



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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Making Book Reports Creative and Fun!

HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



Plan for Classroom Transitions

Prepare your students for classroom transitions before they occur. Let students know up front how much time they have to work on a task in class. Watch your time carefully and let them know throughout the task how much time they still have. Transitions are far smoother when students can anticipate the change and know the time constraints they are under.

Have you tried a simple kitchen timer to help you keep track of time?

Book reports are a classroom staple; they represent a valuable exercise in literacy development. That doesn't mean they have to be the boring exercises we remember as students, though. Creative teachers have added many twists to the old book report formats -- twists that engage and motivate students as they read and report.

Are you worried that some of the ideas that follow will be too much fun? That there will be too little emphasis on writing? Take a look!

- The ideas appeal to many different learning styles.
- Many of the ideas involve making choices, organizing information -- and writing!
- Most of the ideas will provide teachers with a clear idea about whether students actually read the book.
- And *all* the ideas will engage students, help make books come alive for them, and challenge them to think in different ways about the books they read!



If an idea doesn't include enough writing, creative (sneaky!) teachers will usually find a way to work it in use the idea to supplement or replace parts of favorite book report formats. Here are some ideas to try in the future!

Descriptive writing. (Use this activity to supplement a class lesson in descriptive prose writing.) Have each student read aloud the best example of descriptive prose found in the book he or she is currently reading. The student should write a paragraph explaining why the excerpt is a particularly good example of descriptive prose. The paragraph might include some of the adjectives

the author used to set the scene.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down!

Each student writes a review of the book he or she just finished reading -- in the style of a movie review. The student concludes by awarding a thumbs up or thumbs down on the book. This activity could be even more fun if two students read the same book. They could plan a lively interaction, a la and Ebert and Roeper, about the book, which could be videotaped for all to see!

Character Trait Diagram.

Each student creates a Venn diagram to illustrate similarities and differences in the traits of two of the main characters in a book just completed. (A student might elect to create a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences between the book's main character and the student!)

Surfing the Net. Where did the story take place? When did it take place? Each student surfs the Net to find five Internet sites that others might check out before they read the book so they will know more about the book's setting or time period.

Write a Letter to the Author.

After reading a book, each student shares reactions to the book in a letter written to its author. If a student writes to an author who is still alive, you might actually mail the letter.

Sell It! Each student pretends to be a publicist for the book that's just been read. The student writes and then delivers a 60-second speech that will persuade other students that they should read the book. Writing and speaking persuasively will be especially difficult if the student didn't like the book. If that's the case, the student can share that fact *after* completing the speech.

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Making Book Reports Creative and Fun!

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Interview a Character. Each student composes six to eight questions to ask a main character in a book just completed. The student also writes the character's response to each question. The questions and answers should provide information that shows the student read the book without giving away the most significant details.

Ten Facts. Each student creates a "Ten Facts About [book title]" sheet that lists ten facts he or she learned from reading the book. The facts, written in complete sentences, must include details the student didn't know before reading the book.

Script It! Each student writes a movie script for a favorite scene in a book just read. At the top of the script, the student can assign real-life TV or movie stars to play each role. The student might also work with classmates to perform the favorite scene.

What Did You Learn? Each student writes a summary of what he or she learned from a book just com-

pleted. The summary might include factual information, something learned about people in general, or something the student learned about himself or herself. Glossary and Word Search. Each student creates a glossary of ten or more words that are specific to a book's tone, setting, or characters. The student defines each word and writes a sentence from the book that includes that word. Then the student creates a word search puzzle that includes the glossary words. Students can exchange their glossaries and word searches with others in the class.

In the News! Each student creates the front page of a newspaper that tells about events and characters in a book just read. The newspaper page might include weather reports, an editorial or editorial cartoon, ads, etc. The title of the newspaper should be something appropriate to the book.

Create a Comic Book. Each student can turn a book, or part of it, into

a comic book, complete with comic-style illustrations and dialogue bubbles.

Characters Come to Life! Each student creates life-size "portraits" of one of the characters from a book just read. The portrait should include a written piece that tells about the character. The piece might also include information about events, traits, or conflicts in the book that involve that character. Hang the students' portraits in a class gallery.

Create a Card Catalog. After reading a book, a student completes an index card with information about the book. The front of the card includes details such as title, author, and date published along with a two- to three-sentence synopsis of the book. On the back of the card, the student writes a paragraph critiquing the book. Students might even rate the book using a teacher-created five-star rating system. Completed cards are kept in a card file near the classroom bookshelf or in the school library.—*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 #4



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

Explain to students how the test will be scored. Provide answers to questions about the test: Will skipped questions be ignored or scored as wrong? Should I guess if I don't know the answer? How much time should I spend on a really hard question? How many points is each answer worth? Are some kinds of questions worth more than other kinds? How are essay questions scored?...

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Megan Price

Lebanon High School

Business & Document Design

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher because it is something I have always wanted to do and teaching is very natural for me. I specifically chose to teach business because I believe the concepts taught will benefit students for the rest of their lives no matter what career path they take. I love learning and I love sharing what I know with others. I truly look forward to making a difference and having a positive impact."—Megan Price

***FOR YOUR INFORMATION:** All professional development hours must be completed by **April 20, 2010**. You must have a total of 30 hours credit.

TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:



<http://thinkfinity.org/home.aspx>

Historical Control Panel

The Smithsonian is a big place, both the physical buildings in Washington DC and their web site. To make it easier for visitors to find materials in their American history collection, the museum has created the History Explorer.

On the main page you can search for materials based on key words, appropriate grade level, the type of resource you need, and/or the historical era. In addition, they provide an interactive time line to assist finding things along with a separate search tool for interactive activities and other media.

If you'd rather wander through the virtual stacks, the site offers several opportunities for browsing history. Starting on the main page you'll find a random artifact that changes daily along with today's top 10 resources.

For educators, there is a section of lesson plans and activities as well as one for professional development opportunities.



OFF THE BOOKSHELF

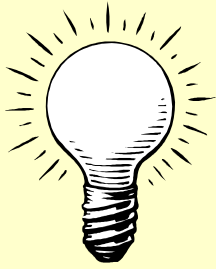


Why School?: Reclaiming Education for All of Us
by Mike Rose

This little book is driven by big questions. What does it mean to be educated? What is intelligence? How should we think about intelligence, education, and opportunity in an open society?

In *Why School?*, award-winning author and lifelong educator Mike Rose calls on us to consider our fundamental beliefs about education, eloquently arguing that contemporary education policy has lost its way.

In the tradition of Jonathan Kozol, Rose explores those core principles that ought to guide education in beautifully written chapters that are both rich in detail—a first-grader conducting a science experiment, a carpenter solving a problem on the fly, a college student's encounter with a story by James Joyce—and informed by a deep understanding of history, the psychology of learning, and the politics of education. *Why School?* challenges today's narrow focus on high-stakes testing and economic competition. It also serves as a critical reminder of the broader purposes of school: the intellectual, social, civic, and ethical development of individuals.



Strategies for New Teachers . . .

EXTRA CREDIT

- Extra credit is Extra. Give opportunities to do “extra” work only when students have completed all expected, assigned work to begin with. Make it clear that the work you assign is not optional and cannot be simply replaced with alternate extra work.
- Be equitable. If you offer an opportunity for extra credit, offer it to all students who meet the above criteria.

PROFESSIONALISM

INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS

- Establish a Boundary. Make a boundary between you and students, and do not cross it. Know the difference between “friend” and “friendly.”
- Dress Professionally. Your attire should be distinguishable from the attire of your students, especially important if you are a young teacher at the secondary level where they may not be much age difference between you and your students.

(continued in the next issue)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NATIONAL BIRD FEEDING MONTH

INTERNATIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE MONTH

HEALTHY WEIGHT WEEK
January 17-23

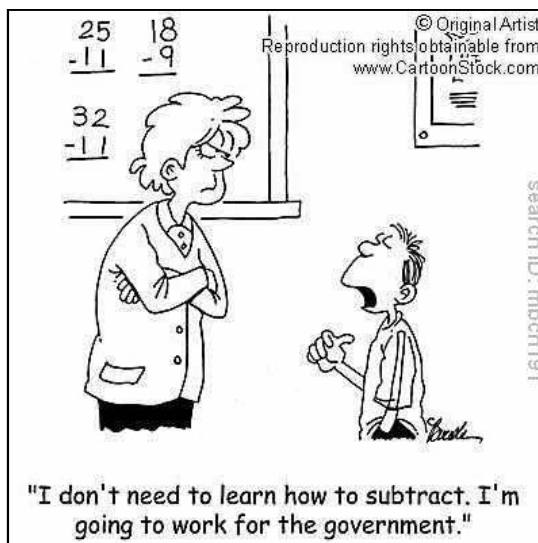
HUNT FOR HAPPINESS WEEK
January 17-23

NATIONAL HUGGING DAY
January 21

BELLY LAUGH DAY
January 24

NATIONAL COMPLIMENT DAY
January 24

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

Teacher: Are you good at math?
 Pupil: Yes and no
 Teacher: What do you mean?
 Pupil: Yes, I'm no good at math!