**“What I Really Want to Say”: Mentor Language Skit**

**Narrator:** After several attempts to set up a meeting that his mentee cancelled, Aaron is finally able to meet with her face to face.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* What I want to say is “thanks for cancelling the last three meetings that I set up. So much for our “standing appointment”. It’s really frustrating that I am just trying to help you and you are blowing me off!

(*To mentee*) Good to see you this morning, Kristi. Thanks for meeting with me. I’m glad we were able to pin down this time that works for both us. Sorry our last few meeting times didn’t quite work out. I’ve been curious to hear how things have been going.

**Mentee:** Well I had the worst morning. Shakela was just a beast from the second she walked in the door. I keep writing referrals for her and nothing happens to her. I’m just getting so frustrated. You would think that administration would take care of it.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* What I really want to say is—that’s your job. If administration handles all of your behavior issues you won’t have any power in the classroom and you won’t be building relationships and trust with your students.

*(To mentee)* As I listen to you I’m hearing frustration. Tell me more about what you have tried with Shakela.

**Mentee:** Well I called her mother and told her about the attitude that Shakela was giving me and that she better do something to check her and quick because I wasn’t about to stop my teaching time and make the rest of the class suffer for her daughter’s big mouth.

**Mentor:** Ah, I see.

*(To audience)* What I really want to say is wow, you can’t talk to people like that. The parents are going to hate you and you need them on your side.

**Mentee:** And you know what, she started defending Shakela and talking about how if I had control of the kids in my classroom there wouldn’t be a problem. You’d think that she’d be on my side since I bust my butt for her kid every day. I’ve pretty much given up on calling her. It’s just a waste of my time anyway.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* what I would like to say is “Duh! Building relationships with parents is part of your job. And of course she is upset with you; look at how you spoke to her.”

*(To mentee)* Well there are a number of approaches to take when dealing with an angry parent. What we know is the more defensive we become, the more defensive they become. How might you work to repair the relationship with Mrs. Semrad?

**Mentee:** Well….I supposed I could try to call her or send a note home about something good that Shakela does in the next few days. That might make her realize that I’m not just picking at the all of the bad things all of the time. I just wish administration would do something about it.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* What I want to say is “Ugh! Here we go again! You are always blaming administration! I don’t agree with you and I certainly don’t want to participate in a gripe session!”

*(To mentee)* It sounds like you have a concern about how the administration team handles the discipline referral process. Well, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. What we know about consequences is that the goal is to prevent the behavior from happening again. Often times, what we think is fair and just and the “right” way to handle the situation is not what ends up happening because of a variety of reasons. We need to keep in mind that consequences aren’t about revenge but prevention. Can you tell me a little bit more about what steps you are taking in the classroom to ensure that negative behaviors don’t continue to happen?

**Mentee:** Well that’s why I keep writing the referrals. If they get suspended they won’t do it again.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* I want to say, “no one else can do your job for you! It is your responsibility!”

*(To mentee)* What I’m hearing then is when a student misbehaves you are writing a referral and you are displeased at how the situation has been handled from there.

**Mentee:** Exactly

**Mentor:** And so what criteria do you use to determine what behavior warrants a referral for administrative action?

**Mentee:** Well I’m just sick and tired of it all so I’ve just started writing up insubordination whenever a student doesn’t do what I tell him. If I am in charge and I say do it and they don’t do it then they are being insubordinate. I can’t keep wasting my time on paperwork that just seems to get brushed over any way.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* What I want to say is, “You need your own consequences in your classroom and a bag of tricks to prevent the misbehavior and keep the power in the room. What are you doing in your classroom before you look to administration???)

*(To mentee)* I see, so I’m hearing many things. It sounds like you are spending a large portion of your teaching time on paperwork that should be spent on teaching your students. And I hear that you are frustrated to see many of the behaviors you are writing up continue to repeat in your room.

**Mentee:** Oh yes! I take up so much teaching time on just stupid behaviors.

**Mentor:** *(To audience)* What I want to say is, “There are probably some things you could be doing to address the issues before they grow or consequences you could try before giving the referral. I need to get some data to show you so that you can’t play this blame game and help you recognize when it is your fault.”

*(To mentee)* One thing that many teachers find helpful is to take a look at how they handle misbehavior in the classroom. We can do this in many ways. I could actually sit in on one of your classes and take some notes on some of the behaviors you are concerned about. The other would be to actually set up a video camera to get an idea of some of the things that are going on and how we can address them. Which of these ideas would work best?

**Mentee:** Well it seems like when other teachers come in the room my kids know when they are doing something wrong and get really quiet. I’m not sure you would even get to see what I’m talking about because they wouldn’t want to get in trouble with you.

**Mentor:** So it sounds like you are suggesting that our best bet might be the video camera. I’m going to get some of these ideas down on the Cal and then let’s look at your plans to find a good time for us to move forward with this….

**Narrator:** What we really want to say is often something that will elicit a defensive response or wound the trusting relationship we’ve worked so hard to build. Thank goodness we have our mentor language!

The End