

This transcript was exported on Mar 17, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Betsy Kindall ([00:08](#)):

I'm Betsy Kindall.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:10](#)):

I'm Nicole Fairchild

Stacy Moore ([00:11](#)):

And I'm Stacy Moore.

Betsy Kindall ([00:12](#)):

And this is Arkansas AWARE, a project to advance wellness and resiliency in education.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:20](#)):

Welcome back everybody. We are here with Ms. Alice Cooper at Jasper High School. Betsy and Donnie and I traveled down here to talk with her, because she has been an educator for 50 years and that's no lie. So if you want to catch up on her history and some of the inspiring things she talked to us about last week, check out that episode. But today, we wanted to talk to her a little bit more about just the wisdom and advice she would give educators today. And some of just the practical classroom management tips that you might give to educators. Yeah. So you want to just jump right in.

Alice Cooper ([00:55](#)):

Yes. Thank you very much.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:56](#)):

Yeah.

Alice Cooper ([00:57](#)):

As I reflect back, I think, from the perspective of an educator, I would strongly encourage all educators to be organized in their classroom. I would encourage you to never get more than one day behind on your grading. Students like to know what their grades are. And a timely feedback is, I think, vitally important and that they know at any given time, and always stress to them, that you're human and that you can error and you have made mistakes, and that we're a team in keeping check on your grades. So I would encourage you to always show enthusiasm. Even though there are days you may not feel enthusiastic, try to be sure to instill your love for teaching and show enthusiasm, have a smile on your face. And it's okay to be silly.

Alice Cooper ([01:56](#)):

I have with age, it is my students and I, when they come, I greet them at the door with a smile. And if I know they had a ball game, we discuss the success of that game and how well they played. Or if they competed in FFA, I tell them how proud I am that they place first in their event at FFA competitions, et cetera. And then we go in the room and of course they're logging into computers, and I ask them to all stand. And sometimes we simply sing a song, if you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. And I dance around the room with them. They like it. Sometimes, there will not be a smile on faces, but when

I'm through singing and acting foolish, there's usually a smile on their face. And we're in a better frame of mind to learn.

Alice Cooper ([02:52](#)):

It just makes the period go faster. We clap our hands. We just do different things as a form of an icebreaker. I just don't call it an icebreaker. It's just a way to get them in the mood to learn and do well. So I would just encourage you as young teachers and teachers that may be struggling, is to just learn to laugh at. If you make a mistake, laugh with, it's okay. And show them love, and again, it depends probably on your age, but I try to show them love. And I have had on occasion, people share with me how they were going through a very difficult time. And I would just come by and a little pat on the shoulder and just say, "How are you today?" I try to tell the young ladies, "You look pretty today."

Alice Cooper ([03:44](#)):

And the young men, you look handsome in that shirt today. A compliment, sometimes a lot of people love to hear that. Another thing that we do aside from all the content areas in my classroom, there's some things that I feel are vitally important. And number one on that list is, we do a portfolio. We started in ninth grade. So my ninth graders begin an electronic career portfolio. And it has 12 pages, and it has a cover page. And from there an introduction, and at the very back of the book, it has a resume, a letter of application and a thank you letter. I instill in my students the value of taking the time to say, please and thank you. I know we learned that in kindergarten, but we never outgrow that. And when someone gives you something, a gift or a compliment, you should just graciously say, thank you.

Alice Cooper ([04:47](#)):

It's so easy to write a little note, a text message, an email. We're so blessed with the easier ways of saying, thank you. And so, that is a requirement of my portfolio. It is an ongoing document that we work on through 12th grade. And many, many students have shared with me the value of that portfolio. They continue using it throughout their career and their college, because it's just simply a list of their accomplishments and skills and education as to where they are.

Alice Cooper ([05:26](#)):

And another thing that is just mine and nobody else can claim it, you are required to learn your social security number. Back in the early '70s it wasn't such a deal that you couldn't tell me your social security number, but not today. Today, I just have them tell me their last four digits, or we do Scout's honor, or pinky promise that you know you're social. You cannot graduate from high school if you're one of my students, unless you know your social, nonnegotiable.

Betsy Kindall ([05:57](#)):

I think it would be good too nowadays with smartphones for kids. I think we would be surprised how many kids out there really don't know their parents' phone number.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:06](#)):

Or their address.

Betsy Kindall ([06:06](#)):

Or their address, because they don't need to, because it's all right there. And so I love that, Ms. Cooper, because you do need to know, you do need to know the out information.

Alice Cooper ([06:18](#)):

Another note is, I think all people, especially educators, need to rest. You need a good night's rest. I know there are nights when you have a ball game and you can't, but your body gets tired. You're not thinking and functioning at a 100%. If you're not getting adequate sleep and rest, you need to eat well. I think our diet has so much to do with how we feel and how we function. And if we are easily offended, or if we don't have patience with our students, we must have patience. We must show love. We must show kindness. We must keep our voice at a low key. If you ever begin yelling, it will become a yell. Always go down on your voice instead of spiking it, you will learn that it will keep everything in check. And sometimes, just a nod at a misbehavior.

Alice Cooper ([07:20](#)):

I never say a word. I give facial contact, eye contact and I just nod, and they know that's enough. I never have to say anything. I try to always refrain from embarrassing a student. Because if you back that student in a corner of embarrassment in front of their peers, there's likely going to be disciplinary problems. I am so blessed and I'm so happy to share with you today that I have very, very few discipline problems in my classroom. In fact, I would like to tell you that just almost no disciplinary problems, but again, I do have a few tardys, but everyone gets a detention.

Alice Cooper ([08:04](#)):

If you're tardy, it doesn't make any difference who you are. If you're tardy, you're tardy. And just treat everyone fair and equal with a smile, and try to be respectful to them. They have feelings and maybe going something, you can almost tell where their little facial expressions when they're sick or if their faces are red, something's bothering them. Just try to be that person that sheds some encouragement. My message is to be the encourager in the classroom.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:41](#)):

I'm thinking, as you're talking. Ms. Cooper, lots of times people will come to us and they'll say, kids are different nowadays, there's a lot more trauma. There's a lot more discipline problems. There's a lot more broken homes. There's a lot more this and that. And they'll come to me as a mental health clinician and say, what do I do about this behavior? What do I do about this behavior? And I feel like over and over again, we're repackaging what you have basically said, because you're talking about the same students I'm talking about. And you're saying, you don't hardly have any discipline problems. And it's that stuff that works. It's the regular firm, but kind, is how I always put it together.

Alice Cooper ([09:21](#)):

Yes.

Betsy Kindall ([09:21](#)):

Well, and when you step into your classroom, because I've been in your classroom, you have relationships with your students, you know them. And you also know what may push their buttons and why you wouldn't push their button. And so, I think that's really important, and it goes back to what we

This transcript was exported on Mar 17, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

are always talking about. Such an important part of teaching is rapport. The rapport you have with your students, and you are a fine example of what that looks like. And so, thank you so much for sharing those things with us today. And for all our listeners out there, if you've taken anything away from this, we hope that we have inspired you to tap into the Ms. Alice Cooper in your career and in your life, because we could all use a little bit more of that.

Nicole Fairchild ([10:04](#)):

I know, let's be Alice.

Betsy Kindall ([10:06](#)):

Let's be Alice.

Alice Cooper ([10:08](#)):

The very bottom line is, I love what I do and I do what I love. Thank you so much.

Betsy Kindall ([10:15](#)):

Thank you, Ms. Cooper.

Nicole Fairchild ([10:23](#)):

Thank you.