



Key to Teacher Happiness

Teacher Happiness Key #1: Slow Down

Students do not learn more by doing more in a single lesson. Sometimes we feel like we can squeeze every minute out of the lesson by doing another activity. This doesn't produce more learning. In reality, it causes cognitive chaos where students are unable to process and organize information in their minds.

Too fast is a blur for students. Too fast is stressful for the teacher. It's okay to slow down.

Focus on one or two goals in a learning block and then plan only the most important learning activities.

Take your time, model and practice the activity well. Give students time to be successful. They'll learn more, and you'll be a happier teacher.

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Teacher Happiness Key #2: Exercise in Class

Relieve the stress and tension during class time. Students need breaks to increase blood flow to the brain - exercise is the perfect remedy. You can join in too!

- A few slow stretches with deep breathing can calm.
 - A few jumping jacks can excite and wake up a class of lethargy.
 - A few calm push-ups or plank poses can increase the blood flow just enough for focus.
 - A two-minute silent walk down the hall and back can refresh minds, reduce stress, and recharge attention.

Different exercises can have different results, but ultimately they do relieve stress and increase happiness. And this is great for you, the learning environment, and the students!

It doesn't take much. You're not leading a Yoga class, but 60 seconds can do wonders.



Teacher Happiness Key #3: Stop Teaching

When students aren't seeming to get it. They just aren't grasping what you're teaching, just stop teaching.

No, don't quit the profession! But do stop teaching. Sometimes over explaining creates less learning. ***Stop teaching and give students time to process.*** Use these steps:

1. Have students write the first 7 words that come to mind with the topic that you're teaching (i.e. "gravity", "ordered pairs", "plot").
2. Walk around and observe what students write. This will help make their learning visible to you and them. Ask students to explain which word on their list is most important in this topic. Call on a few volunteers.
3. Ask students to explain which word on their list is causing the most confusion.





This activity will help students to process the information. When they write the words, they are solidifying connections in their brain. When they talk, they are probably explaining the topic in ways that you didn't.

You'll be happier, and they'll learn more.

Teacher Happiness Key #4. Put You First

I'm not saying read your emails before teaching. It's not to say, drink your coffee and check Instagram prior to meeting with your small group.

It's about making sure that your health, your relationships, your own state of well-being are at the optimum level.

Only then can you be all that your students need in that classroom! Take care of you, so you can be happy with being the servant leader for your students.

Don't buy into the false narrative that you are less of a teacher if you don't:

- take home hours of work
- grade papers all night
- work through the weekend
- and other laborious mindsets that sacrifice you and the longevity of your career.

If you don't put you first, it's only a matter of time before you burn out.



Teacher Happiness Key #5. Build a Network Near & Abroad

Connect with
other teachers
around the
world



You work in an isolated environment with minimal adult interaction. Very few professions have as little adult interactions as teaching. You deserve to know, respect, and interact with other professional educators.

Make it an intentional aim to build your network among like-minded teachers in your local area and also among others online through positive Facebook groups and Twitter chats.

It's refreshing to find others who think like you and who hold a deep passion for making education work for all.

Teacher Happiness Key #6. Connect, Connect, and Critique

There's often a polar extreme among educators. Some simply connect. Some simply critique.

It's like there are two types of teachers: those who just like to get along with others and those who can't get along with others.

Make an effort to find that healthy balance by making two positive connections for every one divergent thought you propose.

If it's your tendency to never offer opposing viewpoints...challenge yourself to do so. ***Positive connections combine with innovative thinking create a healthy work environment that leads to teacher happiness and improved learning for all.***

