

## Plan Simply -- Build a Simple Plan: Loose the Ideology

---

Education can be viewed through the filters and slats of educational theory and "hot-for-the-moment" ideology. This is a mistake.

The "buzz" of today doesn't sound like the "buzz" of yesteryear, but effective teaching is amazingly stable. Master teachers of 60 years ago, if brought back into a "modern" classrooms could pick out effective teachers (and warn against the ineffective teachers) by using the skills that they learned way-back-when.

The fact is that good teachers do the same kinds of things, no matter what they say that their philosophy is.

The teachers of yesteryear would describe what they did differently than the teachers of today...but the processes master teachers use in every generation is similar.

Poor teachers also do similar kinds of things as both effective teachers and other poor teachers. But more importantly, poor teachers do not do the productive kinds of things (that need to be done) in the correct way.

Also, amazingly, these "correct things to do" are not complicated and intricate. These correct things mean establishing a simple plan and sticking to it. (I have not conducted interviews in a scientific way, but my hunch is that poor teachers have a more complicated (and more ideological) way of describing what they do.

Master teachers are more practical.

The master teacher develops a simple plan, has a simple explanation for effective teaching, and stays focused on the plan.

Consistency is the key.

What poor teachers do, besides trying to implement too complicated a plan; is to change their plans in midstream.

Effective teachers know what they are going to do, and they remain on track. Poor teachers panic, and decide that what is needed is a complete program change. Of course, there always will be some author to fill the air with the sweet smell of jargon and ideology that lures the poor teacher into this trap.

In the old days (of the Behavior Modification fad of the 1970s), the folks who counted behaviors could predict that negative behaviors in classrooms would re-emerge each two weeks.

The counted negative behaviors would decrease steadily for two weeks as the behavior management plan progressed, then the number of negative behaviors would spike upward.

© 2005 by Joseph Chmielewski All rights reserved.

<http://www.classroomtoolkit.com>

Reprints may be shared under the Reciprocal Public Materials License:

<http://www.classroomtoolkit.com/reciprocal-license.html>

## Plan Simply -- Build a Simple Plan: Loose the Ideology

---

Here was the turning point that differentiated effective teachers from their try-harder-succeed-less colleagues:

The master teachers stuck to what was working.

The master teacher would say to themselves, "The behavior plan has been working well. I'll hold the course steady."

The poor teacher would say to themselves, "I thought that things were getting better, but I was wrong. Everything is falling apart. I better change to a new behavior program."

For the Master Teacher, sticking with the behavior plan resulted in decreased negative behavior, and a smaller spike in negative behavior two weeks later. This pattern of improvement continues for the rest of the school year.

For the poor teacher, the every-two-week change in behavior management plans results in reinforcing (rather than extinguishing the negative behaviors)...behaviors then become harder to eliminate. This means a miserable, stress-filled school year, and the implementing of yet another new behavior plan.

Remember: "Simplicity and Consistency." Keep it simple and stick with it.

The message translated into various learning styles: :-)

Hands-on: Separate the useful from everything else, and hold on to what works

V

Visual: Focus upon simple patterns and keep focused on the plan as you see continued progress

Verbal: Keep your message simple, repeat often, and stay on message

Mathematical: Formulate a simple implementation algorithm, and test all instances for congruence to the desired pattern

© 2005 by Joseph Chmielewski All rights reserved.

<http://www.classroomtoolkit.com>

Reprints may be shared under the Reciprocal Public Materials License:

<http://www.classroomtoolkit.com/reciprocal-license.html>