



How To Use The Preview Strategy To Improve Behavior

I think you're going to like this strategy.

It's fun and easy, takes very little planning, and can improve behavior in your classroom the first time you try it.

It's called the preview strategy.

It works through a simple change in the way you present your lessons. And the results can be remarkable – resulting in students sitting up straighter, listening more intently, and looking forward to learning.

No, **you're not going to offer external rewards**. It doesn't involve praise, prize boxes, or promises of free time.

The preview strategy is intrinsic in nature and involves a simple piquing of your students' interest in the activities you have planned for the day.

Here's how it works:

Search your lessons.

When you're looking over your lesson plans before school, or better yet, when you're first creating them, search for that "one thing" in each lesson that is potentially most interesting to your students. There will always be something that jumps out at you. And when it does, make note of it.

Define why it's noteworthy.

This "one thing" may stand out to you for any number of reasons. It may be something interesting or particularly cool. It could be novel or funny or fascinating or scary or peculiar or beneficial or surprising. Define for yourself, and then eventually for your students, the reason *why* this particular part of your lesson is worth highlighting.

Give short previews.

Throughout a typical school day, you may have five or six "one things" — moments, activities, stories, facts, or revelations that you're especially excited about sharing with your students. An easy way to promote and build up each of them is through short previews given prior to each lesson.

Be effective effortlessly.

The most effective teachers are able to provide for their students compelling reasons why they should pay attention, why they should lean forward and care about what they're about to learn. Having in mind your "one thing" before beginning each lesson effortlessly gives you this powerful ability.

Make it simple.

Your preview doesn't have to be formally planned. When you discover that "one thing" special about a lesson, you'll naturally be excited to share it with your students. Just **speak from the heart**. Make it simple. *"You're going to learn something in a few minutes you're not going to believe!"*

Deliver.

One of the great things about the preview strategy is that it will cause you to really *sell* what you're teaching. It will cause you to be clear and enthusiastic – without consciously trying to be – and to ensure that your students do indeed learn something cool. Your students in turn will begin looking forward to learning.

Preview the schedule.

It's common, and a good idea, to walk students through your daily schedule first thing in the morning. But they'll tune you out if every day begins to look the same. Armed with five or six compelling reasons why they should sit up and take notice, however, and your morning preview will be a source of excitement and anticipation for your students.

Include a caveat.

After revealing the tubs containing live specimens for an awesome science experiment or explaining how strange but cool the new grammar rule is going to be, you're going to remind your students that only those who follow **classroom rules**, and thus stay out of time-out, will be allowed to participate. (And then, of course, you must follow through.)

Make it special anyway.

You may, at times, feel like there is nothing particularly noteworthy about the day's offerings. Some days you'll have to search more creatively than others. But with experience, you'll be able to take any part of a lesson, no matter how pedestrian, and make it stand out for your students.

Reigniting The Joy

Many teachers struggling with classroom management are surprised to discover that their newly minted classroom management plan doesn't work, that if anything behavior has gotten worse.

But this is no surprise at all.

Unless you have a learning environment your students enjoy and look forward to coming to every day, then there isn't a rule or consequence in the world that is likely to help.

The preview strategy is one of many ways you can create a classroom experience your students want and you need to manage your classroom effectively.

So look for that "one thing" in every lesson. Reignite the joy of learning for your students.

And misbehavior will be the furthest thing from their mind.