

## *Beginning Mistakes and What to do About Them*

(Rick Ward, Island Christian School)

1. Not securing attention before making announcements, teaching, or beginning discussions.

**{When establishing habits and procedures, teach and expect students to be at attention, with NO talking BEFORE you begin speaking.}**

2. Doing too much work and thinking for the pupils, IE talking too much, answering own questions, performing/explaining all of a demonstration.

**{Your goal as a teacher is to get your students to think. Be careful of doing too much for your students. Learn to be brief and exact in your directions.}**

3. Habitually calling upon only a few pupils to answer questions and to carry on class discussions.

**{It is not fair to your students if you only call on a select few. In order to keep all accountable, call on students in random order. Do not become predictable. Strive to have variety in the ways you call on students.}**

4. Calling only on the “good” readers.

**{Begin with your slower readers when your class is fresh. Alternate slower and faster readers; DO NOT label students by not calling on them to read.}**

5. Attempting to work with individual students without maintaining class control.

**{Good classroom control must be established and required before a teacher can effectively work with individual students. Establishing classroom procedures in the very beginning is the key.}**

6. Excessive use of certain phrases, IE “Okay,” “Good,” “All Right.”

**{It is easy to get into a rut when it comes to over using certain words and phrases. Make a conscious effort towards variety.}**

7. Failure to use the blackboard as a vital teaching tool.

**{Your blackboard is the most universal teaching tool available. So much can be done by using the board. Some teachers tend not to use the board because they are afraid of turning their back to the students. Much of what you write on the board can already be done before students come in to the room. Another alternative is using an overhead and or power point as teaching tools.}**

8. Inattention to such things as lighting, ventilation, student movement, and standing in front of windows while teaching.

**{As a teacher, you need to check for glare, or whether a classroom is too hot or cold. Children also need to get their “wiggles” out, allow for movement; a teacher who is aware of these needs in an observant teacher.}**

9. Pacing nervously at the front of the room or not moving from behind the podium.

**{Teachers need to be relaxed, but not to let their guard down. Teaching should be enthusiastic and conversational. A good teacher is one that will move about the room, observing what is going on, while teaching.}**

10. Teaching with a monotone voice.

**{Vocal variety is a must for any speaker, especially a teacher. So many times teaching lends itself to a lack of vocal inflection. Make the lesson come alive. If you are excited, then your class will be excited.}**

11. Attempting to teach a lesson without a lesson plan.

**{Planning ahead and being prepared will help you to be effective in what you are trying to accomplish. You must have a plan or guide in order to be prepared to do a great job. Students will know if you are prepared or not.}**

12. Trying to be “Mr./Miss/Mrs. Nice-Guy.”

**{The best way for students to like you is for you to be the authority. As a teacher, you can be a friend but that does not mean to be a buddy or pal on the students’ level. Begin to establish your authority the first day of class. Being the “Nice-Guy” will only cause problems.}**

13. Using “Joe-Cool” college habits and mannerisms.

**{College habits and dress are not necessarily appropriate and professional for the classroom.}**

14. Assuming no responsibility for room appearance and effective bulletin boards.

**{Part of teaching involves room appearance and meaningful bulletin boards. Plan to have students assist with the process of keeping your room neat and orderly. If you take pride in your room, your students will also. Plan your bulletin boards, as they can serve as effective teaching tools.}**

15. Not acting nor dressing the part of a professional.  
**{Dress, speak, and act the part of the professional that you are.}**
16. Using incorrect oral and written grammar.  
**{Others will judge you by your speech. Re-read notes to be sent home, checking for correct grammar and spelling. Do not expect your students to speak or write correctly if you do not.}**
17. Failure to exhibit enthusiasm about the subject being taught.  
**{Teaching requires you to be a good actor/actress. Not all material is exciting; however, an effective teacher will strive to make all lessons as interesting as possible. Students should never know what your least favorite subject or chapter, etc. is. Look for ways to spice up a lesson.}**
18. Making excuses.  
**{A good teacher does not make it a habit of making excuses. Sometimes there is a legitimate reason for something not being turned in on time, etc. A wise teacher can look at him/herself and determine if they have a weakness.}**
19. Not planning ahead or anticipating what is ahead.  
**{Experience helps you to plan ahead for the unexpected. Until that experience is gained, ask another teacher or supervisor for advice. Make good use of your curriculum guides.}**
20. Does not know subject matter, due to a lack of preparation.  
**{There is no excuse for not knowing the subject matter. Study and work is the remedy.}**
21. Does not make assignments/directions clear.  
**{Again, experience helps in learning how to make assignments and directions clear. Watch student expressions, often they will tell you if they understand what you have just said.}**
22. Finishing a lesson too early or running out of time.  
**{Planning ahead will help prevent finishing too early or running out of time. That does not mean that you will never done one of these. Having something extra to do, or review will fill the time. Be careful of wasting time, for it is something that you cannot get back.}**

23. Feeling persecuted when constructive criticism is offered.

**{No one has arrived. A teacher, who ceases to learn, ceases to be effective. Cultivate a spirit that the authority over you, is there to help. Your attitude is very important when it comes to accepting criticism and learning from your mistakes.}**

24. Do not assume that students had or learned the material last year.

**{We sometimes assume that all of our students had this concept last year and therefore, they got it last year. This is not true of all students. Take nothing for granted.}**

25. Do not sit while you teach.

**{Unless you are physically unable to stand, you should stand while you teach. You will have better control if you do.}**