



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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HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



Conduct an Interests Survey

Find out what your students value by conducting an Interests Survey. During the first week of school, have students complete an interests survey. Use the information to learn more about your students; this can help you connect with them personally. Give special attention to the interests of students who seem to be struggling to fit in, who might be shy, who might be under-valued, or new to the school. Also use what you learn about the students who have conduct issues so that you can connect with them about things that interest them.

Six ways how to help students remember what they've learned

The vast majority of our students don't believe they have great memories. Yet most students do believe that if they could improve their ability to remember what they studied, they would be far more successful in school. These two facts offer us a potentially powerful advantage in our efforts to help students increase academic achievement. But we do need to convince students that we can actually teach them how to remember what they've learned—and then teach them this lesson continually.

Then students are able to recall previously mastered material, our ability to move their learning forward is enhanced. And the less time we have to spend re-teaching previously learned material or filling in gaps in previously taught content, the greater our ability to introduce and engage students in new content and skills. Therefore, when we help students remember more of what they learn, we make our work more efficient—and we instill in students skills that can make them more successful and satisfied in their academic and personal lives. There are six strategies every teacher can use daily to increase the amount of learning students retain.

- **AS STUDENTS ARE LEARNING INFORMATION OR SKILLS YOU WANT TO BE CERTAIN THAT THEY RETAIN, REMOVE AS MANY DISTRACTIONS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AS YOU CAN.**

Unrelated noise, multiple activities, excessive heat, cold temperatures, and counterproductive seating arrangements can be a distraction. Remember, even worry and anxiety can pull student attention away from the content you want them to learn and remember. As stu-

dents become physically and mentally able to increase their focus on learning, they also are better able to move new learning to memory. This learning fact is proven by both research and experience.

- **WHEN STUDENTS ENCOUNTER UNFAMILIAR INFORMATION, THEY OFTEN STRUGGLE TO SEPARATE WHAT IS RELEVANT AND VALUABLE FROM BACKGROUND AND INCIDENTAL ELEMENTS THAT DON'T REQUIRE FULL UNDERSTANDING AND MEMORY.**

We can assist students by pointing out and discussing crucial pieces of information and key details. We can also note elements that are incidental to the circumstances encountered and not worthy of remembering.

- **WE CAN SLOW DOWN DURING INITIAL PRESENTATIONS AND GIVE LOTS OF EXAMPLES TO HELP STUDENTS SEE THE VALUE AND PURPOSE OF WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING.**

The more students can see the relationship between new learning and its use, the more likely students are to make and remember the connections. Whenever practical, we should borrow examples that are familiar to and connected with the lives of students. Incorporate students' names and their friends or even share your personal examples. Personalized stories and examples what they are hearing often carries an element of emotion—and emotion

Continued on page 2.....



of emotion—and emotion is closely connected to memory.

•WE CAN HELP STUDENTS CONSTRUCT MENTAL PICTURES OF WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING

Mental pictures help students move beyond words as a foundation for remembering. Images and the emotions that accompany them often embed themselves in memory more quickly and easily than words alone. We can make the strategy even more powerful when the mental images students construct are humorous or even silly. **Make no mistake: novelty can be a powerful memory enhancer.**

•WE CAN GIVE STUDENTS IMMEDIATE, FREQUENT, AND REPEATED OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE AND USE WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING.

For many students, repetition is crucial to remembering. The more times they use what they learn, the deeper learning penetrates their memory bank. When repetition is combined with usefulness, meaning, and feelings of success, the technique is even more powerful.

•WE CAN HAVE STUDENTS TEACH EACH OTHER WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED.

This process transforms what is learned from initial understanding to deeper mastery. Teaching others requires organizing our learning, identifying key elements, and describing it in ways that are understandable to others. In fact, research shows that this technique alone can move student retention of new learning from approximately 10%-if they only hear new content—to almost 90%. Where appropriate, also have older

students teach younger students. Again, research shows this to be beneficial to both the student who teaches and the student who is taught.

A good teacher knows that memory is crucial to learning success. The more we can assist students in remembering what we teach them, the better learners they will become. Having learns with good memories means we have to reteach less and can move more3 quickly to new learning.

A good teacher understands that a good memory can increase the confidence students bring to learning challenges. A good memory gives students access to more information and previous learning that can be employed as new learning is encountered. As a result, students connect new learning to what they already know and are more likely to apply what they learn. We need to use these memory strategies in our teaching. They work. Certainly, they'll help us not leave any students behind if we use them daily.



“My heart is singing for joy this morning. A miracle has happened! The light of understanding has shone upon my little pupil's mind, and behold, all things are changed.”

— Anne Sullivan

A New Series: Testing Tips for Students #5



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

***Each week, in each subject area, present to students one question in the test format they will find on the standardized tests given in your state. Provide opportunities for students to discuss the format and offer suggestions for addressing questions in that format.**

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Deanna Gray

Tuckers Crossroads Elementary

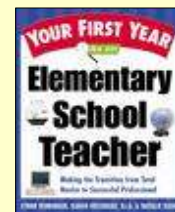
Kindergarten

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

“For the past 3 years, I’ve been doing a lot of soul searching. My career goals have always involved working with children and families. My Bachelor’s Degree is in social work, and for five years I dedicated myself to the profession. I worked with children in an inner city middle school, juveniles in state custody, and children and families with mental health issues. The job I was most drawn to involved working at a school. For a while I thought I might want to get my graduate degree in school counseling but upon much thought, reading, researching, and discussions with people who knew me best—I decided to pursue my Masters in Education. I knew right away—from the very first graduate class—that I had found my calling. Although social work is a wonderful profession, I was feeling uninspired and I knew there was a better fit for me out there somewhere. When I taught my very first lesson in a 2nd grade classroom, I was so excited and inspired—I couldn’t wait to be a teacher. Instead of only getting a snapshot of a child for a few moments a day as in social work, I would have a much greater impact being in the classroom all day with the kids. Now I can use my social work skills and my teaching skills to inspire children to learn and grow and make positive decisions in their lives. I have never once regretted my decision to teach and I look forward to a long career.”—Deanna Gray



OFF THE BOOKSHELF



Your First Year As an Elementary School Teacher :
Making the Transition
from Total Novice to Successful Professional
 By Rominger, Heisinger and Elkin

“Kids are smarter than we sometimes give them credit for!”

“The most fun part of teaching is simply listening to the things kids say. On the first day of school I was introducing the subject matter we’d be covering in American history. I asked the kids to think of how a knowledge of history could help people to get along better in life. One of the tough kids in class wasn’t volunteering any answers, so I called on him to respond. As he sat up straight in his seat, some of his buddies began guffawing behind him. I ignored them and repeated the question: ‘How do you use history to get along?’ He turned around to his friends and said, without missing a beat, ‘Knock off the laughing, or you’re history.’”

“What did I learn my first year of school? Get organized!...Even two minutes of disorganization results in complete chaos for the rest of the hour. Get organized.”

“Some lessons you only learn through experience.”

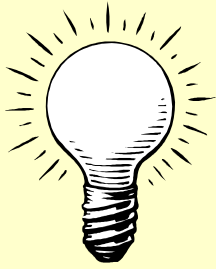


TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:

<http://writingfix.com/>

Writing Fix

A project of the Northern Nevada Writing Project, this site features more than 500 resources and lesson plans created by teachers attending their many workshops since 2001. Because of the large amount of materials, the people at WritingFix recommend checking out their top 12 (scroll to the bottom of the main page), the twelve most popular collections used by teachers, starting with the Daily Prompt Generator. Overall, this is an excellent place to start for anyone looking for resources to teach any kind of writing.



Strategies for New Teachers . . .

PROFESSIONALISM

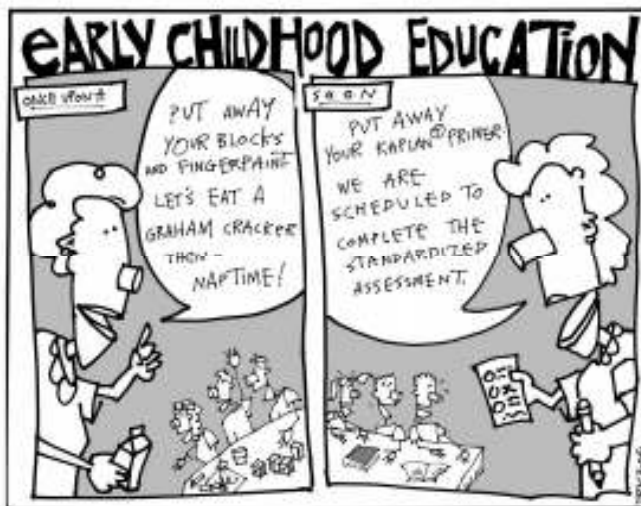
- **AVOID NEGATIVE COMMENTS.** Never make disparaging comments about students or staff members in the presence of anybody, but especially around students. Such comments invite distrust and ill will.
- **USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE.** No matter what stress and frustration you may feel in the classroom, be diligent to use only highly professional speech. Never ever use profanity.
- **AVOID SARCASM.** While sarcasm may be amusing to you, it is disrespectful.
- **BE CAUTIOUS OF HOW MUCH PERSONAL INFORMATION YOU SHARE.** While sharing information about your interests and heritage can help create connections between you and your students, don't share too much, especially about moral, religious and political beliefs.
- **RESPECT SCHOOL LEADERS.** You may not always agree with them, but you must show respect and comply with their policies.
- **HONOR THE SCHOOL DAY.** Arrive on time and don't leave early. Use sick days and personal days wisely and honestly. (continued in the next issue)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- BATH SAFETY MONTH**
- NATIONAL SOUP MONTH**
- NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH**
- NATIONAL TAKE BACK YOUR TIME WEEK**
January 25-31
- HALOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**
January 27
- FUN AT WORK DAY**
January 29
- INSPIRE YOUR HEART WITH ART DAY**
January 29

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM REQUIRED INSERVICE:
 "Parents and Teachers as Partners/Survival Tips for New Teachers"
 February 11 4:00-6:00 pm TTRC



Back to school

Student 1: Can you hold on to my wallet for me while we take the exam? There may or may not be money in it.
Teacher: I can't be bought!
Student 2: Yes, but can you be rented for a little while?