



Technique: Without Apology

The most effective teachers always seek to find a way to make the material students need to know meaningful and engaging. This means they avoid labeling what students need to study as uninteresting, too hard, or beyond their frame of reference. The most effective teachers are careful to avoid such “apologies” – for watering down the content and rigor of what they teach.

At times, teachers may “apologize” by unconsciously

- Telling students that something will probably be boring
- Blaming some outside entity for the fact that they are teaching certain material
- Diluting material under the rationale of making it “accessible”
- Presuming that students will be unable to master the most challenging material

We are all at risk of apologizing at times. In fact, let’s assume that we’ve all allowed apologies to change our teaching at least once. Becoming aware of this risk enables you to stay vigilant and find alternatives, so that your students embrace challenging, rigorous content and pursue scholastic excellence.

Back pocket sayings to avoid the accidental “apology” for content/material

- “This material is going to be great because it’s really challenging!”
- “Lots of people don’t understand this until they get to college, but you’ll know it now. Cool!”
- “We’re going to have some fun as we do this!”
- “A lot of people are afraid to study this stuff, so after you’ve mastered it, you’ll know more than most adults.”
- “There’s a great story behind this!”

Back pocket sayings to avoid the accidental “apology” for students

- “When you’re in college, you can show off how much you know about...”
- “Don’t get rattled by this. There are a few fancy words, but once you know them, you’ll have this down.”
- “This is really tricky. But I haven’t seen much you couldn’t do once you put your minds to it.”

See **WITHOUT APOLOGY** in action

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unHoHA7aMTY&t=36s>