



# 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  
615-453-7282

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### Your mid-year check up for 2010

#### HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



#### Save Yourself Time in the Future

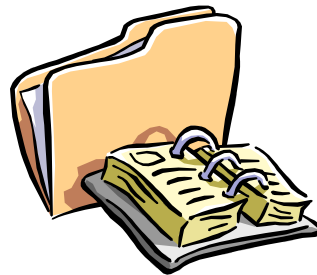
Make a sequential record of the warm-up activities you have students complete. Choose one of the following methods. 1) hand-write each activity on a separate index card. Number the cards and file them sequentially in a card file. 2) if you have a computer, you can keyboard each activity in a large font. Then at the beginning of subsequent semesters, you simply print the warm-ups and each day, post one activity on the board. You will never have to rewrite them.

*Hello everyone and Happy New Year! I hope you have had some fun with family and friends during the holiday and have gotten some rest and relaxation. Hopefully, we are all returning to school rejuvenated and ready to get back into its familiar rhythm and routine. This is a good time to reflect on things that have worked and things that might need tweaking.*

*A mid-year 'check-up' for your classroom:*

#### The Physical Environment:

- Are all student work areas in view?
- Does the classroom environment allow flexibility for student groupings?
- Are there areas for individual student work?
- Is it organized and clutter-free? Can things be found easily?
- Is student-created work on display?
- Can all students easily access needed materials and equipment?
- Is the environment comfortable (e.g., seating, lighting)?
- Are noise levels working? Are ear-phones available when needed? If other adults work in the room, do they have a space to work and keep some materials?



#### The Academic Environment:

- Does planning with colleagues occur regularly in advance to coordinate lesson objectives and to monitor student progress?
- Are plans and materials ready for the next day?
- Are the needs of the learners always considered in planning lessons?
- Are objectives stated clearly? Are they posted in the room?

- Does the presentation style of lessons vary to engage diverse students?
- Are students offered choice in the way they engage in learning activities?
- Is wait time built in for responses?
- Do the students receive specific positive and corrective feedback? Is technology infused into lessons?

#### The Social Environment:

- Do any rules and procedures need to be revisited, deleted, or revised?
- Does the classroom management plan need revising?
- Is there a working system for frequent parent/home communication?
- Is cooperative learning and peer tutoring taking place regularly?
- Are transition procedures working?
- Do the students know what they are good at?
- Are student successes celebrated?
- Are teachers enthusiastic?

Is the classroom a safe place to take risks in learning?

In closing, here are just a few questions just for you:

- Am I taking care of myself?
- Am I saying "no" enough so I don't over-commit?
- Am I hanging around positive people?
- Have I identified a positive role model that I can go to for help?
- Do I thank the people who support me?
- Do I believe in every student I teach? Do they know it? —*Debbie Metcalf/Reality 101*

## Some tips for the new teacher on behavior management

Start each day with the expectation that students will behave well. Write positive comments -- Perfect Paper! Great Helper! Terrific Line Leader! -- on craft sticks and keep the sticks in a cup on your desk. Hand them out whenever appropriate. When a student collects a certain number, exchange the sticks for a small reward.

If you want your students to use quiet voices in your classroom, you must use a quiet voice in your classroom. By demonstrating kindness, consideration, enthusiasm, organization, and a sense of the importance of what you are doing, you are modeling the behavior you want from your students.

Troubled by tardiness. Start giving quick extra-credit quizzes at the beginning of every class.

To help students behave appropriately, keep your classroom orderly. Messy or disorderly classrooms can encourage inappropriate behavior.

Encourage exceptionally good behavior with

"classroom coupons." Award such coupons as "No Homework for a Day," "Ten Minutes of Free Time," "Lunch with the Teacher," and so on for students who make that extra effort.

Encourage kindness with a "Star Jar." Place on your desk a jar of stars cut out of construction paper. Whenever a student is



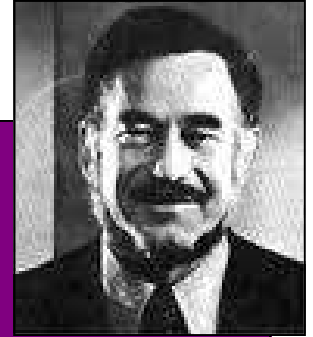
caught in a random act of kindness, invite that student to the front of the room to write his or her name on a star and place it in the jar.

Keep on your desk a mug of craft sticks, each labeled with the name of one student. Whenever you need to call on an individual student to read or respond to a question, pull a stick to choose the stu-

dent. Students pay better attention when they don't know who will be "pulled" next.

If your class is particularly social and chatty, try implementing a system of "My Time" and "Your Time." Say to students: "Instructional time is 'My Time.' You must pay attention; you cannot talk or disturb others who are trying to learn. 'Your Time' is the last five minutes of class. During 'Your Time,' you may talk and to share with one another."

Restore order with an empty notebook. Whenever the group starts to misbehave, pull out a small notebook, look around the classroom, and begin to write. Continue writing (scribbling, doodling!) while you glance from group to group or from student to student. Don't say a single word. You'll find that students will gradually become silent too. What are you writing? Why? The suspense is unbearable. They do not want their names to go into that notebook!—  
Education World



**"Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools. The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task."**

~Haim G. Ginott

## A New Series: Testing Tips for Students #3



*Now that standardized tests are drawing near, a new series to help students and teachers prepare for the months ahead:*

*\*When timing teacher-created tests or other classroom tasks, avoid making announcements about the amount of time remaining for students to complete the task. The purpose of the timed activities is to teach students to manage their own time. In addition, some standardized tests don't allow such announcements.*

'09-'10

## NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Katie Prokop

Watertown Elementary/High School

Band, Choir, General Music

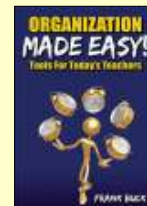
### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher because I want to influence the future. I have a great passion for seeing students grow as human beings and I wanted to help shape who they will become as adults. I also have a great passion for music and I wanted to see my students develop the same passion and grow as musicians."—Katie Prokop

\*Katie has had the opportunity to audition for *American Idol* and has competed in many singing competitions including the WeFest Karaoke Roundup and placed 2nd overall, which led her to the main stage at WeFest in Detroit Lakes, MN where she opened for Brooks & Dunn.



### OFF THE BOOKSHELF



### Organization Made Easy! by Frank Buck

Meet the ever-growing organizational demands of today's changing world with the variety of tools, digital and otherwise, available to you as a teacher.

In this book, organization guru Frank Buck shows you how to take expert advantage of the specific electronic and paper-based resources that will help you manage your time and stay on course as a teacher of the 21st century.

Buck offers practical, easy-to-read strategies for organizing your surroundings, increasing productivity, and reducing stress. Teachers will leave this book with a feeling of greater control of the day plus a renewed sense of pride in their profession.

#### IN THIS BOOK...

- Organizing Digitally
- Organizing with Paper
- E-mail and other e-timesavers
- Handling multiple projects
- Handling the paper blizzard

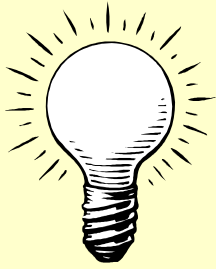
## TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:



[http://  
www.4teachers.org/](http://www.4teachers.org/)

### 4 Teachers

Sponsored by the High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium (HPR\*TEC) this site offers some great free tools and resources to help you in the classroom. These include TrackStar which allows you to create and post lessons on the web complete with annotated links. You can also search for thousands of tracks created by other teachers. Other sections include Rubistar for creating customized rubrics for any kind of lesson and QuizStar for constructing online quizzes. The site also contains a wealth of ideas for integrating technology into your teaching. Unfortunately, this wonderful resource may not be around long. The Regional Technology Labs were paid for using federal funding which has now been eliminated. HPR\*TEC has other funding to continue their work through the 2005-06 school year. After that, hopefully they can find money to continue. We'll see.



# Strategies for New Teachers . . .

## HOMEWORK

- Weigh homework. Homework shouldn't impact a student's grade by more than one letter grade. Generally, the majority of your students' grade should come from work done and learning demonstrated in your presence. The completion of homework is subject to too many variables to support assigning significant weight to it. Assign value to homework so that it counts but is not a pass/fail factor.
- NEVER assign homework (of any academic work) as punishment. Doing so makes school work a negative consequence. Learning must not be a reprimand.
- Never give homework merely for the sake of giving homework. Doing so lowers homework into the realm of "busy work"—work that all students detest and which will ultimately undermine your educational goals.

## EXTRA CREDIT

- When students—and sometimes parents—ask if there is any opportunity to earn "extra credit" you must be ready to state your policy clearly.  
(continued next week...)



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CELEBRATION OF LIFE MONTH

NATIONAL GET ORGANIZED MONTH

HEALTHY WEIGHT WEEK  
January 17-23

HUNT FOR HAPPINESS WEEK  
January 17-23

DRESS UP YOUR PET DAY  
January 14

HUMANITARIAN DAY  
January 15

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY  
January 18

**NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM REQUIRED INSERVICE:**  
**"Parents and Teachers as Partners/Survival Tips for New Teachers"**  
 January 26 4:00-6:00 pm TTRC



## Back to school

A little girl came home from school and said to her mother, "Mommy, today in school I was punished for something that I didn't do." The mother exclaimed, "But that's terrible! I'm going to have a talk with your teacher about this ... by the way, what was it that you didn't do?" The little girl replied, "My homework."