



# Teacher Tip of the Week

## New Teacher Support Program 2008-2009

Terry Edwards, Program Coordinator

March 2009

Vol. 4 Issue 25

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

### Teaching about National Women's History Month in the Classroom

#### HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://www.factmonster.com/>

This site features an almanac, atlas, dictionary and encyclopedia made especially for kids, as well as handy search engine and layout designed for easy fact-finding. Check out fun features such as Biographies of the Presidents, the Geography Hall of Fame, and the Tallest Buildings Slideshow.

Every year, during the month of March, hundreds of thousands of events are held throughout the country to acknowledge and recognize the amazing accomplishments of women.

This national celebration and recognition of women's historic achievements began in 1980 when National Women's History Week was proclaimed by Presidential Proclamation. In 1987, this national celebration was expanded by Congressional Resolution to an entire month by declaring March as National Women's History Month.

National Women's History Month provides an opportunity to educate the general public about the significant role of women in American history and contemporary society. Establishing this focal celebration has encouraged schools to introduce new curriculum, and communities to recognize women who have been pivotal in their own communities.

The knowledge of women's history provides a more expansive vision of what a woman can do. This perspective can encourage girls and women to think larger and bolder and can give boys and men a fuller understanding of the female experience.

Each March, to unify the observance of National Women's History Month, a special theme is created. Women whose lives and extraordinary work exemplify the theme are selected as Honorees.

The theme for 2009 is "Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet." This theme is timely in a year when the world is discuss-

ing the problems and repercussions of dramatic climate change s and the recognition of diminishing natural resources. If you think these ecological problems may be insurmountable, you will be encouraged and inspired by the dramatic actions of the 2009 Honorees.



The 2009 Honorees are women whose courageous, pioneering, and innovative leadership are helping to save our planet. There are over one hundred Honorees and their achievements and accomplishments span three centuries and seven generations. For each acknowledged NWHM Honoree, there are tens of thousands of other women who are equally committed and currently working in their own communities, states, and countries.

#### RESOURCES AND WEBSITES FOR TEACHING WOMEN'S HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/womenshistory1.html>

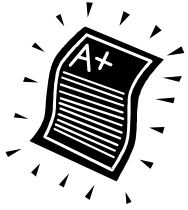
This is a wonderful website filled with an abundance of resources for teaching women's history in the classroom. This index links you to resources in the following categories: history and timelines; special features; especially for kids; prize winners and honorees; fun stuff; awards and achievers; population; health and reproductive issues, etc.



#### Cutting Corners

##### MONDAY MORNING JOURNALS

Make Monday morning journal time by having your students write about their weekend. This is a lot easier than listening to all the different stories in the hallway.



## Making Out Effective Tests: A Guide for Teachers

Creating effective tests is an essential task for all classroom teachers. While it is a task that every teacher undertakes year after year, how can you be sure you are making the best tests possible? Follow these suggestions when creating your next classroom test.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTS:

A well-written test allows teachers to accurately and consistently measure students' mastery



“Education is the ability to think clearly, act well in the world of work and to appreciate life.”—Brigham Young

of specific content taught in class. Results of well-written tests also allow teachers to measure, to some degree, how effective their instruction has been.

Conversely, poorly designed tests lead to inaccurate measurements of learning and provide false information regarding student performance and effectiveness of instruction. They can also result in unintended measurements of skills not taught.

### WRITING BETTER TESTS:

There are a number of steps you can take to improve the quality of the tests you write.

#### Match Instructional Objectives and Teacher Notes to the Test:

When creating your test items, refer back to your instructional objectives for the content and skills you want to assess. Use lesson plans and teacher notes to ensure your test items accurately reflect content that was learned in class. Choose the most important objectives to assess and use these as the outline for your test.

#### Match the Question Type to the Level of Assessment Desired:

Choose the type of questions to include carefully. Multiple choice and matching questions offer the most flexibility in

terms of content that can be covered and thinking skills that can be assessed. True/false are usually limited to fact recall. Try to balance the number of question types and limit their number to no more than three types on one test for middle school and high school students.

### Construct Questions Carefully:

It is crucial to carefully consider the wording of each question and answer on the test. The stem (or question portion) of the test item should be worded using straightforward language. Careful attention should also be given to writing the correct and incorrect answers.—*Teaching Today*

## THANK A TEACHER



Senator John Kerry  
Democrat/Massachusetts

“I will never forget the Reverend John Walker. He was the first African-American teacher in our school, and he got us interested in the growing civil rights movement and, frankly, taught us all a lot about life.”—John Kerry

### Guidelines for Test Questions:

When constructing selected response questions for multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill in the blank questions, use the following guidelines:

- ◆ Avoid confusing students with too many negatives in a question. (e.g, What might not have happened had the Allies not won the war?)
- ◆ Avoid using incomplete sentences.
- ◆ Avoid using “all of the above” as a choice.
- ◆ Write all answer choices to be approximately the same length.
- ◆ Adjust the level of the question to the level of thinking required to answer it.
- ◆ Proofread all items before copying the test.

## New Teacher Support Participants:



**Heather Maxwell**  
Tuckers Cross-roads Elementary  
4th grade



**Lindsay Foutch**  
Mt. Juliet Elementary  
2nd grade

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*“The joy on the faces of our future when you impact their lives is priceless. To teach is to touch a life forever! I want to be the positive speaker on education for a child who is not encouraged by others in his or her life.”—Heather Maxwell*

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*“....Touching and changing a life is something that I think we all would like to do and I believe that if you change a child’s life, they will forever be grateful and better people because just one teacher cared.”—Lindsay Foutch*



## De-Clutter students’ desks

If your students constantly complain about not having enough room in their desks, help them stay organized by keeping seldom-used texts on an easily-accessible shelf elsewhere in the classroom.



You can keep all like workbooks together and have student helpers pass out/collect them as needed. Or keep each child's workbooks together in one place (student #1's books all together, student #2, and so on.) so multiple children can quickly access the shelf and maintain responsibility for their own materials. Older students can keep their texts in a specified order as shown by referencing an index card on the shelf above (blue, purple, green, and then yellow), which makes the shelf look neater and makes materials easier to find. Provide lots of modeling for this system when first introducing it, and supervise book removal and re-shelving regularly in the beginning, have student helpers straighten the shelf every other week.

## From the Bookshelf:



### The Trouble With Boys by Peg Tyre

Interviewing hundreds of parents, kids, teachers, and experts, award-winning journalist Peg Tyre drills below the eye-catching statistics to examine how the educational system is failing our sons. She explores the convergence of culprits, from the emphasis on high-stress academics in pre-school and kindergarten, when most boys just can't tolerate sitting still, to the outright banning of recess, from the demands of No Child Left Behind, with its rigid emphasis on test-taking, to the boy-unfriendly modern curriculum with its focus on writing about "feelings" and its purging of "high-action" reading material, from the rise of video gaming and schools' unease with technology to the lack of male teachers as role models.

But this passionate, clearheaded book isn't an exercise in finger-pointing. Tyre, the mother of two sons, offers notes from the front lines—the testimony of teachers and other school officials who are trying new techniques to motivate boys to learn again, one classroom at a time. *The Trouble with Boys* gives parents, educators, and anyone concerned about the state of education a manifesto for change—one we must undertake right away lest school become, for millions of boys, unalterably a "girl thing."



# Master Teacher Tips...

## Motivation

The idea behind motivating students is to inspire or cause productive action without being unfriendly, demanding, or bossy. One of the most effective ways to achieve this professional task is to give students “wiggle room” with your urging—and then just assume they will comply. To do so effectively, it helps to replace “if” with “when” when you talk with students. Rather than say “Let me know if you need help,” say, “Let me know when you need help. This technique assumes the student is going to do as you suggest.

If a student is dejected, be careful about rushing to give him or her advice. Likewise, never mirror the student’s dejection, or feelings of hope are likely to diminish. To change students’ moods, ask leading questions in response to what they tell you. If a student says, “I’m tired of failing,” ask whether he or she has thought about what might be causing the problem and what he or she can do to change the situation. Choose words that show the student that you are confident he or she can be successful. Say, “when we get by this, we will look back and see we’ve learned some great lessons.” then offer suggestions or a course of action—with no sign of gloom or doubt.



## Upcoming Events

Music in Our Schools Month

Red Cross Month

Girl Scout Day March 12

National Money Week  
March 13-15

National Spring Fever Week  
March 16-22

International Ask a Question Day  
March 14

## For a Laugh!

