

## **Top Ten Classroom Initiatives to Immediately Implement to Make a Difference NOW!**

(Proven strategies backed by abundance of research)

1. ***Know your students!*** When writing a short summary of themselves, students usually talk about what means the most to them first. Very valuable when needed to address issues one-on-one, as well as for motivation. Speak with as many students as possible the first week of class especially!
2. ***Learn students' names and use them frequently!*** Reiterates your concern for them as a person, providing a much needed boost in motivation and self-esteem.
3. ***Praise for effort and progress, NOT results or intelligence.*** Numerous studies show the significant impact this can have on student learning. The results are guaranteed to come with constant improvement, which is why our *focus* is on progress and not the end result.
4. ***Break material into smaller chunks.*** This goes from everything from lectures to handouts. It also teaches that large tasks are completed by focusing on small steps. Phone numbers use a dash for a reason, it is much easier for the brain to remember than using a string of seven numbers. The more at-risk the student, the easier they are overwhelmed and frustrated....which may give the *perception* (not necessarily reality) that the student is lazy, unmotivated, or lacking in work ethic.
5. ***Use humor to lighten the mood.*** The less the stress, the greater the retention. Good teachers tell stories, point out silly things, bring joy to difficult situations, and are not afraid of laughter. They use humor to connect to their students. In other words, excellent teachers *keep the students' attention without fear*. Have a problem with this....use videos!
6. ***ALWAYS start each lesson with an attention-getter or meaningful questions!*** Research shows it does not even matter if the topic is directly related to the material or not. It prepares the mind for engagement. If you *'do not have time for this'*, you need to re-evaluate your content.
7. ***Do not lecture for more than ~ 10-15 min. (20 max) before stopping and giving time to process information*** (via discussions, problem solving, group work, writing, etc). Follows #4 above. Teacher is *actively* involved in this aspect of the learning environment. Key is maximum student engagement!
8. ***Make meaning of the lesson.*** Always be prepared to tell the student WHY they are performing a certain task or topic. Must view assignments as a learning opportunity, not just a 'task to complete'.
9. ***Present the material so it is relevant to the students' lives.*** This gives the lesson more meaning and relates it to something they already know. More important the older and more experienced the student.
10. ***Remember... we are not dealing with just student problems, but human nature problems.*** The more teachers can relate themselves to students, the easier it is to effectively communicate and motivate the student. Just because a teacher *perceives* a student does not care, does not mean it is true. There are some teachers who students *perceive* as uncaring. Just like being respectful (*proactive*) is not the same as *not* being disrespectful (*neutral*). ***"Students do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care!"*** Student problems with *'motivation or work ethic'??*...make this quote your focal point!