Previn (to camera): I think it's very important to think about what I'm seeing when I'm in those classrooms, when I'm interacting with my students and with my staff, and assess the quality of it. And [think about], how can I turn what I'm seeing and what I'm not seeing into a site-specific training at our meeting?

Previn (to team members): Alright, so the next item on our agenda is homework routine posters.

Team member (as voiceover to team meeting footage and then to camera): At the weekly staff meetings, we are able to express our feelings as far as things that are happening in the classroom. We're able to ask questions. We're able to seek answers from other staff members as well as the director.

Previn (to team members): So, what is on your minds? What do you guys want to talk about?

Team member: Okay, what to do when an activity goes awry.

Previn (to team member): Alright, what do you mean when you say, "when an activity goes awry"?

Team member: An activity that I made plans to do with the children. They're not taking instruction. They're not following instructions, and everybody is just scatted, [making] loud noises. There's nothing going on.

Previn (to whole team): Do you guys have any suggestions before I start talking? What do you do when an activity goes awry?

Team member: What I do is (my kids respond to it because we've been doing it for so long), is choose a number, like 10, and I'll count down. And by the time I get to "1" (it's like a game for them), they know that they need to be in their seats and it should be quiet. And once it's quiet, then we discuss the issues at hand. And once they understand what's expected of them, we move on.

Previn: Okay. Let's say you do decide to count. While you're counting, you're deconstructing what just happened. So like, what went wrong – what went right, if anything. And so you ask yourself, in that short period of time, "were my directions clear"? "Did I clearly communicate my expectations"? "Did I give my students the materials that they needed to do what I was asking them to do"?

Team member: One of the things I do when things are not going as planned is have my students sit down on the rug. And [we have] a debriefing period where we talk about what just went wrong and what we can do to avoid the behavior or behaviors from occurring again.

Previn: Yeah, it's really good to get an opinion from your students, because they're really in the best position to tell you what went wrong. And sometimes you might find out that it has nothing to do with you. Maybe they didn't have gym that day. Maybe some people got into a fight before [or] after school. And so those are all things that might come up during that time.

Team member (to camera): Every month, the staff gets an evaluation from the campus director. It's basically telling us strategies of what we can do to improve our classroom management. In the evaluation, she also points out our strengths.