



Top 10 Strategies

How to *Keep* *the Spark Alive* in Your Teaching



Teaching Channel.

A K12 Coalition Company

Teaching is about passion, both for the teacher and the students. You must be able to enjoy what you do. Take pride in it. If a teacher is to teach...truly teach...and perform to the best of their abilities, they also need to find their passion and be able to share it. It must be incorporated into the way they teach. But what happens when you catch a case of the blues as a teacher? We have all been there. Being a teacher in today's world is an enormous challenge. It takes patience, passion, resilience and a lot of commitment.

Here are Teaching Channel's Top 10 Strategies for Keeping the Spark in Your Teaching

1. Plan ahead for Vacations/Celebrations

Planning for the future can help you beat the blahs. People use vision boards all the time for fitness goals, life goals, and bucket lists. Try making a Summer Vacation Vision Board. Start thinking about all the plans you have for the summer, make a visual and put it somewhere you will see everyday. For vision board examples, here are some basics: [Click Here for Vision Boards.](#)



2.

Change it up - Break the Routine in Your Classroom

- Add more physical exercise and movement. Koosh balls can do wonders in invigorating a classroom.
- Add mini-courses into your already established curriculum, Take a subject the students are responding to positively and explore it thoroughly.
- Use technology and take your class on a Virtual Field Trip. Perhaps take a virtual visit to Easter Island, or the South Pacific. If you can't be there in person, you can enjoy the beauty through technology.

3. Be Well-Prepared

When you are well prepared and have lesson plans that cover every minute of class and ten to fifteen extra minutes, your students will always be engaged and not have time to feel bored which ultimately helps you. They will see your vibrancy and your love of the subject matter, and that is contagious.

4. List Goals

One of the things that can make teachers lose motivation is the grind of lesson after lesson with no clear final aim. Write down your daily goals and enjoy the satisfaction of crossing completed goals off your list.

Another goal may be to make a call or send an email each day to the parents of a student in your class in whom you are seeing great progress or enjoy having in class. Make 'Happy Calls' - the parents will be thrilled, the student will react positively, and doesn't it feel good to make someone's day?

5. Examine Your Attitude and Avoid Negativity

It's easy to fall into the gossip trap in the teacher's lounge or during lunch duty. Negative talk and gossip will only bring you down. When the conversation starts turning down a bad path, redirect or walk away. And, challenge yourself to compliment a colleague once a day.

"You can't have a good day with a bad attitude, and you can't have a bad day with a good attitude."

- Positivelifetips.com

"The best preparation for good work tomorrow is to do good work today."

- Elbert Hubbard

"The five steps in teaching a new skill are:

1. Preparation
2. Explanation
3. Showing
4. Observation
5. Supervision"

- Bruce Barton

"Processing information in list-form is a bit like sipping green juice instead of munching on a bundle of kale. It's just easier to digest."

- Maria Konnikova, New Yorker

6. Recharge Your Batteries

Encourage yourself and your students to get outside, it'll help replenish attention and boost creative energy and problem solving skills. According to a 2008 study at the University of Michigan, entitled, "The Cognitive Benefits of Interacting with Nature," even 20 minutes of exposure to nature "resets" our attention and helps us to refocus. Nature replenishes the brain permitting better executive function and self-regulation. Physical activity = improved mental activity. Physical activity helps reduce stress and anxiety. Looking for some ideas to get your kids outside? Visit education.com for some easy ways to implement outdoor activities!

7. Set Up a Challenge

A contest is just the kind of jump-start many students need by the midpoint of the school year. The rainy days of spring are traditionally a time when many students start to get bored and slack off on studying.

- [Read Across America](#) is a great contest with plenty of instructions and information to get you started.
- Take advantage of fun or unusual national days of recognition. For example, Pi(e) day, National Name Yourself Day, Earth Day, etc. This [National Day](#) Calendar shares what each day recognizes and provides some background.

Always make sure to involve the parents as well by sending home weekly updates on the contest or activity, you may get some well needed support!

8. Give Rewards to Your Students

Practice and encourage random acts of kindness. Put out a challenge that your students are excited to aim for. When your students are engaged and focused, the classroom is more productive and the last few months of school will fly by. Set up little rewards for goals that students accomplish. Some examples may be:

- **Elementary School:** For every book read, a tootsie roll. For every 100% on a timed test, a pack of M & M's. For homework assignments turned in on-time all week, go all out with a pack of gum!
- **Middle School:** For every five assignments (with good grades) that are turned in on time, students get to skip a homework assignment.
- **High School:** Change your classroom environment. See if you can find a bean bag chair or two and reward kids by letting them get out of their desk or chair. Bring in your griddle and make pancakes in class. Throw out a Chipotle gift card or two. Food and freedom are two great motivators for high school students.

9. Give Rewards to Yourself

One of the defining characteristics of the mid-year blues is feeling overworked, with seemingly no end in sight. In order to alleviate this listlessness, try and set up little rewards for yourself.

It can be as simple as your favorite chocolate as you send your last student out the door. It can be a movie night with your significant other, friend, or kids that you can look forward to during the weekend.

Or, maybe giving yourself permission to pick-up that fancy coffee on the way to school in the morning.

10. We All Feel Crunched for Time

Feeling crunched for time magnifies the feeling of burn-out. We chuckle to ourselves when we read about taking time to meditate. But, we encourage you to take a moment, when you're feeling like you are at the end of your teaching rope, to reflect on why you chose teaching as a profession.

- a. Did you want to make a difference in a child's life?
- b. Did you want to be a positive influence on our youth?
- c. Did you want to share your passion for learning?
- d. The reward of seeing the light bulb go on when a child understands the challenging concept?





Refocus & Recharge: Strategies for Finding Balance in Teaching

Teaching Channel was created for teachers, by teachers and we vividly remember and understand how easy it is to become overwhelmed and lose your teaching passion. In addition to using many of these tips ourselves, we have a great course, [5792: Refocus & Recharge: Strategies for Finding Balance in Teaching](#), that can help you learn strategies to refocus and recharge your teaching career while earning graduate credit in the process.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Recommended K-12. With the ever increasing demands on teachers, the subject of teacher wellness is a timely and important one. This course explores a wealth of strategies teachers can enlist to attain professional and personal balance, avoid teacher burnout, and recharge. Explore such strategies as: how to manage stress, ways to be part of the larger community, teaching with a sense of purpose, the importance of self-efficacy, positive engagement, and planning one's time and energy. [Register for this course today!](#)

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