

Be A Great Teacher - 5 Things You Can Do That Take Little Of Your Time

By Shannon Tani All teachers want to be great teachers. But the pressures of lesson planning, grading, preparing materials, and talking to parents often eat away at the little time we have to work on being a great teacher. This can lead to frustration and feeling as though you are failing your students. Fortunately, a few changes in the way you think and act throughout the day can make a big difference between being a mediocre teacher and a great teacher. These 5 simple things take up little of your time, but can make all the difference in the world. 1. Think positive thoughts. You should think of at least one good thing that you could say about each of your students every day. If you have a challenging child in your class, it can be easy to get wrapped up in thinking about all of the bad things about that child. By thinking something positive about them--even if it's only that they were wearing cute socks or made an interesting artistic choice by using only red to color their picture--you'll start to change your thoughts about this child. Additionally, having a constant supply of positive things to say about your students to their parents makes the parents more receptive when you need to bring up a problem situation.

2. Give some attention to "kids that don't need attention". We all have students in our class that scream for attention by acting out and behaving badly. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we have students who demand attention for the good things they do, whether it's helping out, knowing the right answer, or excelling in an art project. Then there are the students in between. They may be shy or modest, but for whatever reason, they don't demand your attention. Yet, in my experience, they appreciate it even more when they do get your attention. A great teacher recognizes these students and pays special attention to them. The smile that they give as they think "Wow! The teacher noticed me!" is more than enough reward.

3. Make "mistakes". Throughout the day, make some simple mistakes that the students will notice and can correct. For example, say that it's raining when it's really a sunny day, or point to a picture of a dog and say that it's a cat. Feign surprise when they correct you and let them know that you appreciate their help. This will help boost your students' confidence in their knowledge and helps them to speak out. It also shows them that it's OK to make mistakes, and even the teacher will sometimes make a mistake.

4. Show an interest in their outside lives. Let your students teach you about their outside interests. Young students, for example, may be interested in a particular character. Even if you already know about this character, pretend that you don't, and let the student tell you about them. The student will feel happy that you care enough to ask and pleased that they were able to teach the teacher something.

5. Never dislike a child. A child who has just been punished may think that the teacher doesn't like them. It's important that you let the student know that it's not them you don't like, it's the bad thing that they did. Since I teach very young children, I show them this with a hug. Simply saying it is effective for older students. More importantly, you must internalize this sentiment yourself. You must never think, "I don't like Johnny." Rather, you should think, "Johnny acts out in ways that I don't like." Your actions will reflect your internal attitude, so you must always keep this in mind. Being a great teacher can take a lot of hard work, but following these suggestions can put you on the path to success.

About the Author

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