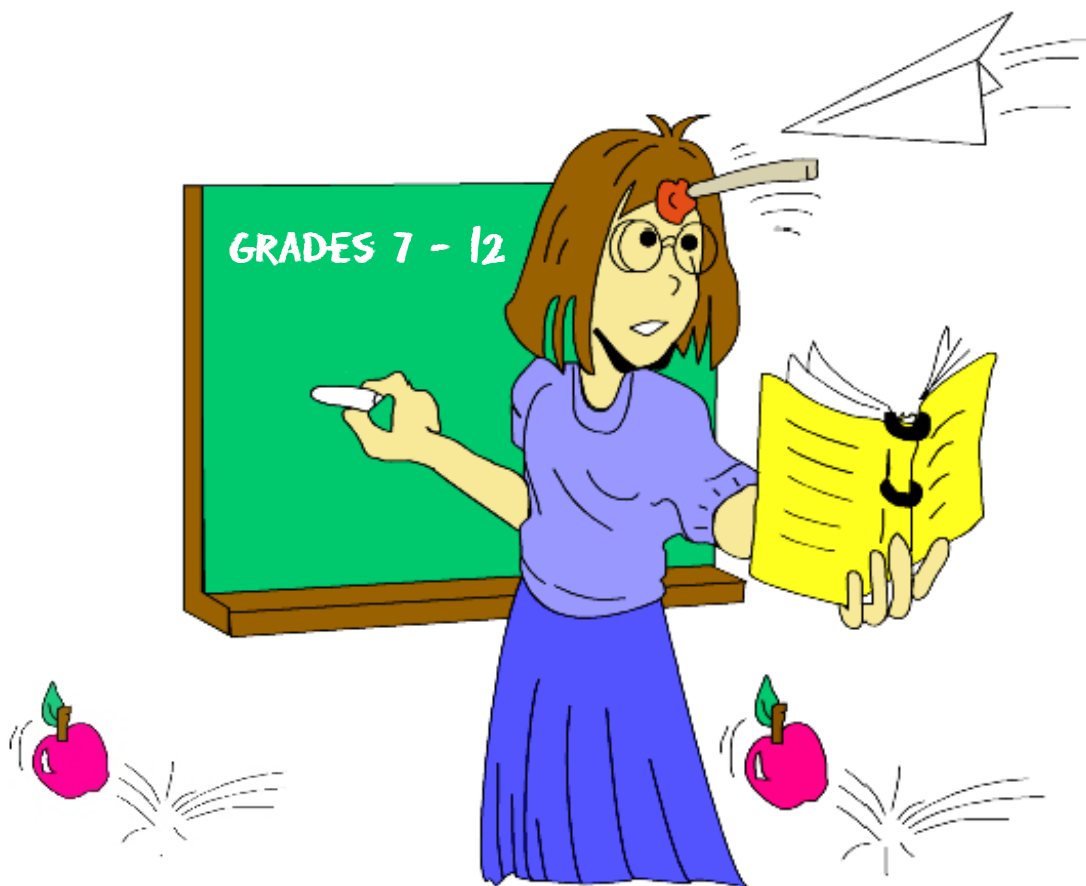


SURVIVAL KIT

**for New
SECONDARY Teachers**



**Empowering Educators for Classroom Success
A User-Friendly Handbook**

Dyan M. Hershman
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Survival Kit for New Secondary Teachers:

Empowering Educators
for Classroom Success

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FOREWORD

Dear New Teacher:

We wrote this book to openly share experiences and strategies to help you become a well-prepared teacher. Some of them we developed on our own. Others are ideas that were shared with us by other teachers, some we know were told to us, and others we simply have no clue where they came from. Regardless, successful teachers have a funny way of taking information they see, read, or hear and adapt it to their own classroom. While an original idea may have come from a college text-book, professional book, professor, or colleague, teachers shape these teaching tools to fit their own classroom needs. This is called “professional sharing”, and is done by educators everywhere. We encourage you to take the ideas from this book and modify them as you see fit so that they will work for you.

We believe we have covered most of the questions and problems you will encounter as you prepare for and enter the teaching profession. Please realize, however, that it is impossible to cover EVERY question or problem as each school and each classroom is unique.

Remember, the more effort you put into these strategies and ideas, in fact, the more effort you put into teaching itself, the more effective you will be in the classroom. When our students have an effective teacher from the very first day, they are more successful learners. We sincerely hope that you use the ideas found within this book to help smooth your first several years in the classroom. However, remember that this book is meant as a starting point, not a program. Successful teachers are constantly striving to improve as they gain experience.

Below are some of the reasons why we wrote this book. Since some probably sound familiar to you, and all are addressed in the pages to follow, we believe that Survival Kit for New Teachers will continue to be of great value to you for several years to come.

“How do I talk to parents or hold a conference?”

“Where do I start when looking for a teaching job?”

“How do I report and handle student misbehavior?”

“What am I supposed to do on the first day of school?”

“What am I supposed to teach each day?”

“Who do I go to when I have questions?”

“I’m so frazzled! Somebody help me, PLEASE!”

The life of a new teacher is full of unfamiliar experiences and questions. Let's face it, who has time to stop and ask?

The ideas and strategies within this book offer a road map to navigating the world of teaching.

Being a Professional

I know that the field of teaching is considered a profession.

What does that mean?

Entering the teaching profession is a noble act. By being a teacher you can have a profound impact on our society as a whole. In shaping young minds, we influence many lives and guide the learning of our future leaders. This being said, it is important for teachers to be positive role models in schools and in the community. The way we are perceived by those around us influence whether we are considered part of a profession or just glorified babysitters.

As Vivian Troen and Katherine Boles so eloquently state in their book, who's teaching your children?

“...teaching is a complex skill that requires specialized training. Once we understand that teaching is much more than simply conveying information from one person to another, certain truths begin to emerge, and persistent myths disappear.” (p. 148)

Teachers can have an impact on how we are perceived by society if we all make a concerted effort to demonstrate our professionalism.

Being a professional teacher requires:

- Training beyond initial course work
- Dedication through extra effort and time
- Professional appearance and demeanor
- Positive interpersonal skills
- Working collaboratively with other educators
- Continuing professional education throughout career
- Resourcefulness and flexibility

Within this chapter you will find many tips and strategies for working as a professional with your students, parents, colleagues, and the community as a whole.

Field Training

All educators are required to do some sort of field work before attaining their teaching certificate. This includes both university trained and alternatively certified teachers. When working in a field situation, many interns find themselves working closely with a veteran teacher within the school. Here are some strategies to make this a positive learning experience for you.



Learn all you can from your experiences whether positive or negative.

Perhaps your cooperating teacher has a personality and teaching style that is very dissimilar to your own. From these experiences, jot down ideas of what you will and will not do in your classroom.



Observe other teachers

- Gather new ideas
- Observe a variety of teaching styles
- Observe different classroom management techniques
- Observe different teacher/student interactions



Become involved in the school

- Volunteer for committees and other school projects
- Attend staff development and faculty meetings
- Sit in on parent meetings to observe positive interactions
- Attend school events such as open house, grade level meetings, parent nights, etc.
- Be an active participant whenever you can



Plan and Team Teach with Veteran Teachers

Planning lessons and team teaching with a veteran teacher provides first hand experience in good lesson design and presentation. When preparing to student teach, talk with your cooperating teacher about using the following format to help you ease into full classroom duties.

- 1) Classroom observations - several days
- 2) Team planning of lessons to be presented by veteran teacher while you observe
- 3) Team teaching of lessons planned together
- 4) Independent delivery of lessons planned together
- 5) Independent planning and delivery with veteran observation

Hint:

The more involved you become within the school, the more likely you will be to garner positive recommendations from other teachers and perhaps even one or more of the administrators.



CONCLUSION

Upon reading this chapter we can conclude that teaching is a stressful, intense, unpredictable and difficult job. Teaching carries a heavy burden. However, with the right attitude, level of dedication and coping strategies at your fingertips, teaching is also the most rewarding career in the world! For the same reasons that make it hard, it is also exciting, challenging, and fun! Teaching is never dull. It is a wonderful career choice made all the better with a positive attitude.

Additionally, when we act as education professionals, we change the public's view of teaching. Since the early 1900's teachers have often been viewed as nothing more than "glorified babysitters." It is time to change this perception and as the future generation of teachers, it is up to us to change it! Remember, the more we dress and act like professionals, the more we will be treated as such.



Additional Resources

Who's Teaching Your Children?
by Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boles

Making Teaching a True Profession
by J. D. Saphier

Teaching as the Learning Profession: Handbook of Policy and Practice
by Linda Darling-Hammond (Editor) and Gary Sykes (Editor)

Before School Starts

I just got hired and school starts in a couple of weeks.

Where do I begin?

While you may feel overwhelmed with a new job and all that it entails, there are a few important things to do before school starts that will help you later on. As a well-prepared teacher, one of the most important things that you can do for yourself and for your students is getting organized before the first bell rings on the first day. This will make your life so much easier and will provide a smooth beginning for everyone.

You can't know everything by osmosis.

There are so many small details in the day to day operation of a school that you need to be aware of. The veteran teachers in your school already know where to find necessary materials and supplies, and on top of that, know what materials and supplies they need!

Who do I ask?

If your school provides a Mentor Teacher, this person would be an excellent resource. Also, the school secretary and librarian are both a treasure trove of knowledge. Some questions you may want to ask are:

Where do I find:

- School/ Class Schedule?
- Class lists with addresses and phone numbers?
- Hall/ Office passes?
- Detention forms?
- Paper for the copier?
- Substitute information?
- Resource materials for the classroom?
- Classroom supplies?
- Discipline/ office referrals?
- Insurance information?
- School rules/ code of conduct?
- Computers & computer programs available?
- Maintenance request forms?
- Any other important papers you might need (ask the secretary)?





Gather Supplies



“How generous will your school be with supplies?”



You will need all of these items before school begins to help you get organized and ready for the new year. Check to see if your school/district gives you these supplies before you spend your own money. Also, check to see how generous your school is with supplies.

You may end up having to buy supplies at a later date, but these items are well worth spending the money if you have to.

- Tubs or crates
- Letter trays
- Desktop filing
- Drawer organizers
- Overhead pens
- Transparency film
- Electric pencil sharpener
- Three hole punch
- Manila folders
- Boarder for bulletin board
- Plastic shoe boxes with lids
- Office supplies including scissors,tape, stapler, staples, paperclips,pencils, pens, rubber bands, etc.

“A well-prepared teacher brainstorms a list of supplies needed for the classroom.”

Hint:

You do not have to do everything yourself. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Most of the seasoned teachers in the school are more than willing to help you out, but they do not want to make YOU feel uncomfortable by offering advice. No one will think you are stupid for asking questions.




Write or Call Students Before School Starts

The year gets off to a positive start when you welcome the students through a postcard, letter, or phone call.

Your welcome message should include:

- An introduction of who you are
- The name of your class and your room number
- A statement expressing your excitement to meet that student
- A statement about the upcoming year

Example:

<p>August 9, 20__</p> <p>Welcome to the new school year. My name is Mrs. Jackson, and I will be your English 101 instructor. I look forward to meeting you in room 302 on Monday, August 14. Please come to class prepared with a spiral notebook, a three ring binder, and one novel you read this summer. Also, please don't forget to bring your imagination and your brain!</p> <p>Sincerely, Mrs. Jackson</p>	 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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“A well-prepared teacher makes students feel welcome even before school starts”

Hint:

Keep in mind that student schedules are often not finalized until a day or two before school starts. This can make it very difficult and even impossible to send a note or letter home to every student before school starts.

If you have a general letter typed out and copied, request a set of labels from the attendance officer for the students on your roster. This will help speed along the process.



Other Tips for Communicating with Students and Parents

- Don't forget to translate this letter into another language when appropriate.
- Create a web site complete with a picture of you that explains more about who you are, your educational training background, and any previous teaching experience (student teaching).
- Put your web site address on your postcard/ welcome letter so that students and parents with computers can get to know you better!



Make a Substitute Folder

Taking the time to put together a folder for substitutes is an excellent way to stay organized when you are absent from school. As a teacher you are judged on how well your classroom runs even when you are not there. You are expected to make things easier for a substitute who is a guest teacher in your school.

Across the nation there has been a huge shortage of substitute teachers available. The biggest reason for this deficit of “guest teachers” is the lack of respect and support from school staff and faculty. This includes a lack of prior preparation, communication, and acknowledgment.

One way you can ensure that substitutes will want to come to your classroom is to provide them with detailed plans, instructions, and classroom policies/procedures. If these necessary tools are readily accessible, the substitute teacher will be more comfortable and confident about leading your class through the day. This will more than likely result in a problem free day for both the sub and the students!

When leaving instructions for “guest teachers,” be sure to offer detailed explanations of how your classroom management system works. When you determine your classroom procedures and motivational techniques, be sure to type them up and place them, not only in your teacher binder, but also in the sub folder.

You also want to have alternative plans that can be used at any time during the year. Oftentimes grade levels, departments, or teams plan for special units or lessons that require everyone to have full participation. If you are absent, your team may decide to do different lessons on that day.

Also, the school may call for an assembly or other type of event may occur that will disrupt your scheduled plans. If you have alternate plans which are easy to implement and follow, your substitute will have a much easier time of adapting to an unexpected situation.

Additionally, your substitute may not understand your plans and may not feel qualified to implement lessons or activities. Having alternate plans with hand-outs ready alleviates this potential frustration for the sub and students.

“A well-prepared teacher has a substitute folder with important information, alternate lessons and activities ready to be used.”



Create a class/ daily schedule

When making a schedule, try to think in terms of time rather than subject periods.

Middle school teachers have only 45 or 50 minutes to schedule per subject/ class period taught

Hint:

When creating your class schedule, think in terms of time rather than class periods. This will help you maintain a good flow to your day or to your class.

Example: English - 50 minutes - 9:00 AM to 9:50 AM
 9:00-9:05 - Daily Oral Language (call roll, etc.)
 9:05-9:10 - Go over DOL - (grammar lesson)
 9:10-9:25 - Mini-lesson -(writing skill)
 9:25-9:45 - Writing time -(students work on individual writing pieces)
 9:45-9:50 - Clean up/ Closure

Some schools have block scheduling which generally lasts 1 and 1/2 hours

Example: Social Studies - 90 minutes - 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM
 9:00-9:15 - Daily Geography (call roll, etc.)
 9:15-9:25 - Discuss answers to Daily Geography
 9:25-9:55 - Lesson
 9:55-10:20 - Activity to enhance lesson (group work, etc.)
 10:20-10:30 - Closure/ Clean up



Classroom Management

Good management is vital to a successful classroom. The best time to think about how our classroom will work is before school starts. In this chapter you will find various ways to have a smooth classroom through proactive management and discipline strategies.

My room is all set up and ready to go, but I'm not sure how to make everything flow smoothly.

Where do I begin?

As teachers we need to strive for positive relationships with our students - one that has clear expectations, but is based on mutual respect, communication and kindness. Just because we are in control and expect appropriate behavior does not mean that we need to be cold or distant.

Teachers can help to create a positive and motivating classroom environment by:

- √ Being friendly
- √ Having a sense of humor
- √ Having a good rapport with students
- √ Effectively communicating our desires and expectations
- √ Understanding that students cannot read our minds
- √ Being organized
- √ Being well-prepared

Teachers are much more than just babysitters, managers, and timekeepers, they are also leaders. This role has much more importance than one realizes on the overall classroom climate. A leader guides, shapes, teaches, motivates, corrects, directs, and encourages his/her "platoon." In a teacher's case, the proper leadership style is crucial so that chaos doesn't rule!



"Leading your platoon takes effort, communication, dedication and respect!"

Classroom Leadership Styles

The three main leadership styles teachers use in the classroom are:

Teacher as Dictator
Teacher as Free-Spirit
Teachers as Balanced Leader

“The Dictator Leadership style does not promote a positive classroom climate.”

Teacher as Dictator

The teacher who acts as a dictator is often afraid of losing control, so he/she resorts to maintaining a very distant and stringent relationship with students. This often results in a relationship that is businesslike, firm, and authoritarian.

Characteristics of a Dictator Leadership Style:

- No room for group discussions or banter of any sort
- Routines are strictly adhered to
- Flexibility is not commonplace
- Tasks are performed in a quiet and efficient manner
- Students are not encouraged to be individuals and active participants in the lesson
- Students are required to conform to the teacher’s way of learning
- Creative thinking is not encouraged
- Memorization and “skill and drill” are the main learning styles of this classroom

Although predictability and routine can be a positive classroom feature, this type of leadership is often boring and squelches creativity. It promotes a dull and resentful environment instead of one filled with active learning and excitement.

Rarely does a teacher accomplish a smooth running classroom by resorting to dictatorship. Students are more likely to rebel, complain, and misbehave because they are not intrinsically motivated.





Quick Tips on Successful Classroom Management

If we had to provide a brief overview of our main philosophies on classroom management, this is it!



Hint:

The more specific directions and expectations are, the better students will understand how to follow them.

Always check for student understanding before releasing students to get started.

Use a key word like "GO!" and do not let students begin the activity until you say your key word.

- √ Read up on Brain-based learning. This research clearly shows how a non-threatening environment increases student learning and leads to open communication between teachers and students. See our discussion in the Teaching Strategies Chapter.
- √ Post basic classroom procedures so that in the beginning students and parents know what to expect and can become accustomed to your classroom management style.
- √ Distinguish between "Teacher Time" vs. "Student Time." A productive classroom allows for teachers to instruct without interruptions, and then gives students opportunities for debriefing, discussing and assimilating the new information.
- √ When students are actively participating in classroom activities which are meaningful and motivating, they are too focused to misbehave.
- √ When joking with students, be sure to set a limit and end with a phrase such as, "Well, that was fun, but now it's time for us to get back to work. Everyone needs to focus on chapter..."
- √ Students crave consistency. Your class will run smoothly if students always know what to expect.
- √ Use eye contact to make sure that everyone has understood the move from "play time" to "work time."
- √ Consistent behavior builds trust.
- √ You'll find that when your lessons are motivating for students, they beg to stay in the classroom!
- √ Trust then builds respect.
- √ Frustration builds when students are confused. When frustration builds, behavior breaks down. Don't let this happen to you! Structure your daily routines!
- √ Personal choice and group discussions are daily occurrences in a classroom which thrives on student involvement.

Traveling Teachers

Many new secondary teachers begin their career as a “traveling” teacher. Basically this means that the teacher must travel from one classroom to another rather than staying in one room all day to teach. Any school with a large student population and not enough physical classrooms will have one or more “floating,” or traveling, teachers. Without a classroom of their own, the traveling teacher must essentially borrow another teacher’s room in order to teach his or her class.

It is vital that you develop a good rapport with the teacher who’s room you will be sharing. This person will notice whether you are being responsible with their room or not, and they will share that information freely with others in the school. Below are some tips on getting off to a good start:



Before school begins, introduce yourself to each teacher who’s classroom you will be using.

- Do not barge into the classroom demanding to have a discussion. Instead, ask if they have a few minutes to talk.
- If they say no, try to determine a time later in the day that you might be able to discuss the situation with them.
- Let this person know that you want to respect their rights and that you want to be sure that you are both on the same page in regards to sharing a classroom.



Determine the following through questions and discussion:

- Is there a place in the room where you can keep supplies or materials for your class?
- Would they mind if you had a small space on the wall or bulletin board to post student work, etc.?
- What supplies/equipment in the classroom are strictly off-limits to both you and your students?
- What supplies/equipment is this person willing to share?

Hint:

If you need special equipment, etc., for a particular class period, talk to the person who is in that room to make arrangements. Do you need to use the computer presentation station each day? Work it out in advance rather than making assumptions!

“Always leave each room exactly as you found it!”

Remember:

No one is required to share anything other than their room space with you and your students. Do not be offended by someone who adamantly refuses to share or help you. It may happen. But it is better that you are aware of that teacher’s attitude from the start. Be as friendly as you can and make sure you respect their stuff!

Hint:

Have a student stand at the front of the classroom and read a paragraph. Then as the student is reading, you walk around the room talking with other students, sharpening your pencil, doing jumping jacks, and acting the way you wouldn't want your students to act while you are presenting a lesson.

Then, have the students explain how difficult it was for her to continue reading with all of the distractions.

Analogy

Let's put into perspective this idea of explaining our classroom expectations to students. Imagine that you are visiting a foreign country where you have never been before. When you arrive, a list of cultural guidelines and laws are given to you to help you know what is and is not acceptable. You read over these, and feeling confident that you are aware of everything you need to know, you venture out for dinner. Upon arriving at a restaurant, you enter and wait to be seated. The hostess comes and beckons for you to follow her. You calmly follow her to your table. Suddenly she turns around, looks down at your feet and begins to yell at you. You are startled and don't really understand the problem. The hostess is now quickly ushering you out of the restaurant. As you are being pulled back towards the exit, you realize that everyone else is wearing closed toed shoes and you are wearing sandals. It is an unwritten rule, or expectation, that everyone wear socks and shoes inside buildings in this country. Unfortunately, this was not in the list of guidelines, and no one ever told you about this "unwritten rule." Now you are flustered, you feel stupid, and feelings of anger and resentment begin to build because you are being punished for not knowing the expectation.

Think about these questions:

- How do you expect for papers to be turned in?
- What are your rules regarding neatness?
- Can the students write in print vs. cursive?
- What type of paper do you want students to use?
- Can they use colored ink pens?
- What are your expectations for bathroom breaks ?
- How will students get supplies during class or sharpen pencils?
- What do you expect students to do when they are finished with their work early?
- What are your expectations for students in writing centers, the reading corner, or lab stations?

When going over expectations at the beginning of the year, you want to be sure to:

- √ Maintain eye contact with each student - this type of body language helps keep students focused on you
- √ Speak slowly and pause after each sentence to emphasize the importance of what you are saying
- √ Practice procedures over and over until they are habits!
- √ Have discussions with students to explain why these expectations are important to you.
- √ Maybe demonstrate some examples of why it would drive you crazy if students...

NOTICE OF CONCERN

Date _____ Student's Name _____
 Student's ID Number _____ Grade _____
 Subject _____ Teacher _____
 Counselor _____

To Parent/ Guardian

- _____ This notice is sent to advise you that your child is having academic difficulties.
- _____ This Notice is sent to advise you that your child is at risk for failure.
- _____ This Notice is sent to advise you that your child's behavioral conduct may result in disciplinary actions.
- _____ Student cannot participate in extracurricular activities due to failure.

Tutorial help: **M T W Th F S** Time: _____

Academic Difficulties

Failure to complete assignments	Failure to make up work/ tests	Excessive absences
Failure to bring materials to class	Poor quality of work	Excessive tardies
Poor test(s) results	Failure to follow directions	Lack of effort
Other _____		

Behavioral Misconduct

Talks excessively	Ignores correction	Disruptive
Distracts other students	Displays negative attitude	Displays disrespect
Other _____		

Parent/ Guardian is requested to have a conference with the teacher at one of the conference periods indicated below:

CONFERENCE TIME: 1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____

Please Sign and Return

Parent / Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

We Missed You!

Name _____

Date of Absence _____

You missed these cool activities in class today!

Important Assignments

You missed the following Quiz/ test on:

Journal topic/ Warm up assignment

Other

CONCLUSION

As we prepare to take on the many roles of teaching, we must keep in mind the end result. If we desire a well-disciplined class which is learner centered, it is vital to train our students in our expectations and procedures. Proactive, not reactive, strategies are required to maintain a classroom where students know what is expected of them at all times. Remember, adolescents need boundaries and structure in order to feel safe in their environment. Although they will test and strain these boundaries, children ultimately want to know that they cannot be broken.

When there is consistency in the classroom, trust is built between all members. Where there is trust, respect follows. If we want our students to respect us, then we must respect them as well. This includes setting expectations and being consistent in our requirements. When everything changes from day to day, students never know what to expect and as a result become excitable, unruly, and sometimes angry.

Good classroom management takes time and effort. It is not easy being consistent and it is not easy always enforcing the expectations set. However, without consistency behavior breaks down and learning does not occur. Thus, effective learning on the part of the student is the result of dedication, preparation, and planning on the part of the teacher.

Additional Resources

Choice Theory in the Classroom
by William Glasser, M.D.

Discipline without Stress, Punishments, or Rewards
by Dr. Marvin Marshall

Discipline with Love and Logic
by Jim Fay and Dave Funk

The Bully Free Classroom: Over 100 Tips and Strategies for Teachers K-8
by Allan Beane

“A well-planned teacher has a focus activity ready for students to complete as soon as they enter the classroom.”

Teacher Testimony

My students all copy their homework into an academic calendar as soon as they walk into my class. Then, while they are all working on their warm-up activity, I go around and check their calendars. I initial each entry that has been copied down correctly. This gives me a chance to say hello to each student and see how everyone is feeling. I can actually diffuse any problems right from the start of class!

As we stated in the previous chapter on classroom management, students can immediately tell when the teacher is not in control due to lack of planning. This often causes behavior in the classroom to break down. Each class period should be planned out from bell to bell. What is the focus activity? What will you do first, second, third? What will the students do first, second, third? Every moment should be planned.



Focus Assignment

When students first enter the classroom, they need a focus activity of some sort to help them calm down and get ready to start class. This must be done every single day and for every class period (when changing classes) in order to maintain consistency. When used here and there, students never know what to expect. This adversely affects their behavior. The focus assignment is sometimes called a “bell-ringer”, “warm-up”, or “sponge” activity.

Types of focus activities:

- Write in journals
- Creative writing activity
- Calendar questions
- Sentence corrections
- Simple review activity
- Geography questions
- Name the state, scientist, explorer
- Math problems
- Review questions from previous day’s lesson
- Vocabulary
- Pop-quiz
- Bulletin board activities—current events, calendar, vocabulary, authors, birthdays, etc.
- Daily Oral Language/ Geography/ Math/ Science
- Quote of the Day

While students are completing their focus activity quietly at their desks, you can use that time to call roll, visit with individual students, and take care of other housekeeping items.

Some quick sponge activities can also be used for transitions when students are finished early.



Steps of Lesson Planning

These steps are for teachers who are beginning the year with no idea of where to start. For those of you who already know WHAT you are going to teach, look at the templates provided later in the chapter.



“An effective teacher works hard to make lessons meaningful to students.”

- 1.) What are you required to teach? Look at a scope and sequence or overview of state required essential elements for your subject and/or grade level. *(Use State Department of Education Webpages)*
- 2.) How can you organize that material into units? Try to make these units meaningful to students. For example, a unit on Nouns is not going to motivate any of your students, but a Mystery unit might.
- 3.) Write an overview for your first six weeks on a calendar. This does not need to be detailed, but should give you an overall picture of what you will cover during that grading period. If you teach several courses, make a calendar for each course taught. This will be extremely helpful to refer to when you sit down to write daily lesson plans.
- 4.) Write lesson plans for the first week. In the beginning you may want to go one day at a time unless your principal requires you to turn in your weekly plans. Use the following format:
 - **Date**
 - **Objectives** - what do you want the students to know or be able to do?
 - **Materials** - what do you need to accomplish this?
 - **Procedures** - what are you going to do 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.?
 - **Assessment** - how are you going to know you met your objectives? This may not occur for several days or weeks into the grading period, but you need to know what you are going to do.

The following three pages show examples and templates for planning. A sample calendar and daily lesson plan is included.

CONCLUSION

Detailed lesson planning is one of the major keys to a successful classroom. Without it teachers are unprepared and unorganized which causes students to be unruly and disruptive. Rather than broad topics in a small box, lesson planning encompasses so much more. It involves thinking through objectives carefully, developing engaging activities to motivate students and enhance the lesson, and creating meaningful assessments of knowledge learned. To use an analogy, lesson planning is the jar that contains our methods for teaching students. When used properly, everything flows out smoothly into each container. Without it, our ideas and strategies have no guidance and spill haphazardly around the room.

Additional Resources

Daily Planning for Today's Classroom: A Guide to Writing Lesson and Activity Plans
by Kay Price and Karna Nelson

The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning
by E. Kralovec and J. Buell

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why do you think it is important to write out detailed lesson plans for each day instead of simply writing "assignments" in the planning book?
- 2) Do you feel it is important to have a focus assignment for every single class? Why or Why Not?
- 3) What is your opinion of giving students time in class to do assignments rather than as homework?
- 4) How can you prepare yourself and your class for a formal teacher observation?

Suggested Activities

- 1) Following the guidelines within this chapter, create your own lesson plan template on the computer to use for your classes. Organize a disk or CD with folders for each six weeks of this or an upcoming school year. Inside those create folders for each week (ie - August 5) to hold lesson plans. Create a separate folder to hold your template.
- 2) Brainstorm your homework procedures/policies and type out for students & parents.
- 3) Brainstorm a list of possible warm-up activities (focus assignment for beginning of class) for each subject you teach. Type them and place them in a manila folder labeled "Warm-Ups" to use when needed.

The First Day

**The first
day of
school is
starting
soon!**

**Where do
I begin?**

The first day of school is the most important of the entire year. You can make or break your classroom environment on this day. The climate of the classroom should be one of mutual respect and understanding between the teacher and students. You want the students to go home with a feeling that the year will be interesting as well as challenging, but also have a clear sense of your expectations. This chapter will contain several tips for getting off to a good start as well as examples of how to run your first day.



What to expect

The first day of school will be hectic, even chaotic in a way, but your goal is to have “organized chaos” through planning. Be prepared for lots of things happening in your classroom all at once:

- Parents and students who are lost and may be asking you for directions to another class.
- Administrators and other school staff popping in to ask you questions, informing you of new procedures, or getting a head count.
- New students arriving who are not on your class list.
- Students seeing friends and buzzing with excitement.



This chapter should be used in combination with the Before School Starts chapter and the Classroom Management chapter. It is vital to have classroom organization and structure set up before students ever arrive. You want to be prepared with classroom routines and procedures, so you can begin training students from the first day.

Parent Communication

***I know I
need to
talk to
parents,
but I don't
know
how!***

***What do I
do?***

The concept of parents as partners is not a new one, and we don't believe it is one that teachers disagree with in general. Rather, it is difficult to know when and how a positive partnership can begin with parents. Many teachers, especially new teachers, may feel insecure or awkward when communicating with parents and thus try to get away with as little interaction as possible. This attitude of minimal contact is one that will ultimately hurt the student.

As educators, we have a responsibility to involve parents because of their fundamental rights. However, it is also to our great advantage as well as the student's to involve parents. Recent research documented by Fuller and Olsen in their book, *Home-School Relations: Working Successfully with Parents and Families*, shows that family involvement has a profound effect on student success in both academic achievement and behavior. Students who have highly involved parents are more likely to be well-adjusted and successful than those whose parents are not involved in their school life.

Key to Success: Act Early and Often!

School + Parents = Success

What happens when parents get involved in their child's education? Grades go up and behavior improves, too! Parent involvement does make a difference.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum

The skills of reading and writing are such an important part of every classroom. Whether you teach the actual subjects of English and Reading or not, these skills are vital in all aspects of learning and life. Without the ability to read and write, students cannot function efficiently and successfully in the world, not to mention those oh-so-important standardized tests.

How can I teach and/or implement essential reading and writing skills in my class?

While most of us will admit to the importance of these skills, there are many teachers who feel that the teaching and practicing of reading and writing is solely the domain of the Language Arts teacher. This is absolutely not true. With the current crisis in student achievement and the recent *Leave No Child Behind Act*, more than ever it is important for every teacher in the school to incorporate reading and writing skills in the classroom and across subject areas.

The goal of this chapter is to help prepare all teachers to be able to implement these vital skills in their classroom. The majority of ideas presented in this chapter can and should be utilized by all teachers, no matter what subject is taught. We owe it to our students to help them become better readers and writers. So, now, how can we prepare ourselves to either teach reading and writing, or integrate these skills into our lessons?

Set up a Classroom Library

- Choose one corner of your room to be dedicated to reading. It doesn't have to be huge, just a space big enough for two or three kids to sit comfortably. However, if you have a nice big room, make your corner as big as you like!
- Partition it off a little from the rest of the room to make it seem like a special quiet place.
- Books and other types of reading material are an important part of a reading corner and should include non-fiction as well as fiction. Be sure materials is available for a wide variety of reading levels.



Reading Skills to be Taught and Practiced

The following are reading skills that should be taught in reading and practiced in every single class. If you do not specifically teach reading, it still should be relatively easy to integrate either a review or use of these skills in your class. The best way to help your students recognize that they use these skills on a daily basis is to use the vocabulary and point them out in your own lessons.

Examples:

“What was the sequence of events that caused the Civil War?”

“We just identified a cause and effect. That is an important reading skill.”

- Identify main idea
- Summarize a passage
- Distinguish fact from non-fact
- Sequence events
- Identify supporting details in a passage
- Determine word meaning (vocabulary)
- Determine cause & effect relationships
- Compare and contrast ideas
- Make observations and analyze issues within a passage
- Locate specific information in a passage
- Use graphic sources to help interpret reading
- Make generalizations and draw conclusions from a passage
- Identify purpose of a text
- Making predictions

As you read these objectives, ask yourself, how many of these am I already doing without being aware of it? How many Science and Social Studies teachers, for instance, require students to locate facts from the textbook? Sequencing is another commonly used skill in Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art, and PE classes.

“Well,” you may ask, “since I’m already reinforcing many of these skills in the classroom, what more is there?” Awareness on the part of the teacher is the first step. However, we must also make our students aware that these skills are not just practiced in their Language Arts class, but that they can be applied in all areas - academic and real life.

Example:

A Science teacher has a lesson on electricity. Before the textbook reading, the teacher introduces important vocabulary terms. At this time it would be very easy to incorporate a short discussion on how the prefix or suffix of a word gives a “clue” as to the meaning of the word. This little bit of “reading instruction” doesn’t take long, but now two reading skills have been emphasized in a science class. To take it a step further, the teacher could also point out how using prefixes and suffixes help determine word meaning in everything they read from technical VCR manuals to advertisements. In the course of a few minutes within a lesson, the Science teacher has reinforced reading skills, applied it to their curriculum, and applied it to the real world!

Hint:

When planning out lessons, think about ways you will incorporate vocabulary, textbook reading, and reading from other sources to enhance student learning. As you write your objectives, be sure to include the reading objectives that will be used in the lesson.

Example:

Students will be able to identify key vocabulary terms within the text.

“A well-prepared teacher helps make his/her students fluent readers through integration of reading skills.”

Bloom's Taxonomy Keywords

We want to encourage higher level thinking skills in all areas of our classroom. What better way than to use the Bloom's keywords to help develop reading discussion questions, reading responses, and writing activities. Use the keywords below to create responses on a variety of reading responses.



“Increase critical thinking skills by utilizing higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy when creating reading responses.”

KNOWLEDGE

define
list
identify
describe
match
located

COMPREHENSION

explain
summarize
interpret
rewrite
convert
give examples

APPLICATION

demonstrate
show
operate
construct
apply
illustrate

ANALYSIS

compare
contrast
distinguish
deduct
infer
categorize

SYNTHESIS

create
suppose
design
compose
combine
rearrange

EVALUATION

judge
appraise
debate
criticize
support

Sample Questions: *Count of Monte Cristo*

- Identify the main character(s).
- Describe the mood of the story.
- Explain why the Count is helping Morrel.
- Give examples of how Danglars betrayed Edmond Dantes.
- Illustrate Faria’s plan of escape from Chateau d’If.
- Compare Edmond Dantes to the Count of Monte Cristo.
- Predict what you think will happen to the Count now that his revenge has ended.
- Compose a letter to Mercedes from Edmond while in prison.
- Suppose Dantes escaped prison without knowing the events which lead to his arrest. Create an outline of events that might have happened were this true.
- Is Faria a helpful character? In a paragraph, criticize his actions.
- Should the Count have taken vengeance on Danglars and the others? Why or why not? Support your reasons.

Brain-Based Classroom

Creating a learning environment where students are motivated to learn and collaborate with one another should be our ultimate goal. How can we accomplish this?

- We need a solid base of knowledge and understanding of the actual content we teach.
- We need an understanding of human nature.
- We need an understanding of how the brain learns best.

I want to have a Brain-Based classroom!

Where do I start?

1.) Knowing Our Content

Why? Well, the more knowledge we have about a particular event, concept, or skill, the better we are able to teach it. The wealth of information stored away in our brains through study and experiences makes it possible for us to expand upon the basic information presented to students in textbooks.

Could we teach a subject straight from the textbook and cover the required objectives? Probably. Would it be considered effective teaching that will follow the students throughout their lives? No way. Knowing your subject materials brings with it the confidence that you know what you're talking about. You'll be able to share stories and fun facts that add depth to student learning. And, you'll be better prepared to help students apply this learning to their lives and the world around them.

Example: A class is reading a chapter in Social Studies about the early United States government and the first president.

Teacher A:

After students read the chapter, the teacher discusses the information from the text and assigns a worksheet with various questions to assess comprehension of material read.

Teacher B:

While students read the chapter, the teacher stops at various points to check for understanding. When students read about the first president, the teacher pulls out two wooden squares the size of teeth and passes them around the class. When students ask about the squares, she tells them, "How do you think George Washington may have used these?" Students brainstorm and they discuss the possible uses. The teacher then goes on to tell them that George Washington actually wore wooden teeth. Students are then encouraged to look on the internet for other interesting facts about the U.S. founding fathers or early presidents.

Which lesson do you think students will remember and retain?

CONCLUSION

A brain-based classroom is one where collaboration between students and teacher occurs on a daily basis. It is a place where everyone feels comfortable working and sharing ideas with one another. Can it really occur in the real world of teaching? You bet! We've been there and have experienced it ourselves. However, it is up to the teacher to create this type of an environment through their knowledge and actions. By being life-long learners ourselves, we foster a love for learning in our students. How? By reading and researching all we can about the concepts we teach, our students see our own desire to learn more. Additionally, when we take the time to get to know each of our students as individuals, they begin to trust and respect us as their guide. Lastly, when we understand how the brain works, we can better meet student needs. When these needs are met, learning takes place every single day, which, after all, is our ultimate goal.

Additional Resources

Multiple Intelligences: Theory into Practice
by Howard Gardner

The Unschooled Mind
by Howard Gardner

Brain Based Learning
by Eric Jensen

Human Brain and Human Learning
by Leslie Hart

Bringing Up Boys
by James Dobson

The Wonder of Boys
by Michael Gurian

Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys
by Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why is it important for you to be knowledgeable in your content area?
- 2) Why should you get to know your students? How will it help you as a teacher? How will it help your students?
- 3) How does knowing about the Triune Brain affect your teaching style and your classroom?
- 4) What can you do to encourage a non-threatening environment in your classroom?

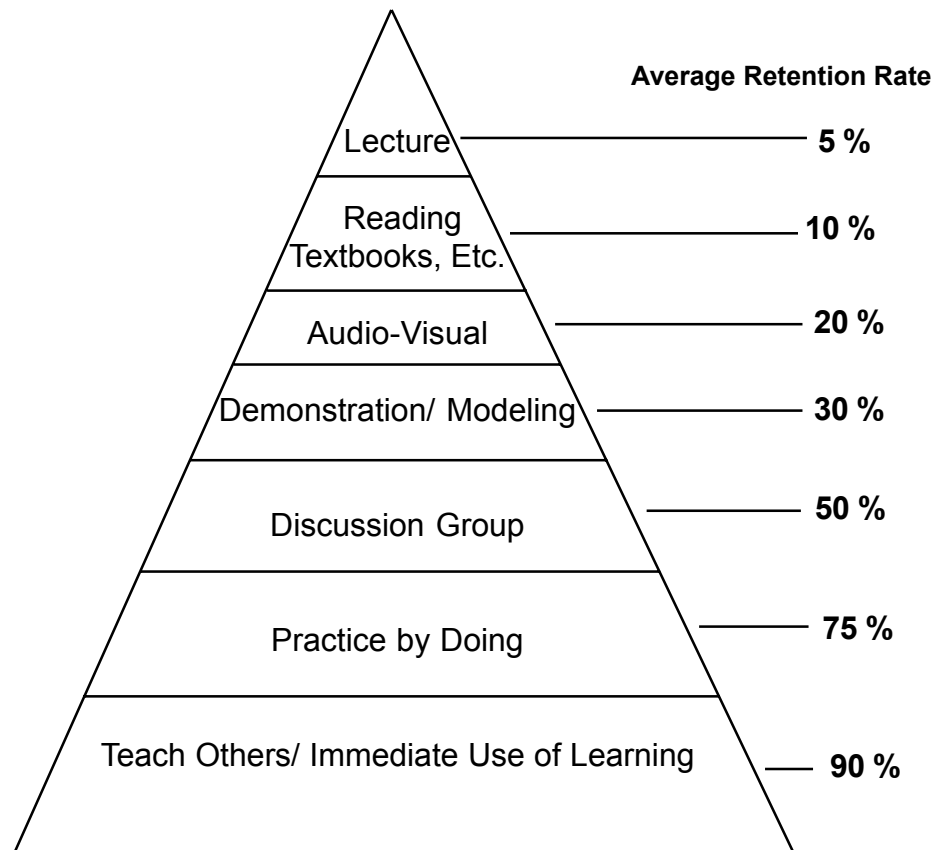
Brain-Based Teaching Strategies

Another aspect of the brain-based classroom is engaging students in their learning. We want students to be active, not passive participants in the learning process. What exactly does it mean to be active versus passive?

Take a look at the learning pyramid below to see the average retention rate for different styles of teaching. Which of these encourage passive learning through listening or watching and which encourage active learning through doing?

I want to keep my students actively engaged in class!

How do I begin?



NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 300 N. Lee Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314. 1-800-777-5227.

Students need to be actively manipulating information through a variety of activities in a brain-based classroom. Being actively involved is motivating and you'll find that students won't want to leave your class because they are having so much "fun." Can you imagine a classroom where students are being challenged to think at higher levels, create products that demonstrate and apply their learning, and teach others what they have learned? This is what a brain-based classroom looks like. Let's start by taking a look at higher level thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

A brain-based classroom is also one in which students are actively engaged in the learning process. Human beings naturally have a sense of curiosity about the unknown. Unfortunately, the isolated nature of traditional lectures and textbook reading has a tendency to squelch that curiosity. Students become bored and refuse to learn. We hope that this chapter has inspired you instead to use cooperative learning tools such as discovery learning, integrated content, and learning through experiences to foster life-long learning within your students.

Additional Resources

Learning Thru Discussion
by W. M. Fawcett Hill

Teaching with the Brain in Mind
by Eric Jensen

Integrated Thematic Instruction
by Susan Kovalik

The Way We Were, The Way We Can Be
by Ann Ross

Synergy
by Karen Olsen

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why is it important to keep students actively engaged in the classroom rather than passively listening?
- 2) What are some different ways you can keep your students actively engaged?
- 3) How might you implement discovery or experiential learning in your classroom?
- 4) Why should you consider using research projects throughout the year rather than just once a year?
- 5) What is your opinion of integrating subject areas? Is this something you might implement in your classroom? Why or why not?

Assessment

Not sure of what to do to assess, or evaluate, your students' abilities and progress?

How do I assess my students so that their abilities and progress are accurately reflected?

Don't worry. This chapter will give you a clearer understanding of assessment and will provide ideas that you can use right away. Not only is it important to have a philosophy of assessment before you begin the year, but you also need some practical know-how. Throughout this chapter, we will provide you with various assessment strategies, grading techniques, and practical ideas for your gradebook to help you prepare for assessing your students.

First, you need to realize a few things about assessment.

- Even experienced teachers have to continually check their assessment techniques. By doing this, effective teachers make sure that their assessment is a reliable and valid tool to show student achievement.
- Proper assessment can be a challenge.
- It is important to vary and adapt assessment tools to fit different learning styles and instructional needs.

“An effective teacher continually re-evaluates his or her assessment techniques.”

Motivating Students

***Some of
my
students
are not
excited
about
learning!***

***What can
I do?***

One of the most difficult aspects of teaching is motivating students. In fact, William Glasser, in his book entitled *Choice Theory in the Classroom*, states that trying to teach students who do not want to learn is impossible. In our own experience, the middle and high school student is especially challenging in this area. Add to it the fact that you will most likely have students from a lower socio-economic background, where survival is more important than learning, as well as students with learning or language difficulties, and you have a challenge.

Remember, the more engaged your students are, the more they will be motivated to learn. Engaging activities are ones where students must manipulate the information, skill, or concept in a variety of ways. This can include working in teams, discussion, projects, research, or creating a product of some sort as we discussed earlier.

Take a few minutes to think about classes that you've attended throughout your lifetime. Which ones do you remember as positive and motivating experiences? Which ones were so boring that you spent every minute counting the seconds until it was time to leave? Generally classes where the teacher or professor lectured at students or required students to do meaningless work, busy-work, or repetitive tasks are the most boring. Classes which get students actively involved in discovering their own learning, interacting with each other, and encourage respect between the teacher and students are the most motivating. Look back at the *Brain-Based Classroom* and *Strategy* chapters for more detail about these motivating attributes.

Additionally, it is important to be prepared with a variety of activities that will engage students in their own learning. If a lesson seems to be faltering or you notice a glazed-over look in the eyes of your students, smile a big smile, do a little dance, and pull out something different to capture their attention. Have you been doing all of the talking and action for the lesson? Think quickly how you can get students involved instead.

In this chapter we will share additional easy-to-use strategies to help you engage and motivate students. These can be referenced when planning lessons, or in many instances, used at the spur-of-the moment when you see that glazed-over look.

Journaling, continued

Students can create a learning log by writing down what they have learned for the day. It can also be used on a weekly basis. The only rule is that students must use complete sentences. Journaling provides the transfer necessary to make a concept real. It also allows the teacher to check periodically on a student's individual progress. Journals are a great way to demonstrate knowledge of a concept, show understanding, and give directions on how to complete a task or solve an equation. A journal entry also works great as a closure activity.

We discuss additional ideas for using Journals in all subject areas in the Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum chapter.

K-W-L

KWL stands for Know-, Want to Know-, Learned-, and is written across the top of a chart, chalkboard, or paper. Students fill in the first two sections as a class before a new unit or concept is learned. The last section is completed at the end of the unit or lesson. With primary students this can be done orally or as a class using large sheets of butcher paper.

Life Size and Letter Writing

Students love anything different from paper and pencil activities, so give them a large piece of butcher paper and markers and let them make life sized timelines in History, graphs in Science and Math, solve problems, create storyboards, or brainstorm ideas.

Writing letters to the President, Governor, local Congressman or Senator, or to other famous figures, is extremely motivating to students. Many addresses for government officials and businesses can be found in the almanac and on the internet. This is an excellent way for reviewing both friendly and business letter formats with students. Not only do they have a real audience, but also have a variety of topics to write about. This can also be used as a tool for assessment since students have to know the subject in order to make a coherent letter. Everyone will be excited when they receive a reply letter in the mail.

There is an excellent book called "Letters from a Nut" (will have to edit some of the material for appropriateness), that uses letters written in a serious format to poke fun at the world. The author has written letters to actual businesses with either a compliment or a complaint and has published the return letter. This book is a fun way to introduce writing letters to businesses to either compliment or complain about a particular product or service.

Mobiles

Mobiles are a fun way to display information. Students can make mobiles of atoms, story settings, and timelines. Require written explanations of the mobile. This is great for visual learners and can be used as an assessment tool. We've used everything from coat hangers to dowel rods to make mobiles. Students can be creative in what they decide to hang when representing a concept.

Technology in the Classroom

*My
school
has
really
embraced
technology
in the
classroom.*

*Where do
I start?*

To be effective, teachers need to be prepared to use a variety of technological hardware and software when teaching students. While the computer is becoming a major tool within the classroom, technology comes in all shapes and sizes. Not every school is fully equipped with computers and other types of high-tech hardware. This can be frustrating to tech savvy teachers. Even more frustrating is the fact that many teachers across the United States are equipped with computer presentation stations and other hardware/software options that they rarely or never use.

There are lots of different, helpful, and motivating ways you can use technology in your classroom to enhance student learning. However, we must stress the importance of attending training provided by your school or district in how to use these tools. A well-prepared teacher strives to stay on top of the latest technology available to them. If we are not familiar with using certain types of hardware or software, we will not use them in the classroom. This hurts our students who need that exposure to help prepare them for life in the new millennium.

Computers

Computers have so many different uses in the classroom. Whether you have a presentation station, one computer for the whole class, or several workstations, computers can be used in a variety of ways to enhance your learning environment. We are going to discuss both teacher use and student use of equipment and software programs for the computer in this section.

Word Perfect or Microsoft Word

You can use Word for the same reasons as Power Point. The difference is that multiple pages will not change automatically. Also, you must remember that students can only see what is visible on the screen. With Power Point, once you start the slide show, each slide will adjust itself to fit perfectly to the screen.



“Creating letters and forms using Word or other word processing programs allows you to save on disk an edit as needed.”

Use Word to:

- Create and save letters to parents
- Create note cards or post cards to give to students
- Create tests
- Create welcoming letters for parents and/or students
- Create forms to use in the classroom
- Create checklists for assignments
- Create assignment handouts
- Create lesson plans
- Create lesson handouts
- Teach editing skills -- Have students point out mistakes in a typed paragraph. You can correct the mistakes on the computer while students are watching. You might use a different color to fix the problems in order for the changes to stand out.

EXCEL

Excel is a spreadsheet program and has many different uses. We highly recommend that you take a course in using Excel to learn all of the different ways it can be used in the classroom. Here are a few examples:

- Graph data or information to encourage higher level thinking with students.
- Keep and average grades if your school/district does not have an electronic gradebook. The spreadsheet will actually calculate the averages for you if you set up the equations correctly.
- Make a spreadsheet to keep track of student work, absences, etc., or to use for the Clipboard Management techniques we discussed earlier in the book.
- Create databases to use for mailing labels

Also, you can use your presentation station to teach students how to use any program through demonstration.

Career Bound

***I'm ready
to start
teaching
in the
classroom
and need
a job.***

***What do I
do?***

It isn't easy knowing what to do when you first get out of college and are looking for a job teaching. For the most part your college should have a career center to help you with your resume and interviewing skills. Your student teaching professor should get you started on a portfolio and dossier to use when applying for jobs. At many universities, and in many cities, teaching job fairs are held during Spring Semester where you can meet with different districts.

However, if your college doesn't have a big education department you may be left with a feeling of frustration due to a lack of information. Also, most university career centers are geared for students going into the world of business which doesn't help you much at all.

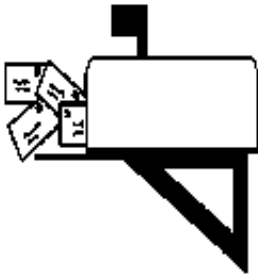
Additionally, you may be someone looking to change careers and become a teacher. Although you do not have your certification, most states now have an Alternative Certification Program to help you make the transition. You will still be required to attend teacher training courses and get your state certification, but you are allowed to teach while you work towards that goal. Contact your State Department of Education to locate different programs available in your state. The US Department of Education website - <http://www.ed.gov> - lists all of the state departments for your reference.

This chapter is designed to help you understand what public school districts are looking for and how they hire new teachers. Whether you are a recent graduate or trying to change careers, you will need to find a teaching job somewhere. We hope you will find these tips to be helpful. Please remember that every state is different, so not every tip will be useful to you. Still, it can't hurt to have some information on your side.

The Application

First of all, most school districts have an application that has to be filled out. The best course of action is to decide which school districts you are interested in, call them and ask for an application. It will arrive in the mail between 1 and 5 days within your phone call.

If you don't know the districts in your area, the college or public library will have Patterson's American Education which lists every school district for every state. It is organized by state, city and then districts in that area. Each district has a little blurb about it along with the address and phone number. Don't forget about private and charter schools as well when putting in applications.



It is your responsibility to mail the form, along with an addressed stamped envelope, to each reference.



When filling out the application, be sure you have:

- **Basic biography information** - name, address, etc.
- **Schools where you have previously taught**
(your student teaching experience will work fine for this area) — name of school, name of district, address, phone number, how long you worked there, and possibly a supervisor's name.
- **Other work experience**



Be ready to provide References.

- Cooperating teacher
- Principal of your student teaching school
(if he/she observed you teaching)
- A professor in your major subject area
- Your student teaching professor/supervisor.

Be sure you know their address and phone number. Also, make sure you tell them that you are using them as references.

Remember: Most districts do not like personal references!

Many districts will want your references to fill out a form. **YOU** have to get the form to your references **AND** give them an addressed/ stamped envelope to send the form back to the district. Sometimes the form is a rating chart and other times there are general questions about your performance. Make sure you choose people who will take the time to fill it out.

CONCLUSION

The hiring process can really be a time of stress and uncertainty. However, you can help yourself in getting a teaching job by standing out from the crowd. Take the time to prepare a good presentation of yourself through your cover letter, resume, and portfolio. Keep in mind the hot issues of concern to principals today and research information about the schools and districts where you interview. Although the teacher shortage in some areas pretty much guarantees almost anyone a job, there are places across the country and world where you must present yourself as a “must have.” Remember the following when interviewing:

- Be confident, but not cocky.
- If you don't know the answer to a question right away, ask to have it rephrased. Take a moment to think about it before answering.
- Be assertive, but not aggressive. Use your “teacher” voice and mannerisms.
- Show enthusiasm for working with students. This will show in your eyes, voice, and body language during the interview.

In short, be a professional in every way from attire to conversation and demeanor, and you will find yourself a bonafide classroom teacher!

Additional Resources

How to Develop a Professional Portfolio: A Manual for Teachers
by Pamela Cignetti

The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/ Tenure Decisions
by Peter Seldin

Inside Secrets of Finding a Teaching Job
by Jack Warner, Clyde Bryan, and Diane Warner (Contributor)

How to Get the Teaching Job You Want: The Complete Guide for College Graduates, Returning Teachers, and Career Changers
by Robert Fiersen and Seth Wietzman

“Use as many different resources as you can to help you get started!”

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About the Authors

Emma McDonald and Dyan Hershman, experienced classroom teachers and educational consultants from Texas, are known for their unique teaching strategies and techniques that motivate both teachers and students. Going beyond theories, these educators provide proven practical strategies to help teachers improve student learning. McDonald and Hershman have worked with and educated both children and adults over the past fifteen years. Currently, both mentor new teachers and work as Consultants with the Teacher Certification & Preparation Program for the Region 10 Education Service Center. Their strategies have been featured in Instructor Magazine and have been widely used by both new and veteran teachers. McDonald and Hershman now share their “tools” for success with educators all across the United States. They are well-known for their motivational, positive, practical, and energetic presentation style which inspires and encourages both new and veteran teachers.

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We are an organization of veteran teachers dedicated to helping the beginning teacher be successful in the classroom from the very first day of school.

Our mission is to empower new teachers with effective teaching strategies through resources and support services.

We believe a well-prepared teacher is an effective teacher.

We believe that new teachers who are given the right resources and support will stay in the classroom and make education a life-long career. This is important for our schools, our students, and our communities.

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- Professional Development - Book Studies, Links to additional resources
- Classroom Resources - Links to books and websites that are content related
- Classroom ToolKit - Gradebook and communication tool for students and parents
- Classroom Websites - Create a classroom or teacher website
- Teacher Preparation - Resources and links for becoming a teacher and getting a job
- Community - Email discussion lists and message boards to network with others
- Idea Share - A place to share great lesson ideas
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