

Erin Merrifield

I believe that there is truth to the statement by Robert Fulgram, "Everything I needed to know in life I learned in kindergarten." Frequently, in our fast paced society, we forget those small life lessons that we learned so many years ago. These are infinitesimal life lessons that can and should be practiced by teaching professionals as well as others in our general public.

Lesson one, take your time. Take the time to get to know your students as individuals in order to appreciate who they are as life long learners. Take the time to make positive calls home to commend a student on a job well done and share that news with their parents. So often we call only when there are issues and problems. We as educators repeatedly underestimate the value of positive feedback even though we recognize the impact it has on others.

Lesson two, remember to use your words. Remember the power in our language and how our students interpret what we say. We need to discontinue our generic praise like, "Good job, well-done." As educators we need to be providing our students with genuine feedback that relates directly to their learning needs and allows them to internalize their effort and achievements. We need to use our words to guide our learners to be 21st century thinkers and facilitate their out of the box problem solving abilities.

Lesson three, share. Be willing to share all of yourself with your students, parents and colleagues. Often we keep so much of our teaching within the four walls of our classrooms. Share the innovative lessons with colleagues and the materials you personally made that brought the lesson to life. Share your mistakes, thoughts and feedback with your students. The more they see you as a human, the more you will unfold about them. Share your thoughts with parents, they are sharing their most valued possession with us, it is imperative we give back. We are fortunate enough to begin with a blank slate each and every year, fill your slate with only the finest teaching and paramount goals for yourself and your students.