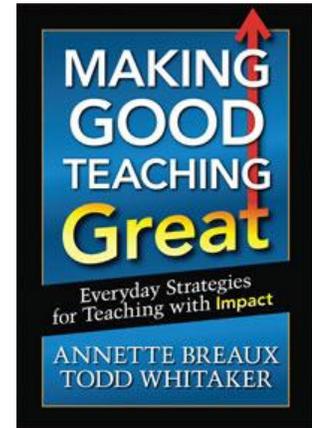


April 11, 2012

In [Making Good Teaching Great](#), [Annette Breaux](#) and [Todd Whitaker](#) share dozens of strategies for classroom management and effective instruction. Below is an extract from their tip called “To the Office You Go! Yes? No?”

Start a new trend today. When a student does something good, send him to the office! Send a little note along with him that says something like, “John received an award in my class for having the most improved behavior this week. I just wanted you to know what a good job he is doing.” That’s it. If the principal or assistant principal is not available, that’s okay. He can simply leave the note for them to find when they return. If an administrator is available, then he or she will have the opportunity to pat John on the back for a job well done. This little technique makes a big difference. Just watch how much better John’s behavior becomes. And no student is too old to do this. We all like to be complimented and recognized for a job well done!

Make it a part of your routine. At least once a week, send a student to the office for a positive reason. Trust us when we tell you that any administrator will welcome this kind of good news!



We have asked the members of our panel: What simple strategies do you use in your classroom to address management and instructional challenges or improve students’ behavior?

	Suggestions from Steven Arechiga K–8 ESL Teacher Amphitheater Public Schools
Tucson, AZ	

Academic games are an important tool for teachers. Using games helps to engage and motivate students, which results in fewer behavior issues. Students will want to come to your class. The students are learning, but they are having so much fun they don't even realize it!

I teach English as a second language, so my students are constantly learning new words. Research has shown that it takes multiple and varied exposures to internalize vocabulary. What better way to review words than to play games with them? Jeopardy is a classic. You can create your own Jeopardy or Bingo games to reinforce vocabulary in many content areas. There are a multitude of interactive games that can be found on the Internet to reinforce vocabulary and content. Smartboard websites are out there if you have one in your room. There are also many games that can be purchased through educational companies.

Use games in centers, as whole class activities, or with small groups. Games motivate kids, which creates happy and engaged students, in turn resulting in fewer behavior problems. This all translates into better learning and increased achievement!



Midlothian, VA

Suggestions
from **David S.
Ellena**
Principal
Tomahawk
Creek Middle
School

The biggest thing we stress during the first week of school is establishing classroom rules and procedures. We want our teachers to set up how things are done in that classroom from the first moment the students walk in the door. Once the students have become accustomed to the rules and the expectations, then teachers can begin to allow for more freedom and interaction within the class.

This is done in different ways in each teacher's classroom. Some teachers allow students to create the rules, some have them posted, and some have rules that are non-negotiable, but they invite the class to add one or two. With procedures, it is important for the students to understand the way certain things are done: when to respond, what is the proper way to respond when the teacher asks a question, how to gather materials, how to work in groups, etc. These are all things that need a few weeks to establish. Once they are established, they become habits. This minimizes the amount of time spent on correcting behavior because the students know the proper way to behave.



Suggestions from **Dana
Dusbiber**
High School Literacy and
Writing Teacher
Sacramento City Unified
School District
(Teacher Consultant,
California Writing Project)
Sacramento, CA

One simple strategy that I use to promote success for my most vulnerable students is that of offering choices. When I have a student in the room who is clearly having a bad day — who seems very upset and likely to disrupt the rest of the class — I offer him/her a choice in activity. My students always carry or have access to independent reading books. If I know that pushing forward with the planned activity is going to cause significant upset or frustration, I simply lean in next to the student and offer him/her the option of reading. Since I don't permit students to put

their heads down in my room, I find that the reading option almost always allows for both of us to feel like winners.

As a teacher, I never promise to treat my students the same. I do promise to treat each of them as individuals with unique gifts and challenges. Offering choices and “space” within the confines of the classroom allows me to gently reach out to my individual students and, hopefully, create some respectful safeness for them.



Suggestions from **Amy Bosley**
Clinical Faculty Associate
Indiana State University
(Permanent position at Vigo County
School Corporation)
Terre Haute, IN

I have found bucket-filling to be quite effective in my fifth-grade classroom. Each child has a metal bucket on the wall and students are encouraged to write “bucket-slips.” These are kind or encouraging words for one another (for example: “Thank you for including me at recess,” “Congrats on the top score on the math test,” “I like your new haircut”). I also have a bucket on my desk and they write things like, “The science experiment was so fun,” “Thank you for choosing great books to read to us,” and — my favorite, from a boy who hates school, hates every teacher, and is bitter to the end — “To the #1 teacher in the world!”

Once a week we empty our buckets and read what’s inside. I didn’t think this was a big deal until a parent told me about her hard-shelled son’s reaction. We were a few months into the school year and I didn’t feel that special bond with the boy yet. He was gone from school on Friday, which was our designated bucket-emptying day that year. His mom came to school on Monday to tell me about his hospital stay over the weekend. She didn’t really want to tell me about his medical issues, but focused on his twelve-hour crying spree. The nurses and doctors couldn’t find anything wrong with him. He wouldn’t tell his family what was wrong. People even offered to bribe him with ice cream to find out why he was crying. Finally, he told his mom that he was upset because he was missing emptying his bucket in the classroom. That’s when I knew that bucket-filling was powerful!