



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2009-2010

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August 2009

Vol. 5 Issue 4

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New Teacher Support
Program
Wilson County Schools
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Motivating Students: Our Biggest Challenge

HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



Labeling Student Papers

Post procedures for labeling student papers. Ask students to write their name, the date, your name, the period number, and the assignment on every paper they turn in to you. You will probably need to remind them of this often. When you receive unlabeled papers, first check the handwriting to see if you can attribute it to a particular student. Confirm with the student that it is his or her paper, if you are not certain. Then, set up a basket where you place papers that do not have the required information on them. Explain that if you cannot determine to whom a paper belongs or which assignment it might be, you cannot give credit for the work. Allow students to look in the basket for missing work. Treat formerly unlabeled papers as if they are late.



Motivating **students** is a challenge all teachers face. Since every classroom consists of a wide array of **students**, each student brings with them different learning styles, different interests, and different life experiences that make each classroom unique and special. There are several ways that teachers can tap into the individual learning styles and interests of students; thus making learning more fun and meaningful all at the same time.

EXPECTATIONS—Teachers should set reasonable objectives for every lesson that allow their students to progress in the classroom. Expect students to achieve the objectives, and they will. Studies show that students achieve at higher rates when their teachers have high expectations for them.

SUCCESS— Motivate students by showing them that they can be successful in the classroom. Teachers can differentiate instruction to meet the students' needs by adjusting the corresponding class work to the appropriate levels. Class work can be modified in a variety of ways: shortened assignments, extra response time, or enrichment activities.

RELEVANCE—Show students how what they are learning matters in real life. Guide students to discuss the new material, and allow students to draw on their own experiences to learn and understand the new material.

ENGAGING QUESTIONS— Lead in with questions that will get the students talking. Encourage students to discuss the topic by bringing what they know about the topic to the classroom discussion. Clarify any questions that arise by encouraging the students to talk to each other first and expand on their pre-existing knowledge.

INCORPORATE DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES—Use a variety of strategies in the classroom to facilitate the lesson. Classroom discussions consist of whole group learning. Cooperative group learning allows students to work together on assignments in small groups. Direct instruction allows teachers to model lesson assignments first so students can work independently at their desks.

REWARDS AND PRIVILEGES—Rewards and privileges are great motivational tools for hard work. Teachers can use a variety of them to encourage student participation. Examples of privileges or rewards are as follows: *Lunch with the teacher* allows students to come back to the classroom and eat lunch with the teacher. *Extra center time* allows students to have a few more minutes at a computer lab. *Pizza parties or snacks* can be offered as incentives. A *token-based economy* is a great reward system that lets students earn points or chips that can be cashed in for prizes, such as pencils or notepads.



There are lots of ways to motivate students. Most importantly teachers can show students that they can be great learners. By addressing the various needs of the students inside each classroom, students' achievement levels will increase and so will their motivation.

“Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Asking Questions That Count

Teachers can promote mathematical reasoning and critical thinking skills by combining higher-order questions with sound questioning strategies.

Promote Reasoning Skills with Questioning Strategies

Questioning serves many critical functions in the mathematics classroom.

Teachers use questions to

- identify students' background knowledge
- guide students to reasonable answers
- give students practice using mathematical language
- informally assess student understanding.

While meeting these purposes, teachers can promote mathematical reasoning and critical thinking skills by combining higher-order questions with sound questioning strategies.

The quality of the questions asked is of central importance. Will students be asked to simply recall a fact or compute an algorithm, or will they be asked to do something more? The questions teachers ask greatly impact the learning that occurs in the classroom.

Varying Question Structures

Open-ended questions encourage discussion and promote higher-order thinking. They promote reasoning and help students develop a more complete mastery of concepts and skills by requiring them to apply, analyze, synthesize, interpret and evaluate information. In short, to think at the higher end of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Simple calculation questions can be modified to create higher level questions.

Rather than asking simple "What is...?" questions, push students to explain and make connections.

Question Starters

Consider using the following question starts to replace your "What is....?" questions.

- What evidence is there to....?
- What is the relationship between....?
- What would happen if....?
- How could you determine....?
- How would you explain....?
- How would you rate the



importance of?

As you develop higher-order questions for your lessons, make sure to use a variety of question formats. Variation will not only increase student interest, but it will promote the development of the complete range of critical thinking skills.

Wait Time

Waiting just a few extra seconds to call on students after posing a question or to respond to students after they answer questions can have a profound affect on students' ability to formulate and articulate mathematical ideas in class. Studies have shown that with increased wait time, more students will

volunteer answers and the responses will be longer and provide more thorough evidence. Students speculate more and ask more questions. The extra few seconds provides the additional time most students need to begin to reasoning.

Safe Classroom Environment

The students who raise their hands in response to a question will naturally tend to be those students who know the answer or believe that they know the answer. By calling only on these students or by quickly calling on another student if an incorrect answer is given, teachers lose valuable opportunities to promote mathematical reasoning. This habit can send the message that students should only contribute their ideas if they know them to be correct. Unsure students shut down and stop contributing. Yet incorrect answers are precisely the tools teachers need to guide students through, model and develop critical thinking skills.

Questioning Strategies

To create a classroom environment in which all students feel safe to communicate their ideas, try the following strategies:

- Establish a system to call on all students and involve as many students as possible. For example, you can write the students names on note cards and draw them at random. When asking a closed-end question, you might ask students to raise a thumbs-up to show agreement and a thumbs-down to show disagreement.



“To be able to be caught up into the world of thought -- that is educated.”

—Edith Hamilton

- Practice effective listening skills. Make sure that your students have the background knowledge they need to understand your questions. Restate students' answers in clear language or elaborate an idea, and ask them if this is what they meant.
- Use probing questions to flush out misconceptions or help students elaborate their assertions. Avoid telling students the "answer." Anticipate student responses and prepare questions in advance that might help guide students toward correct responses. —*Teaching Today*

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Mary O'Neill

Tuckers Cross Roads Elementary

Science 6th & 8th grades

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher with the hope that I can impart my passion for learning onto the students and show them the infinite possibilities of education. I hope to motivate students and convey my concerns for their overall academic and individual well-being. Furthermore, I became a teacher because it gives me the chance to recognize potential and help students develop their talents and interests. Ultimately, I became a teacher so that I can impact students' lives and give them true meaning to their education."

—Mary O'Neill

REQUIRED INSERVICE: Tuesday, September 1, 2009—Lesson Planning and Pacing for the Elementary Teacher TTRC 4:00-6:00 pm (first of four possible dates)

TEACHER WEBSITE

OF THE WEEK:



<http://americanart.si.edu/>

Natural Museum of American Art

Produced by the Smithsonian Institution, this site claims to have pictures and information on over 1000 works of art. You have the option of browsing on your own or taking one of several organized "tours" focusing on a particular artist or style of art. Check out the White House collection of American crafts and Joan of Art where those of use who are clueless can ask questions about art and artists.



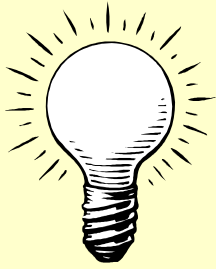
OFF THE BOOKSHELF



How Lincoln Learned to Read: Twelve Great Americans and the Educations That Made Them
by Daniel Wolff

This extended essay, in the form of a dozen entertaining profiles of great Americans—an unexpected cross-section, from Ben Franklin to Elvis Presley—provides an unusual look at the varieties of educational experience that shaped these ground-breakers. Along the way, many of the prejudices and misunderstandings that are part of the American fabric are shown to be overcome by each through his or her mode of learning.

Poet Wolff (4th of July, Asbury Park) shows how the studied yokel Ben Franklin created an American archetype, and how Helen Keller and her teacher Annie Sullivan would inspire Maria Montessori on the instruction of all children. Wolff wears his learning lightly, and there is a subtlety to his contrasting biographies. For example, the education of Lincoln, whose formal schooling ended at the age of 15, could not be further from the privileged world of JFK's; auto pioneer Henry Ford and environmental pioneer Rachel Carson, both Midwesterners, could not be more different. Above all, Wolff observes that in our national tradition "an American education is going to bear the marks of rebellion."—*Publishers Weekly*



Strategies for New Teachers . . .

ASSIGNING SEATS

If you have desks in your room, begin the year by arranging them in rows that face you, placing you as the center of attention and minimizing disruptions.

HOW TO ASSIGN SEATS RANDOMLY: label all desks in advance with a number. Have each student draw a number from a container as he or she walks in the door. After class begins, call the roll and record the student's desk number next to his or her name on the roster. Later, record the students' names in their assigned seats on a blank layout that models your classroom layout.

EASING SEATING CHARTS: write each student's name on a mini Post-it. Post the notes on a piece of paper labeled to model your classroom desk layout and slide the sheet into a plastic page protector. This method allows you to easily move students' seats as the year progresses without creating new charts.

GRADING PAPERS

The grading of papers—homework, projects, quizzes, etc.—can quickly overwhelm you and undermine your mission. If you are exhausted by paperwork, you cannot serve your students well. Keep the following in mind to avoid a massive paper pileup!

AVOID COLLECTING EVERYTHING: a common mistake is to collect all assigned work. Be selective in what you collect and grade based on the purpose of the assignment. Generally, collect Summative Assessments and do not collect Formative Assessments. *(to be continued next week...)*



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

National Inventor's Month

National Safe-at-Home Week
August 24-28

Be Kind to Humankind Week
August 25-31

Women's Equality Day
August 26

Global Forgiveness Day
August 26

Race Your Mouse Around the Icons Day
August 28



Back to school

Son: I can't go to school today.
Father: Why not?
Son: I don't feel well
Father: Where don't you feel well?
Son: In school!