

## Chapter 8

**Theme:** What is Best for Kids

**Single Best Quote:** “While [the very best teachers] know and value their own programs and areas, they are well aware of competing interests for limited resources.”

### Points:

1. Breadth of vision
  - a. Great teachers see something bigger than themselves
  - b. Great teachers see something bigger than their own programs and classroom
  - c. Great teachers consider:
    - i. Education
    - ii. School system
    - iii. Other teachers
    - iv. And, of MOST IMPORTANCE, the STUDENTS
2. Obviously we all want to protect our time, our schedules, our thoughts, our plans, our efforts, but this must be done on a prioritized basis. Before our needs, we must consider the student’s needs. And, realize that we, the teacher, is just one small part of a bigger and greater whole. Don’t forget yourself, but keep yourself in check.
3. Socializing with other teachers when you should be teaching and supervising is negligence.
4. Complaining should be avoided when it is merely bitching or spreading negativity. But, there are times when the system, the administration, a team of teachers or even a “influential” (think “big mouthed”) teachers forces through an idea that is NOT what is BEST for KIDS. In other words, if we are to do what Whitaker says here we may have to rebel against what is coming down from above in order to truly “focus on students first.”
  - a. Mere compliance to a system change does not indicate you are a great teacher.
  - b. A bubbly, positive attitude which refuses to complain does not indicate you are focused on students first. In fact, the fastest way to the top is consistent compliance accompanied by the most socially acceptable behavior of never complaining. But, suddenly, now these behaviors are not putting students first, but the teacher’s career and their reputation.
5. If complaining is necessary go directly to the top to let your voice be heard, and along with a logical presentation bring a solution.

### Self-evaluation and application as a:

- **Shop teacher** – sometimes the shop teacher needs to protect the students, the shop and the program from “progressive” ideas that are presented from people who are unfamiliar with what is best for students in a shop (industrial, technological, artisan, craftsmanship) setting. I like to let the leadership make decisions concerning things I am not thinking about, but at the same time it is necessary to protect what is happening in the shop from the standardized, typical classroom attitude. This requires me to be both cooperative with the school plans, while at the same time defensive of what is best for students in the shop. Many times I have to welcome new technology into my classroom to stay updated, but for years I have had to be the defender of the industrial portion of my classroom to prevent it from collapsing into a computer lab. Many students have been poorly served by schools (not my schools) that implemented what seemed to be most “progressive” before considering what was best for the craftsmen, the artisans and the future career opportunities among the students.

- **Bible teacher** – It is always easier to follow the latest trend or marketed growth plan for a church, than to teach the believer the Bible. It is always going to be more popular to entertain the goats than to teach the sheep.
- **Parent** – A parent's life is joyfully burdened by always considering what is best for your child before you choose what your own personal agenda is.
- **Person** – Ultimately a truly successful person is going to be one who spent their life serving other people.

**Questions/Criticisms/Evaluations/Comments of Whitaker's presentation or perspective:**

Great chapter, but a variety of polarized groups among teachers could wrongfully take quotes and concepts from this chapter to defend themselves and their own personal professional behaviors.

I would like to think that I consider the students first, but I know sometimes I have entered into areas of debate and protest that is above my pay grade. Indeed, sometimes I speak words of wisdom, but sometimes I deteriorate into spouting out the sewage of a bad attitude.