



Teacher Tip of the Week

The Many Faces of Praise



We all know that praise can be a very effective motivator. The problem is that we don't know what or how to praise. And, of course, if we don't see any noteworthy attitude, effort, ac-

tion, or achievement, we won't do very much praising. When such is the case, we may not give any feedback at all—or we may imply criticism or rejection whether we intend to or not. When we do, we compound the problem. That is why we need to remember the value of praise and look for opportunities to give praise, especially to those students in whom we are having difficulty finding anything to see as praiseworthy. This involves looking at ourselves as well as looking at the many aspects—or faces—of praise.

Praising students is hard if it is not a familiar behavior. It's even more difficult if you don't like to do it—or don't feel comfortable when you do. Therefore, the first face of praise is your own feeling toward it. Maybe giving or receiving praise makes you uneasy. Maybe you don't think "doing what one is supposed to do" is worthy of praise. Maybe you can praise only the exceptional achievement. Any of these feelings can explain a reluctance or failure to praise.

Too, if you are afraid you'll appear dishonest or insincere, praising will be even harder. Students trying to win your approval and enhance their own self-worth via confirmation from you will find a "rocky road." just know that some behaviorists say, however, that the most common reason behind withholding praise is a poor self-image. Whatever the cause, the moti-



ational power that results from giving sincere praise is lost. Therefore, it is wise to get comfortable with yourself and praise—and make it a natural and sincere part of your teaching style. After all, the first face of praise that students see is yours.

One of the most powerful and appreciated faces of praise is a show of trust. And trust need not be spoken to be given to students. We automatically reveal trust when we give students authority and responsibility. Both are evidence of trust, and they can be given to students in almost every classroom situation. For instance, allowing students to formulate approaches to difficult assignments, encouraging them to work out details of a task, and taking them at their word are all forms of trust. And these actions can speak louder than words.

Any time we give students more autonomy—or freedom—we communicate a form of praise. Autonomy can be granted by allowing students to make decisions and hold a measure of power. We can allow them to enjoy privileges and offer input regarding solving problems. All these actions say more than "good job". They convey the special freedom that comes to people when they perform well.

Another face of praise is interest. Whenever we show interest in students as people—as well as in what they do well—we are praising. We will find that students are strongly motivated by our asking how they reached a personal goal or arrived at a good decision. Wanting to know or understand what a student values or how a student overcame obstacles to do something successfully is one of the highest forms young person cherishes.

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Ideas to Share

READ TO YOUR STUDENTS

Begin each class period with some kind of reading. It might be a famous quotation, a humorous quotation, a "Murphy's law," a startling statistic, a great passage from literature, or whatever. Consider allocating the first five minutes of any period for this activity. Your reading can relate to the subject matter at hand if you like, but that's not really critical. Any valid material is worthwhile.



Helpful Website for Teachers

<http://www.learnnc.org/>

LEARN NC, a program of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill of Education, finds the most innovative and successful practices in K-12 education and makes them available to teachers and students.

The New Teacher Support Program

The Many Faces of Praise

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Giving students individual time with us—in and out of class—is also praise. The more we reveal that we want to be with young people, the more praise we offer. Students quickly realize the big difference between our wanting to spend time with them and our spending time with them because it is part of our job. When we visit with students who drop by to see us, engage them in conversation when we see them downtown, or go to a wrestling match, basketball game, or theater performance to see them, we are spending extra time with them. And, of course, listening, being empathic, and showing we are impressed during any conversation with students are high forms of praise.

There are many other faces of praise that can be revealed daily. First is recognition—from saying a simple hello to noting something a student does. Second is complimenting a kind deed or a good intention. Third is acceptance—for just being—for what a student is as a person, a son, a daughter, and a citizen of the school.



**“KIND WORDS
CAN BE SHORT
AND EASY TO
SPEAK, BUT THEIR
ECHOES ARE**

ENDLESS.”

—MOTHER TERESA

A good teacher knows praise is one of the lifelines for motivating students. Students love praise. They need praise. Praise is the affirmation of a relationship. It is a sustaining force in the feelings of worth that people need in order to enjoy productive and satisfying lives. To be the most meaningful, however, praise must be specific. Without question, it must be sincere and must never be employed as a manipulative gesture.

A good teacher knows we need to give praise as much as students need to receive it. That is because doing so motivates us to look to the best in our students and bring forth more of their strengths. And receiving praise helps make students more imaginative, more creative, more motivated to work. It facilitates their achievement and enhances the best qualities in their character. That is why we should have no hesitancy or apprehension in giving praise. We won't spoil a student with praise. But we can hurt a young person if we withhold our praise.—*Robert DeBruyn*

20 Ways to Praise Students

1. Good
2. You've got it right
3. That's right
4. Super
5. That's good
6. You're really working hard today
7. You are very good at that
8. That's coming along nicely
9. Good work
10. That's much better
11. Exactly right
12. You just about have it
13. That's it
14. You are doing a good job
15. That's quite an improvement
16. Great
17. I knew you could do it
18. Congratulations!
19. Not bad
20. Now you have it



MEET THE PRINCIPALS: Clint Wilson

School: [Lebanon High School](#)

How long have you been a principal at this school? [This is my first year.](#)

Colleges and universities attended: [Tennessee Tech and Tennessee State University](#)

Special interests and hobbies: [Reading. I am writing my first book, collecting PEZ, cooking, Saturday morning cartoons with my 3 daughters \(especially, Jimm y Neutron!\)](#)

Who or what inspires you each day as you do your job and why?

[The students inspire me when I walk around and see them having fun at school while they are learning. There is no greater feeling at school than seeing students attain new knowledge. If I had to pick someone it would be Mr. Hamlet and Mr. Dennis, both from Goodpasture High School, as they inspired me to go into teaching practicing the 3 R's \(Relevance, Relationship & Rigor\).](#)

If you had not gone into education, what type of job would you have chosen: [I would have gone into Forensic Science.](#)

What is the favorite part of your job: [Working with teachers for the betterment of the school.](#)

Suggested Reading for Teachers



The Reading Teacher's Book Of Lists by Edward Bernard Fry, Jacqueline E. Kress, Dona Lee Fountoukidis

The definitive reference for reading and literacy from kindergarten through college. This comprehensive fifth edition of a bestselling classic offers an unparalleled source of timely, practical information on all aspects of reading instruction. Ready for immediate use, it offers over 190 up-to-date lists for developing instructional materials and lesson planning.

The book is organized into 15 convenient sections full of practical examples, key words, teaching ideas, and activities that can be used as is or adapted to meet students' diverse needs. New topical areas include: ideas for non-narrative reading; word walls; graphic organizer and concept development software; new literacies, such as 'zines, Internet terms, emoticons, e-mail, and chat; as well as weekly writing prompts.



REGINA ROBINSON

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CAREERS INSTRUCTOR / WILSON COUNTY CAREER TECHNICAL CENTER

... "Run, run, as fast as you can...and don't look back!" You know, I'm just kidding! -ha!! ...I'm actually having a GREAT 32nd year to my career!!!

On a more serious note... With two of my own daughters now preparing to become teachers, I have many "tips" I could pass on.

One of which I would like to share is the following: One great way I have found to put the responsibility upon the student to see that individual assignments are submitted in an orderly manner is to make use of the following... Have a large capacity three ring binder (including dividers for each class section or subject area), located in a visible area of the classroom - close to the instructor's desk. Students are instructed to place completed assignments within the binder (face down), leaving the rings in the "open" position for the next classmate's use. At the close of the day the instructor may close the rings - carrying the notebook with him/her to grade the submitted assignments. This eliminates the excuse - "I laid it on your desk" which students like to use to place the blame on someone else for an assignment lost or never turned in. The students will soon learn that if an assignment has not been placed in "the notebook" then it has not been submitted for grading purposes.

New Teacher Support Group Participants



LACONDA DODD
WATERTOWN ELEMENTARY
6th-7th GRADES



JAMIE FULLER
WEST WILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
MATH

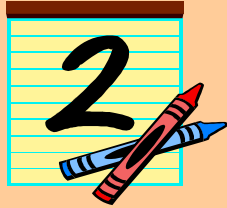
WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher because I feel that what the students learn in my class will prepare them for the future. Reading, writing, and communication in general are skills used in everyday life. I wanted to be a teacher because I want to help my students learn these critical skills and how to use them effectively."—LaConda Dodd

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher to make education a positive part of each student's life. I love to see the "ah-ha" moments, they make me feel I've succeeded in my job. I want to be a role model for all students, but especially those who do not have a positive role model outside school. I want to instill my love of math and education into my students by making my lessons fun and exciting."—Jamie Fuller





GOOD TEACHING: THE TOP TEN REQUIREMENTS

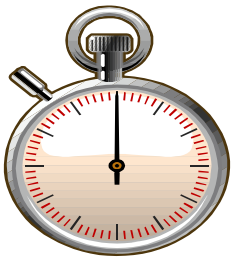
2—Good teaching is about substance and treating students as consumers of knowledge. It is about doing your best to keep on top of your field, reading resources, inside and outside of your areas of expertise, and being at the leading edge as often as possible. But knowledge is not confined to scholarly journals. Good teaching is also about bridging the gap between theory and practice. It is about leaving the ivory tower and immersing oneself in the field, talking to, consulting with, and assisting practitioners, and liaising with their communities.

Time Management Tips for Teachers

Continued from last week...

10. It can be tricky to keep track of missed class work for students who are absent for periods of time. An effective way to do this is by creating "While You Were Out" folders. After taking attendance, place one on the desk of every absent student. This gives you specific, organized places to put all assignments and notices.

When children get back, they will find the folders waiting and they will be

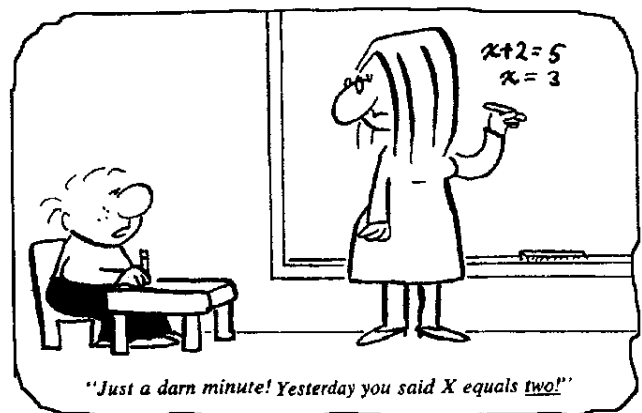


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able to catch up on missed work or information.

11. Take home papers to be corrected in color-coded pocket folders. This helps eliminate misplaced papers by giving you only two places a paper could be—in the file drawer or in the folder. If students claim they turned the assignment in, have them look through the two locations.

Need a Laugh?



It is the policy of the Wilson County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.