



# Teacher Tip of the Week

## New Teacher Support Program 2009-2010

Terry Edwards, Program Coordinator

April 2010

Vol. 5 Issue 30

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

### HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



#### Taking Responsibility

Have classroom rules posted with numbers attached to them. When a student breaks a rule he/she must sign their name in "The Book", a simple binder with loose leaf paper in it. They must also put the date and number of the rule they broke. They receive a writing assignment associated with the class they are in.

After signing 3 times notify their parents and they lose a recess. Start off fresh after each report card. This works very well and after 1 or 2 calls you usually never need to make another one. It is also helpful when parents want to question why their child received a poor conduct grade. Just show them the book!

### Using Differentiated Teaching Strategies: Lesson Planning Tips for Working with Different Level Students

*How much time do you spend on differentiated teaching? By adapting instruction to cater to different levels, you will teach more effectively to a variety of students.*

Teachers use differentiated teaching to cater to diverse learning needs. All students are different in terms of their achievement, ability, learning and cognitive styles as well as attitudes, pace of learning, personality and motivation.

#### Using Differentiated Instruction with Different Students

The lower performing and average students are motivated to try and increase their knowledge because of the input of the stronger students.

Using differentiated instruction, teachers cater to a wide variety of varied interests, cultural backgrounds and world knowledge which results in more dynamic classroom interaction.

The teacher's attitude is central in setting the scene for the acceptance of differences.

#### How Differentiation Instruction Works

##### Same Activity – Different Tasks

One way to implement differentiated instruction is to plan different tasks for the same activity. This may be teaching a grammar point or a pre-reading activity or any activity for that matter. After the initial input of the teacher, there are two main options for assigning tasks.

- **Quantity** – the same task can be assigned to the whole class, but students do not have to do the same amount of questions or exercises. The students are given a choice. For example, they can be asked to answer only some of the questions

while others try and answer all the questions.

- **Level of difficulty** – The teacher can adapt the task to two or three different levels which allows the student to choose the level he/she feels most comfortable with in terms of completing. The bottom line is that the teacher adapts already existing activities in the textbook, without having to make up additional activities.



#### Using Differentiated Instruction to Teach Reading and Science Lessons

Teachers can use the principles of differentiated instruction to teach reading and science. In such cases, teachers are using differentiated instructional strategies in a cross-curricular way.

##### Same activity - different tasks

- **Lower performing reading group:** students read a passage and list names of people, places and numbers and then, classify them into groups. Teachers can use reading comprehension skills in other subjects of the curriculum such as reading a passage on bugs and insect for a science activity.
- **Middle reading group** – students answer questions that relate to general ideas
- **Advanced reading group** – students read the passage and answer detailed questions. They can also guess unknown words and look up their meanings in a dictionary.

Teachers can use differentiated instruction involve planning lessons that can meet the needs of all the students. Teachers can use a variety of differentiated teaching strategies to cater to a diverse learning needs.—*Dorit Sasson*

## How to Keep Your Students Thinking



When students engage actively with material, they generally understand it better and remember it longer. Student participation often results in *covering less* material during a semester. Yet it also can mean that students *learn more* information than when the material is simply "covered" because they actively *use* it and have more chances to clear up confusion. Large numbers of students in class do not preclude interaction. The following techniques to open up lectures to student participation have been used in classes of up to 1200 students, as well as with smaller groups.

Begin the course or the lecture with a question or questions that help you to understand what students are thinking: "What are some of the differences between clinical medicine and public health?" "What would be a feminist perspective on contraceptive research?" "What are some examples of marginalized populations?" To introduce new topics and find out students' assumptions, ask students to jot down answers to some questions on their own and then combine answers in a small group. Examples from a pre-course survey: "List

up to 10 major environmental disasters. Name up to 10 health disorders in which environmental agents are causative; list the 10 etiologic agents. Identify the kinds of data needed to characterize an environmental health hazard."

When a student asks a question, instead of answering it yourself, ask for an answer from other members of the class.

Ask questions throughout the lecture, so that the lecture becomes more of a conversation. Asking students to raise their hands (for example, "What is the direction of the data: increasing? decreasing?") is easier than asking them to speak. Questions with surprising answers can engage students' interest (for example, "What is the probability that two people in this room have the same birthday?"). Generally, questions are more evocative if you are not looking for one right answer. The most fruitful questions are thought-provoking and, often, counterintuitive.

Pause in the lecture after making a major point. Show students a multiple-choice question based on the material you have been talking about. Ask stu-

dents to vote on the right answer, and then to turn to their neighbors to persuade them of the answer within the space of two minutes. When time is up, ask them to vote a second time. Usually far more students arrive at the correct answer when voting the second time.

Stop the lecture and ask students to write for one or two minutes in response to a particular question. Then ask them to discuss their answers with their neighbor. The writing will give everyone a chance to think about and articulate a response, and may enable broader participation.

Allow time for questions at the end of the lecture. Ask if students would like to have a point clarified.

End the lecture with a provocative question. If you have TAs, ask them to begin their sections with a discussion of that problem or issue.

Do a one-minute paper at the end of class. In this exercise, students write down what they consider (a) the main point of the class and (b) the main question they still have as they leave. Collect and read these unsigned papers. You can use some of these



**"We spend the first twelve months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk and the next twelve years telling them to sit down and shut up."**

—Phyllis Diller

questions to begin the next lecture. This technique encourages students to listen more carefully, to review their notes, and to think about the lecture before running to their next class.  
—University of Virginia

## A New Series: Testing Tips for Students #14



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

Prepare students for multiple choice tests by teaching them the concepts of "process of elimination" and "educated guesses." Show students how to eliminate choices they know are wrong, and then look for the correct answer among the choices that are left. Explain that they can use the process of elimination followed by an educated guess to increase their chances of choosing the correct answer -- even when they don't know which answer is correct.

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM  
PARTICIPANTSMelissa Barrell

Watertown High School

Algebra I

## WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I come from a different perspective as a second career teacher. I made a difference physically to my community as an engineer, but I wanted to have more impact directly on people's lives. In my preparation to become a teacher, I found that impact in something one of the speakers said. We were asked what we taught and responded with math, science, or whichever subject area our endorsement would be in. She stopped us and told us that was not correct. We teach students.

Students are why I want to teach. Math and science are subjects I find interesting, but without students and their new ideas and perspectives nothing new would ever be accomplished. I expect them to teach me as much as I impart to them."—Melissa Barrell

## LITTLE KNOWN TEACHING FACTS:

What is the attrition rate of teachers in the profession?

Interestingly, nearly 50% of teachers resign in the first 5 years. This is a very high attrition rate. It is explained that this is mostly because those entering the profession have not done their ground work properly and come in perhaps with unrealistic expectations which acts as a dampener. They are also not properly trained and equipped and hence, feel the only way is to exit the profession.

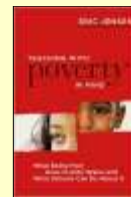
## TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:



<http://technorati.com/>

Blogs are a relatively new phenomena which allows anyone to publish their ideas on the web. Keeping track of the more than 30 million blog conversations is what Technorati does. Their main page shows the major topics currently being written about as well as the most popular search terms for that hour. Users can also create watch lists to keep track of the subjects in which you're most interested. While most teachers will not be interested in a large part of what is written in blogs, they are fast becoming an important source linking people to information on the web.

## Off the shelf:



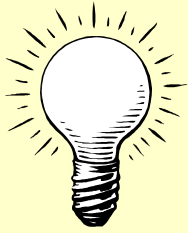
Teaching with Poverty in Mind : What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It  
by Jensen, Eric

In *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*, veteran educator and brain expert Eric Jensen takes an unflinching look at how poverty hurts children, families, and communities across the United States and demonstrates how schools can improve the academic achievement and life readiness of economically disadvantaged students.

Jensen argues that although chronic exposure to poverty can result in detrimental changes to the brain, the brain's very ability to adapt from experience means that poor children can also experience emotional, social, and academic success. A brain that is susceptible to adverse environmental effects is equally susceptible to the positive effects of rich, balanced learning environments and caring relationships that build students' resilience, self-esteem, and character.

Drawing from research, experience, and real school success stories, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind* reveals

- \* What poverty is and how it affects students in school;
- \* What drives change both at the macro level (within schools and districts) and at the micro level (inside a student's brain);
- \* Effective strategies from those who have succeeded and ways to replicate those best practices at your own school; and
- \* How to engage the resources necessary to make change happen.



# Strategies for Teachers . . .

## Y Charts

### What is it?

A graphic organizer that requires the brainstorming of ideas around three dimensions: what a particular topic/situation 'looks like', 'sounds like' and 'feels like'.

### What is its purpose?

- It encourages students to think critically about classroom climate and to identify appropriate behaviors for achieving this, for example, what does a co-operative English classroom 'look like', 'feel like' and 'sound like'?
  - Focuses students on the importance of social skills and a positive classroom climate
  - Establishes the importance of co-operation as a tool for learning
  - Gives students the language which best describes appropriate behaviors
  - Acknowledges the importance of 'emotional' intelligence
- Facilitates critical thinking and problem solving

### How do I do it?

- Decide on the topic/social skill you wish to explore with your students
- Divide students into small groups, allocating tasks to each group member such as recorder, reporter, time-keeper, organizer
- Hand out Y chart proforms, A3 size
- Have students brainstorm as many possibilities as they can within a specific time limit
- Each group reports back
- Discussion and clarification follows

Strengths and weaknesses are identified as the topic/social skill is utilised in the classroom over several days or lessons and follow-up action is suggested

### How can I adapt it?

- Use it as an individual exercise for students to reflect on their own social behaviors
  - Use it to explore concepts and issues
- Explore features and structures of texts as they are the focus of class work, for example, 'What does a strong/successful character look like, feel like, sound like?'

### How can it be used to evaluate students' language learning?

- An evaluative tool for analysis and discussion
  - Provides a structure for effective reflection
  - Anecdotal evidence of social skills development
- Useful as a set of criteria for self and peer assessment of effective speaking and listening



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

TENNIS MONTH

WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE MONTH

NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK  
April 22-28

CELLOPHANE TAPE DAY  
April 27

INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY  
April 29

HUG YOUR CAT DAY  
April 30

INDIANAPOLIS 500  
April 30

MEMORIAL DAY  
April 31

off the mark.com by Mark Parisi



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