The purpose of today’s inservice is to help your teachers—all of them—better understand the characteristics of both effective and ineffective teaching. This understanding is critical if we want to figure out what separates the best from all the rest.

**INSERVICE**

Tell your teachers that they will be taking a group test today. You are simply going to read a list of characteristics of teaching. For each item you read, if it is a characteristic of effective teaching, they are to raise their hands. If the characteristic is one of ineffective teaching, they are to put their heads down.

**Effective Versus Ineffective Teaching Test**

1. Begin lessons by saying, “Open your books to page ___.“ (ineffective)
2. Use lots of hands-on learning activities. (effective)
3. Enjoy a positive, friendly rapport with students. (effective)
4. Rely heavily on textbooks. (ineffective)
5. View and use textbooks as resources and teaching tools. (effective)
6. Smile often. (effective)
7. Appear serious most of the time. (ineffective)
8. Use lots of worksheets. (ineffective)
9. Raise your voice in anger and frustration when dealing with students. (ineffective)
10. Appear calm and professional at all times. (effective)
11. Allow for lots of structured student discussion during the learning process. (effective)
12. Often allow students to work together to solve problems. (effective)
13. Test what is taught in the same way that it has been taught. (effective)
14. Include “surprise” items on tests—items students did not know would be on the test. (ineffective)
15. Engage in power struggles with students when required. (ineffective)
16. Deal with student misbehavior in a private manner. (effective)
17. Embarrass students in front of their peers (ineffective)
18. Plan detailed lessons designed to maximize critical thinking, learning, and engagement. (effective)
19. Use the same lesson plans from year to year. (ineffective)
20. Constantly seek to learn new and better ways to teach. (effective)
21. Relate lessons to the lives of the students. (effective)
22. Resist change. (ineffective)
23. Accept and welcome change as a necessary part of growth. (effective)
24. Often speak of students with fondness. (effective)
25. Often speak of students with disapproval. (ineffective)
26. Express belief in each student. (effective)
27. Make tireless efforts to keep parents informed of student progress. (effective)
28. Focus on student strengths. (effective)
29. Appear to love teaching. (effective)
30. Act as though teaching is a chore. (ineffective)
31. Complain a lot. (ineffective)
32. Collaborate with co-workers in order to improve effectiveness. (effective)
33. Do whatever it takes to help a student succeed. (effective)
34. Believe that all students are capable and treat them accordingly. (effective)
35. Refuse to give up on any student. (effective)

Add as many of your own items to this test as you’d like. Because this is given as a “group test,” all will do well. So now you can say, Great job! You aced that test. I knew you would. But if we are brutally honest with ourselves, we can probably all find a few ways in which we are sometimes ineffective.

IMPLEMENTATION
Give each teacher a copy (complete with answer key) of the test you just gave. Their assignment this week is to identify two or three areas of weakness in their own teaching and begin, this week, to improve in those areas. Ask them about their progress when you meet with them in the upcoming week. Make a special effort, of course, to speak with your least effective teachers, asking about the skills they’re targeting and expressing your belief that their improvements will yield positive results. You might also make a special effort to speak with your best teachers and say, “I don’t know how you found anything to work on, because you possess all of the effective teaching characteristics on that list. Don’t think I don’t recognize that!”