



Teacher Tip of the Week



Points to Ponder privately...or with colleagues

- What differences in learning styles do you see among your students?
- How do you differentiate between auditory learners and visual learners?
- How do you vary teaching techniques to best complement students' learning styles?



ADVICE AND SUPPORT...FROM THE VETERANS



MARY ANN SPARKS, HUMAN RESOURCES

“The best advice I ever got was to keep every student actively engaged in the lesson. Active learning does not give the students the opportunity to become off-task. By developing teaching strategies that require

Parent Conferences Have Four Objectives

Parent conferences can be one of your most overlooked assets. In the elementary school, teachers usually do fine. But as a student advances through school, teachers are prone to use parent conferences less and less. In fact, you might be surprised to discover that parents of older children often don't even know the names of their child's teachers, much less the courses they teach. And make no mistake: Back to school nights are no substitute for parent conferences. Only a private, face to face meeting allows us to create the image of a professional who is knowledgeable, capable, and caring. However, we need to take two steps to get maximum results. First, we need to know the purposes of parent-teacher conferences. Second, we need to learn how to set the objectives for a conference.

It is essential that the purposes of the parent-teacher conference be kept before us all times—for a very simple reason. If you keep your focus on the purposes of the meeting and show parents how your objective benefits the student, they will be more satisfied with the outcome. There are at least four identifiable purposes of a parent-teacher conference:

- ✓ TO DELIVER INFORMATION THAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR CHILD.
- ✓ TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM PARENTS THAT WILL HELP YOU TEACH THEIR CHILD MORE EFFECTIVELY.
- ✓ TO ESTABLISH A PLAN WITH PARENTS FOR REDUCING OR ELIMINATING AN ATTITUDE OR BEHAVIOR WHICH MAY STAND IN THE WAY OF A CHILD'S ACADEMIC OR SOCIAL GROWTH.
- ✓ TO BUILD A FOUNDATION OF TRUST AMONG ALL PARTIES—PARENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND THE SCHOOL.

This foundation is of paramount importance. It does not need much explanation. After all, if the first three purposes are properly handled—delivering information, gathering information, and planning to solve problems—the trust will take care of itself. That is why you must establish the conference objective.

The objective must be clearly stated so that communication can take place. Your opening statement might be, “Thank you for coming. I am pleased you are here. I would like to talk about...” If the parent says, “But I'm concerned about...,” your response might be, “Fine. We have only twenty minutes, so we will talk about your concern for the first ten minutes. Then, we will discuss mine for the final ten minutes. If we run out of time, we will schedule another conference.”

An effective teacher knows that if you intend to solve a problem, you must be sure to listen carefully during the conference and ask yourself if the information you are receiving will help you understand the student or your own teaching better. And, above all, you must resolve not to avoid parents or count them out of your plans. Including parents is more than wise. Remember, it is your professional responsibility to consult with parents and confer with them, and involve them always—even when total indifference is revealed.—

Master Teacher

New Teacher Support Participants

everyone to “act, think, or do”, you are significantly decreasing problems and significantly increasing learning opportunities. For example, in a mathematics class, instead of calling on one student to work a problem and get the correct answer, write each answer individually on a card. After you have voiced the problem, each student must work the problem to determine if they have the card with the correct answer. This can be altered for any subject or level. You can also do this with groups or competitively. Actively engaging students decreases behavior problems and increases student achievement – what a winning combination!”



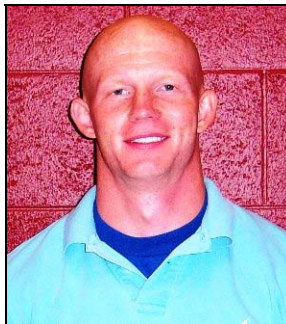
TEACHER TIPS.....ON STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Unless we give students attention, it is often difficult to maintain good relationships with them—especially with the nonachiever. Remember, “out of mind, out of expectation” can occur easily with a student who does not do well academically. Never forget, this is the student who needs you the most—and the student knows it, regardless of how he or she acts. If you do not show that you know it, the nonachiever may come to the conclusion that he or she should not be in school and start pulling away even more.



JENNIFER THOMPSON
GLADEVILLE ELEMENTARY—1ST GRADE
WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

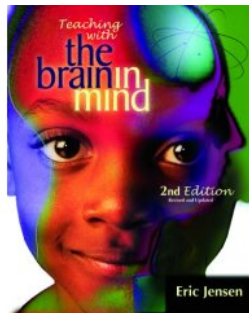
“To make a difference. Children are our future leaders, decision makers, etc. I believe being a teacher is the best investment I could ever make.”—Jennifer Thompson



CURTIS GRAH
MT. JULIET MIDDLE SCHOOL—SOCIAL STUDIES
WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

“I feel as though every child has the capability and opportunity to learn. Fifty percent of the children come from broken homes and face challenges that I never faced. My role is to make sure these students see some kind of male role model that these children may or may not get.”—Curtis Grah

Suggested Reading for Teachers



Teaching with the Brain in Mind
 by Eric Jensen

When the first edition of *Teaching with the Brain in Mind* was published in 1998, it quickly became a bestseller, and it's gone on to inspire thousands of educators to apply the latest brain research in their classroom teaching. Now, author Eric Jensen is back with a completely revised updated edition of his classic work.

In easy to understand, engaging language, Jensen provides a basic orientation to the brain its various systems and explains how they affect learning. After discussing what parents and educators can do to get children's brains in good shape for school, Jensen goes on to explore to such as motivation, critical thinking skills, environmental factors, the "social brain," emotions, and memory and recall. He offers fascinating insights on a number of specific issue, including

- * How to tap into the brain's natural reward system.
- * The critical link between movement and cognition.
- * The impact on learning of environmental factors such as lighting, temperature, and noise.
- * The value of feedback.
- * The importance of prior knowledge and mental models.
- * Why stress impedes learning.



HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR TEACHERS

www.jc-schools.net/tutorials/interactive.htm

Interactive websites provide standards-based cross curricular web resources designed to enhance online learning opportunities. These sites interact with the user usually through either a text-based or graphical user interface.



Words of Wisdom



- * How social interaction affects the brain.
- * How to help students improve their ability to encode, maintain, and retrieve learning.

The repeated message to educators is simple: You have far more influence on students' brains than you realize. And you have an obligation to learn as much as you can to take advantage of the incredible revelations that science is providing. The revised and updated *Teaching with the Brain in Mind, 2nd edition* helps you do just that.

#3 Marzano's Nine Essential Instructional Strategies

Number Three: Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition

Effort and recognition speak to the attitudes and beliefs of students, and teachers must show the connection between effort and achievement. Research shows that although not all students realize the importance of effort, they can learn to change their beliefs to emphasize effort.

Applications:

- * Share stories about people who succeeded by not giving up.
- * Have students keep a log of their weekly efforts and achievements, reflect on it periodically, and even mathematically analyze the data.

According to research, recognition is most effective if it is contingent on the achievement of a certain standard. Also, symbolic recognition works better than tangible rewards.

Applications:

- * Find ways to personalize recognition. Give awards for individual accomplishments.
- * "Pause, Prompt, Praise." If a student is struggling, pause to discuss the problem, then prompt with specific suggestions to help her improve. If the student's performance improves as a result, offer praise.

Next week: #4 Homework and Practice

Need a Laugh?

Nothing in the world will take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than the unsuccessful person with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" will solve the problems of the human race.—*Calvin Coolidge*

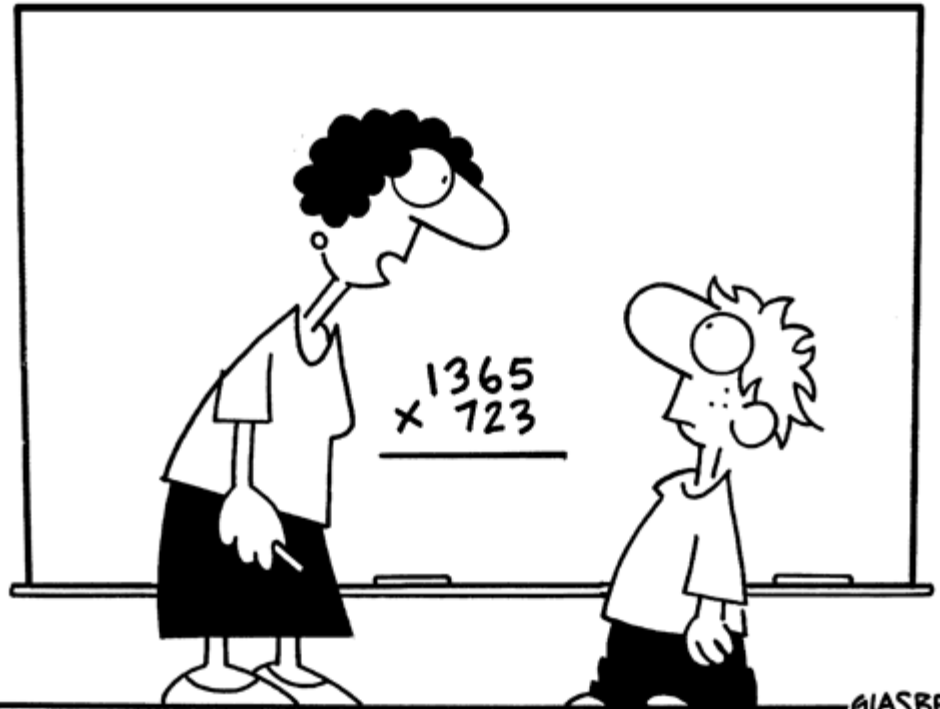


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"Pretend you're starring in a reality show about a kid who can make his dreams come true if he works hard and gets good grades."

It is the policy of the Wilson County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

