

SURVIVAL KIT

for New Teachers



Empowering Educators for Classroom Success
A User-Friendly Handbook

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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.

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.



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?
- TV/ VCRs?
- Any other important papers you might need (ask the secretary)?






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 4th grade. My name is Mr. Sims, and I am your teacher for this year. I believe in learning through experiences, and have planned some great activities for us throughout the year. Our room number is 32. I look forward to seeing you there Monday morning. Bring your school supplies, your imagination, and your brain!</p> <p>Sincerely, Mr. Sims</p>	 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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“A well-prepared teacher makes students feel welcome even before school starts”



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!

Before School Checklist

- _____ Laminate supplies
- _____ Set up room
 - _____ arrange desks/tables
 - _____ set up reading corner
 - _____ set up other special areas (writing center, learning centers, etc.)
 - _____ post classroom expectations and consequences posters
 - _____ organize filing cabinets
- _____ Set up student mailboxes/ cubbies
- _____ Create Day of the Week folders
- _____ Create individual student folders
- _____ Set up gradebook
- _____ Write welcome postcards to students
 - _____ mail postcards/letter
- _____ Create a class schedule
- _____ Create a substitute folder
- _____ Organize a Teacher Binder
- _____ Write out lesson plans for first day
 - _____ second day?
 - _____ third day?

Hint:

Be aware that many districts require you to start work at least four days before the kids start. **THIS WILL NOT BE ENOUGH TIME TO PREPARE.**

Several of those days will be spent in staff development, new teacher training, and school meetings. You will probably be given one day or 1/2 day to work alone in your classroom. It is wise to get your classroom keys the day you are hired or as soon as possible thereafter.

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!"

Key Concepts for Successful Classroom Management

Dealing with your regular classroom duties with efficiency and calmness allows for positive student relationships. Students feel flustered and uneasy when their teacher is in a panicked or unorganized state. Too much unstructured time or too many pauses in instruction result in misbehavior. Also, loss of respect and trust for the teacher can result in additional misconduct. Here are some tips to help you streamline your classroom routines so that you are more prepared.



Have Specific Procedures Every Day.

It is important to have procedures ready for students to follow upon entering the classroom from the very first day. Examples of daily routines which need teacher expectations and procedures:

- What to do before the bell rings
- Checking attendance
- Giving directions
- Collecting classwork and homework
- Distributing materials/ papers
- Bathroom breaks during class
- Transition times between lessons/activities
- Working on projects
- Reading workshop
- Writing workshop
- End of the day

“Always remain calm and maintain order.”

“A well-prepared teacher trains students on class routines used everyday to build consistency.”

Teacher Testimony

My first year of teaching I had a horrible feeling at the end of every day! It seemed like chaos as students grabbed their backpacks and began shoving everything inside! Some students were asking me questions about homework, while other students were responding to a lesson we had just finished, and most students were excitedly chatting with each other about after school activities. I felt so scattered and disjointed when the bell rang and the students rushed the door. After several weeks of this, I decided to enact an End of the Day Routine that we would follow everyday. If the procedure wasn't followed, then students didn't get to leave my classroom. This included cleaning up the room, copying homework into their daily planner, packing up their backpacks, and then writing quietly in their journal until the bell rang. I gave them topics that provided closure to my lesson or that stimulated interest for the next day. When the bell rang, we all sat in silence until I said “Go!” Then they put their journals away and off they went! I felt so much more collected and relaxed at the end of the day from then on!

“Avoid looking panicked!”



Create a Calm and Welcoming Climate

Maintain your Composure

Create a classroom climate that is calm by not overreacting to situations or problems that arise. Stay alert for behavioral problems and initiate strategies to dissolve the problem before it gets worse.

Avoid Yelling

When you find yourself losing your temper, turn around and count to ten or take several deep breaths while you close your eyes. This will help you remain calm and focused. Yelling only makes things worse. It upsets students and causes them to lose respect for you. Also, increasing the volume does nothing more than add to an already chaotic situation.

Verbalize Directions firmly but quietly OR Use Non-Verbal Cues

Use a quiet signal to help students focus on you while you are giving directions. This allows you to use a quiet and deliberate voice. Do not speak until EVERYONE is silent and looking at you.

Redirect Inappropriate Behavior Immediately

Unnecessary commotion must not rule your classroom. If things get out of control, rely on your non-verbal cues, such as eye contact or a quiet signal, to bring things back to order.



Keep Students Actively Engaged in Learning Activities

“Busy hands are happy hands,” our grandmothers always say. Challenge students and keep them involved with lessons by planning meaningful activities that have connections to other subject areas and real life.

Give students project type activities where they must create some sort of a product. This can be as simple as a scavenger hunt of important concepts within a chapter, or as complex as a diorama and oral presentation.

We offer specific strategies for this in the latter half of this book! Please read on!

“When Students are interested and engaged, behavior problems are at a minimum and positive student - teacher relationships are at a maximum.”



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 _____

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, children 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.”

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
- Name the season/day of the week/etc.
- 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, when preparing for lunch or recess, or getting ready to go home.



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!

Sample Lesson Plan

- Objectives:** To be able to demonstrate the Millions Block
To be able to identify characteristics of a Sci Fi or Fantasy story
To be able to compare/contrast different types of Stars
- Materials:** Math book, Sci Fi and Fantasy notes on transparency, white paper, Kids Discover Magazine, Mobius handout, Venn Diagram handout
- Homework:** Math - Math in Space, p. 34-36 (Mobius Loop & experiments)
Rdg. - Read for 20 minutes and list the main events from the chapter/section you read
- Journal:** If I could capture a star, I'd...
- Words of the Day:** cluster - a group of similar things gathered closely together
universe - all the matter and space that exists
- Daily Oral Language:** Read the following sentence and circle the proper nouns. What is the rule for proper nouns?
The Sun is a star in the Milky Way Galaxy.
- Daily Geography:** a) Name the ocean closest to the Arctic Circle.
b) Which one is farthest from the Arctic Circle?
- Daily Math:** Write the following numbers in expanded form:
a) 758 b) ten thousand five hundred nine c) 2,707
- Procedures:**
- 8:00-8:30** Announcements, Homework calendar, Word of the Day, Journal
8:30-9:00 Daily Oral Language, Geography & Math
9:00-9:45 - Review homework from last night over Thousands place & expanded form
- Give notes from page 18 in Math book- into math notebook
- Practice Millions place & assign homework
9:45-9:50 Bathroom Break/ Go to Specials
9:50-10:45 Specials/ Planning period
10:50-11:20 - Reading Workshop - set up folder with paper in middle for responses & choose novel to read
- Silent reading
11:20-12:00 - Give notes on Sci Fi Genre and pre-write a sci-fi story
- Give notes on Fantasy Genre and pre-write a fantasy story
12:00-12:50 Lunch/ Recess
12:50 - 2:30 - Read to students about stars from the Kids Discover Magazine & discuss
- Student pairs use Venn Diagram to compare/contrast different types of stars.
- Students create their own Mobius Loop and conduct experiments
(See copied directions)

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 fun 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 asking you questions and visiting with other parents.
- 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.

CONCLUSION

Although the first day of school is often hectic, it is vital that you set the proper tone. If students see you flustered and unorganized, they will store that picture of you in their heads for the rest of the year. Following expectations and staying organized will not be a priority to your students because of it. However, if students see before them an organized teacher who knows exactly what will happen first, second, and third, they will be more likely to develop into a well-disciplined class.

Remember that your tone of voice and posture affect how students view you as a teacher. Be firm when going over expectations, but also let students see your unique personality. Take the time to get to know your students and to train them in what you expect to happen within the classroom. In essence, the first day is a time for you to “set the stage” for the rest of the school year.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why is the first day of school so important?
- 2) How do you think having a poster clearly visible with the daily schedule listed will help you? Why should you go over this schedule at the start of class?
- 3) Why do you think it is important to alternate between giving information about class rules and procedures, and fun get-to-know or team building activities?

Suggested Activities

- 1) Decide how you will sit students randomly. Create the squares, shapes, cards, or other objects you plan to use. Laminate these and place them in a ziplock bag for use on the first day of school. (Pre-service teachers may want to keep these in their 3-ring binder along with other classroom materials)
- 2) Brainstorm three different activities that you might ask students to complete as soon as they walk into the classroom on the first day of school. Be sure that each activity is age-appropriate and can be completed individually by each student with little to no help from the teacher.
- 3) Write out detailed lesson plans for the first two days of school. Be sure to include the objectives, materials, and procedures. Under procedures, list each item along with the directions or your comments/reminders in an outline format. When you get your daily/class schedule, you will be able to plug those items into different time slots. See our sample plans in this chapter and the Lesson Planning chapter.

**After the Parent Arrives:**

Having a successful conference can be an obtainable goal. Here are some suggestions for after the parent arrives.

- Start with a friendly greeting and a smile. Thank the parents for making the effort to come, and show a pleasant, relaxed attitude. Try to put them at ease and make them feel welcome.
- Begin with a positive statement about their child!
For example:
"I am delighted to have Suzy in my classroom. She is a joy!"
- Ask how the parent is thinking and feeling about their child's behavior, progress, and/or grades. It helps you to understand the student's behavior if the parents' attitudes are known.
- Share observations about the student. Ask for parent observations and compare with yours.
- Listen to what the parents say and respond to their comments. You do not have to control every discussion.
- Discuss ways both you and the parents can help the student to improve.
- Make sure to have documentation in order to demonstrate your concerns. If the child has been having problems with grades, show the parent some of the student's work (or lack thereof), or maybe show them a negative pattern that is forming in your grade book. Do not make generalized statements,
"State the facts, Ma'am!"
- Do not interrupt the parents while they are speaking. This often makes them feel defensive. Wait until they are finished speaking before you begin.



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 Reading Corner

- 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

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.”

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!

PERSUASIVE MODE

Ideas for Practice Essays

- Should girls be allowed to play on the football team?
- Any concerns in the local or global community such as rainforests, oil spills, garbage dumps, cold war, etc.
- Should students wear uniforms to school?
- Should students be allowed to use a calculator on math tests?
- Any concerns in the school
- Should students provide their own art supplies?
- Mini-persuasive writings - Why I should be allowed to go to the bathroom, or, to see a principal or another teacher, or, why I shouldn't have to do homework.

This is the hardest purpose/mode for students and the one they are not given enough practice with. Mini-persuasive writings may help students be able to give solid reasons for choices.

WHAT DO I LOOK FOR IN A PERSUASIVE PAPER?

- Position Statement
- Introduction
- Three clearly stated reasons
- Specific examples under each reason
- Elaboration phrases (as well as, one example, for instance, additionally)
- Persuasive vocabulary (obviously, clearly, noticeably, stands to reason, unmistakably, evidently, glaringly, plainly, needs no explanation)
- Transition words (therefore, in conclusion, for example, nevertheless, another)
- Interesting adjectives
- Specific verbs

A graphic organizer and grading checklist are included in the back of this chapter.

“Use Mini-persuasive writings to help students practice giving SOLID REASONS for their position!”

Hint:

Give a checklist to students that shows what elements you expect to see in their persuasive essay.

Students need to know what is expected of them.

Also, you can use the checklist to help you with the grading process.

Implementing Math

***There are
so many
ways to
teach
math
skills***

***Where do
I start?***

Math is often the subject that new teachers struggle with the most. How do you motivate students to learn their math? Does math always have to be boring? How do you make math interesting, fun, and integrated with other subject areas? These are questions that we struggled with our first years of teaching. To help you get started, we have outlined a step-by-step strategy for teaching math concepts within this chapter. We hope you will find it helpful.



Before you start teaching math, you must determine what is required by your district and state. Consult with a master teacher in your school to get the district philosophy on teaching math, the scope and sequence for your grade-level, and the standardized testing requirements. Then, tackle the math textbook, released standardized tests, and your other subject themes to develop a plan for teaching math concepts. You do not have to follow the textbook page by page! Teach math how it makes sense to you!

First, we would like to offer you some easy tips that you can try throughout the year to make teaching math more fun. This is just a small sampling of ideas. There is no way we could mention EVERYTHING that teachers can and are doing for math instruction within this chapter. You will learn of more interesting things to do with math the longer you teach and the more exposure you have to other teachers! The following are some key points to keep in mind when teaching math:

- Integrate Math with other subject areas
- Use practical/real world applications



Step 3: Practical/ Real World Applications

Once you have taught the students the concept and skills necessary to solve a type of math problem, you must make that skill meaningful for them! The students need to be capable of applying that skill in real life. This sounds harder than it really is. The key to this section is “word problems!” Word problems offer real life situations and the students must be able to solve the problem using the skills and concepts that you taught them. This keeps your math instruction from dealing with rote memory and actually forces the students to use reasoning and their newly acquired skills.

Tips for Real World Math

- Bring grocery store ads, department store ads, sales catalogs and mail order catalogs to class. Make up questions or word problems so that the students have to use these items to solve your problem.

Examples:

- Applying multiplication with decimals and practicing working with percentages -- Find something that you would like to buy and pretend that the store is having a 25% off sale. Calculate the new sales price of your item. Now add 8.25% sales tax. What is the total price? How much money, in whole dollars, will you have to take to the store in order to buy this item? (25, 30, etc.)
- Applying addition and subtraction -- If you buy five apples for your teacher, on sale for 25 cents each in the grocer’s ad, how much will your total price be? How much change will you have if you pay with a \$10.00 bill?
- Have students plan a fun trip to the destination of their choice and figure the costs, mileage, etc.
- Let older students plan a class party given a certain budget.
- Have students design and build an invention or object using a variety of materials. They will need to use correct measurements in their design and apply those measurements when building their object.



“Use real world scenarios such as grocery shopping, cooking, figuring the tip for dinner, sales tax, etc. to apply math skills and motivate students.”

Sample Math Lesson

The following is a short example of how to teach a math concept, using all three steps of our math strategy.

Graphing Lesson

- OBJECTIVES:**
- To teach students the concept of a graph
 - To teach students the four main types of graphs
 - To teach students how to read and interpret different kinds of graphs
 - To teach students how to create their own graphs.

This lesson should be taught over several days. You cannot cram the whole lesson into one hour!

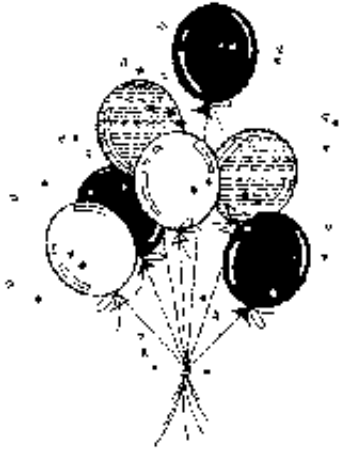
Step 1: The Concrete Model

Birthday Graph

- Have every month of the year written neatly on 12 separate, rather large, sheets of paper. Have this done before the lesson.
- **Do not tell the students what you are doing before you begin your lesson.**
- Lay out all of the months of the year in order with some space between them, about 6-12 inches, on the ground in the front of the classroom, in the hallway, outside or on the parking lots.
- Have the students get in a line in front of the month their birthday falls. When they are in straight lines, have them remove their shoes and leave them in their place. Have all students stand back behind the pictograph and observe.
- Ask them if they know what they are looking at? (A pictograph)
- Have students draw the pictograph neatly on a piece of paper. They will need to sit on the floor where they can see it and they will not be able to put their shoes on yet.
- Have the students put on their shoes, clean up the papers, and have students return to their seats.
- Once all students are in their seats and have their drawn pictographs in front of them, have all students look at their graphs to discuss:
 - What does each pair of shoes represent?
 - What observations can we make by looking at this pictograph.

Make them give specifics!

- Which month has the most birthdays in our class?
- Which month has the least?
- How many months have no class birthdays? How can you tell?



“The Birthday graph gets students personally involved with creating a pictograph!”

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?



As teachers we can create a non-threatening environment by:

- Insisting upon positive life skills.
kindness, cooperation, team-work, flexibility,
friendship, integrity, honesty, dedication, loyalty, etc.
- Character education is an additional way to create a positive classroom climate.
- Do not stand for bullying, teasing, gossiping, and other negative behaviors in your classroom.
- Implement your consequences and defend those students being hurt by others. Show that you will not tolerate it.

Of course, all of this is well and good, but if you do not practice what you preach, you will never have a non-threatening classroom environment.

Why is this so important? Remember that amygdala we mentioned earlier in the chapter? When our classrooms are full of negativity and hurtful behaviors from either the teacher or students, the amygdala kicks in and student learning shuts down. Let's take a look now at how the brain operates.

The Triune Brain

Simply put, the brain is made of three parts. This is called the "Triune Brain." There are technical terms for each part, but I use more simplified terms to explain this concept to my students. The terms in parenthesis come from Leslie Hart in his book *Human Brain and Human Learning*.

1. The "Thinking" Brain - (Neomammalian)
This is where we learn, store, and retrieve knowledge. Our memories are housed here as well as our creativity.
2. The "Regulating" Brain - (Paleomammalian)
This part of our brain is much smaller and somewhat below the thinking area. This part of our brain takes care of all our bodily needs such as eye blinking, swallowing, digesting, heart beating, eating, etc.
3. The "Reflex" Brain - (Reptilian)
This is the smallest part of our brain (the amygdala) which resides just below the regulating brain and just above our spinal cord. This is the control of our emotions, as we discussed earlier. The "fight vs. flight" reflex is exhibited through this part of our brain.



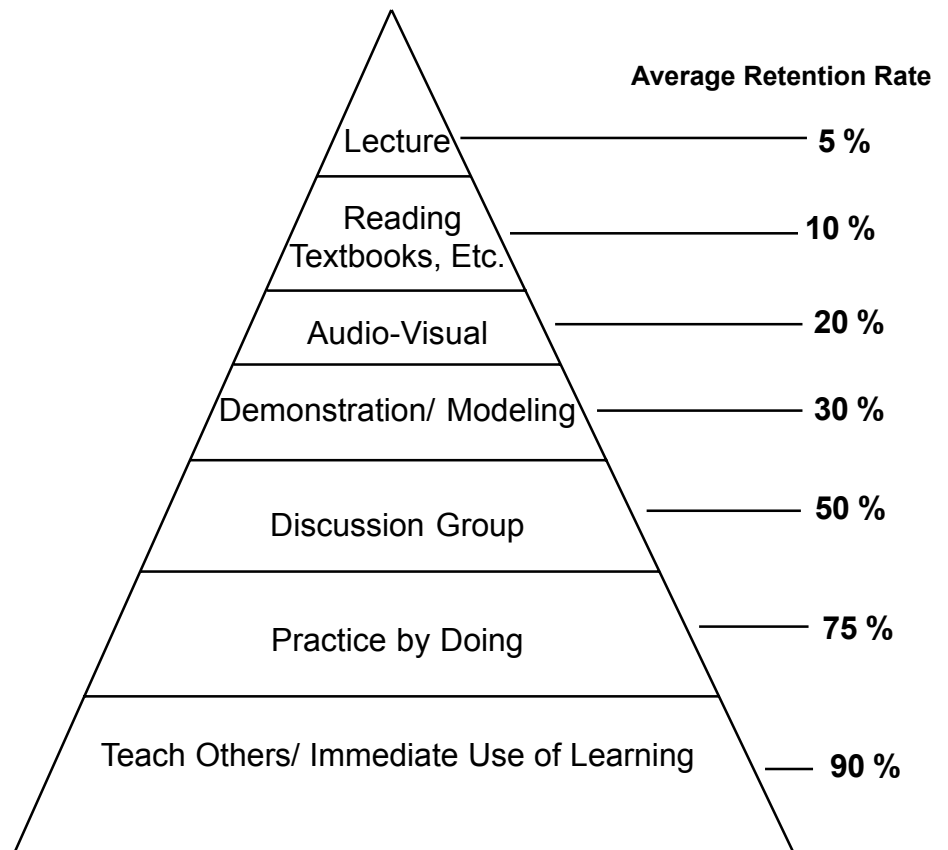
Brain-Based Teaching Strategies

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?

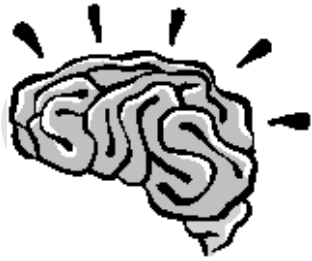


NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 300 N. Lee Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314. 1-800-777-5227.

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.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills includes:



KNOWLEDGE

COMPREHENSION

APPLICATION

ANALYSIS

SYNTHESIS

EVALUATION

“Increase critical thinking skills by utilizing higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy”

Knowledge is the lowest and most basic skill while evaluation is the highest cognitive skill. Our students should be assessed using each of these cognitive levels. This helps our students to stretch and challenge their critical thinking skills rather than always testing basic facts.

Below are some terms you can use to help you create different types of activities:

KNOWLEDGE define list identify describe match locate	COMPREHENSION explain summarize interpret rewrite convert give example	APPLICATION demonstrate show operate construct apply
ANALYSIS compare contrast distinguish deduct infer categorize	SYNTHESIS create suppose design compose combine rearrange	EVALUATION judge appraise debate criticize support

Field Trips

Field trips are important discovery learning tools. They provide hands-on learning for students and serve as a great way to get children to experience the community around them.

Students love field trips! Think about it...you all get to go somewhere exciting and it gives you a break from your daily routine. Field trips also provide wonderful educational opportunities for students and teachers alike. However, without planning and organization, field trips can be a nightmare for teachers.

A large part of this planning process is soliciting parental support in the form of chaperones. Most museums, theaters, and other cultural places require a small student to teacher ratio of 5 to 1 or 10 to 1. When you have a class of 30 or more students, this means that you'll need several adult volunteers to help.

Helpful Tips



The number of chaperones you will need depends on -

- your class size
- the type of field trip (inside vs. outside)
- the number of students requiring special attention



The more chaperones you have, the lower the student to adult ratio. Smaller groups give parents/ volunteers greater control over their charges.



Whenever you go on an inside field trip, you want lots of structure and control to maintain a quiet and non-disruptive environment.



Sign up parent volunteers well in advance of your trip.



Notify other teachers in the school of the dates and times for your field trip.



Notify the cafeteria if you will be out during lunch time. This helps them better prepare for lunch that day. Also, you may have several students who need a sack lunch from school. A lunch count needs to be done at least 2 weeks before your trip.

“A well-prepared teacher plans ahead and in detail for all field trips.”

“Remember to get your lunch count in early. The cafeteria staff must make sack lunches for your students AND lunch for the rest of the school. They have a lot to do!”

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.”

Alternative Assessment Tools

There are a variety of ways to assess student work and learning. A common dilemma among first year teachers is how to find different ways to assess students other than paper and pencil examinations. Here we have provided for you different ways you can evaluate your students' learning. You may not use every method, and you may vary your assessment tools with each class and/or each student. You will make these decisions once you get comfortable in your teaching. Whatever methods of appraisal you choose, just be sure to use a diversity.

“Your lesson should reflect the type of assessment tool you use.”



Observation

- **Teachers can observe students in various situations and can keep records for grading purposes.**

Most teachers think that grading has to be done on paper. This is not true! In your grade book, you can give many different grades, such as participation and discussion. These kinds of grades often help students who do not normally perform well on written assignments.

- **You are the teacher and should be evaluating your students constantly. How can you do this?**

- **Walk around the room -**

If you walk around the room, you can more accurately observe students without them necessarily knowing that you are grading them. Students often freely share their knowledge when they are not intimidated by the pressure of getting graded!

- **Observe students in cooperative group discussions -**

Are they participating? Are they showing knowledge of a concept or comprehension of a reading passage by the comments they make in a discussion? Are the students correctly using a skill that was taught?



- Be sure the lighting in your classroom is adequate. If not, bring a few lamps from home to add more soft light. Also, check the temperature of the room. If the conditions are too cold or hot, students will be more concerned about the temperature than the test. Lastly, are students moderately comfortable? You don't want things too cozy, but if a large student is crammed into a small desk, his/her brain will not be on the test.
- Explain restroom procedures to students. Make sure they understand that they are not required to "hold it," but that they need to give you a signal. Some teachers like to give each student a small piece of colored construction paper folded in half. The student places this card on their desk to signal the teacher when they are in need of assistance, a snack, or a restroom break. You might want to laminate these cards and use them all year long.
- Encourage students to eat a good meal and get at least eight hours of sleep the night before a big test. This will help students arrive to school rested. Also, you want to encourage students to arrive a little bit early so that they do not feel rushed before taking the test.



Teach Students Calming Exercises

What do you do with a student who has severe test anxiety or who clams up suddenly during a test? Here are the steps you can teach your students when they are feeling nervous or tired during a test.

1. Close your test booklet and place your answer sheet in the middle of the booklet (or turn the test over).
2. Close your eyes.
3. Imagine yourself in your favorite place - somewhere quiet where you feel calm and relaxed.
4. Slowly count to ten or take several slow deep breaths.
5. Don't think about the test, but try to keep your mind empty/ calm (in other words, don't start thinking about what you are going to do later in the day).
6. When you feel ready, open your test booklet and begin again.

Hint:

How can students know when they need to take a breather?

- I'm feeling sick to my stomach/ butterflies/ anxious.
- I'm thinking about everything except the test.
- I'm feeling frustrated.
- I'm feeling angry at someone or something.
- I'm blanking out on each question.
- I'm tired.
- I'm hungry.
- I'm thirsty.
- I have to use the restroom.

Brainstorm additional "clues" with your class. You'll be surprised at how many they come up with during your session.

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 upper elementary through 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.

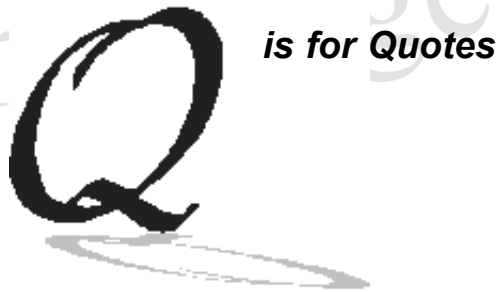
Additionally, it is important to be prepared with a variety of activities that will engage students in their own learning. If a lesson seems to be faltering or you notice a glazed-over look in the eyes of your students, smile a big smile, do a little dance, and pull out something different to capture 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.

P is for Paper Bags

Students can use paper bags as an alternative to routine paper/pencil tasks. Fill the bags with flash cards, sequence strips, or character traits. Decorate the outside of the bag and put in exciting events from history, a script for a skit, events of a novel, etc. Students can complete the activity found within the bag.

Students can also put their work inside a paper bag and illustrate the outside. The possibilities are endless! When using paper bags as part of a project, be sure to use a checklist so that students know exactly what is expected of them.



As students make profound, or humorous statements, have them write these down and display them on a bulletin board or walls of your classroom. What a great way to let students know that what they say is important!

A variation to this activity is to have a quote of the day or a quote of the week from different famous figures. Use the quote as a springboard for your discussion that day or week.

For example, a music teacher might use, "We are the music makers and we are the dreamers of the dream," by William Shakespeare. Students can interpret what they think this quote means.

This is a great way to jump start an activity with student groups. Have them predict what the activity will be based on the outside of the bag. Encourage student cooperation with paper bags. If each group has one or more items another group needs to complete their task, they will need to cooperate with one another in sharing and exchanging needed information.

P is for Pop-Up Books

Pop-up books are such a fun way to publish student writing. When students are writing one or two paragraphs to answer a research question, have them publish their information in an illustrated pop-up book. Students simply fold a piece of construction paper in half for their book. The title should be written on the front and an "About the Author" on the back along with illustrations. Inside, have students write their paragraph(s) on the bottom half of each side and illustrate the top. A pop-up image can be created by folding a small piece of cardstock or construction paper in an "L" shape and pasting it on the page. You might also ask your art teacher to help you with other ideas for creating pop-up images.

Another variation for quotes is to have students finish the quote. Provide students with the beginning of a famous quote or saying and have them finish it in their own words. You'll enjoy reading the results as will the parents! Afterwards, discuss each quote and its meaning with students.

The internet is an excellent source to find books of quotes or even websites full of quotes ready to be used.

Working with Special Needs Students

This section is in the Motivating Students chapter because oftentimes these are the hardest students to motivate. Mainstreamed students include Special Education and ESL (English as a Second Language) students. As teachers we know that our job is to teach ALL students regardless of their inherent ability. However, we also know that there are some students who are harder to reach for whatever reason. This section contains tips that will help you find a way to cope with the varying abilities of your students.



Special Education Students

The Special Education teacher comes into your room a few days before school begins and tells you that you have a few students with special needs. What can you do to accommodate them?

“Do not hesitate in asking the Special Education teachers for help!”

- Do not treat these students any differently than the others.
- Pair them with someone in your class who is patient and willing to help.
- Read each I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan). If you don't understand it, ask your Special Education teacher to explain what that particular student needs. **It never hurts to ask for help!**
- Remember, you are required by law to follow each I.E.P. exactly when modifying for the student.
- If you do not feel comfortable modifying tests or assignments, ask your Special Education teacher to help you.
- Get textbooks that you can highlight. Some I.E.P.'s request this. Your Special Education teacher will know where to get them or may have some you can use.
- Modify tests BEFORE you hand them out. It only takes a few minutes to cross out or highlight sections for the student to complete. Don't embarrass the student by making them wait while you modify the test or assignment right at their desk.

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.

Power Point

Power Point is a program that is used to present information. The pages can be changed manually with the click of a mouse, or automatically through the slide show mode. You choose how many seconds or minutes you want to pause in-between each slide.

Power Point can replace the overhead transparency when presenting notes, pictures, or information. Simply type your notes, information, or insert pictures onto each page (called a slide). When teaching, either time the slides to automatically switch or use the mouse to click over to the next slide of information. This is a great way to integrate pictures along with information. You can use digital camera images or clipart. The program includes a nice little collection of clipart that is easy to insert.

Other Uses include:

- Post class objectives, the date, homework assignments, or your focus assignment (warm-up, sponge, bell-ringer, etc.). This helps keep your whiteboard or chalkboard open for other teaching needs.
- Post Vocabulary or Spelling words for students to copy or look up in the dictionary.
- Post your Word(s) of the Day or Quote of the Day
- Print the outline version of the slides to use as notes when presenting the lesson. You could also give these to students who were absent or special needs students who cannot copy as quickly.
- Review for a test. Create one slide for each review question. Set the time between each slide to give ample opportunity for answering the question before it switches to the next slide. This keeps you free to monitor students while they work and to help answer questions. This method saves on copies and is a great alternative when the copier is broken or the school is out of paper.
- Post directions for assignments, lab rotations, or group work.
- Have you run out of room on the overhead or whiteboard? Think about posting some of the information using Power Point.

Social Studies

- Use CD Roms, Software, Internet and Email for research
Example: Take a "Tour of the White House" over the Internet!
- Write research reports and complete projects
*The computer has different fonts and images that can make historical reports look authentic!
- Create graphs and charts showing information
- Create Maps and Travel Brochures for geography
- Create slide show presentations for lessons and/or student projects
- Create a website to help other students practice or learn more

Language Arts

- Write compositions
- Create 'About the Author' Pages using the digital camera to place a picture of the student on the page with their biographical sketch
- Use the computer for Final Drafts or to Publish students' works
*Poetry can look beautiful when using the variety of fonts and illustrations from the computer!
- Use *Print Shop*, *Draw* and *Paint* programs to illustrate stories and projects
- Create cards for classmates and family
- Create invitations for parents to come to events like open house
- Students can practice grammar and reading skills using programs in your school.
- Create a website to share information or publish written works

Hint:

Check with your librarian and/or computer technician on your campus for help with locating software programs and CD Roms already in your school. Don't run out and buy any programs yet!

See our list of web sites at the end of this chapter for ideas.

Teacher Testimony

As a Kindergarten teacher, I sometimes have trouble figuring out how to incorporate technology into my lessons. However, one activity I did after a field trip, as closure, was to have my students each make up one sentence about the trip. I typed out each sentence on half of a page using the presentation station. I did this as a whole class so that my students could see me writing the sentences in correct format. Next, I printed off each sentence (two per page) and asked students to illustrate their own. Lastly, we gathered each half page together and created a class book about our field trip. It was a fun closing activity that incorporated technology and ended with a product my students were proud to show to everyone!

Internet Web Sites

There are many interactive internet sites which offer free services for students. These can include review of facts/concepts, games, and other online type programs that are educational. Be sure you personally review any website before allowing students to view them. In the last few years we have seen an increase in unacceptable adult websites buying expired education domain names. This practice is horrific and can cause major problems. For example, we had a link to a site for lesson plans which at one time hosted fantastic teacher lesson plans. Just recently we checked our links and found that this domain name now leads to an adult-only website. Needless to say, we took that link off immediately. This story is just to caution you to preview all sites before letting students view them.

In the next few pages we have listed some internet sites that you might find helpful in the classroom. We have checked all of these links and updated them. However, as with everything on the internet, there is no telling when site names will change or disappear. Your best bet is to spend some time previewing and investigating these and other sites to be sure of what you will find.

Teacher Resources:

Beginning Teacher's Tool Box <http://www.inspiringteachers.com>
TeacherNet <http://www.teachers.net/>
Teachers Helping Teachers <http://www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/>
Tenet Halls of Academia <http://www.tenet.edu>
Education World <http://www.education-world.com/>
Classroom Connect <http://www.classroom.net/>
Busy Teacher's Web Site <http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/BusyT/>

Content Resources:

Color Landform Atlas of the United States
<http://fermi.jhuapl.edu/states/states.html>
National Geographic
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/main.html>

Presidents of the United States
<http://ipl.sils.umich.edu/ref/POTUS/>

“Remember, always preview web sites before students look at them.”

It is important to closely monitor internet use by students.”

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.



Be genuine in the way you answer each question.

Districts are looking for enthusiastic, energetic teachers, not automatons. You may do yourself more harm than good if you write out an essay answer for each of these questions, memorize it and then try to recall it in the interview. Do some serious thinking about each issue and you will find that at the interview it will not be hard to answer the question.



Remember to send a Thank You note to your interviewer.

Usually you will be given a business card by the interviewer with their address and phone number. Reiterate in a thank-you note your interest in working for their district and how excited you were to meet and talk with them.



Once the initial screening interview is over, the next step is to wait.

Unfortunately there is no set time of waiting. Some people who have applied and interviewed early have had to wait several months while others have gotten a job right away. Other people have applied and interviewed closer to the start of school only to find that there are no more jobs left, while still others do the same and get a job that day.

“Most districts follow similar hiring procedures.”

Thank You

Remember to write a thank-you note!



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