

We are now over half way through the school year and you may have had one or more student come to your attention because of difficult behavior. While they are not bad students, they do have a knack for asking questions that are on the edge of being disrespectful or for behavior that is always pushing you to remind them of procedures (while never stepping across the line and causing you to have to refer to your discipline procedure). I want to offer you some ideas on ways to approach these students that might make them less difficult.

One of the first things that you can do is DEFER. This is when it is best not to respond to the difficult student at that time, but to give them a time after class or during break when you can answer their question. This allows you to move on with the lesson without drawing attention to the student.

Second is WAIT. Usually a student will be difficult because he or she can create a change in your behavior. While you do not want to let bad behavior go, sometimes it is not necessary to jump on it when you see it. Waiting gives you a chance to formulate a calmer more matter-of-fact response rather than an off-the-cuff, edgy response that draws the attention of the entire class.

The last thing to consider is your APPROACH. Start by changing how you think about the student. It has been said many times that the teacher controls the weather in the classroom. The students are not stupid; they know when they come into a classroom if it is rainy, sunny or thundering and lightning. This may take some conscious thought on your part to change how you think about the student. There is usually no big secret about how you feel about your students, so not only must you changing how you think about them but also about how you approach them and act around them.

One of the things to note is that sometimes when a student becomes difficult it is because you are not adequately explaining the WHY or WHAT of what you are doing. When a student truly knows why, he or she may become less difficult. Never assume that the students know what you are talking about when it comes to their behavior.

There is one more Teacher Academy meeting Jan. 30. If you have not registered you can still do so at [Teacher Academy](http://www.okcareertech.org/educators/professional-development/continuing-teacher-academy).