



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2009-2010

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Teacher Tip of the Week
New Teacher Support
Program
Wilson County Schools
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Help your students form good habits

HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



Dealing with a Defiant, Hostile Student

Avoid public power struggles. When an outburst occurs, diffuse the situation as calmly and quickly as possible and delay any further discussion of it until a later time when the class is either not in session or busy with a task. If this does not work, call or send for the vice principal immediately. When the whole class acts inappropriately, stay calm, try to disarm them with a little humor, and move on. And remember, don't sweat the small stuff.

It takes 27 days to form a habit. Remember when your mother used to ask you to make your bed every day? Then, after a while, you simply started making it on your own --without having to be reminded to do it. Making your bed every day had become a *habit*.

When thinking about the kinds of good habits you want students to develop, go back to that list of expectations and procedures you created. For me, for example, it's important that students enter my classroom, check their mailboxes, and start working on their focus assignment before the first bell rings. It's important that when I use the quiet signal, my students get quiet and focus on me. I expect my students to stay in a quiet straight line when I walk with them down the hall. It's also important to me for students to be silent, with a clean area, before I dismiss them. Those types of habits, as well as others, also might be important to you. If you're not really sure what you expect of your students, then take some time right now to brainstorm those actions and behaviors that you want to become habits for your students.



Okay, you have your list. You might be asking yourself, "Why is it important that I help build these habits?" The reason is to save yourself stress later on in the school year. Spring semester might seem like a long way away, but it will come around a lot faster than you think. Students who are not following good habits in the fall have a tendency to let spring fever get out of hand. Behavior can become more erratic then, and without good habits in place, students are more likely to get out of control. By setting the standards at the beginning of the year and turning good behaviors into good habits, you save yourself a lot of time and stress later.

But how can you build in students the good habits you expect? First, clearly

explain your expectations to students. Next, make sure students practice the correct actions and behaviors daily. (It's especially important to practice behaviors over and over again during the first couple of weeks of school.) Third, be consistent about requiring specific behaviors. If you see students not meeting your expectations, don't be afraid to stop and take the time to practice the correct action or behavior right then and there. For example, if I notice that many students are entering the classroom and "hanging out" without starting their work before the bell rings, I stop everything and practice my expectations. I have students file out of the classroom and re-enter correctly. If students are not following my quiet signal, we stop immediately and practice until they get it right. By doing that consistently, students begin to see that I will hold them accountable for their actions. After 27 days or more of doing the same actions over and over again, the behaviors become a habit for students. What you want to achieve is a classroom in which students know what to do and when to do it. That is a well-disciplined classroom.

You might find, of course, that as the year progresses, you need to stop and practice your expectations again. That is perfectly normal and can be thought of as "maintenance."

Before you know it, however, your students will be entering the classroom and doing exactly what you expect of them -- whether you are there to remind them or not. Good behavior has become -- just like making your bed each day -- a habit. In the end, that's precisely what we strive to accomplish.

As you work toward that goal, remember the maxim "Good habits are hard to break" -- and practice, practice, practice.
—Emma McDonald

Classroom exercises to reduce tension and increase attention

After long periods of listening or sedentary work, most people find that their minds begin to wander and they lose their focus of attention. Humans have always had to move as an inherent part of living, and find that an occasional physical break can result in a more alert mind.

Physical movement is also an important way to relieve stress that many health professionals consider to be the #1 cause of disease. Yet many schools have cut back on physical education, and large numbers of people of all ages come home after a busy day of stress and inactivity only to sit in front of a television set instead of engaging in some kind of physical recreation.

Increasing numbers of teachers recognize the need for physical activity in their classes; however for those who do not, we offer three simple exercises that require very little space or time. They can oxygenate the body and brain, resulting in a decrease of stress and tension and an increase of attentiveness, alertness, and interest. After a particularly intense unit of study, or to change pace, try using one or all three of the following exercises to relax the body and refocus the mind.

Most students appreciate a teacher who is motivational and inspirational. Notice that the roots of these words have to do with moving and breathing. Traditional Chinese medicine and, more recently, Western medicine, recognize the importance of movement and breath in the overall health and vitality of the individual.

An old Chinese proverb states, If there is flow (of vital-

ity) there is no pain; if there is pain there is no flow." Simply observe a body of water which is not flowing and compare it with a steadily moving stream. If water is left to stagnate, the result is obvious. The same is true of the human body. Certain fluids, such as lymph re-



quire physical movement for adequate circulation, and so does energy. Let us see how we can facilitate that movement.

Before we begin, the following suggestions will enhance the environment. First disperse stagnation in the environment. Open the windows if possible, clear out clutter, and place healthy green plants around the room. Stand up (if possible). Standing in and of itself activates circulation. You may wish to use music, and vary it as appropriate to the time, subject, and needs of the students. Loosen any restrictive clothing and adjust lighting.

The following exercises will help facilitate a healthy flow of vitality:

(1) "The Shake Out"

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, spine aligned, head up, and arms hanging loosely at the sides, allowing the whole body to let go and relax, jangling and dangling like a puppet on a string. Begin with a gentle

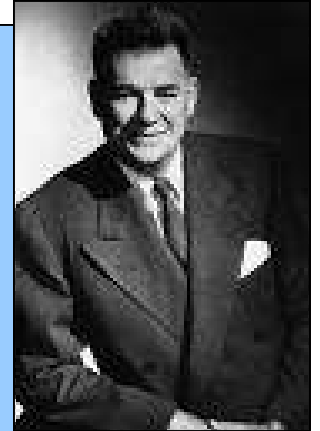
bounce, breathing is relaxed and natural, eyes and face smiling. Gradually increase the speed, depth, and intensity of the bounce, encouraging participants to let go and relax, more and more. (Three minutes.)

(2) Ai/Ya

Stand as in #1, knees bent, arms at sides. Let the movement originate from the center of gravity, just below the navel. Circle the arms up at the sides, rise up, inhaling, then allow the arms to cross in front, down, and back out to the sides, exhaling and sinking down. Then reverse, cross arms in front, raising them up to overhead, inhale, then exhale and let arms down to the sides. Make an "Ai" sound, breathing in, and a "Ya" sound on the exhale. Allow the rising and sinking of the whole body to effortlessly move the arms up and down, in and out, with the breath.

(3) Belly Breathing

Simple and highly effective, this exercise has the advantage that it can be done anywhere any time one wishes to relax, even at a desk. It uses a breathing technique called "belly breathing" or "diaphragmatic breathing." Imagine that you are actually breathing through your belly button. To get the initial technique, many find it helpful to place a hand on the abdomen to feel it expand, pushing out with the inhale deeply and slowly to the count of three, then letting go and contracting with the exhale, again counting slowly to 3. This simple exercise has numerous benefits, such as gently massaging the internal organs, increasing oxygenation, and



"If you become a teacher, by your students you'll be taught."

—Oscar Hammerstein II

helping to eliminate toxins and stress. Even a few minutes can have a remarkably relaxing effect, and of course regular practice makes it even more effective.

These are only a few examples of simple, yet highly beneficial exercises. Be creative, do your own variations. There are no hard and fast rules. Find what movement works best for you and your students. Observe the results. Enjoy.—Robert Dickinson

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Mindy Evans

Watertown Elementary and
Watertown High School

Speech & Language Pathologist

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I chose to become a school based speech language pathologist because working with children is so rewarding. Unlike working with adults with speech and language problems, most children do not have the negative connotations associated with these communication problems. The students I get to work with are positive, happy, creative, and a joy to be around. Those are the type of people I want to be surrounded by in my lifetime."—Mindy Evans

TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:



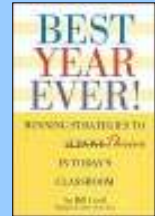
<http://www.historyplace.com/index.html>

The History Place

These pages have a lot of information! The featured exhibits highlight specific eras, events, or people in history, mostly from American history (the site hints of some world history topics coming soon). The topics are well organized and feature in-depth articles as well as photos, speeches, timelines, profiles of historians, and a tourism guide to historic places in America. Also take a look at the material on the web site sponsored by The History Channel.



OFF THE BOOKSHELF



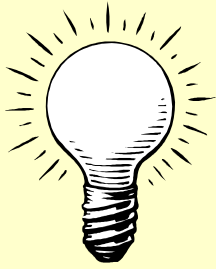
Best Year Ever! : Winning Strategies to Thrive in Today's Classroom

By Bill Cecil

Best Year Ever provides teachers with proven classroom management strategies that can turn any classroom into a caring community, complete with high morale, infectious enthusiasm, and increased performance. This book is broken up into two sections.

Section one ("Setting the Table for Success") will provide teachers with four key strategies to help build their students into a winning team that will be better prepared to learn.

Section Two ("A Year-Long Theme That Focuses On Team") provides a step-by-step playbook for how to create a Best Year Ever! experience for students and teachers alike. This section includes lesson plans and activities to use with students that will set them up for success. Appendix 2 provides teachers with a 30 day supply of lesson plans to help build their teams and a safe learning environment.



Strategies for New Teachers . . .

TOTAL POINTS

TIPS FOR USING TOTAL POINTS

Differentiate between different types of assignments by having some “count” more than others. For example, homework assignments could count for 10 points while tests count as 100 points. This gives some measure of weight to assignments that are more significant than others.

ADVANTAGES OF TOTAL SALES

- It is easy. You simply log grades in with out having to assign them to any particular category.
- Students can calculate their grades by simply adding and dividing.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

- Students and parents (and even you) have less insight into how the grade is determined, especially how particular assignments may impact the final grade.
- Without really knowing the weight of a particular category of assignments, certain kinds of assignments (e.g. homework) may count more towards the final grade than anticipated or desired.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NATIONAL READING GROUP MONTH

NATIONAL WORK AND FAMILY MONTH

NATIONAL GO ON A FIELD TRIP MONTH

FREEDOM FROM BULLIES WEEK

October 18-24

NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

October 18-24

EVALUATE YOUR LIFE DAY

October 19



Back to school

Teacher: Why can't you ever answer any of my questions ?
Pupil: Well if I could there wouldn't be much point in me being here !

