

# BONUS SEVEN

This Bonus Seven section is taken from *Seven Simple Secrets: What the BEST Teachers Know and Do!* by Annette Breaux and Todd Whitaker. We have included it here because we feel that mentors and new teachers can use these lists for conversation starters, for goal-setting, and to simply – and most importantly – improve teaching and learning. The lists share what highly effective teachers do on a daily basis. Enjoy!

## Seven Things Parents LOVE About Effective Teachers

1. Parents love teachers who **treat each child as if he/she were the teacher's child**. They trust these teachers to treat their children fairly. These teachers actually tell the parents, "I'll treat each of your children as if they were my own."
2. Parents love teachers who **keep them abreast of what's going on in the classroom**. They love getting updates on what's happening in your classroom. They love hearing about wonderful learning that's taking place. They love being "included" and feeling "in the know."
3. Parents love teachers who **make efforts to ensure positive communication**. These teachers send notes home telling parents of their children's successes, make phone calls to let them know of good things going on with their children, and keep them informed as to the progress of their children. This way, when a serious or negative situation presents itself, the parents are more willing to deal with a teacher they believe actually cares about their child and enjoys teaching their child. With less effective teachers, a negative phone call or letter is often the first communication between the parent and the teacher. Thus parents feel the teacher only communicates when something is wrong!
4. Parents love teachers who LISTEN to them. This does not mean that the parent and teacher always agree. It simply means that the parent feels as though he/she can come to the teacher and have open and honest discussions, even in times of disagreement.
5. Parents love teachers who don't give up on students. These teachers do whatever it takes to help a child succeed – from taking extra time with the child, to suggesting to parents ways that they can help the child at home, to keeping parents abreast of all the efforts the teacher is making to ensure success for the child – academically, socially, and/or behaviorally. Parents see these teachers as team players, not threats or inhibitors to their child's well-being.
6. Parents love teachers who challenge students, while making learning attainable and fun. Students WANT to go to these teachers' classrooms, not because it's easy, but because they feel challenged, loved, safe, and successful.

7. Parents love teachers who do not overburden students with lengthy homework assignments. Learning is done in class. Homework is quick, meaningful, and doable – meant only to reinforce what has been learned in class. Many parents do not feel capable of teaching their children content they, themselves, don't understand. And, even if they do understand the content, they are wondering why their child isn't being helped to grasp the content in class. And even if the child does understand the concept of the homework, no parent is happy when their child has to spend hours at night completing homework assignments!

## Seven Things Students LOVE About Effective Teachers

1. Students love **teachers who are nice** to them. Students, at all grade levels, respond much more favorably to teachers who are nice to them than they do to those who are not. The old “Do unto others” rule applies to us all. But remember that students are not adults, and they don’t always treat others the way that they would like to be treated. That’s why they need positive adult role models in their lives! Being nice does not mean that you let students have their way and do anything they want. It simply means you deal with them, in good times and in bad, in a nice, calm, professional manner.
2. Students love teachers who **make learning fun**. Don’t we all? If learning is fun, it hardly feels like learning at all. Students should not feel worn out and frustrated when they leave our classrooms. They should feel invigorated, inspired, and successful. That’s why the most effective teachers create ways to make learning fun and exciting. This way, the students can’t wait to return tomorrow!
3. Students love teachers who **help them succeed**. The same concept applies to sports. Players love coaches who help them succeed. No one wants to feel unsuccessful, so students will often give up for fear of failing. This way, they feel “in control” of the failure. But in the classrooms of teachers who make learning something new appear doable and who guide students and who stop at nothing to help students understand when they struggle to understand, it’s rare to see a student giving up. At the risk of overstating the obvious, success really does breed success!
4. Students love teachers who **challenge them**. Yes, students welcome a good challenge, as long as they feel they can walk away from the challenge having accomplished something, having experienced some degree of success. They don’t want “easy” and they don’t want “impossible.” In between the two are activities that are challenging yet attainable. That’s where learning takes place.
5. Students love teachers who are **clear with expectations** – both for behavior and learning. They want to know what they can do and what they can’t – what we do expect and what we don’t – what we will and won’t allow. They don’t like surprises. They like to know where we stand so that they can better know where they stand.

6. Students love teachers who **don't hold yesterday's transgressions against them**. Quite simply, they want us to wipe the slate clean every day.
7. Students love teachers who can relate to them and their lives – teachers who **get to know them as people**. Get to know your students – who they are and aren't, what they like and dislike, what they dream about becoming. Help them to realize their dreams. That's what teachers do!

## Seven Things Administrators LOVE About Effective Teachers

1. Administrators love teachers who **arrive prepared for each lesson**. These teachers spend a lot of time planning lessons with careful thought and attention to detail, ensuring that each lesson is designed to maximize student engagement, interest, participation, and success.
2. Administrators love teachers who **handle their own discipline problems** whenever possible (which is most of the time). These teachers rarely send students to the office, but when they do, the office takes their referrals seriously!
3. Administrators love teachers who **make every decision based on what's best for students**. Though there are times when it is tempting to give students "busy work" or plan activities that give the teacher some "down time," these activities almost never maximize student engagement and/or student success. Effective teachers know this, and they make every decision based on how best to serve the students, not themselves.
4. Administrators love teachers **who come straight to them, the administrators, with problems or grievances** as opposed to griping to other teachers or, worse yet, the community. No teacher always agrees with everything that goes on in his/her school. But effective teachers air their grievances privately and professionally, never in a way that could harm anyone or degrade the reputation of the school, its staff, or its students.
5. Administrators love teachers who **continue to educate themselves** and keep up with current practices in education. These teachers never "finish" learning, growing, experimenting, discovering. It doesn't mean that these teachers embrace something merely for the sake of change. Rather, they are accepting of change and willing to try new ideas. They are open-minded yet realistic. They are willing to change and grow with the times.
6. Administrators love teachers who **are excellent classroom managers**. The fact that they are excellent classroom managers is the main reason these teachers have the fewest discipline problems. It's not that they get the "good kids" every year. Rather, it's the fact that they have established clearly stated rules and procedures and they are consistent with their

management plans. Students know what to expect from these types of teachers.

7. Administrators love teachers who **treat every child with respect and dignity**. No matter how tense or tough a situation may become, everyone is treated, in these teachers' classrooms, with respect and dignity. These teachers even know how to reprimand a student in a nice way, meaning they remain professional and calm, attacking the problem but never the person.

## Seven Things Effective Teachers Do EVERY Day

1. Effective teachers **prepare, prepare, prepare**. Their lesson plans are detailed. They never wing it. You never hear an effective teacher claiming that he/she doesn't need lesson plans. And you never see an effective teacher using the same plans over and over, year after year.
2. Effective teachers **treat every student with respect and dignity**, every day. No matter how the student acts, effective teachers remain professional, realizing they are the adults in the classroom. No one is ever treated in a disrespectful or undignified manner by an effective teacher.
3. Effective teachers **smile** – a lot. They know that students are in need of positive role models. They greet their students every day – making their classrooms feel welcoming and inviting. They smile during conversations with students. And they smile often while teaching. They convince their students that there is no place they'd rather be than in the classroom, teaching, every single day.
4. Effective teachers **are good actors**. No one always feels happy. No one always feels professional. No one loves every moment of every teaching day. Effective teachers simply use their acting skills to appear as though they do! They don't allow their personal moods or problems to spill into their professional lives.
5. Effective teachers **remain calm and composed**, especially in tough situations. They draw on those acting skills just mentioned. They realize that when conflict meets calm, it is more effectively resolved. Therefore, the more out of control a student is, the more in control the teacher must be.
6. Effective teachers **have clear rules and procedures**, and they adhere to these every day. They are consistent. The students know what to expect, and the parents know what to expect – so there are rarely any surprises. When people know what it is you expect, they are much more likely to do what it is that you expect them to do. Period.
7. Effective teachers **teach from bell to bell**. There are no "lulls" in their classrooms – times when students find themselves with nothing to do. Idle time invites misbehavior. In the classrooms of effective teachers, it is difficult for students to even find time to misbehave. The teacher keeps the students so engaged that the class is over before they know it!

## Seven Things Effective Teachers DON'T Do

1. Effective teachers **don't yell at or intentionally humiliate** students. Ineffective teachers are often heard raising their voices in a desperate attempt to regain the control they so often lose. They also tend to do things like calling on students who are not paying attention in an attempt to embarrass them. Such approaches never breed positive results, so effective teachers don't engage in this type of futile behavior.
2. Effective teachers **don't gossip**. Gossiping about others can only serve to harm others. It's never a good thing, it never helps anyone, and it should never take place in a school setting. Effective teachers are not overheard gossiping about students, parents, or anyone else.
3. Effective teachers **don't take student behavior personally**. They realize that they are the adults; they are the professionals. Students will say and do inappropriate things at times, and sometimes those things are directed at the most readily accessible adult – the teacher. But effective teachers know that the second they allow students to push their buttons, the students have taken over. So even when their buttons may get pushed (on the inside), they never allow students to know this. Their outward behavior is always that of someone in control. Not “controlling,” but “in control.”
4. Effective teachers **don't rely on others to handle problems that could be handled in class**. They handle every problem themselves, unless the problem is something that absolutely must be brought to an administrator's attention. If it CAN be handled in the classroom, it IS handled in the classroom!
5. Effective teachers **don't play the blame game**, blaming parents, society, the administration, or others for challenges in their classrooms. They know teaching is challenging, and they welcome those challenges as opportunities for growth – growth for them and growth for their students. Less effective teachers act as though their hands are tied and that until society changes, parents change, and their administrators change, they are helpless to make a difference in their classrooms.
6. Effective teachers **don't stop learning**. It is simply not possible to master the art of teaching and to finally learn everything there is to learn about teaching. No one has ever done it, and no one ever will. The day you're not learning something new about teaching is the day you should probably

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exit the profession. Effective teachers realize this, and they never stop learning to teach.

7. Effective teachers **don't give up on any student**. No matter what a student does, says, or does not do, effective teachers have no "stopping point." They don't throw their hands up in the air and say, "I give up." They actually believe that every student is capable, and they treat each student that way. Students know that these teachers will stop at nothing to help them succeed and that giving up is simply not an option.

## Seven Things Effective Teachers Love About Teaching

1. Effective teachers **love that teaching is challenging**. Successful people, in any profession, welcome challenge. Because we want students to learn to accept life's challenges and tackle these challenges with courage and drive and determination, we, as teachers, have to show them how. Worthwhile accomplishments are never easy; that's what makes them worthwhile! Teaching is not easy. But there is no profession more worthwhile! Effective teachers live by this belief.
2. Effective teachers **love that students have a variety of needs**. They celebrate the uniqueness of each student, as opposed to trying to make them all the same. They use their artistry to find ways to accommodate the differences in students, knowing no two students learn exactly the same way. If all students were the same and learned the same, teaching would be a breeze. Almost anyone could do it. If all patients had the same illness and could be treated the same, almost anyone could be a doctor!
3. Effective teachers **love knowing how influential they are**. They want to make a difference in every student's life, not some or most. They realize they are shaping the future, and they are up to that challenge. They realize that they live in the hearts and minds of every student they have ever taught. Their influence lives on long after the students leave their classrooms. They take their power of influence very seriously.
4. Effective teachers **love involving parents and the community** in the education of students. This does not mean that they get every parent or every community member to become active participants in educating their students. It does mean, however, that they are continually making efforts to utilize parent and community support as part of their students' learning process. They realize that if they encourage the support of 100 parents and succeed in getting support from one, that's one more than they had before!
5. Effective teachers **love when the light bulb goes on in a child's mind**. They live for these moments – moments that can encompass the slightest or greatest of accomplishments. Any little amount of success is a big deal to an effective teacher!

6. Effective teachers **love the fact that they teach children**, because they truly love children. Less effective teachers sometimes act as though their students sort of stand in their way of being good teachers. It may seem like common sense, but in order to be a great teacher, you have to really love children!
7. Effective teachers **love that learning to teach is ongoing**. They love learning new and different ways to help students learn and grow. They don't balk at every new program, technique, or trend in education. They welcome change and are open to trying new things, always!

## Seven Things You Can Do to Be a More Effective Teacher Tomorrow

1. **Greet students** every day, every class period. Effective teachers stand at their doors with huge smiles on their faces (regardless of their personal moods) and welcome the students into their classrooms. The students feel as though these teachers are happy to see them every day. That one action heads off many potential discipline problems!
2. **Do things in small bites.** Take one of your lessons that you've already planned and add one activity that will make the lesson more engaging for the students. Don't change all of your day's plans or activities. Just take one and make it better. Add another tomorrow and another the next day. Soon, you'll automatically be planning better, more engaging lessons and activities on a daily basis.
3. **Ask for ideas** from others, and give one new idea a try. Effective teachers are always borrowing ideas from their coworkers. Don't be afraid to ask for new ideas because you fear appearing incompetent. On the contrary, you'll look more competent – as everyone knows that effective teachers are constantly asking others for ideas and sharing their own ideas with others.
4. **Revisit your management plan.** Make sure everyone knows what to expect from today forward. If, by some chance, you've not been clear and consistent with your management plan, that's okay. Start over today. Become clear on your expectations, share them with the class, and begin implementing your plan on a consistent basis.
5. **Tell your students why you love teaching.** Convince them that you are happy to be teaching them. Effective teachers often express, to their students, why they love teaching and why they chose this profession. If the students believe you love what you're doing, they'll be more likely to "buy" what you're "selling."
6. **Teach even more enthusiastically than you normally do.** If you want to be more effective instantly, appear more enthusiastic. Even if you're normally an enthusiastic person, act just a little more enthusiastic today. The teacher's attitude really does determine the overall climate of the classroom.

7. **Get feedback from your students.** Ask how they feel about your class thus far, and solicit ideas for making the class even better. Effective teachers make an effort to give the students lots of ownership in the class and how it's run. It doesn't mean they do everything the students suggest, but they do listen to their students and entertain their thoughts and ideas for making the classroom environment one that is optimal for learning and growing.