

## What is Anchoring?

Anchoring is when a trigger is associated with a desired behaviour or emotional state. So that when the trigger is activated the individual is 'automatically' anchored into the desired behaviour or emotional state.

## What is a trigger?

The trigger can be:

A **sound** for example, specific music (you may have music that quietens a class on entry to the classroom, or 'signals' story time or 'ends' a small-group discussion session), a hand clap to signal to pay attention, a set of words "settle down now" or 'whisper talking' to quieten the class.

An **aroma** for example a citrus aroma to start a question-and-answer session, a lavender aroma to quieten a noisy classroom.

A **place in space**, so moving closer to a student without direct words could be associated with 'quiet please', creating a space on the ground that the student (or adult) steps into, that evokes the feelings of calm or success and confidence. You could place a circle on the floor of your classroom just inside the door which each student must step into before proceeding, this could be a calm trigger or a confident trigger or an 'excellence' trigger for example.

**Touch**, a point on the body that you can apply a small pressure to yourself, that 'fires up' the feelings of confidence, success, calm etc.

## How to set up anchors

### **Behavioural anchors**

Setting up a whole class behavioural anchor means linking the trigger with the desired behaviour consciously at the beginning.

So for example **play a specific piece of music** to signal "put your things away and come and sit on the floor for circle time" **and give specific instructions about what you want the children to do.**

This may need to be repeated for a week or two before you can just play the music to evoke the behaviour without words.

This could also be used for a class entering a room and getting their books etc out, sitting down and watching the teacher.

Think about what kind of music might calm or elevate the mood, what might be age appropriate etc

With an older group of student you can co-create these anchors so that they feel engaged and empowered in the process.

### **Emotional anchors**

Setting up an emotional anchor can be done with an individual student, to yourself or with a whole class for example to get ready for exams.

Choose an emotional state that you would like to feel  
e.g., going into exams you might choose confident, or calm

Choose an easily accessible place on the body that can be touched with a little pressure and isn't too 'obvious' to others. e.g., the ear lobe or the pad of a thumb or the skin between the first finger and thumb. This will be the 'anchor' point.

Ask the person to remember a time when they felt that desired emotional state e.g. "*close your eyes and remember a time when you felt incredibly confident, when you felt that everything was going well and you could do what needs to be done easily and without any worries* (if the person has never had this experience then get them to imagine a person that they consider to be

supremely confident, it could be a favourite sports person or pop star, a friend or a film character). *Now step into that person and inhabit their/your body. Feel what you now feel, see what you see, hear what you are telling yourself “I’ve got this, no worries”, stand the way you stand when you are being confident right now. Increase that feeling so that you can feel it from the top of your head to the tips of your fingers and toes. If this feeling of absolute confidence was a colour, what would that be? Right now, feel that colour of confidence flow through you from the top your head all through your body and as you do so press your [anchor point] and keep pressing it until I say stop”*

Press the anchor for a few seconds until the feelings start to subside, perhaps 5-10 seconds.

Then repeat the process with a different scenario of when they felt confident and build with three of four different situations when they felt confident, always using the same pressure point as an anchor.

Now test the anchor, by pressing it to bring back those feelings of confidence.

Ask them to think of a pink elephant (this changes their state).

Now ask them to imagine getting ready to go into the exam room, trigger their anchor and feel the difference as the feelings of confidence come into play.

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