

Seven Simple Secrets:

What the BEST Teachers Know and Do!

Annette Breaux

Materials in this handout are excerpts from the following book:

Seven Simple Secrets: What the BEST Teachers Know and Do. Annette Breaux and Todd Whitaker. Eye on Education: New York. 2006.

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Secret One. The Secret of Planning

- Determine your objective.
- Decide how you will make the lesson interesting and inviting for your students.
- Be sure to make a concerted effort to actively involve your students in every part of the lesson.
- Plan to state the lesson's purpose, relate the skill to their real lives, teach and model the skill, practice the skill with them, have them try the new skill independently, and review.
- Be sure to gather any necessary materials beforehand.
- Enjoy teaching your well-planned lesson!

If you plan your lessons with careful attention, treating each one as a special invention, you're sure to see student success and retention, reducing your levels of stress and tension!

Secret Two. The Secret of Classroom Management

What an Effective Teacher's Classroom Looks Like:

- The classroom looks "organized." There is a place for everything, and everything is in its place.
- The students do most of the talking and the "doing."
- Routines and procedures are evident. Students know exactly what is expected of them.
- There are no teacher "warnings" for student misbehavior. If a rule is broken, there is a consistent consequence.
- The teacher is proactive.
- Lesson plans are well-written.
- The objectives for the lesson are clearly established for the students.
- There is constant teacher movement around the room.
- Lessons are inviting and exciting, and students remained actively engaged.
- The teacher never appears to be anything but "in control."
- Activities are varied to meet the needs of all learners.
- There is constant positive reinforcement, and the teacher smiles often.

Secret Three. The Secret of Instruction

- Relate everything you teach to the real lives of your students.
- Plan lessons and activities that will actively involve your students.
- Make every student successful by teaching him "at his level" and then moving him forward.
- Be enthusiastic in your teaching, and when you don't feel enthusiastic, fake it!
- Test only what you teach.
- Test in the same way that you have taught.
- Pace your lessons such that activities move quickly, students remain active, and there is never any "down" time where students have nothing to do.
- Be sure to teach and model, and then practice with students before they try a new skill on their own.

Secret Four. The Secret of Attitude

- Attitude is everything!
- Find what's good, and focus on it. Find what's not so good, and make it better!
- Our attitudes help to shape the types of teachers, leaders, and role models we become.
- Don't gripe, groan, or gossip in the Teachers' Lounge or anywhere else!
- Your attitude and approach can either ignite a volatile situation or extinguish it.
- Portray an "attitude of responsibility." Take your students' failures and successes personally!
- Burn calories by walking away from negative co-workers!
- Make positive contacts with parents.
- Convince a parent that you're on the side of his child by being on the side of his child!
- Have the BEST attitude on your faculty!

Secret Five. The Secret of Professionalism

- If you're going to call yourself a professional, then you have to appear professional at all times when practicing your profession.
- Dress professionally.
- If you try too hard to "fit in," you're more than likely to "fall in."
- Once you've fallen in, no one offers a hand to pull you out!
- Remain in control of your actions and reactions with students, no matter what.
- Do not take student behavior personally.
- You can be serious without being loud and losing control.
- Always attack the problem; never attack the person.
- Never stop learning to teach.
- Bleed professionalism!
- Do your best, be your best, and give your best every day that you teach.
- Keep your students as your main focus. Make EVERY decision based on what's best for them, as opposed to what's easiest for you.

Secret Six. The Secret of Effective Discipline

- Do not allow your students to "see" your buttons. If they can't see them, they can't push them.
- Appear calm in any situation.
- Have a very specific discipline plan and enforce it consistently.
- Never argue or bargain with a student.
- If you have well-established procedures in place, you'll need very few rules.
- Use clever psychology to ward off potential discipline problems.
- Ask students what they want, need, and expect from your class.
- Use every situation to learn and grow as a teacher. Remember to focus on becoming "better," not "bitter."
- Never lose your cool with a student.
- Practice self discipline.
- Find the good in every child.

Secret Seven. The Secret of Motivation and Inspiration

- Your actions and your moods will set the daily tone for the class.
- Act excited and motivated every day. Fake it if you must!
- Find the good in every child.
- Make every student feel like your "favorite" student.
- Find ways to help keep yourself motivated and inspired.
- Do whatever it takes to motivate and inspire your students.
- Your influence is lasting, so make it positive!
- Make every student feel special. They all are!
- Make every student successful. They all can be!

I Teach

I light a spark in a darkened soul
I warm the heart of one grown cold
I look beyond and see within
Behind the face, beneath the skin
I quench a thirst, I soothe a pain
I provide the food that will sustain
I touch, I love, I laugh, I cry
Whatever is needed, I supply
Yet more than I give, I gain from each
I am most richly blessed – I teach.

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THANKS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!