



Coach's Corner

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"Great teachers have high expectations for their students, but even higher expectations from themselves."

– Todd Whitaker

STRATEGY SIDEBAR

Channel the Chaos

For many of you, I have mentioned suggestions like: they are going to talk, so use it; or don't fight it, embrace it. But just how do you do that?? For the next couple weeks I will provide some strategies in our Strategy Sidebar for channeling the chaos:

- **Class Debate:** Set up the room for debate, as students enter give them an index card with an issue to debate (this could be from a previous lecture, a novel, school policy, etc, but best if connected to your lesson) on the flip side give them "for" or "against" and allow the debate to commence! Be sure to label what side of the room to sit on.

Upcoming strategies:

- 4 Corners
- Walk the Line
- Scavenger Review

Is your Do Now actually a Do Later?

We all dutifully post our *Do Now* in our lesson plans and on the board, but is it really as effective as it should be? The Purpose of a *Do Now* is to understand the previous lesson, correct student misunderstandings and remedy any deficiencies before moving on with your instruction. But often our do now becomes a wrestling match with students to get in and get working while we fumble through some papers, try to post the attendance, or prepare for class. An effective *Do Now* is 3-5 minutes and **must** hold value. If there is no value attached to it then why would a student do it? If you assign it then you assess it, and that doesn't mean grading every little part of it, but it does mean walking around assessing that they know what they are doing, checking it off, and offering the students helpful comments. This will prove that the *Do Now* is actually valuable. If you lock yourself behind your desk preparing for the class, then you will lose the class before it even starts. The *Do Now* tends to play out in three ways:

1. They complete the "Do Now" correctly on their own, and then sit idly, socialize, or do something for another class as the teacher reviews the "Do Now"--at which point, for these students the "Do Now" has become the "Did Already."
2. They sit idly, socialize, or do something for another class instead of doing the "Do Now" on their own, since they know the teacher will eventually do it for them--at which time they can copy down the answers. For these students, the "Do Now" is really the "Do Later."
3. They sit idly, socialize, or do something for another class instead of doing the "Do Now" on their own but, unlike their "Do Later" classmates, they remain off task even when the teacher reviews the "Do Now." For these students, as you could probably guess, the "Do Now" is the "Do Never."

I encourage you to test this out by greeting the students at the door and taking attendance as they come in (then post it online quickly or while they are working after the *Do Now*), then walk around and comment on the *Do Now* as they are working and see if this makes a difference in the start of your class! Remember, as with any change, it will take time but let's see if we can make the *Do Now* and actual *Do Now*!

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset:

The Danger of Praise

Praising our students is so very important, so you might be wondering what could possibly be the danger? It makes sense that praising a student's ability would foster confidence and achievement, however by praising *ability* we are showing that *ability* is what we value. Students in the fixed mindset believe their ability can never change and will never improve so praise of ability is detrimental. Instead, praise the *effort*. Instead of "you are a good writer" try "this is a good essay, I can tell you worked very hard on it" or "you are really good at math" try "I can tell you really pushed yourself to get the correct answers here". Praising the effort shows that it takes hard work and *effort* in order to be successful.