



How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best

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Publisher Data & Legal Information

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Published by Marjan Glavac

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Praise for Marjan Glavac's

“How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best”

Normally, our company only sells just the books that we produce, but when we read this book, we decided that <http://youthchg.howtomake.hop.clickbank.net/> we had to make an exception. This is a landmark book for teachers. This book has so much heart, insight and passion, that we asked the author to let us sell it on our web site. It's the book we wish we'd written. This book has wonderful, inventive strategies but it's more than just a book of strategies. It is that rare book that can make you remember why you signed up to be a teacher. But, even more importantly, if you have hated your job lately, this book can make you glad again that you teach. It can help you re-discover your passion for teaching while loading you up with improved methods to use in your classroom every day. With these improved tools, your job might not be so hard and the days might not seem so long. The author, Marjan Glavac, a veteran teacher, has thought of everything that you need to maximize your impact on your challenging and struggling students. He even gives you (without charge) a free workbook to help you apply and fully utilize the information from his book. Even better, you can own this instant ebook and the free companion workbook in just 60 seconds. Let Marjan's wisdom and ideas transform your those long, hard days into inspirational ones.

Ruth Wells Youth Change <http://www.youthchg.com/>

Marjan Glavac's new book How To Make A Difference - Inspiring Students To Do Their Best provides *sensible sunlight* as it emerges from Education's verbose jungle. It is, in fact, creative relief from the ubiquitous published convention of intellectual posturing. It is not written in pompous style (represented by my previous sentence) but in a down-to-earth attitude of conversational tone representing a connection between author and reader as interested colleagues.

Another topic which impressed me was his interest in developing a collaborative attitude as an educator by bringing in other teachers who have special interests in order to widen the scope of the students' experience.

Al Beck, Professor Emeritus Culver-Stockton College
Canton, Missouri, USA

How to Make a Difference reviews strategies for bringing order, industry and success to students' working environments. It provides busy educators – particularly new ones – with practical, field-tested teaching and organizational strategies.

Reviewed by Gail Lennon, Professional Speaking magazine Teacher of distance education online adult secondary courses with the Bluewater District School Board in Chesley, Ontario, Canada

Your eBook *How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best* works very well at the high school level. The principles of effective teaching can be used at all grade levels.

I found that many of the strategies described in your book match very nicely with Dr. Glasser's Choice Theory and Reality Therapy. Many of the activities can be modified for middle and high school students.

The workbook is an excellent self-evaluation tool for teachers to use for personal and professional improvement.

Mrs. Latricia Dulaney
Eau Gallie High
Melbourne, FLORIDA USA

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How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best

Chapter 1

Building The Foundation

“Embrace your journey – every day is a new discovery”

Anonymous

Know Thyself

“A life unexamined, is a life not worth living”

Socrates

Neither a successful class, nor a successful student, magically appears out of thin air. Success in the classroom begins with the most important element in that classroom. That one element that will determine the success of each and every student, the one element that will determine a successful day, term, or school year is you! You determine the success. You make the difference in each and every one of your students by your thoughts, words, and actions. Don't let anyone tell you any differently. You are the deciding element in your classroom.

To achieve success in the classroom, you need to know yourself. You need to feel right in your own skin. To enable students who may never have experienced success to experience it, you must show them. If students who may never have experienced success are going to experience success, they must see success in you. You must exude success; be success to them.

Knowing yourself means to take a hard, close, and objective look at who you are. This can be a painful process, but it need not be if you're honest with yourself. To come face to face with your own weaknesses, limitations, fears, and doubts isn't easy. However, if you don't do it, your students will. They will find out your triggers, your buttons, your stress points. You must find them first. Your strengths, your hopes, dreams and goals, are the sparks that light the fire of desire in you to teach. They keep you going in those dark depressing days when nothing seems to go right- those days when you feel like giving up. Every teacher has them at some point. You must overcome them. Then bounce back determined to succeed. How do you really get to know yourself?

Here are some questions that will help:

- What do you personally like/dislike about yourself?
- What motivated you to become a teacher?
- What are your hobbies, interests and talents?
- What do you like/dislike about children?

- What do you like to do when you are free to do what you want to do?
- What are your most memorable moments?
- What made them so? Give an example how different people may have found it memorable for different reasons. E.g. a birthday: I was the center of attention; I planned it; It was great- everyone had a great time; I got my first motorbike etc.

Interest Inventories

Here's an approach I've found that helped me discover my interests and talents. In high school I took a general interest inventory. It showed I had a high interest in writing, perhaps because I loved to read so much. At the end of my university studies I took the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory: a vocational interest assessment tool. Not surprisingly, English teacher was in the top 3, right below lawyer and reporter. I also learned which subjects and careers least interested me. At the time I didn't give the revelations much thought. However, after teaching a number of years, those weaknesses show up in the classroom.

Interest inventories can confirm what you may already suspect!

Knowing what I'm weak in has helped me a great deal. By taking additional courses, asking colleagues for help and advice and even asking my own students for ideas, I've strengthened my skills.

Discovering your weaknesses yourself is a lot easier than finding them out from your students or during a job evaluation.

Other personality profiles I have used and recommend are The Personal Profile System and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Both these personality profiles can show you the type of person you are, your potential contributions to the organization, and your preferred work environment, your leadership style, potential pitfalls, what you're good at as well as what you may not be, what motivates you and how to be more effective. Truly this is useful information! Armed with all this information, the next step is to find out how people perceive you. The next step is to find out how other people perceive you.

Getting To Know Who You Are

Teachers wear many hats, play many roles and present many different faces. The “you” your students see, is different from the “you” colleagues, administrators, or your family know. When you first walk into your school, masks do you wear? Are you usually in a happy and buoyant mood? Do you smile and walk with confidence? Is your back straight, chin up, and is there a bounce in your step? Or do you look like something the cat dragged in the night before. Are you grumpy, shoulders slump as drag yourself to class? Do your colleagues view you as a positive person? Or do you drag others down by constantly complaining rather than offering solutions?

How do you react to parents who appear unannounced outside your class? Do you extend your hand and welcome them? Or are you curt and short? How do you respond, especially if they have been unsupportive and critical of you?

What would students most often say about you? What traits would they list? Why not ask them? Ask students to write down 3 things they like and dislike about what you do. The results may pleasantly surprise you, especially if you already think you know yourself.

While they may reinforce what you already know, they may also show you what you need to improve and communicate better to your students.

Now, how do you want others to perceive you? Think back to all those teachers you had. What did you like most about them? What did you dislike? Which teachers motivated and inspired you to learn? What did they do to get the best out of you?

Which teachers did you dislike? Why? What did they do to make you feel that way? And what about your acquaintances and friends? What are the traits that you like or dislike in them? Why did they become your friend? Think about your partner. When you first met, what attracted you to them? What qualities does your partner add to your personality, or bring to your life? Think about your other family members, your relatives, and the new people you meet. What stands out in each of them? What about them appeals to you?

In view of all this information, how do you want others to perceive you? How do you want your students in class to see you? And what about their parents, your colleagues, and administrators? How much of the real you do you want them to see you? Do you want your

students to see you happy, sad, angry, or thrilled? How comfortable are you sharing these emotions?

Now you have come face to face with your strengths and weaknesses. Now you know your limitations and expectations. Once you become comfortable with who you are and you truly know yourself, playing to your strengths and the strengths of your students will become easier. It will also be easier to offset or improve, and to help your students to do the same. Only when you can accept “you”, will you be able to accept your students.

I found it easier to admit to my students that I can't sing, dance, draw, or do a lot of other things, than fake that I can or to tell them otherwise. Finally admitting to yourself and to others your weaknesses, especially if you are a closet perfectionist, is actually liberating! In doing so, you will better appreciate your students' strengths and weaknesses.

Start now to go into your class with the attitude that every day you will learn something from your students and they will learn something from you. Be yourself in front of them. Resolve to do your best every day. In doing so, you will be taking the first steps toward making a real difference in your classroom. As you do your best, you will inspire your students to do their best.

Know Your Students

“Forewarned is Forearmed”

There seems to be two schools of thought among teachers on the topic of Know Your Students. One says, “Know as much about your students as you can possibly learn.” The other, says “Find out about your students only from their actions in class.”

I have done both. Part of me wants to know the children through their interactions with me and their classmates as the school year goes on. Unfortunately, when a parent asked about their child’s medical or psychological condition, or about a life altering incident which has affected their learning, often I knew nothing about them.

Now, I employ both approaches to learn about my students. I don’t need to know in excruciating detail about child abuse, family dynamics, or violent incidents. I do want to know the generalities just not to the point where it really begins to cloud my perception of the student. While I need to be aware of the information I don’t want to be hamstrung by it. Rather, I want to take each child at face value and to judge him or her on the basis of their current and not on the basis of their past behavior.

The trend over the past 10 years in my district and in the schools where I have taught, is to do a formal review of each student early in the school year. We usually start by reviewing the existing files.

Here in Ontario, a student's file is called the Ontario Student Record or OSR. Once the information is collected, it is reviewed with the help of a specialist teacher called a Learning Resource Teacher. Students with apparent difficulties are flagged to extra help and resources depending on the personnel and resources available in the school.

What To Do On The First Day Of School

On the first day of school and during that first week, I gather additional information on my students in other ways. For example, I will test students' spelling ability using the Morrison McCall Spelling Scale. Then I will do this once a term using the initial test as a baseline.

To assess reading skill level, I administer the McCall Crabbs Standard Test Lessons In Reading. I do three tests timed for three minutes the first day and then another three the next day. Doing so gives me a baseline of their reading and provides me some information for their reading groups. At the end of the year, I retest the first three tests. (I also use the Developmental Reading Assessment or DRA to evaluate reading about 6-7 weeks into the first term.) In Math, I do a quick review of numeracy (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing) using questions of increasing difficulty. Again, I retest at the end of the year to measure progress.

I also give out a number of different interest surveys to learn more about students' extracurricular interests. One quick way I find out

about the learning styles of my students is to ask them how many like to do cross-word puzzles versus word searches. Doing cross word puzzles is a left brain activity while doing word searches usually employs right brain activity.

Another very effective way to find out about student learning styles is through the use of Pay Wyman's "The Personal Learning Style Inventory" This tool is an interactive online quiz that tells you how you how children learn best (by seeing, hearing or doing).

<http://www.1shoppingcart.com/app/afrack.asp?afid=336546>

Finally, I survey the entire class through a group scavenger hunt on such topics as their birth order, whether they are left or right handed, whether they are born outside the country. I try to do this in a non-threatening manner by having a short class discussion on what it means to be the only child in the family, the youngest child, the middle child, the oldest child, or a child in a large family. We also talk about the challenges of being left handed. To find out about students who were born outside the country, we have interesting discussions on different cultures, languages and religions. Doing this gives me the opportunity to show the class how diverse a group we are. We are all different, yet we are all in the same class together.

Best Source Of Information—And How To Get Them

One of my best sources of information are the informal conversations I have with other teachers. They often prove invaluable, especially when a student exhibits extraordinary or unusual behavior. A simple mention of the behavior to a teacher who has taught the student and/or a sibling the previous year may be all I need to uncover the underlying cause of the student's behavior. In my first years of teaching, I had a difficult time trying to get a handle on my class. Something seemed out of the ordinary, but I couldn't figure it out. So, I asked my principal. He looked at me with that all knowing glint in his eye and suggested I ask how many students were the youngest in their families. I learned that the majority of my students were. That's when I realized that I would have to change both my teaching style and strategies.

Perhaps one of the most valuable sources of information on students is their parents. Early in the school year, most schools have a parent - teacher open house night. Sometimes known as "Meet the Creature". I make sunshine calls to parents reminding them about the event. I also say something positive about each child and then ask if the parent has any questions or concerns about the first days of school. I also ask if there is anything they would like me to know about their child. Often what they say comes as a surprise to me, so I thank them for sharing that information.

Another technique used by my colleagues, is to ask for a letter written by the parent on the strengths and weaknesses of their child.

During the open house, parents again will share with me information that may not be written down. Parents tell me about a child's summer, winning a competition, or wanting to do a certain thing in my class during the year.

All this information gives me a valuable understanding of who my students are, of the challenges I have, the way I need to teach, and the resources both physical and human I may need to meet those challenges.

Building Rapport

“There can be no teaching without compliance. There can be no compliance without trust. There can be no trust without rapport.”
Anonymous

Once you’ve gotten to know your students, you can zero in and focus on the class as a whole and on individual students that might present future hotspots. First, let’s deal with the class as a whole.

On that very first day of school, I use a number of exercises to promote class bonding. One activity which I suggest as a way to get to know your students, is a student scavenger hunt. This sheet lists challenges and tasks such as “Find someone who is: new to our school; has visited 3 countries; is left handed; is the oldest in their family; has seen two oceans, and so forth. There are 3 reasons I like to do this on the very first day of school:

- 1) It gives me the opportunity the very first day to observe interactions among students. I learn about the personalities of students. Here, I see who are the natural leaders and or followers, students who have high self-esteem and those who lack confidence, students who tend to be loud and boisterous, and others who are shy and quiet, students who have many friends, students who have very few friends. This activity also pinpoints students who are needy by the number of times they come up to ask me for the answers to the questions on their sheet.

- 2) The scavenger hunt is the perfect opportunity to start to take pictures and to videotape students for my own video time capsule of their progress. I usually videotape 2-5 minutes of certain highlights several times during the school year. Doing so usually gives me between 45-60 minutes of video which I show to students on the very last day of school.

- 3) The activity is also a way of making every student in your class special. It is a non-threatening activity. There are no right or wrong answers. There are no marks to earn. If an answer can't be found, I let students leave the space blank. The answers are taken up as a class, discussed and collected. They are not evaluated and students are told this. Since the assignment is done in class, every student is able to do it. Consequently, their first assignment is complete. They've achieved success on their very first assignment.

Student Needs

Students come into your class with a number of concerns and questions. High achieving students want to know how they will be graded and what they need to do to get excellent marks. Low achieving, high needs, and special education students want to know what kind of person the teacher is. They want to know whether the teacher is going to like them or not.

I focus on students with high needs as early as possible in the school year. Then, I have a better chance of reaching them and changing their behavior. I have few, if any negative perceptions of them. Moreover, I have the greatest amount of energy at the beginning of the year than I do at any other time!

If I'm teaching in a school where I've taught for a year or more, I have a good idea who these students are from my dealings with them on the playground, and in the hallways, assemblies, and through conversations with other teachers. Certain students keep coming up more often than others. Another advantage is that I get to know their names very quickly! Hopefully, I've been able to find something positive about each student, especially if I know he or she are coming into my class the next year. I may have even taught their brother or sister and therefore might be able to form a connection based on that relationship. Often I notice a strength in them while they were on the playground during sports or extracurricular activities. Whatever it may be, I try hard to build at least one connection before students come to my class.

If this is a new teaching assignment in a new school, I have an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage I have is that I have no negative perceptions of these students because I haven't seen any inappropriate behavior. The disadvantage I have is that the only information I may have comes from their student file and or from former teachers, who may not have the best opinion of them after being with them for an entire school year.

Catch Them Doing Something Positive

One of the first things I do, and what I've found to be extremely effective, is to catch those students doing something positive the very first day. And since I've usually made that very first day a very busy yet non-threatening day, finding something positive is not hard. And when I find that positive "something" I make a "sunshine call" to their parents. This is a phone call to give parents positive news. It is very effective first because parents of students who are often in trouble at school don't get usually get these calls, and second because we tend to phone parents to give them bad news rather than good news.

One year, I was teaching in a very small town. It was so small that I taught every 12 year old in the town. Consequently, I was teaching a number of my friends', neighbors' and teacher colleagues' children. Early in the school year, I gave a "sunshine call" to one of my teacher friends. Although her son was a superb student, the first reaction I got was "What's wrong? What did he do?" And this was from a friend that knew me and about a child that was a wonderful student! Imagine the kind of reaction you'll get from a parent who gets a number of sunshine calls from you those first days and weeks of school. This is especially so if in the past she's received nothing but bad news about the child. Sunshine calls are a great way of building rapport early in the year with parents and with your high needs students. Building rapport early encourages students to work with you even when things aren't going well. Moreover, you likely will get much needed support from parents when you need it. If you can get a parent on your side early, behavior problems are easier to solve.

Discipline: Rules, Procedures and Routines

“If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn’t need motivation to speed him up. What he needs is education to turn him around” - Jim Rohn

What holds your foundation of your class from falling apart are your rules and procedures. They are the glue that holds the whole thing together. The best time to introduce your rules and procedures is on the very first day of school. The best way to introduce them is before students even enter your class.

Schools differ in their first day procedures. In some schools, students know who their teachers and classes are. In other schools, students don’t know which teacher they have until that very first day. Some schools have students assemble in the gym or outside according to class lists. Whatever your school’s method of delivering students to your class, what you do when you receive them is crucial. Your actions set the standard for the first day of school right through the last day of school.

I begin by reading the names from my class list and having students line up in front of me. When all the names have been read, I wait. I want their quiet attention by saying “all eyes on me”. I tell them there is no talking while we walk to the class. Will some students talk while we go to class? Yes, unless your have already trained them to comply with your instructions. Here is your first opportunity to set

the standard and reinforce that you mean what you say. If you hear the slightest peep out of your students, stop and have the entire class turn around and go back. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Many times, I’ve found myself alone with my class on the playground that very first day repeating my original instructions. Doing so also gives me an opportunity to tell the students that one reason why we walk quietly through the hallway is to not disturb other classes. When children understand why they are asked to do something, they are usually more willing to comply.

First Impressions

Once we get inside with no students talking, I have them line up outside my classroom door. This step may also take a few tries to get the class to quiet down. If the class is still noisy, you can use a number of other options. You can wait until students are all quiet before moving. You can tell students that they will be practicing this during their recess or free time unless they’re quiet. If just one or two students talk, I try to let the group quiet them. If the one or two students persist, then I deal with them. I cue them and directly tell them what to do, or I have them practice during their recess or free time.

Before students enter the class that very first day, I’ve already arranged the desks and decided the seating. Your classroom arrangement depends on your subject, teaching style and with what you feel comfortable. It also depends on the type of students you’ll be getting. There are a number of approaches. One teacher I know,

would begin the year with no desks and no formal seating arrangement. The desks and classroom furniture were literally all piled in the middle of the classroom. He wanted to empower his students and give them ownership of the class by having them set up the class themselves by deciding on how to arrange the desks, the activity centers, other classroom furniture, and to have them pick and choose their seats the very first day. It was a method that worked for him because he knew with what he was comfortable and the type of students he was getting. Here is an example of where know yourself and your students beforehand!

Being Proactive

I prefer to set the standard myself and avoid as many problem situations as I can by being as proactive as possible. Even before class begins on that first day, I have already set up the desks in rows. Already I have the names of students neatly printed on construction paper and taped to the front of their desks. I also have set up four extra seats with materials and assignments for students who register late and haven't made it onto my list. Based on what I already know about my students, I have placed them according to where they can learn the best. Students who need extra attention from me are placed close to my desk. Already a number of assignments are waiting for them on their desk. There is an agenda and instructions on the board. I have sharpened two pencils and placed them, along with an eraser, on their desks.

I greet each student at the door by asking his or her name, checking its correct pronunciation and confirming they are on the class list. Then, I shake every student's hand and tell them to quickly and quietly take their seats and begin working on the assignment on their desk. I wait to see if each student complies. If the student is not quiet, I wait until he is settled at his desk before I go on to the next student. If a student does not comply and is talkative, I call the student back and repeat my expectations in a calm, normal voice. In this way, by the time all the students have entered the class, and been seated, all have complied to a number of my instructions even before I've introduced the rules of the class. I have also set the standard as to how and what they are to do when, they enter the class and what they need to do when they enter the class. This is the same procedure I follow every day. However, after the first day, instead of shaking their hand, I usually ask them a review question from either a previously taught lesson or an upcoming lesson.

Once this routine is in place, students will be eager to answer a question. They will also remind you if you don't ask them a question! It's a great way to do some one on one instruction with a student, check their moods and find out more about each student in an informal and non-threatening manner.

Planting The Seeds

The first day is also a great opportunity to “plant a seed” with your high needs students. Since I’ve already identified a number of students who have had behavior and academic difficulties in the past, I usually extend my hand, look them in the eye, say their name, and tell them that they will have a great year. Your complimentary and positive attitude may be the first one the student has heard in a long long time!

Once students are all quietly working and completing their first assignment, I ask them to put their pencils down, and have their “eyes on me”. I then introduce myself, my expectations and the rules of the class.

Some teachers prefer to have the students set up rules, through consensus or through voting. Other teachers prefer to set up the rules themselves and then discuss and teach them to the students. There are merits in each approach. Again, which you choose depends on how comfortable you feel. From the outset, I want to send students the message that I am setting the standard because I am ultimately responsible for teaching them. Later in the year, as I get to know them and as they get to know me, the rows of desks will change to groups and students will have more responsibility in managing the classroom.

Class Rules

How many rules should there be? It's a good idea to have as few as possible. I try to limit the posted rules to six. The more rules you have, the more you need to enforce them. Do take this opportunity to discuss what routines and procedures are and why they are so important. We talk about their daily morning routine and why it's important to have a routine. Then we talk about the daily routines in class and why they are important.

These six rules are the basis of my discipline code. I also explain what discipline means. Students think it's punishment. I tell them that it's doing what's right when no one is watching. When introducing the rules, I make sure my tone and body language is serious and business like. I try very hard not to make a joke or laugh when introducing these rules. If you want students to be serious about your rules, your actions should be congruent with your words. Lead by example.

Here are my Rules of the Class

1. Be in assigned seat and ready to work.
2. Bring all equipment and assignments.
3. Keep hands, feet, books and objects to yourself.
4. Use appropriate language.
5. Follow teacher's instructions.
6. No food or gum in the classroom.

Each rule also has a consequence:

- **FIRST TIME:** Name on board. Warning
- **SECOND TIME:** One check beside name. 15 minute detention
- **THIRD TIME:** Two checks beside name. 30 minute detention
- **FOURTH TIME:** Three checks. 45 minute detention. Phone call to parents

Instead of a phone call to parents you may want to have the student write, print, dictate the information to the parent. In this way, the student also practices letter writing.

This also gives me the chance to tell them what a detention really means. It comes from the French word *detendre*—a lessening of tension. It's a chance to cool down and consider how to make good decisions. When we're upset, emotions rule us instead of logic, making us say things that we later regret!

I also give rewards, for good behavior. These include positive notes and comments to students and parents, free time, extended recesses, no homework, extra reading time, extra Physical Education, game time, class parties, sending students to the office for a sticker and a pat on the back.

As I mentioned, I don't smile when explaining the rules. I do smile and laugh and joke when I explain the rewards.

The Tools of Success

“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.” - Antoine Saint-Exupery

“Don’t sell the steak, sell the sizzle.” - Dale Carnegie

What amazes me time after time, year after year, in dealing with my students, is that a lot of them really don’t know how to achieve success. School should be a great place to teach children the methods to achieve success.

One concept that I introduce very early are the simple, yet very effective principles of goal setting. Some students in the early grades have heard about the importance of goals. By their high school years, virtually all students have heard about the need to set goals. Few students however, are taught how to achieve their goals.

One day my principal walked into my class as I was teaching about goal setting. I had just asked my grade 5 class the question “How can you eat an elephant?” After a long pause I asked my principal and he answered, “One bite at a time!” After another long pause, my students start get it. At that point, I elaborated with the statement that no matter how huge the goal may be, “A journey of a thousand miles, begins with the first step.” It’s at this point that I tell students that everything is incremental. I give them the example of me and my

weight. I didn't put on 20 extra pounds all at once. Over the years, I exercised less and less and ate a bit more and more until I started to put on an extra pound (or two) a year. Over 20 years, those pounds add up! Since it took me 20 years to gain the extra weight, I'm not going to lose it all at once.

How To Set Goals

Most goals are reached one step at a time. The most important thing is to get started. I made a conscious effort a number of years ago, to get back into shape and exercise. Since I'm often too tired to exercise before and after school, I started to exercise with my students by running and doing stretches with them during our physical education classes. I not only show students how goal setting works in theory, but also in practice.

Early in the year, I distribute a goal-setting handout to the students. I also make a transparency for the overhead. Then I explain each point to the students. (See Workbook for sample and black line master.)

When I first started this practical goal-setting exercise with my students three years ago, my goal was to run 5 minutes non-stop by the end of the school year in June. That was no easy task. I tried all summer, before school started to get into shape by running. For some reason, although I ran all the time in high school and partly throughout university, I couldn't run more than one and a half minutes! For some time, I just couldn't break that barrier. So, I went "public." After telling my students my goal, writing it down, then

posting it publicly for all to see, I was determined to show my students how to implement a goal.

I am happy to write, that before the year was over I did achieve the goal of running 5 minutes without stopping. The next year, I doubled the goal to 10 minutes and showed those students how to achieve their goals while I modeled how I achieve mine. Again, I succeeded.

Flush with success and confidence, the following year, I doubled the goal to 20 minutes. That was definitely a year long goal, which I succeeded in achieving. The following year, I continued with the goal increasing it to 30 minutes. That goal was also achieved. Next year, I'm looking at doing 60 minutes!

I tell students that their goals don't need to be school goals. Over the years, their goals have included doing more reading, to becoming a better soccer goalie, getting an advanced yellow belt in karate, earning more "I Did It Awards", scoring a goal in hockey, and watching less T.V. Some students duplicated my goal of running. Knowing these students' goals and what's important to them, gives teachers a great opportunity to help students to connect them to success. If I know that a student is looking for a babysitting job and I know parents who are looking for a babysitter, I can connect them. It's the same for students looking for jobs or places on the school team. If I know of someone who can help them, I will connect them. This approach also shows students the power of networking and getting to know other people.

Each of us has just 86,400 seconds every day to use. How we use them, determines our success.

How To Achieve Excellence

“You cannot help someone get up a hill without getting closer to the top yourself.” - General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

To achieve excellence, students need to know what it is. That very first day of school when new students enter my room, above the front board I have my I Did It Awards posted from the year before. I explain to the newcomers that one of my goals is to have every student in the class earn an I Did It Award. This award is given when a student achieves excellence. It can be earned for a number of accomplishments: perfect tests, dramatic improvement in behavior and attitude, being the most improved student of the month, exceptional improvement in a school subject, first student in a physical education class to run 20 minutes without stopping, most improved in reading, writing, etc. How many ways can an I Did It Award be earned in your classroom?

The appeal of the award is that it is special. It is not given out for something that anyone can accomplish. For example, students will often ask if they will receive an I Did It Award for passing a particularly easy review test. I tell them “No. It’s not challenging enough for the award.” So the award is very appealing and motivating, particularly to my high achieving students. In feedback I receive from my high achieving students, they consistently rate this award as a top motivator in my class because it is a special award that

not everyone can get every time. I also make the award special by having a mini-award ceremony. I call up each student individually, shake their hand and congratulate them on earning the I Did It Award. I then get the entire class to acknowledge the achievement by a round of applause.

The award is also very appealing to my special needs students and students with low self-confidence and self-esteem. By having the previous year's awards posted above the front board, students can see who earned it the year before. The award is set up to give all students a place, all students hope and encouragement, all students a chance to achieve excellence. I believe every student comes to class with at least one strength. It may not be self-evident, but the strength is there. It's my job to find, note it and strengthen it. The I Did It Award does that!

Building Good Public Relations—One Kitchen At A Time

The very first time that a student does get perfect for a unit math test for example, I print out two I Did It Awards. One of the awards is posted above the front board for everyone to see. The other award is a keeper award. I tell the student to put it on their refrigerator. By having the award on the refrigerator, the student sees a solid reminder of excellence and success every day before going to school and after arriving back home. Nothing succeeds like success. Success breeds success. Parents too are proud to see the award and they encourage their children to keep up their excellent work. Family members,

friends, and visitors who come into the kitchen, also see the award. Often they make a comment to the child about his or her achievement. The children also go away with a solid example of how achieve excellence and success and the rewards that come with them. The other tangible benefits are the positives that reflect on you as a teacher and on the school itself. Our teaching and educational system will get better whenever we can bring the positives around the kitchen tables and homes of our students and their families.

How many awards can a student earn? The more the better! Some of my high achieving students have earned over twenty. Some of my below average students have earned only one. However many awards they achieve, only their first award is posted. All are equal above that front board. Subsequent awards are their keepers for home. Once their refrigerator at home gets overcrowded with awards, a number of my students put them into their albums and scrapbooks.

Another way to build a bridge to your students is to allow them to know more about you. A number of teachers have a bulletin board or corner of the classroom showing their personal side. This may consist of a class photo of when they were in kindergarten, high school and university graduation photos, sports teams, wedding and family pictures. On my bulletin board I post the awards that took me years to achieve. They are my university degrees. Students need a visual reminder that their teacher has achieved success and excellence too! Perhaps the teacher has overcome some failure as well.

For example, I tell them of how I failed at French. Then after high school I went on to live with a French speaking family for 3 summers and I started to really enjoy the language and culture. This kind of sharing is an encouragement to students and can give them hope.

Chapter 2

Reinforcing The Foundation

“Success consists of moving from failure to failure without losing heart.” -Winston Churchill

Best Practices

“Today a reader – tomorrow a leader.” - W. Fusselman

With your foundation set, now you can build upon and reinforce it with a variety of best practices.

Time management, study skills, organizational skills, problem solving, tracking reading, building friendships, reinforcing neat writing, learning responsibility, home-school communication, and parental support all can be taught and strengthened over the entire school year through the use of a single tool—the student planner. All these skills aren’t going to be taught all at once of course. As your students learn to use their planners, you will be introducing these skills one at a time. However, you will reinforce them all year long.

Over the years, I have either made my own or purchased commercial planners. I prefer the commercial planners. They save time and are expertly done. There are a number of companies in the planner business. Our district uses planners from The Premier Agenda.

<http://www.premieragendas.com/>

Costs vary depending on the number of planners bought. The schools where I have taught usually ask parents to contribute part of the fee and the Home and School or Parent Teacher Association to contribute part of the fee as well. I believe it's not only a very worthwhile but crucial investment for parents and students, and for you the teacher.

Planner Secrets

The key to using a planner is consistency. Use it daily for it to be effective. Since parents and the PTA have contributed their hard-earned money to the purchase of the planners, they want to know that students are using it. After all, they've used their hard earned money to buy the planner. You can really plant the seeds of parental and community support by using it on a consistently. You will have gone a long way in building a supportive and positive relationship with your parents and community when they see children using the planners in school and at home. If it's not being used consistently, parents may become resentful. They may think twice about giving you or the school financial support. It's the little things that count next time you ask them!

It's use by students must be reinforced as well. If not, they won't take it seriously. And, if students don't take it seriously, you will be trying to cope with lost or forgotten planners all year long. Over the years, I've found that if I consistently check their planners and reward students for bringing them in and for having their homework assignments written down, completed and then signed by their parents, by the end of the year most, if not every student, will still have their planners. In my early years, I never would have thought it possible to have students hold onto something like a planner all year long. If you take the time and effort to make the planner use important, your students will make it important as well.

Using A Planner Successfully

There are a number of ways to use the planner. I introduce its use as soon as I receive them. I begin by making sure students neatly print or write their name, address, and homeroom teacher in their planners. I also make sure students have written down the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of at least two students in the class as their "study buddies". I tell them they can use their "study buddies" not just for homework, but also information about activities in and out of school. There will be a number of special activities such as parties, tie day, hat day, beach day. If they have been absent from school, they will miss out on them when they come back, unless they keep in touch with their study buddies. I also stress that it's their responsibility to contact their study buddies for missed homework, assignments and news, not their study buddies' responsibility to contact them. I also tell them they can keep in touch in person, by

phone, by e-mail, instant messaging and by fax! Yes fax. I tell them that my son when he was in grade 6 had a group of study buddies that would fax homework sheets and permission forms to each other when they forgot to bring them home from school. This happened with such regularity, that I started to telling my own students about the fax option.

Using A Planner To Build Class Community

Having students write down the names of at least two study buddies is the start of networking and of relationship building. It is also one way of observing the class dynamics. You can quickly discover the popular students and their group of friends. Also you can find out quickly the students who may need some help in finding and forming friendships. It's also something to draw to the attention of parents during interviews and to note when forming classes for next year. I try to make sure every student has at least one friend in their class for next year.

Planner Routines

There are a number of ways to reinforce the use of the planner. Depending on my class schedule, I use 5-10 minutes at the end of the day as planner time. On the front board I write down the homework assignments for the day, including a minimum of 20 minutes of reading out loud or quiet reading depending on the reading skills you want to reinforce with your students. I ask students if they have any homework assignments, tests or projects from classes that I don't teach: music, science and technology, etc. I also ask students to tell

me one thing they learned in class that day. I like to do this before lunch and before end-of-the-day dismissal. Doing so gives students something to tell their parents when they are asked, “What did you do in school today?” I have students write this down in their planners. I also write down on chart paper any new words or concepts they discovered to review and reinforce what they learned that day. This is also a great way to show parents that their child is actually learning and remembering what was taught in school. Before students head out for home, I also staple into their planners important handouts that their parents need to read and sign.

I also use the planner as a communication tool with parents by writing a note to parents or stapling personal letters or the class newsletter into the planner for parents to read. Moreover, I encourage parents to write me notes if there is information I need to know about the student such as difficulty with a homework assignment, an upcoming absence, or times and dates for a meeting with them. I find when things are written down, there’s less chance for miscommunication between home and school.

Getting The Planner From School To Home And Back

A great way to encourage a student to take home a planner every night is to write something positive about the student in the planner for the parent to see. By now I’ve usually identified two or three students who have a troubled past. As soon as they do something positive, I make sure to note it in the planner.

Some teachers prefer to check each planner before students leave for the day. Others do it in the morning. For the first weeks of school, I like to check the planners before students leave. Then I like to check them before they enter class or first thing in the morning depending on the size of the class and my class schedule. I check to see that the homework assignment on the board has been written down and that there is a parent signature or initial indicating to me that the parent has seen the assignment and planner. I also check to see if the number of reading minutes has been recorded and if they have written down at least one new thing they learned in class that day. Again, depending on your planner, you may only have room for the homework assignment and reading minutes. Planners are constantly changing and some years they have more, sometimes less room for personal notes. To confirm clarity, I use the “alien test”. Could an “alien” or stranger read what is written down?

Sometimes I will go into another class or ask a student passing by in the hallway to read what the student has written. If this student can’t read what was written down in the planner, the planner fails the “alien test”. This strategy is one way of reinforcing neatness and clear communication. Parents, too, may comment in the planner if their child’s writing is sloppy or neat!

What? No Planner!

What if the student doesn’t have his or her planner? Accept no excuses. There are students who have learned over the years to have a good excuse ready. They will talk your ear off with it. I simply and

calmly ask them “How do you plan to make sure it’s here tomorrow?” This question catches students off guard. They’ve been working on using their excuse with you because they think they’re going to get into trouble with you. (Instead, here’s an opportunity to teach and develop problem solving with the students. If I see a pattern in the number of students not having their planners complete, we discuss as a class some solutions to the problem. Doing so may simply be a matter of putting the planner on the kitchen table every night before going to bed or asking a parent to sign it first thing in the morning. Your class will come up with a number of other innovative solutions)

As I check the planners I simply put a mark beside their name on my clipboard list if they don’t have it signed. If students don’t have their planner or their planner is incomplete three times in a week, or if there is another pattern developing, I enroll them up for “The Club.” This is one club I tell students they do not want to join! I put their names on the board and I keep them after school. Then, I will check not only their planner but also all their work in all their notebooks-- including subjects I didn’t teach that day. If anything is not done, they need to work on it before going home. Membership in The Club rarely lasts more than a week.

If a student has a complete planner, I give them two “gotchas”. I give one for their parent signature, and one for having taken down the assignment. I find that every student should be able to take down the assignment at the end of the day. In some years, I give more “gotchas” to students for writing down one thing they learned and

keeping track of the minutes they read that day depending on what I need to target. It all depends what you're targeting and what you're comfortable doing.

Getting a parent's signature can be a bit more difficult, especially if the parent works nights and doesn't get to see the student after school. That's the point where we brainstorm for ways of getting that signature. Largely, the answer is just a matter of training the parent!

"Gotchas" are admit-one-tickets or coupons that I buy from a stationary or office supply store such as Staples. They come in single rolls of 500 tickets, or a double roll of 1000 tickets. I've used my own in the past, but the commercial ones save a lot of time and energy.

When I give a "gotcha" to students, they immediately print their names on the back side of the ticket. They keep them in their desk until the tickets are collected. I'll describe other incentive programs in the next chapter.

Avoiding The Ruts With Your Class

“A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success.” - Anonymous

Nothing ever goes smoothly all the time. Every road has some ruts. There are a number of ways to avoid the ruts in your classes' learning journey. Certainly, you need to be flexible and “go with the flow” in the class. Use variety to spice up your teaching and make the day go quicker. “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” One of the best ways to avoid the ruts in the road of daily teaching is through an incentive system, or reward program. I have already discussed one program in the previous chapter.

A number of factors determine the success of an effective incentive program:

- Have a valid purpose for it.
- Target only the behaviors you want to reinforce.
- Do not reinforce behaviors you don't want.
- Students need to know how it works.
- Keep it simple.
- Make managing it simple, too.
- Make sure you and your students are comfortable with it.
- Have more than one incentive program throughout the year or at one time.

Every year has its unique challenges. Every class is different. What works one year may not work the next year and vice versa. Decide on a system for the entire class and a system for individual students.

My “I Did It Award” is an incentive designed to target excellence and doing one’s best. Although it is an individual award, it’s set up so that every student in the class is able to earn an award by year’s end.

Incentive Systems

When I began teaching students in both regular and special education classes, I used a chart and star system to track certain behaviors which I knew every student could achieve. I focused on behaviors like bringing in forms and tests that needed to be signed by parents, completing homework assignments, quietly working on task at a class center and on class/individual projects. Each time a student completed a certain activity I handed out a gold star and had the students put them beside their names on the chart. Students competed to see who would be first to get to the end of the chart. When the “winning” student got to the end of the chart, I rewarded him or her with a small prize. I then waited until all the others caught up. Once everyone in the class got to the end, I would take the chart and hang it up on the wall. It was an impressive site having a bristol board chart filled with hundreds of gold stars.

By the end of the year, the class was surrounded by these charts filled with gold, silver and red stars. This was a very successful tracking and incentive system. What I found very interesting was that students

knew who would be the first to complete the chart and “win”. Students who knew they couldn’t “win” and compete with the best student in the class, competed against a friend or someone that was on the same level as themselves. This proved to be a “win-win” system since I didn’t end it until every student made it to the end and the whole class was rewarded.

Although this system did what it was designed to do for the type of classes I was teaching at the time, over the years I learned to try other systems as well. Also, variety is used not only to keep students interested, but to also to keep yourself motivated too!

Using “Gotchas”

Currently I have a number of incentive programs in my class. I use “gotchas” solely to track completion of planners. Since I believe all the skills I’m trying to teach through the use of the planner are very important, completing their planners and managing their planners is the only way students can earn “gotchas”. Of course, you can certainly use “gotchas” to target other class and individual behaviors. In my case, every two weeks, we collect the “gotchas” and put them into a box. I use a clipboard with a class list while I call out the names of each student, so I can record their number of “gotchas”. I use this number for our school color house incentive system where I award points to each student, as well as to their color house. Doing so is also a way to track the number of times their planner has been completed for the month and how responsible students have been in keeping their “gotchas”.

If you are using an auction system with “bonus bucks”, the “gotchas” can easily be converted to “bonus bucks” for these auctions. Every two weeks, for the last 10 minutes on a Friday afternoon, I draw names from the box. Over the years, I have used all kinds of prizes as incentives from books, stationery and trading cards, to candy, chocolate bars and potato chips! Throughout my teaching, I’ve noticed that it isn’t the prize that motivates students. Rather, winning the prize is the motivator. I have made the same observation with teachers, whether awarded door prizes or other draws at staff functions. People don’t care as much about what they win, as long as they win something! My teenage daughter has confirmed this too. She told me that “It doesn’t matter what I win, as long as I win something!

With that in mind, I now give out a sucker or a lollipop. I tell students that the only prize I give out is a lollipop or sucker. It doesn’t matter. Students are thrilled to win something.

Once students names are drawn, they pick a sucker and then they need to say, “Thank you” before I give it to them. It’s an opportunity to simply reinforce good manners, which I find are sometimes lacking among a number of students. As soon as the time is up (or as soon as the bell rings) the draw is over, providing me an opportunity to reinforce the importance of time. Everything eventually has to come to an end.

The Points Incentive System

Another incentive system I use involve points. Points are easy to manage and easy for students to understand. I explain to them how I get points for using my credit card, for paying my bills, and for buying groceries. They too can earn points. You can decide what behaviors to target and the number of points to award. There are no limits to the type or variety of rewards you can give. They may be a short field trip, a DVD, end-of-the-term party, free time, no homework, extra recess, extra physical education class, or the like.

Some teachers aim for 100% compliance of all students before points are awarded, others for a lesser percentage. If there are one or two students who try to sabotage the group efforts of the class, they can be counseled privately or excluded from taking part in the reward activity.

I usually use a small area on my back blackboard to keep a running total of the class points. In addition to having a running total of points, I like to link the points to a sentence such as “**Let’s Go Celebrate Now!**” that the class needs to complete in order to get the reward. Then I can teach some math by asking students how much is each letter worth (5 points) and how many points are needed to complete the sentence (100 points). I can also add my English lesson and tell them that the apostrophe (‘) and exclamation mark (!) are important and count as well!

Still another incentive system used by teachers is the granting of personal time or personal activity time. This is a period of time, a half hour more or less, which students can use for personal activities such as reading their favorite book or magazine, drawing, working on the computer, going to the library, playing a board game with a friend, or going to another class as a peer tutor or buddy. Also it can be used for students to catch up on any work they missed during the week. I like to use part of the time to have students clean and organize their desks. If they take the time to clean and organize their desks beforehand, then they can have the whole period for their own personal use.

Once the personal activity time is over, the games, books, and magazines are put away, and the computers are shut down, I stand at the door, wish each and every student a good weekend and give them a “high five”. It’s a fantastic way to end the week and to begin the weekend on a positive note.

When Incentive Programs Are Not Enough

There are times when the class may be very difficult to quiet down or manage. When they ignore your routine signals i.e., raising your hand, turning off the lights, there are other effective strategies you can employ.

A short term solution is to have students put their heads down and turn off the lights. Usually, depending how patient I am, I wait until after recess or lunch to implement this strategy with a little twist. I turn on soft music, usually music for yoga or meditation. It may be of the Amazon rainforest, or the gentle waves of a beach relaxing

settings. I dim the lights or turn them off and have students go to their seats and put their heads down. The students are told “You’re not in trouble—you just need to relax and calm down before I can teach you.”

A good extension to this is the use of a community circle time.

Students get to leave their desks to sit in a regularly scheduled community circle on the carpet. I usually schedule this as first thing on Monday mornings and the last thing on Friday afternoons.

Sometimes I will bring in a treat which is shared among all the students. Each student voluntarily shares what he or she did on the weekend or will be doing on the weekend. Sometimes the community circle time is used during the week as a way to discuss certain topics.

I have also used it to recognize students who have achieved a goal or contributed to the class or school in a positive way.

I find the community circle time to be a great opportunity to build class rapport and teamwork skills.

Avoiding The Ruts With Individual Students

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless.” - Mother Theresa

Building rapport with your class and with the individual students in it is one of the best ways to avoid the ruts and prevent inappropriate behaviors before they begin. Call it preventative maintenance for your classroom.

Building rapport-- making a connection with students--can start before you even enter the school or classroom. In a number of schools that I taught at, I was able to walk to school. Every student I passed, I would greet. My present school has a before and after school daycare program attached to it. Students are dropped off at 7:00 a.m., start classes at 9:00 a.m., then go back to the daycare program after school ends. There they can stay till 5:00 p.m. Doing so makes for a long day for some of these students. Some days I arrive early at school and have a chance to talk to these students and parents before school starts. I sometimes drop in the students after school as well. This gives me a chance to see them in a setting other than the classroom. Doing so also gives me a chance to touch base with parents before a major problem arises.

During my first year of teaching, I taught in a school in a community where many students and parents didn't like to learn the subject I was teaching. I taught French to every student in grades 4, 5 and 6. It was

a tough sell until one day one of the students invited me to see him play hockey. He didn't really think that I would show up at his hockey game, but invited me anyway. When I showed up, he was thrilled to see me. What is more important, some of my other students were playing on the same team or on the opposing team. They couldn't fail to notice that I was there watching them, too. However, the biggest surprise for me was the reaction of the boy's parents. They couldn't believe that a teacher would show up for their son's hockey game. Until then, no teacher had ever shown up for any hockey game. They saw me in a different light. Afterward I could make a connection with them and see them in a different light, away from the problems of the classroom.

How To Build Parental Support

Once parents and students saw me, not as a French teacher, but rather as someone sincerely interested in the same things they were, the tone of the classes I taught changed. Parents had always come up to me and openly told me the problems their children had with French. However, once I showed up to their children's hockey games, the support from parents grew. It made my first year of teaching a great experience.

If you ever get the opportunity to see one of your students play a sport, or see them in a tournament, watch them perform in a play or band, or observe them in any other event outside of the classroom, seize that moment! Especially do so if it is for a student that is giving you a lot of challenges. The small amount of time you put in may

mean all the difference between having a frustrating, rather than a successful day with that student.

Hooking Disruptive Students With Sports

The one area of strength for many of my disruptive students is playing sports. Sports, however, is not my area of strength. Since I need to teach them in my physical education classes, I get the students to teach their sport—basketball, soccer, football etc. to the class. If you do this in a structured way, you can really turn around some of these challenging students. Try to build on their natural leadership and athletic talents.

Three or four weeks before I introduce a sport to my students in their physical education classes, I meet with my chosen challenging student after class or during recess. We sit down and I ask him or her to plan out the lessons for the class. I give the student any resources I have as well as tell him to talk to other staff members at the school who may be coaches for the sport or who may be athletes themselves. In this way, other staff members get to see the disruptive student in another light based on the child's strengths and talents. I also introduce these students to some social skills such as proper ways to introduce themselves, interviewing skills, taking notes, as well as ways of thanking others in person or formally through a written thank you note. I meet once or twice a week to touch base with the student and check progress. I also expand the social skills by having the student choose two or three others as helpers.

On the day of the lesson, I place the chosen student in charge. He or she gets a whistle and leads the class just as I would for a typical physical education class. This is a role reversal for both of us as I play the student while learning along with the others. Although the student is in charge of the teaching, I'm of course still there in case there are any problems. And, there usually are! The student, now teacher, often finds out how difficult it is to manage and teach a class. Invariably, there are students who don't want to follow the instructions, who will talk while "the teacher" is talking, and who generally try to test or disrupt the lesson. That's when I tell the "teacher" to blow the whistle. In extreme cases, I tell the student that the class doesn't seem to be interested in the lesson and it's time to line them up and go back to class. Once students get their confidence and find their stride, the units usually go quite well. As I become a student and listen to the instructions just like all the other students, I see things from a different perspective—through the students' eyes. Overall, it proves to be a great experience for all the students, the "teacher", the class and me. Not only do I observe students from a different perspective I can help them overcome difficulties in the class by doing something out of the ordinary. I've used this strategy with other subjects such as dance with equally good results. Another benefit to this approach is the teaching of leadership skills. This approach really bears fruit when younger students move to the upper grades and come back to volunteer their skills and talents in your class.

Meet Me At The Door

Yet another excellent way to build rapport and be proactive with students is to continue the first day routine with them throughout the year. Before students are allowed into the classroom, meet them at the doorway. Speak to every student before they come into the class. Ask them about their weekend, how they're feeling, last night's homework, or the concert, game. Get them to tell you about sports scores, how their favorite athlete, singer, or movie star is doing, and about any other interests they may have. If any students are new to the country and speak English as a second language (ESL), try to learn a couple of words in their language. They may be as simple as "Hello", "Thank you" or numbers up to 10. Either will make these students feel connected to their new country and to you. You can also make sure that students are prepared for class by having with them their textbooks, notebooks, pens and pencils. Here also is a good opportunity to "check their attitude".

A number of my students are on medication. If they seem jittery, anxious or upset, I ask them if they have taken their medication. If I see that a student is too upset to come to class, then I refuse them entry. If they're having a hard time being polite, calm, and collected outside the classroom, they're going to have a harder time doing so without disturbing others while they're in the classroom! Instead, I ask that student to sit on the bench and relax or to go down to the office, the quiet room, the resource room either for their medication or for a time out if they need one. Doing so puts the responsibility on the student for their behavior and not on me the teacher.

I also use this time to ask students review questions about work I've covered or about lessons I've taught. If they get an answer wrong, they go to the end of the line.

If they get a right answer, they enter the classroom and follow the procedures I taught them the first day. They quietly go to their seats, and do the assignment written on the front board. This assignment is Bell Work. Bell Work is an assignment that doesn't need me in the class to teach. It usually involves simple math questions and problems, short (75-100 word) answers to story starters, or anything else I need to review and reinforce quickly with them.

Having students answer questions before they come into class gives me a great opportunity to review what they were taught the day before as well as to see first hand if they learned the material. If a majority of students have difficulty with this quick quiz, then I do a quick review lesson as soon they have settled in the classroom.

If you use a proactive approach to preventing problems before they become bigger ones, you'll go a long way towards having a class and students receptive for learning. You'll also have one less thing to think about before your busy school day has begun.

Winning Strategies

“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

The very first major assignment I have students do during the first week of school is the Time Capsule. I hand this assignment out the first day of school. It reinforces immediately that we will be doing work in the class, that the emphasis is on learning. It’s an assignment that can easily be modified so that all students are able to do it.

The Time Capsule gives students a sense of achievement, success, at the outset of that first week. The subjects are personalized and relevant to every student. There are no wrong answers. And, since we will have been working on all the topics during the first day, it’s a hard assignment to fail!

It’s also an assignment that shows students a sense of time, change, and history since they will open these time capsules on the very last day of school.

It’s a Matter of Time

I ask students to bring in a number of items in a “time capsule” container (shoe box, plastic container, manila envelope etc.). These will hold items such as a list of students’ favorite things: TV shows, movies, recording artists, songs, books, subjects, colors, friends, foods, hobbies, etc.. Included could also be a piece of string

measuring their height, a copy of their handprint and footprint on a piece of paper, a flower or leaf wrapped in plastic wrap, or a list of 3 goals that they want to accomplish by the end of the school year. In fact they can include any number of items that may change in some way throughout the year, or show what was meaningful to them at the start.

On the Friday or the following Monday, I have students present their time capsules to the class. I photograph each student with a digital camera and then videotape the presentation. Since the photographs are digital, I save it to the computer hard drive. I then use this photograph for their I Did It Awards and for their birthday cards. I also print out all the students' photos with their names underneath for substitute teachers. You can also use a class seating plan with the children's photos above their names: a great help to supply teachers.

For their videotaped presentation, I have them introduce themselves and pick three things from their time capsule to present. I collect the time capsules and tell the students that the capsules will be "buried" (I usually put them in the basement, crawl space or closet.) and they won't see them until the last day of school.

From this assignment, you can quickly get a handle on how responsible each student is. (If they can't hand this assignment in, they're going to have a tough time handing in other assignments!) There are no wrong answers here and the capsule is truly their record. Here they show how creative they are, their work habits, and

presentation skills. The Time Capsule assignment also gives you a number of marks for their report cards.

Before I “bury” the time capsules, it’s a good idea to check them for anything that may spoil such as fruit, vegetables, cookie, cake, etc. It’s amazing what some students will wrap up in plastic wrap! Or, be sure to exclude these at the outset.

Another excellent beginning –of-the-year activity for students to find out more about themselves and each other, are autobiographies, silhouettes, a day in the life, and life lines.

Once students have a good grasp of who they are, I start connecting and showing them how to network with each other. This is done the very first day through the use of the scavenger hunt and recording homework buddies in their planners. It is also done by putting students into groups.

I use groups for every subject from reading and physical education through math and social studies. Most groups are temporary; some are permanent. For the making of temporary groups, I use a plastic container with pupil names from a class list. I randomly pick the names for partners and for groups. I also use this method to pick who goes first in a game or a presentation. This way I avoid all kinds of arguments. Random selection also ties in very well if you’re doing a lesson on probability. For example, I’ll ask the class, “If there are 30

names in the container, and 10 names have been pulled but yours hasn't, what is the probability that yours will be next?"

Painlessly Picking Groups

Students, sometimes dread being in a group with specific students. If the group is for a certain problem that we're doing in math or history class, I avoid a lot of trauma by telling them how long the group will be together. It may be for only 10 or 20 minutes. I tell them, "You're not marrying the person, just working together to solve a problem: just like in the real world." I also tell them that there are times that I've been put into a group with a person I didn't get along with only to find out something interesting about that person that I didn't know.

One of the keys to building group harmony, especially among students whose social interaction skills are low is the interview question. As an icebreaker and to build up rapport, I have students introduce themselves to someone they don't know. Then I have them all ask each other a question such as, "What is one thing you will be doing on the weekend?", or, "What is your favorite book, song, movie, T.V. show", before you work on an assignment.

As they are working on the assignment, I'll go around and ask group members what is one thing you found out about the other people in your group. I'll also use this approach when a new class seating is assigned. In this way, students in the class will get to know that other students in the class whom they may yet know. I want students to

know the names of all their classmates and at least one, two, or three things about them before the end of the year.

Group Success Strategies

Another key to group success is making the groups last but a short duration at the beginning of the year until you get to know the students. 10 to 20 minutes is a good period of time for students to get to know each other without getting into too many arguments.

Depending on your students, your class, and school, sending groups to different areas of the class or school can make a big difference in how groups operate and the quality and quantity of material that comes back. First, make sure you know which students you can trust with the extra responsibility of going outside the classroom. A number of my students will lose this privilege of for inappropriate actions and need more direct supervision.

Another factor to keep in mind, for group success especially at the beginning of the year, is to have clear and easily achievable goals outlined for all students before they're put into groups.

Predicting Group Dynamics

For groups that need to be year long, such as in reading and phys. ed., or for seating groups of 3 to 4 weeks, I will sometimes do a sociogram exercise.

This sociogram can be as simple or as detailed as you like. I like to ask the following questions to get a good idea about who my students are. On a piece of paper, I ask students to answer these three questions:

I would like to sit with this person:

First Choice _____

Second Choice _____

Third Choice _____

If I needed help for a class assignment, I would ask:

First Choice _____

Second Choice _____

Third Choice _____

I would play on a sports team with this student:

First Choice _____

Second Choice _____

Third Choice _____

From these three questions, I get a good idea about the social, intellectual and physical abilities of students. It's a great exercise to see who the leaders are in social, academic, and athletic areas in the class. It also pinpoints which students may need support in those areas.

Connecting Students With Others: Expanding A Student's Circle of Influence

“We might cease thinking of school as a place, and learn to believe that it is basically relationships between children and adults, and between children and other children. The four walls and the principal's office would cease to loom so hugely as the essential ingredients.”

George Dennision

Early in the year I ask teachers to buddy up. Or they may ask me. It's a great way for students to act as mentors for students in lower grades. I usually have my class become buddies with another class for a 30 minute period. During this time, a number of activities can be shared such as reading, writing, making crafts, doing artwork, science projects, or enjoying sports activities. In my school, we have a class for developmentally handicapped students. In the class a number of students are in wheelchairs. I often have 4-6 students go to the class to help the teacher once a week for 30 minutes. Doing so gives helping students a great opportunity to socialize with other students who are different from themselves and to assist them as well. I also have students volunteer for their former teachers in the lower grades during the students' personal activity time on Friday afternoons.

This is a great opportunity for students who may have behavioral difficulties. For example, one year I had two students who had a long history of many fighting, aggression and anger control issues. In an

effort to help them learn to control this behavior, I had them go to the kindergarten room every afternoon an hour before dismissal. Once there, they would do activities with the kindergarteners and assist the teacher with dismissal. Their help was much appreciated by the teacher, especially on cold winter days when the children needed to put on their heavy coats, boots, mittens, and hats as well as load up their knapsacks and put in them any handouts and projects going home! The responsibility of helping others had an amazing effect on the two students. They calmed down just before their own dismissal from my class.

Other activities in which students work in pairs or groups outside the classroom involves the planting of trees, tending the school gardens and cleaning up the schoolyard. Similar opportunities for students to work with others in the community can range from visiting senior citizens' homes and having seniors visit the school, doing biographies on family members and members of the community, or working on a class community project. You will have other excellent ideas for such relationship and building with your class.

Every activity outside the classroom is ideal to photograph, videotape, or write up for newsletters, memory books, or class writing assignments. These activities contribute to your class climate, culture, team building and a sense of belonging.

One specific activity, which I enjoy doing with my students, involves connecting students with other classes in different communities and in different countries. A wonderful, easy-to-do project is one managed by teacher Dale Hubert. In the book, *Flat Stanley*, by Jeff Brown, Stanley is squashed flat by a falling bulletin board. One of the many advantages is that Flat Stanley can now visit his friends by traveling in an envelope. Students make paper Flat Stanleys and begin a journal with him for a few days. Then Flat Stanley and the journal are sent to another school where students there treat Flat Stanley as a guest and complete the journal. Flat Stanley and the journal are then returned to the original sender. You never know where these Flat Stanleys can end up. One Stanley was found floating on board the Space Shuttle “Discovery”, another on a popular TV show, still another climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. They have been to every continent in the world, traveled millions of miles, and involved thousands of students. Check out Flat Stanley on the web: <http://flatstanley.com>

Another project similar to Flat Stanley are travel buddies. These travel buddies are soft plush toys or puppets that travel the world as representatives of your class. Sometimes they’ll travel to many locations. A other times they will go to just one before returning home. They have names like Moose on the Loose, Mr. Snapper, Ollie and Oscar Otter, Scully the Skunk, Woodsy Woodchuck, Diamond the Dolphin, Timer Wolf. My classes have thoroughly enjoyed the visits of their traveling buddies.

For more detailed information on how to participate and integrated this project into your classroom, check out teacher Nora Boekhout's site **CanOz Connection**

<http://www.teacherwebshelf.com/canozconnection/>

If you're looking for penpals for your class, an easy way to find classes worldwide is through ePals at: <http://www.epals.com>

Building Trust and Respect Through Responsibility

“Little by little, one walks far.”
Peruvian Proverb

In order to have trusting, respectful, and responsible students, they must be respected and trusted with a responsibility. One of the best ways to do this is to give students a meaningful job to do in the class. In the past I would often assign jobs to students, but they didn't do them. This frustrated me. Frankly, I often resented the lack of respect and responsibility shown. This led in turn to me not trusting students to carry out their responsibilities. Over the years I've found a number of keys to the giving of job assignments making it work well:

- Let students choose their jobs. Students who are motivated to take on a responsibility will more than likely do a better job than those who aren't.
- Use a fair and equitable way to hand out the jobs.
- Make sure there is a variety of jobs available
- Make the jobs important
- Train students how to do the job properly.
- Have students who have done a job train their replacements.

Ensuring A Successful Job System

Once my students start to get settled into the classroom routines and procedures, I take out my list of jobs. They range from handling the attendance folder and audio visual equipment to recording points and being the class secretary. The jobs are posted with names of students beside each job. The key to success is to have a system for changing jobs so that every student has an equal and fair chance to get the job they want. Once a month, I devote a period of class time for the assigning of jobs. The very first time I do this, I number and put every job on my list on the board. Beside the list I put the number of people needed to do the job. I use my bowl of names to randomly pick students. As each name is pulled, I ask that student which job they want to do and I record their name on the job list. The job is then erased from the board. As we get down to the last of the list, there are always one or two jobs that students don't want to do. Every year it seems to be a different job that goes in and out of flavor! Since the draw has been done randomly, students judge it as being fair. The job lasts for only one month in any event.

The following month, all the jobs are posted back on the board. This time, I go down the list and ask every student if they still want their job. The rule is they may keep their job for two consecutive months, then they have to give it up. They can "reapply" for their job after a month has gone by. (This way no one person can have a monopoly on a particularly appealing job.) I have my secretary erase the jobs or leave them on the board. I remove from my "lottery" bowl, the names of those students who opt to keep their jobs. Once this is done, I

randomly pick the remaining names and, like before, ask students which jobs they would like to do. If there are any jobs left over, I then ask students who would like to take on a second or third job.

By following this procedure, you'll go a long way to building up respect and trust among your students since you will be respecting and trusting them to do their jobs and accept responsibility in the class.

A quick way to build responsibility and respect for class materials and a way of not losing them, is to employ this tip I first learned from Barbara Coloroso over 20 years ago. I've since added a few twists to it. (Check out Barbara's website at: <http://www.kidsareworthit.com>)

When students want to borrow a pair of scissors, a pencil, pen, some masking tape, or other class supply that you want returned, ask them for a shoe in return. At first they will look at you with a surprised and incredulous expression on their faces. Some refuse. For others who know me from previous years and by reputation, taking off one of their shoes to exchange for one borrowed item, or a second shoe if they're borrowing two items, is an established procedure.

It's A Matter Of Trust

Here is a wonderful teachable moment on the meaning of trust and responsibility in the working world. I ask the students why I take a shoe. Some will answer that I want my item back and I don't want to lose it. Some will say I want their shoes! I tell students about the first time I bought a car. I didn't have enough money to buy the car, so I

went to the bank and borrowed the money. I then ask my class what the bank took in return or as collateral for my loan. Some of them get it—they took my car! (Technically, you give the bank a “mortgage” on your car. They take a “lien”.) Depending on the level of students I’m teaching, I explain to them all about loan payments, interest, and collateral. I explain that if I don’t pay my loan every month, the bank may take back my car. This lesson also leads to a discussion on mortgages. A lot of students hear about this term around the dinner table so I explain it to them as clearly as I can. Since I also teach French, I explain the word’s origins i.e. *mort* in mortgage means death in French and *gage* means “a bet” in French. Originally it was a bet with the lender on paying back the loan before your death.

Throughout the year I’ll keep coming back to the concept of trust with other authentic examples such as borrowing money and the use of credit cards. I like to show students a twenty dollar bill and ask them what it represents. Then I tell them that all money is, a trust. People trust it and use it to buy things. I then give examples from my own travels where the money in the countries where I traveled wasn’t trusted by their own citizens and instead they used American currency which they trusted instead. I also show students a credit card. I ask them why I can go into a store or restaurant, or get gas and all I have to do is show a credit card. Then, on the basis of my signature alone not have to pay in cash. Again I tell them that the transaction is based on trust. People trust my signature. Then I ask students why they would trust my signature. That’s when I bring up examples of building trust by being responsible for paying my bills each and every

month. I also tell them that at the beginning I had a low credit limit and only through being responsible and respecting the credit agreement was I able to get a higher credit limit. By respecting my responsibilities, I get more privileges. They will too if they are responsible.

When your students consistently show respect, responsibility, and trust, you can show them one of the highest forms of responsibility and trust. Take them on a field trip beyond the school.

Field trips can be great learning tools. They reward and motivate your students. Before planning a field trip read your school and district policies. You will need to know such things as use of permission forms, and medical information, criteria for bringing along parents, the required adult to student ratio, what to do during an emergency, emergency procedures and phone numbers, high risk activities, as well as acceptable places to visit.

Whether you go on some field trips, such as overnight trips, will depend on the maturity level of your class and the costs involved. Overnight trips, depending on where you go and the costs involved, should be planned well in advance. Short trips such as a trip to the local library can be done on shorter notice and with less planning.

Getting The Most Out Of Field Trips

Field trips are a great way to integrate your curriculum with “real life” learning experiences. One way I do this is to have students take along

an exercise book. Have them answer the questions “Who?”, “What?”, “When?”, “Where?”, “Why?” and “How?”

Field trips also give you a great opportunity to see how your students behave with other adults and other groups of students in situations outside the classroom and school. Field trips are also a learning opportunity. You will learn much about yourself too, especially when things don't go as planned!

Field trips are also a great opportunity to get to know those parents who come as volunteers. One of the tasks I assign students after the parents are introduced to the class, is to find out what the parents' interests are, what they did over the summer, or their plans for the weekend.

After the trip, I have students thank the parents with a “pat on the back”. This is a job that I assign to two of my students. Their job is to trace their hand on a blank piece of paper, color and decorate it. At the top of the page are the words: “A Pat On The Back to Mr./Mrs./Ms. for coming on our field trip to _____”. Every student then signs the “pat on the back”. Then, I sign, date the hand, and thank the parent as well. Doing so is an easy yet excellent way to show your appreciation for the parent's time and participation as well as to model for your students, how to do a proper thank you.

Always a good idea is to reinforce your expectations for the field trip before you leave the classroom. Depending on your school and

district policies, they can guide the consequence of misbehavior. Some students, unless they have close supervision, have a difficult time being in an unstructured setting such as a field trip. Other students who have a history of misbehavior on field trips, may need to lose the privilege of going altogether. Whether you can hold students back from a trip depends on your school and district policies.

One of the most difficult things I've ever had to do to a class is to cancel our end-of-the-year trip because of misbehavior. I firmly believe that students should earn the right to go on an end-of-the-year field trip. Sometimes students feel entitled, Others automatically assume the class will be going and let their behavior slide. So, here is an opportunity to show leadership and while making a decision which may not prove too popular. In 22 years, I've only twice cancelled the end-of-the-year trip. Doing so was emotionally difficult, especially on a hot sunny day at the end of the year when other classes were going on their field trips. However, the decisions sent a very strong message to the next years' students coming into my class: I say what I mean, and do what I say. It's your integrity and reputation as a teacher that is being defined.

Getting Outside Help Connecting Students To Others

“Many hands lighten the load”
Chinese Proverb

One thing you will learn quickly as a teacher is that you can't do everything. You don't have the time, resources, or skills to be perfect. You can only do it the best you can. Someone once said, “Perfection is the enemy of excellence.” One advantage of knowing who you are is the ability to complement your weaknesses and use your strengths. You might also want to connect students with other people outside your class who have the strengths that you lack.

I have little to no art ability. Fortunately, there are a number of staff members who love art and enjoy teaching it. One way to bring in another staff member to teach your class is to combine classes. You become the helper, the other staff member is the expert. In this case the art expert. Another way is to trade classes. For instance, I've gone into primary classes to teach about bees (I used to be a part-time beekeeper) while the kindergarten teacher has gone into my class to teach an art lesson. Exchanges are win-win-win opportunities for everyone concerned: teachers and students. Students win by connecting with another staff member and discovering and enjoying the benefits of that teacher's strengths and interests. The expert staff member wins by having you teach their class a subject in which you

have a strength or have a great desire to teach. They also win when they occasionally reconnect with students they may have taught years ago, or when they want to try out a different teaching assignment, age range of students. You win because you also connect with another class, and/or with students that you may be teaching a year or so down the road. Of course, you get to teach a subject that you're an expert in and enjoy doing, too.

Connecting Students And Community

I've also used this strategy to connect students with their community. In the early days of computers and the Internet, I wanted to integrate these new technologies into my class and show students how to create web pages. Unfortunately, I knew very little about creating web pages and didn't have the time to spend one on one with students.

I contacted the local university by sending my request in an e-mail to a student list. Within days, I received dozens of replies. I found two excellent students who came into my class and volunteered hundreds of hours of their time to work with my students to produce web pages from their work. I gave the volunteers excellent references to future employers and my students received expert instruction on the new computer technology.

My current school has taken this idea to a higher level. In the beginning of the school year, our resource team goes to the local university and recruits student volunteers. There are so many

volunteers, a school bus is rented to bring them into our school to meet and get paired up with teachers. This is done after school at a “volunteer fair” where teachers set up a desk with their requirements. Our entire after school homework program is staffed by these university volunteers as well. It’s a win-win situation for everyone.

Another great resource is high school students. They could be your former students. So, too, are parents. Some schools have a data base of parents and their skills which teachers may access, or of other professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, dentists. During a mystery unit, I invited my dentist to talk about forensics and how dentists identify criminals through their dental work.

Before you use any volunteers, however, to make sure you are clear on your school and district’s volunteer policies. Some districts require a police check, the completion of special forms, and the briefing of volunteers on procedures of confidentiality.

Chapter 3

How To Overcome Obstacles

“The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.”

John Maxwell

There are many ways to overcome the obstacles you will inevitably encounter. One way is to pick the right time. For example, it's never a good time to deal with incidents in the classroom while you are angry or emotionally upset. Hold your temper, maintain your cool, bite your tongue, and wait until you are settled to address any particularly upsetting situations.

In a calm, cool and collected manner, introduce changes the next class day. Doing so gives you time to collect your thoughts and analyze the problem. Sometimes students can be your best asset in times like these. Depending on the situation and my students, I've often used the entire morning and, with input from students worked through a problem. The key to finding solutions to classroom problems is not to immediately assign blame. Instead, you can overcome most problems by following this simple model, and asking these questions:

- What is the problem? State it in clear, simple language.
- What happened to cause the problem?
- How can we solve it and make the situation better (or what can we do to solve it?)

It's Not The Problem—It's How You Deal With The Problem

One teaching assignment I had was as the school guidance teacher to the grade seven and eight students. One day, a substitute teacher, very upset and distraught, left the class I was about to teach. It didn't take long for me to see why. Students were boisterous, rude, and not sitting in their seats. I looked up at the ceiling to see the ceiling tiles perforated with pencils. The students had sharpened them and thrown them into the ceiling tiles over and over again until they were stuck up there while the substitute teacher was teaching.

When they've been "caught" doing something inappropriately students usually react in a number of ways. One is to deny that they did anything wrong. Another is to blame someone else. Still another way is to remain silent and not say a word.

The first thing I did was tell the students very calmly that I wasn't there to blame anyone. I just wanted to know what happened and how to improve the situation. I used a "round table technique" in which I asked every student for input without judging it. I wanted them all to participate and to give me their versions of the facts. After some discussion, we came up with the problem: The class was disrespectful of the substitute teacher. We then discussed what happened to cause the problem. This time I put on the board the name of every student who wanted to participate. I went through every students' name and put a check mark beside them when the students were finished. When all had their chance to say something,

we then discussed how to make the situation better. Again, I used the same system with names on the board. Together the students came up with a solution to the problem.

By listening to the students and modeling respect, I was able to get their cooperation. They respected the process, me and each other. They could also see the consequences of their actions.

I have used this process very successfully a number of times to deal with teasing, bullying, and fighting in the classroom.

Change

“I don’t mind change. I just don’t like being there when it happens.”
Adrian Monk from the T.V. show Monk

Sometimes change may involve a rearrangement of seating, the breaking up of cliques in the class, or a tightening up of the rules, routines, and procedures. Sometimes throughout the year, fatigue sets in. We lose a bit of our motivation and persistence, and start to let some things go. That’s when it’s time to go over your classroom rules with your students to review what procedures and routines need to be followed better. What you permit, you condone. What you condone, promotes the behavior that you permitted.

One good exercise is for to create a vision of what your class should look like. Ask yourself, “What kind of class do I want to have?” Periodically, when the class seems to be slipping, you may ask “What can I do to move the class to where I want them to be?” Adjusting this is similar to what pilots do when they make numerous course changes to account for unexpected weather, wind currents, tailwinds, traffic in order to guide the airplane to its destination.

For example, I noticed that my students were having difficulty lining up and waiting outside their music class while the teacher finished up without talking, poking each other and generally getting into trouble. Instead of having them wait outside the class doing nothing, I started doing deep knee bends or squats with them. This activity settled

them and gave me an opportunity to squeeze in some daily physical activity for them and for myself. I've also used the time to quiz them on their math facts and to do quick reviews of other subjects by making the reviews it into a game of around the world. (Around the world is where one student stands beside the desk of another student and given a question to answer. The first person who answers correctly moves on to the next student. If the student answers the next question correctly, he or she continues to move around the class—hence the name-Around The World. If he or she fails to answer a question correctly, he or she sits in the student's chair. The winner is determined by the number of seats he or she is seated away from their own seat.)

Variety Is The Spice Of Life

Another time I noticed my students were having a really difficult time walking to their next class to the other side of the school.

I brought in some camp songs that my son and daughter learned at camp. A number of the students knew these songs as well. I put the words of the songs on overhead transparencies. We learned the words to the songs and sang them every time the class rotated subjects to another room. (I made sure we did not disturb other classes by going down the stairs and past the office.) This activity not only calmed the students, but it also built up a sense of community and team building.

A practical way of making an adjustment is to change the relationship you have with your students. If this improves, the class climate will

also improve. One way to do this is to reinvent yourself. Doing so takes planning and courage, but it's one way to keep your students motivated to do their best. For instance, ask yourself "What can I do to motivate this student to do her best?"

Making A Difference One Student At A Time

As I was reviewing my students' files before school began, I noticed one student who had been in seven different schools. Now she was going into my grade 5 class. I saw she had received unfavorable report card comments from every teacher she had and even received a failing mark for Physical Education! There was nothing in her entire file that told me what her strengths were. Even more troubling, she had a history of defiance, being passive aggressive, and of making a point to aggravate teachers in and out of class at every opportunity. Moreover, there was no record of support from home for any teacher meetings or phone calls.

Knowing this information, I had to become proactive and focus on how to solve the inevitable problems I would encounter with this student, before they occurred. In her case, I did a number of things: First, I changed my perception of her. As soon as I met her, I shook her hand, smiled, looked her in the eye and said " Linda", (this was not her real name) you are going to have a great year." Then, I sat her at the back of the class beside another female student who was strong both academically and socially. I also put her in a group of students who could encourage her to do her best. The first class job I assigned her was a point recorder. Every time the class did

something positive that first day, i.e., followed routines, answered questions by raising their hands, minimizing transition times, I gave them a point by calling out Linda's name to record it. Every time something positive happened in the class, her name was associated with it. Linda was in charge of keeping a record of the points on the board, counting them, and assigning letters to every five points. (Once the letters spelled out the word Let's Celebrate Now, the class would be rewarded.)

Every time I noticed her do something positive, I commented on it. As soon as Linda filled out her interest sheet that first day, I learned what she was interested in—horses. I immediately found a book, about horses, for her to read at her level and gave it to her. On that first day of school as a positive reward, I sent her to the office to have one-on-one time with the principal who rewarded her with a sticker and positive attention. He also connected her to another teacher in the school who shared her interest in horses. That teacher just happened to have bought a horse ranch that summer. So, before school started, I spoke to my principal about Linda's file and gave him a heads up about her. I then asked him if I could send her down to see him as soon as she did something positive!

The second day of school, I made a sunshine call to her mother. She was surprised that I was calling to say something positive about her daughter. I then told her that I sent her to the office...for something good! The mom admitted afterwards that she was scared to talk with

me about Linda. I then made a point of inviting her to our Meet The Teacher Night.

You can also try this effective approach to building rapport. As you go through your teaching day, try to catch students doing something positive and to compliment them on the things they do well. Keep track of all the negatives and positives you give out. Do you give out more positives than negatives? Which students are getting the positives and which the negatives? Do you notice a pattern? If so, how can you change that pattern for the better? As Mark Twain once said, “I can live for two months on a good compliment.”

Sometimes if we change our perception of students, and have positive events to associate with them, especially students who are most often in trouble, wonderful changes can happen. We just need the determination to do so.

Optimal Times To Reinforce Changes

“Everyone who remembers his [her] own educational experiences remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the kingpin of the educational situation. He [she] makes or breaks programs. - Sidney Hook

There are better times than others to reinforce your discipline code, rules, routines, and procedures. When a problem occurs, catch it and change it when it happens. For lining up problems, repeat the process until it's done right. Or, if during a Physical Education period there is too much bickering going on, you might cancel the class, then debrief with the students then and there what's not going right and how it can be corrected. You can always do it again in the next Physical Education period.

If there are only minor changes to be made, I like to fine tune my classroom management on a Monday. Then I'm rested and the class is still fresh from the weekend. I talk to the students first thing in the morning and reinforce what they did well the week before. Then I focus on a procedure they're not doing well, such as keeping their desks clean, being noisy and talking during transition times, or improper lining up. If there are any major changes or reinforcements to be made, I like to introduce them after holidays and natural breaks in the school year: between terms, or between major teaching units.

After the first term and winter Christmas break, when students return for the New Year, I like to start off the year fresh with New Year's resolutions and a new unit reviewing goal setting. For examples of students' New Year's resolutions, see *Zillions* magazine, the kids' magazine from Consumer Reports: <http://www.zillions.org/>

The New Year—Starting It Off Right

The New Year is a great time to start fresh, a lot like you did the first day of school in September. Here's a chance to reinforce your goals for the class as well as an opportunity to look back to what you and they did well the first term. After all, January comes from the two headed Roman god Janus, the god of gates and beginnings. One head looked backwards to the past and the other head looked forwards to the future. You and your class do the same.

Here's how I do this. As students enter the class, I give them a sheet of paper to copy the three resolutions I've written on the front board. This exercise shows the students that the New Year is a new beginning. Here is the list I have for the students:

1. Something to do more frequently.
2. Something to improve.
3. Something to NOT do any more.

When students finish, I file their sheets in their student folders. Then, just before the last term begins, I interview each student about their resolutions and whether they achieved them.

The New Year is, a new beginning, a time for goal setting, for resolving, to do your best. Consequently, I spend time doing a goal setting unit based on the movie about Michael Jordan called *Michael Jordan To The Max*.

I too try to rejuvenate and reenergize over the holidays by not only previewing the Michael Jordan video, but by also by watching teacher useful movies such as: *The Dead Poet's Society*, *The Emperor's Club*, and *12 Angry Men* (to review the 12 different learning styles and personality types and how to deal with them).

After the spring or March Break, when there is only one term of school left, I like to review Michael Jordan's quote on failure:

“I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over again in my life. And that's why I succeed.”

Michael never gives up!

During the longer breaks, is also a great time to view and discuss movies such as *Miracle On Ice*, *Apollo 13*, *Gandhi*, *Fly Away Home*, *The Lord of The Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Karate Kid*, *Holes*, *Like Mike*, *Freaky Friday*, *Mean*

Girls, Spiderman, I Like Mike, Tuck Everlasting, Swiss Family Robinson, The Princess Bride, Dark Crystal and the like.

At the end of the year, I show *Back to the Future*. This film shows how events in their past can affect their future. The classic movie *It's A Wonderful Life* also graphically shows a cause and effect relationship.

Please Note: Whichever films you may consider using, always review them before showing them to your class. Some of these movies may not be suitable for lower grades.

Also, be sure you can legally show those films. A classroom showing may be deemed “a public performance” which can usually only be done under a license to do so.

For parent and teacher movie reviews, go to:

Family Movie Reviews Online

<http://www.familymoviereviews.com/>

Kids-in-mind

<http://www.kids-in-mind.com/>

The Internet Movie Database

<http://imdb.com/>

Another more subtle way to reinforce your discipline code, rules, routines, procedures, and values all year long is through the use of read aloud books. I tailor the books that I read out loud to the type of students I have. Over the past number of years, I have been reading to my students *The Time Warp Trio*, by Jon Scieszka. It is a series that especially appeals to boys and reluctant readers. Through *The Time Warp Trio* books, I can show students the value of having an education, of cooperation, group decision making, tolerance, respect for others, diversity and multiculturalism, and creative problem solving in a fun way without giving them another lecture. The books and themes have now been made into an animated cartoon show. Check your local area for T.V. channels and times.

One of my main goals as a teacher is to teach my students to read. Many of my students are reading below their grade level. Some as much as 3 years! Unfortunately, most of these students are boys.

The following is a wonderful resource to help boys (and girls) with reading:

Me Read? No Way! A Practical Guide To Improving Boys' Literacy Skills

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/merread/index.html>

This guide, available free from the above website, was prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Education as part of an initiative to support student success in literacy. In particular, it focuses on boys' literacy.

This guide offers a rich source of practices and strategies that are being used in successful literacy programs for boys around the world and that educators can draw on to create a stimulating and engaging learning environment for both boys and girls.

It's a great resource with a lot of great tips. I highly recommend it.

For a list of great read aloud books go to: Family Literacy Foundation

<http://www.read2kids.org/> or Jim Trelease's website

<http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/>

How To Unstuck A Class

“I try to hear things through the ears of others, and see things through their eyes.” - Leonard Riggio

There will be times when none of your work, preparation, incentives, awards, routines, rules or procedures are as effective as they once were. The students won't perform as well as they once did. Their motivation and morale will be low and you will feel frustrated. At that point your class is stuck.

One way to “unstuck” a class is to ask questions; then listen for the answers. Are your students overwhelmed with the curriculum, work load, or your expectations? Have they been given enough time to complete their work? Are other rotary teachers giving them major projects and assignments at the same time as you do? Ask students to write their answers to the following three questions. They will give you a good idea of what you're doing well and what still needs to be improved. Answers to these questions can help you improve and fine tune your program next year.

- What 3 things do you like about our class?
- What 3 things you don't like about our class?
- What 3 things would you like to do in our class that we haven't done yet?

I read all my students' responses to these questions. Then I report back to them. Together, we then brainstorm a class solution to the problems. You'll be surprised how in tune the children are to the workings of the class and how to get unstuck.

Boredom Busters

Another way to get unstuck is to use the following Boredom Busters:

- Humor: Telling corny jokes.
- Toboggan on a nearby hill.
- Swim.
- Skate.
- Play soccer ball in the snow.
- Play broomball in the snow.
- Design an “unbreakable” box for eggs and then test them by dropping each one from the top of the school.
- Play balloon volleyball in class.
- Give students a personal activity time.
- Hold draws/auctions.
- Have an impromptu recess—stay outside/dismiss class early and go outside with you supervising them.
- Have a bubblegum chewing contest.
- Enjoy class parties for Halloween, Christmas, and at the end of the term.
- Hold special days: Hat Day, Christmas in June day, Beach Day in February.
- Have a Paper Airplane Flying Contest

- Play 20 Questions
- Hold a Spelling Bee
- Teach students how to play chess
- Review curriculum through games such as Trivial Pursuit®, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire™, Wheel of Fortune®, Survivor®.

To change the pace and to make the class more interesting in the class, I will occasionally add a zinger. When a relationship with your students involves something unexpected, the surprise breaks an otherwise too familiar routine. A zinger becomes something special. For example, I'll ask the class to turn to a page in their textbook and read quietly for 5 minutes. Then I will ask them to close their books and tell me what the first word on the page, give me the title, or tell me three facts from the page they were reading. The first few times, students have difficulty answering the questions. I use these teachable moments to reinforce the question words Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. It also reinforces concentration and focusing skills.

To encourage realism into their writing, I assign students a daily journal topic such as "What would you do if a horse were to come galloping into the cafeteria during lunch? Describe how you would feel." I let students respond to this for a couple of minutes. Then I tell them that I'm going to demonstrate by being the horse. I instruct everyone to act as if they are eating their lunches, or talking to their friends in the cafeteria. Then, I turn off the lights, and in the pitch blackness, all the students can hear is the neighing of a horse. After I

turn on the lights and the screams and laughter have subsided, I then tell them to write down what they felt like in the dark with a horse coming out of nowhere.

To reinforce students putting their names on their assignments, I collect their papers and then put them into a shopping bag. Every time I pull out an assignment with a name on it, I give a point to the class or I hand out a sucker. This, I find, is an excellent, tangible reward, reinforcer, and fun to do.

Sometimes I'll do an mock fire drill to see how students respond to the fire drill procedure. The drill is a very good way to practice the procedure, and a change of pace to the classroom.

Tempus Fugit—Time Flies

Throughout the first month, I secretly time how long student take to settle down to a task in class, to line up before school, after morning recess, at lunch, and afternoon recess. I do this once or twice a week for about a month to get a baseline. By the second month, times have usually increased. I then teach students the power of increments. If we waste 10 minutes a day for 100 days, we lose 1000 minutes. 1000 minutes equals a little over 16 hours- over two days of teaching! These are days that we could be swimming or taking a field trip for example. I also tell them the times we waste during transitions and going to rotary classes. When students first become aware of time in this way, they also start to assume more responsibility for their actions. I use the same technique to teach students the cost of

smoking over 20, 30 and 40 years. I sometimes ask them, “How would you like to get a free house?” Then I show them how a 2 pack-a-day smoker could buy one with the money they burned by their smoking.

Some of my students have little self control. When pushed from behind in line they will turn around and hit the other student. I ask them if it were a grandmother who was behind them, would they hit her? Of course they say “no”. I ask why. Then we talk about that could have happened to the student they pushed back in the line. One of the most effective ways I’ve used for discussing points of view and looking at all sides of an argument or situation, employs a defective soda can. (I’ve also used an empty donut box, a resealed empty box from a popular candy-like cereal etc.) The can looks like a full can of soda but it’s really empty. The tab is still in place. There are no holes. I show the students the can and ask them to describe what it is. After the discussion, I lightly toss the can to a student. They quickly realize that it’s empty. I tell the students not to judge anyone until they have all the facts. Don’t assume you know everything about a situation until you have all the facts.

How To Get Yourself Unstuck

“Hard work, of course is critical. But you have to balance that with time for your family and friends. One-dimensional people are rarely successful over the long haul.” - G. Richard Thoman

If you're feeling overwhelmed and burned out, putting in long hours without seeming to get ahead, becoming irritable with your students, and you can relate to the following poem by D.H.Lawrence, then there are things that you need to do to take care of yourself.

Afternoon in School -The Last Lesson

When will the bell ring, and end this weariness?
How long have they tugged the leash, and strained apart
My pack of unruly hounds: I cannot start
Them again on a quarry of knowledge they hate to hunt,
I can haul them and urge them no more.
No more can I endure to bear the brunt
Of the books that lie out on the desks: a full three score
Of several insults of blotted pages and scrawl
Of slovenly work that they have offered me.
I am sick, and tired more than any thrall
Upon the woodstacks working weariedly.

And shall I take

The last dear fuel and heap it on my soul
Till I rouse my will like a fire to consume
Their dross of indifference, and burn the scroll
Of their insults in punishment? – I will not!

I will not waste myself to embers for them,
Not all for them shall the fires of my life be hot,
For myself a heap of ashes of weariness, till sleep
Shall have raked the embers clear: I will keep
Some of my strength for myself, for if I should sell
It all for them, I should hate them –
- I will sit and wait for the bell.

There are times when every teacher feels this way: tired, and exhausted when all their bag of tricks and experience can't seem to motivate their class any longer, when all they feel they can do is wait for the bell. D.H. Lawrence makes the valid point that you can't use up all your strength on your students. Otherwise, you will grow to dislike them all. One of the most common factors in work-related stress is the lack of control. The more we feel out of control due to unruly students, demands of administrators, and the increased work load, we're going to feel stress. There are some things that are out of your control. You can't take any action. There are times when the best approach is to take no action at all; just let it go. When you don't have control, ask yourself if this battle is worth fighting. Sometimes you'll win the battle, but the resentment will linger. Then

you be fighting against a guerilla war all year long. Ignore irrelevant behavior especially.

Movie Motivation

At such times, I particularly like to watch teacher movies. Although *Blackboard Jungle* was made in 1955, it still has important lessons for teachers. The central character, played by Glenn Ford, shows what a teacher can and can't control, how to make incremental changes, and how to savor the small victories while changing student behavior. I also like a more recent movie *The Emperor's Club* with Kevin Kline. This movie showed me that although I can try my best, do all I can for my students, I can't "fix" them all. There will be failures, especially with students whom I tried to reach, but for whom I was unable to change their behavior. There will be students you can't stop for whatever reason, from going down the wrong path. This movie shows that for every student you can't change, there will be hundreds of students where you will make a difference. Those you will inspire to do their best through all the little things you do with them all year long. Even though they don't tell you or acknowledge the impact you have on them, in later years, they will remember and be grateful for the things you did. Talk to older teachers about the students who came back, the students who went on to make an impact in their communities, the students they remember, and who loved you. You'll have students like these, too.

Some time ago, in a small rural community, I was attending the funeral of my sister-in-law's father. As I was waiting in line at the

funeral home, there were a lot of people who got out of the line to shake the hand of a gentleman in front of me. I told my wife that it must be the mayor of the town since so many people knew him and greeted him by name. I asked my sister-in-law “Who is that gentleman?” She told me it was a retired grade 6 teacher!

For years I drove to school passing a river that meanders slowly down the middle of our city. In the morning I’d notice the mist rising from the water and the bright sunshine reflecting off it. Every time I saw this idyllic scene, I regretted going to school. Every day on the way home, I passed the same scene. Then an idea dawned on me. Why not stop and take a few minutes on a picnic bench. Admire this scene before I take my stressed out mind into the house. Now, I find this a great way to unwind from a stressful day. While I have the last of the coffee from my thermos, or a piece of fruit from my lunch, I’ll just sit on a bench and admire the river, the rowers, the kayakers, the birds, the bicyclists and joggers, and let all the cares of the day melt away before I go home.

If there are students with behavioral concerns that are wearing me down, I like to talk to other teachers who have had the same students to see how those teachers dealt with them. I also talk to my administrators and counselors expressing my wish to work with and improve the behavior of the students.

A website I find useful during such times as these is *You Can Handle Them All* at: <http://www.disciplinehelp.com> . This site is an excellent

source of ideas for handling over 117 misbehaviors at school and home. The behaviors are listed in categories: attention, power, revenge, and self-confidence. The owner of the site describes each behavior in detail, i.e., effects on teacher, classmates, and parents, and tells what actions to take to deal with the misbehavior. I also like to visit *Learning Disabilities Online* at: <http://www.ldonline.org>. Here you can find expert tips for teaching children with learning disabilities.

Another website I highly recommend is:

<http://www.glavac.com/resources.html>

Every resource on this page has been reviewed and used by me in my teaching. I have also personally spoken to each of the authors about their products. I highly recommend each and every one of them.

Quench the Flames of Burnout

The latest research on teacher burnout shows that teachers who are least likely to burn out are those who discuss positive aspects of the job with other teachers and associate pleasant emotions with the job. Here are some things you can do to deal with burnout and stress: (Just be sure more work doesn't add more stress.)

- Take on a new task such as a school or district committee.
- Enroll in a fun workshop, seminar or conference or personal, non-teaching interest.
- Change teaching grade assignments in the school.
- Change schools.

- Go into a different teaching role such as resource, administration.
- Avoid the negative attitude of your colleagues. Be more positive.
- Cultivate a hobby.
- Take a leave of absence.
- Eat healthier.
- Get exercise.
- Enroll in a yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, aerobic course.
- Take up swimming, jogging, walking, rowing, cycling.
- Get a physical checkup.
- Get enough sleep.
- Use deep breathing, meditation techniques, music to relax.
- Attitude is a choice, choose your attitude.
- Pick your battles: your hill to “die” on.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Have realistic, attainable, and measurable goals.
- Cultivate allies among students, staff, and parents.
- Find friends outside of teaching.
- Go to out-of-town conferences.
- Give Pat On The Backs, and send thank-you notes, cards, and compliments to others. Why not send one to yourself.
- Send yourself some flowers.
- Develop positive self-talk, self-control, and self-confidence.
- Cultivate a sense of humor; laugh and smile more.
- Join a professional reading group.

- Participate in a noon hour walking club.
- Give yourself a gift of time to reflect, relax, and recharge.
- Define what success is for you, not for others.
- Believe in yourself.
- Practice random acts of kindness.
- Read motivational quotes, and stories.
- Collect and mount motivational posters in your classroom.
- Take a vacation, a week-end getaway, or go to a spa retreat.
- Find a significant other who can support you in good times and bad.
- Get involved with your professional teacher groups.
- Learn how to say no—you don't have to do it all.
- Replace the words can't, try, and problems with can, will, and challenges.
- Be flexible, or you'll be permanently bent out of shape.
- Focus on the positive.
- Join a sports league or a charitable volunteer group.
- Get a pet (rabbit, cat, dog...).
- Do your best. Perfection is the enemy of excellence. There is a very wide range of good, acceptable, yet valuable work.
“Perfect” teachers are a burden to everyone-even themselves.

Chapter 4

Capping Your Success

“If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime educate people.”
Chinese proverb

End of The Year Activities

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
William Butler Yeats

The last weeks of schools are often hectic and whip by in a blur. Although the end is near, there is still an excellent opportunity to review and plan for next year. If it's true that students only remember their first and last days of school, the last day needs to be planned and structured just as carefully and completely as the first day.

The end-of-the-year school trip has come and gone. The final assemblies and class parties are being planned. The final standard tests have been taken. This is a very exciting and hectic time. However, if you don't have a plan in place for the final days, excellent learning opportunities for you and your students could be lost.

During the last days of the school year, I make sure that the standardized tests that I gave in the first week of school, and then each term, i.e., Morrison McCall Spelling Scale, McCall Crabbs Standard Test Lessons In Reading, and Arithmetic Review have all been done and recorded on the same class list so I can see what improvements the students have made. The list also shows me quickly and easily which students did not make any significant improvement over the year. This is the time for me to find out why. Was it my teaching? Did the students need extra help? Were there other circumstances beyond my control that account for how the students did?

To my running list of things that worked and didn't work, I can now add any observations from my standardized test results. I also take the time to make comments in my unit files, and in my class teacher textbook. I note anything that needs to be fine tuned for next year, also anything that worked and didn't work. I'm usually doing this throughout the year, but in the rush to get things done, sometimes I forget to note some ideas. This running list is something I'll look over during the summer to help me track down resources such as books, audio-visual resources, and websites to incorporate for the next years class.

This running list is also a place to write down any moments that were especially fun with the students and to reflect on whether they were just one-time things with this group or can it be duplicated with another class.

During the last week, I also start collecting all the textbooks, notebooks, and leftover projects and papers. This gives me the opportunity to prepare anchor papers to show students next year. I show students what an “A” “B”, “C”, “D” and an unacceptable paper look like. (Of course, I remove the students’ names before I do this.) I’ll also keep the notebooks and work for a record of what I did with students. Doing so, gives me concrete evidence of what went well and what didn’t. In some schools notebooks are collected into student portfolios and passed on to the next teacher.

Depending on your class, the last days of the school year provides an opportunity to use them as a focus group. The same type of questions I use to “unstuck” the class, I also use in a different format to get feedback to help me in planning for next year. Here are some samples from grade 5:

- What are 3 things you liked about grade 5?
- What are 3 things you didn’t like about grade 5?
- What are 3 things that I should stop doing?

The Last Day

“A teacher affects eternity. He [She] can never tell where his influence stops.” - Henry Adams

Every year the last day of school seems to go by faster and faster. It's obviously a very exciting day both for students and teachers, but sometimes not for parents! It's a day that should be planned as carefully as the first day since students' excitement level, increases as each passing hour approaches the end of the day!

On the last day, some teachers will have a class party. Some schools will have a farewell assembly in the morning to review the year and to announce the awards given to the graduating grade 8 students the night before. Often there is a party with a BBQ and music in the afternoon outside, involving parents, students, and teachers. Other schools have a teacher versus senior or graduating students' baseball game. Usually the last few hours of the school day are left for the teachers to say goodbye to their students.

End-of year is a unique and precious time to ensure closure. I often tell my students that it is the very last time all of us will be together as a class. Some of them will move away and go to different schools. Some will be in different classes in the same school. New students and new teachers will come into the school, their classes, and their lives.

I usually start the last day as I did the first day. I meet my students at the door, shake their hands, and give them a fun activity sheet to do. Sometimes it's an activity that we didn't have time to do the very first day.

Depending on what the entire school is doing that last day, e. g., all attending an assembly, I'll work around the activities with my own class. The last day is the day I bring in my video of the entire year. This is my visual memory book. Usually the video lasts between 45 and 60 minutes. The highlights of the video are the time capsule presentations. I'm just as amazed as the students are when they see the changes in their physical appearance after only a year. This is a time that I'll also show their time capsules to my grade 8 students. Remember I had taken them years before when they were in my grade 5 class. Students will laugh and get embarrassed as they see themselves and their fellow classmates. After the video, I hand out their time capsules. Students will often spend a half hour or so reading what they wrote that particular first day, seeing how much they've grown and changed and comparing themselves to their classmates. Some teachers like to have students prepare letters to students in the previous grade telling them about what their year was like or will be. Other teachers choose to have their students write introduction letters to their next year's teacher.

Some schools hand out their yearbooks and class pictures on the last day. It's a great time for students to share memories and get autographs for their yearbooks. I tell each of my students to make a

record of the names of their classmates so years from now they'll remember who was in their class.

As I'm about to give out the report cards, I remind them what I told them on the first day—blink your eyes, that's how fast this year will go by. The night before, I put two things in their report card envelopes. One, a list of supplies they will need for next year. The other, this poem entitled "Last Day of School", as well as a few items packed into a plastic baggie: (I found this poem on the Internet many years ago. Unfortunately, I do not know it's source. intent to not give proper credit. Upon notification and proof of origin, proper credit will be given in subsequent editions)

Last Day of School

"You're a very special person,
And I wanted you to know,
How much I enjoyed being your teacher,
How fast the year did go!
Please come back to visit me,
As through the grades you grow,
Try hard to learn all that you can,
There is so much to know!
The one thing I tried to teach you, to last your whole life through,
Is to know that you are SPECIAL,
There is no one else like you!
Here are a few items to help you remember to celebrate you and your successes:

Toothpick - to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others.

Rubber Band - to remind you to be flexible, things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out.

Band Aid - to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's.

Pencil - to remind you to list your blessings every day.

Eraser - to remind you that everyone makes mistakes, and it's O.K.

Chewing Gum - to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything!

Mint - to remind you that you are worth a "mint".

Be sure you add:

Your Name

Grade/School/Year

City

Then, I shake their hands, tell them one or two quick words of encouragement, and wish them a happy and safe summer vacation. At one school I worked at, the tradition was that after the report cards were handed out, students lined the hallways. All the grade eights

would leave their classrooms and walk down the hallways being clapped out of their elementary schools.

What a super way to end their year and yours on the same high note on which they entered your class that very first day!

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Step number one is to register at Clickbank. Clickbank is the company that takes all the credit card orders for "How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best" website. They also track all affiliate sales and send out your commission checks. Clickbank accepts all major credit cards in over 100 countries. **To set up your affiliate account (it's free) and takes less then 2 minutes, just click on the link below:**

<http://www.clickbank.com/jmap/?v=howtomake>

All you have to do is fill out the simple form and choose a clickbank "nickname" of your choice (which will be your "affiliate ID"). Once you have your Clickbank "nickname," You can start making money right away. All you do is put links on your website or in your e-zine using the following link (URL) to advertise:

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Replace the **YOURID** with your ClickBank nickname. (Be certain that your link is correct so you get credit for the sale !). Whenever someone clicks on YOUR link, the affiliate software recognizes that it's YOUR customer and it takes them to the How To Make A Difference website - and if they order, you earn a 50% commission on the sale equal to approximately \$12.00 dollars per e-book sold!

If you're already a clickbank member simply insert your nickname in the link above replacing the YOURID with your nickname.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'VE MADE A SALE?

Every time someone orders through your link, you'll receive an instant e-mail notification that you've made a sale. You'll get commission checks directly from clickbank in the mail and they will be sent to the address you choose when you fill out the sign up form.

It's really that simple. Just send your e-zine, newsletter subscribers or website visitors to the How To Make A Difference website through your special clickbank affiliate link. You get notified by e-mail each time you make a sale, and you get checks in the mail twice every month! What could be easier?

HOW MUCH MONEY CAN YOU MAKE?

Obviously it depends on how many e-books are sold but remember our product is only \$27 and includes an e-book, and work book and we are also giving away over \$100 dollars worth of free bonus products with each purchase so it will not be a hard sale to make.

If you put highly visible links or banners on a high traffic website, the commissions can be very substantial.

If you have an e-zine with a large subscriber base and you recommend the power of positive habits E-book in each issue of your e-zine, the commissions are usually even higher.

LINKING METHODS

There are many ways you can promote “How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best” in your e-zine:

- 1) Write a short endorsement, testimonial, and/or success story about the results you achieved in your class by making use of one or more of the tips and strategies outlined in the eBook. An endorsement like this is one of the best ways of making a sale.
- 2) Write your own book review or endorsement. After you've read the e-book, write your own "book review" or book endorsement ad (in your own words) explaining what you liked about the book and why every teacher should get a copy.
- 3) Use a simple text link. Anywhere that you would put a regular link (like on your links page), simply replace the normal link with your special affiliate link that contains your nickname.
- 4) Use banner ads. Put banners on high traffic pages of your website . We provide banners below. Make sure your affiliate link is properly set in the banner HTML code.
- 5) Run "Sponsor ads" in your e-zine. You can say that How To Make A Difference website is the "sponsor" of your e-zine. Place a "sponsor link" or short classified in the e-zine. See sample ad text below.

If you need any help just ask. Send an email to: marjan@glavac.com

SAMPLE BANNERS



SAMPLE Classified ADS BELOW

To send this classified ad to your customers and subscribers, simply copy and paste it into your ezine or newsletter. **Don't forget to replace the YOURID with your own ClickBank ID.**

Sample Classified Ad #1

"Overcome Your Greatest Teaching Challenges With This Ebook!"

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?YOURID/howtomake>

Do you want to take your teaching to the next level?

Do you find yourself prevented by:

- 1. Being completely exhausted from constantly disciplining students?
- 2. Allowing fear, lack of knowledge and procrastination control you and keep you from becoming the teacher you've always wanted to become?

It's time to Say "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH" and put control and power back in your hands!

Finally Teacher Resources that reveal breakthrough strategies to reveal YOUR expertise.

So powerful are these strategies...they will effortlessly compel YOU to become the teacher you've always dreamed of becoming!

Guaranteed.

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?YOURID/howtomake>

Sample Classified Ad #2

BECOME THE TEACHER YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED
ABOUT BECOMING

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?YOURID/howtomake>

Do you dread teaching?
Are tired of constantly disciplining students?
Have you allowed fear, lack of knowledge and procrastination control
you and keep you from becoming the teacher you've always wanted to
become?

It's time to Say "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH" and change the status quo.

Finally an eBook to allow YOU to tap YOUR expertise and make
YOU become the teacher you've always wanted to become.
YOU can't go wrong.

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?YOURID/howtomake>

Classified Ad #3

Make A Difference In The Lives Of Your Students And Inspire Them To Do Their Best

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?YOURID/howtomake>

Free prize inside.

E-mail: To send this email to your fellow teaching colleagues, customers, or newsletter subscribers simply copy, paste, and send. **Don't forget to replace the YOURID with your own ClickBank ID and replace [firstname] and [yourname].**

Hello [firstname],

I just finished reading Marjan Glavac's new eBook on teaching strategies "How To Make A Difference: Inspiring Students To Do Their Best. This eBook contains teaching strategies and tips that any teacher can use to make a difference in the classroom.

The best part about the book is Marjan's down to earth writing style. His strategies are flexible. These strategies are not "pie in the sky" theory—they're based on his 23+ years of teaching.

Marjan's a classroom teacher and wants teachers and students to do their best. If you have any questions, you can contact Marjan directly with any questions you may have about any of the strategies in his eBook. And, as well, your satisfaction is guaranteed or he will refund 100% of your money.

To learn more about the eBook go to:

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?YOURID/howtomake>

All the best,

[yourname]