



# Teacher Tip of the Week

## New Teacher Support Program 2008-2009

Terry Edwards, Program Coordinator

January 2009

Vol. 4 Issue 18

Teacher Tip of the Week  
New Teacher Support  
Program  
Wilson County Schools  
615-453-7282

### HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://cybersleuth-kids.com/>

A comprehensive educational search engine, directory and homework helper for the K-12 student. A virtual library and reference tool providing easy access to thousands of safe subject-specific sites.



### Cutting Corners

#### ATTENTION GETTERS

• flick the lights • clap a pattern • sing a song • rain stick • chimes/bells • Give me 5 signal (eyes on speaker, mouth closed, ears listening, hands still, feet still- kids hold up high 5 sign) • Stop, look and listen • I can see that (name) is ready because he's looking at me.... • peace sign • whisper • The 'Eye'

## Applying Feng Shui in Your Classroom

These days stress is the number one killer of relationships and productivity. Stress is everywhere. Now day's even small kids get stressed fast due to peer pressure, pressures from class and the amount of homework that is placed upon them. Many people have started turning to the ancient art of **Feng Shui** to make their home and office clutter free and pleasant.

These day's even classrooms are aligned as advised by Feng Shui so that the kids can have maximum productivity. Let's examine the ways in which we can achieve a Feng Shui classroom:

### Feng Shui Tip #1- Clear the clutter

Clutter is perhaps one of the most stressful and harmful aspects of a classroom. Make the class room as clutter free as possible. Remove all the charts, posters and hangings that are not required. Do not keep too many books and papers in the class room cupboards. Keep them as tidy as possible.



### Feng Shui Tip #2- Classroom arrangements

Most classrooms have close seated arrangements. The desk should be arranged in the following manner.

The teacher's desk should always be facing the door with its back firmly against the wall. This is the power position and imperative to the teacher. For pupils' desks, you need to avoid square pillows, sharp corners, and desk in rows.

Bring in nature calls. Classrooms should be arranged as close to nature as possible. They should be made to depict the natural beauty and tranquility. Use earth toned colors and plants into your class room to keep it natural. Use real plants, free form shapes, and beautiful

natural scenery to make your class room beautiful. You need to avoid furnishing like mirrors.

### Feng Shui Tip #3- Classroom enhancements

Avoid using fluorescent light in the class room since it gives a claustrophobic and closed feeling. Plan activities in the natural sunlight or set up excursions to natural places. This will not only make children appreciate nature but also save them from the uncomfortable glare of the tube light. Ask students to get their own floor lamps if they really must use light in the class room.

Provide soothing music in the class. Music has the power to heal the mind, body and soul. Music can also help in increasing concentration. The steady and soothing rhythm of classical music is ideal for setting the class room environment for independent reading or class work. Hence, try including music in your classroom during class room periods.

Provide water in the class room as water symbolizes flow and serenity. Feng Shui suggests that water must be present at a learning place to symbolize the flow of knowledge. You can add a small aquarium, fish bowl, water garden or a table top water fall to your class room. Besides being soothing for the classroom environment, it can also help children in enhancing their creative writing, art and research abilities.

Feng Shui can be used in the classrooms to enhance the child's creativity and innovation skills so use Feng Shui to enhance your class room and learning capacity. The next time your students start to falter, consider turning to the ancient oriental art of Geomancy and try to achieve a Feng Shui classroom.—Lynn Lee

## Stretching Instructional Time

Want to stretch your teaching time? Then double-check how effectively you utilize the first ten minutes of class. Often, those first ten minutes aren't as productive as they could be. If students take too long to settle in and get on task, you may be losing valuable instruction time and momentum. To set a more get-down-to-business tone, try implementing these routines:

- Greet students as they enter your classroom and distribute any papers pertinent to the upcoming lesson.

- Make it standard classroom procedure — for students to go to their seats promptly no milling around cubbies and pencil sharpeners.
- Always have a message on the board or overhead that tells students what the day's curriculum entails and what they need to be prepared and organized. For example:
  - Turn to page 52 in your textbook.
  - Please take out your reader-response journal and a pen.
  - Write tonight's homework in your assignment notebook.
- Begin the opening activity.
- Always have an opening activity posted or distributed so students can start working on it as their classmates arrive.
- Instead of doing roll call, use your seating plan to quietly check attendance.—*Margie Markarian*



**“We need to internalize this idea of excellence. Not many folks spend a lot of time trying to be excellent.”**

**- President Barack Obama**

## THANKING A TEACHER



**“Teachers are often the people who inspire us the most. I know I would not be where I am today with my 4th grade teachers, Mrs. Duncan. She so believed in me, and for the first time, made me embrace the idea of learning. I learned to love learning because of Mrs. Duncan.”—*Oprah Winfrey***

## Tennessee Diploma Project Information



Beginning next school year, the Tennessee Department of Education will implement the Tennessee Diploma Project (TDP), a broad overhaul of standards and curriculum designed to challenge students and better prepare them for college and the workforce.

Students beginning high school in Fall 2009 will begin a new path with increased graduation requirements from 20 credits to 22, a focus on the skills needed for college and the workforce in an ever expanding global economy, and new assessments.

Gateway Exams in high school will be replaced by end-of-course exams that truly test the mastery of expectations leading to college- and work-readiness. The overall assessment system includes the ACT's College and Readiness Test, Explore (given in the 8th grade) and the PLAN College Readiness Test given in the 10th grade.

**For more information on the revised graduation requirements, please visit <http://state.tn.us/education/gradreq.shtml> .**

## New Teacher Support Participants:



**Zac White**  
Mt. Juliet Middle School  
Computers



**Laura Smotherman**  
Gladeville Elementary  
Kindergarten

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

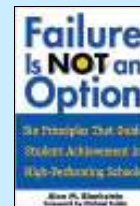
*“The reason I became a teacher was to help the physical well-being of children. I was supposed to be a PE teacher and am teaching computers, so it is a little different. So the idea is essentially the same—now it is just the mental aspect.”—Zac White*



### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*“For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to become a teacher. I’ve always had a heart for children and a passion and desire to help them learn and grow. I realize that for some children school is the safest and most comfortable place for them. I want to be a part of that safe place. Every child should know they are loved and cared about, and I feel I possess the qualities that are perfect for a teacher. I’m patient, loving, creative, hard-working, organized, active, and positive. I have confidence in my abilities to be a strong and influential educator, and I do not want that to go to waste. I became a teacher to make a difference in the lives of children on an educational and emotional level, and that’s exactly what I intend to do during my career as a teacher. Growing up, I had several teachers who made a lasting positive impact on my life, and I only hope I can do the same thing for my students.”—Laura Smotherman*

### From the Bookshelf:



**Failure Is Not an Option : Six Principles That Guide Student Achievement in High-Performing Schools**  
by Alan M. Blankstein, Michael Fullan

Building on a foundation that identifies courageous school leadership and the professional learning community as the center of effective school reform, this powerful new book by Alan M. Blankstein offers six guiding principles for creating and sustaining high-performing schools:

1. Common mission, vision, values, and goals
2. Systems for prevention and intervention
3. Collaborative teaming for teaching and learning
4. Data driven decision making and continuous improvement
5. Active engagement from family and community
6. Building sustainable leadership capacity

Covering theory into practice, applications that include case studies and vignettes, and techniques for addressing difficult issues, the book also provides valuable dual perspectives on the critical issues: how implementation looks when it's done right as well as when things go wrong. *Failure Is Not an Option* is sure to be the state-of-the-art resource that school leaders reach for when, in Michael Fullan's words, they need "practical applications to perplexing problems."



## For your information...

### TODAY'S TEACHERS:

- ◆ Spend an average of 50 hours per week on all teaching duties, including non-compensated school-related activities such as grading papers, bus duty and club advising.
- ◆ Teach an average of 21 students (elementary). Secondary teachers have an average class size of 28 students.
- ◆ Nine out of 10 teachers (90%) say they spend no time teaching grades or subjects outside their licensed subject area.
- ◆ Nearly 50% of all public school teachers have been in the classroom 15 years or longer; more than one-third (38%) have 20 or more years of classroom experience.



# Master Teacher Tips...

## Communication Skills

When praising students for extra effort, quality work, or even a positive attitude—do so publicly, when appropriate. Most students want friends and classmates to hear about their accomplishments. Further, your public attention to a particular behavior or the quality of work demonstrated reinforces standards and expectations—and their importance to everyone. However, if you think that your public praise will embarrass the student or cause discomfort, ask for permission from the student before praising publicly. Remember: If you praise some students publicly without permission, you may find that they actually try to get less acclaim. But most students will be motivated by public recognition.

A private approach is the best if you must criticize or give negative feedback to a student. Typically, privacy helps the student avoid feelings of shame and embarrassment. Also, be certain to criticize the behavior or the work product, not the student directly. As a result, you will be less likely to make the student defensive and resistant to your guidance. In a classroom, it is often hard to take private action. But your sensitivity to protecting the student from ridicule will lessen the risk to your long-term relationships with all students.

**\*If you caught my infamous “six” error last week, THANK YOU for reading the Tip of the Week each week! TE**



## Upcoming Events

**National Clean-up Your  
Computer Month**

**Healthy Weight Week  
January 18-24**

**No Name-Calling Week  
January 21-25**

**Belly Laugh Day  
January 24**

## For a Laugh!



The Wilson County School System does not discriminate due to age, race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, creed, or veteran status in the provision of services, in programs or activities, or in employment opportunities or benefits. Inquiries should be made to the following individuals at (615) 444-3282: Title VI or Title IX of the Civil Rights Act—Monty Wilson; Section 504—Yvonne Smith; Americans with Disabilities Act—David Burton.