



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2008-2009

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Teacher Tip of the Week
New Teacher Support
Program
Wilson County Schools
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Words of Encouragement to your students

Don't forget the encouragement! Encouragement can be as simple as saying "hello" and greeting students at the door as they enter the classroom.

Sometimes we can get so wrapped up in showing our students the problems with their work that our comments discourage them, and our efforts do more harm than good. One of our purposes as teachers is to improve our student's confidence in their abilities. In order to do that, we must learn to be conscious of the state of our students' morale and then be able to adapt to their needs. We want to acknowledge their fears and recognize their successes. Ultimately, we want to encourage our students (to grant them the courage) to learn.

◆ Observe student attitudes

As teachers, our job is to work with our students. Just as we give our students information, they respond by giving us information. Their facial expressions, body language, and verbal comments all convey information about their attitude towards what we are trying to tell them. Effective teachers make a conscious effort to understand these attitudes and to modify their comments accordingly.

◆ Responding to individual students

When working with students individually, we should be attuned to the way that they perceive our comments. If they look increasingly discouraged, be prepared to stop your comments and acknowledge their apprehension. Often, they simply need us to recognize that they are worried about their abilities, and to reassure them that we have confidence in

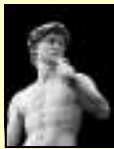
them. I know this sounds like a lot of work, but I know you can do it. At this point, it's a good idea to point out their strengths to convince them that they are capable students. For example, "I observed some of the comments you made on Paul's paper, and they were right on the money." Or, "I can tell you have put a lot of work into this so far." If they continue to look downtrodden, you could help them come up with ways to break up their work into more manageable (less-daunting) tasks.

◆ Words of encouragement

Once students have completed a task it is essential that we acknowledge their efforts. Encouraging words, such as "great job" are often enough to instill them with a sense of pride. We must take care to avoid making evaluative praise ("This is the best essay, and you are an amazing student!") as it often implies competition. In order for our encouragement to be meaningful, we must comment specifically on their successes. "Your organization is so effective now" is much more meaningful than vague compliments like "You rock!"

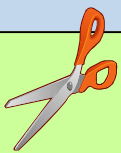


HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm>

a timeline of art history from around the world that is linked in a chronological and geographical context, from prehistory to the present. The Metropolitan Museum decided to create a timeline based on its collection to present a great reference and resource tool for those studying art history and related subjects.



Cutting Corners

MAKE A COMPLAINT MAILBOX:

A classroom complaint mailbox is a good way to manage students who want to tattle on one another. When students have a complaint, tell them to put it in writing and put it in the mailbox.

Answer each complaint in writing within two days, and be sure to thank each student for his or her comments. Some students will realize their problems are not worth the effort. Others will feel they have had their say.

Six Steps to Encourage Learning:

<http://www.ehow.com/how/2050215/encourage-student-learning.html>

The 2008 Olympics as a teaching resource

The Olympic Games are not only exciting; they also offer a wonderful teaching opportunity. Integrate the study of history, social studies, and physical education into this timely topic.

Help students draw parallels between the perseverance of athletes and their own lives with lessons, printables, and activities on the Olympics.

The following websites and resources are appropriate for all grade levels. You'll find information about the

rules of basketball around the world, essay topics about whether athleticism is innate or learned, daily warm-ups on current events, references on the many historical events that have occurred during the Olympic Games, biographies about famous athletes, and much more!

A good general website that will lead you to many subjects and activities regarding the 2008 Summer Olympics is: <http://www.teacherplanet.com/resource/summerolympics.php>



“Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten.”

—B. F. Skinner

What makes a class of interested students?

Making a class interesting is always foremost in a teacher's mind. Though no single approach is effective in keeping all students interested, here are some ideas that usually work:

- Try to make class openings novel and appealing. A great opening act sets the tone for the day!
- Use a sense of humor throughout the day (students may not always agree with the quality of your jokes, however).
- Use students' names in problems whenever possible.
- Try to make all new

information clear and understandable.

- Introduce challenge exercises and problems when appropriate.
- Try to keep all students actively involved all the time.
- Vary your activities—don't use the same one for too long a period.

- Try to give feedback to all students about their progress during the period.
- Try to show applications, either novel or practical, of the objective you are teaching.



- Introduce into the lesson problems and examples with an element of surprise to them. The unexpected always arouses interest.

Nice as it would be to have self-

motivated students, we all know the reality of the situation. A little attention to teaching style, though, can work wonders in keeping students concerned and interested in the lessons we are trying to impart.

New Teacher Support Participants:



**Jeri Ann
Jones**

Southside
Elementary

6th grade
Science



**Amber
Barnett**

Tuckers
Crossroads
Elementary

7-8th grades
English

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I knew that I wanted to be a teacher after my 2nd grade year in elementary school at Carroll-Oakland. The reason for this interest in becoming a teacher was completely because of a lady and friend named Sherry Eskew. She made learning so fun and really took an interest in me. I knew from that point on that I wanted to make a difference in children's lives in the way that she had mine. I have never once regretted my decision!"—Jeri Ann Jones

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher because I truly want to help children learn and succeed. Too many children go through life without many positive school experiences, but I hope to help make a difference and encourage them to strive to be successful in everything they put their minds to. I look forward to learning and growing every day!" —Amber Barnett



Advisors can help students

Do you try to stay "tuned in" to your students? Good teachers make a conscious effort to be close to students.

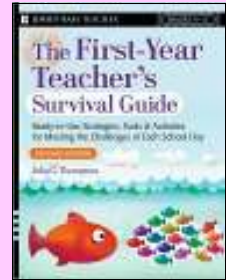
Gone in most high schools today is the block of time when homeroom teachers got to know their students well. The result: no time to nurture trust or friendships with the teacher. For some students at risk of failing or quitting school, this might be enough to push them out.

One antidote to the impersonal atmosphere is a teacher-advisor program. Teachers meet regularly with a small group of students.

Such programs are not new, they are widely used in middle schools but are less common at the high school level. Schools that have started advisor programs report fewer absences and discipline problems. There is also a better attitude toward school, and fewer school dropouts.

No matter how such programs are designed, their most important element must be the personal interest and social rapport developed within each group. Advisors must convey to each student that they are an individual worth knowing, and the school cares about them.

From the Bookshelf:



**First Year Teacher's
Survival Guide**
by Julia Thompson

The best-selling *First Year Teacher's Survival Kit* gives new teachers a wide variety of tested strategies, activities, and tools for creating a positive and dynamic learning environment while meeting the challenges of each school day. Packed with valuable tips, the book helps new teachers with everything from becoming effective team players and connecting with students to handling behavior problems and working within diverse classrooms.



Born to Read
by Judy Sierra

This book chronicles the successes of Sam—thanks to his early love of books and reading.



Master Teacher Tips... Motivating Students

When you trying to motivate students, remember that hype can help or hurt. Obviously, excitement can be beneficial. But if your excitement is extreme of turns only to hype, you may over-promise and affect your credibility. Your excitement can also make students suspicious. Remember, to motivate students, you need their trust and confidence—and hype has the potential to destroy both.

The words *why* and *learning* go together. Yet, there are times when asking a student “Why?” will not help you in the classroom. Never ask “Why?” when you really want to discover how a student can avoid a mistake the next time. For instance, asking why an assignment was late will probably get you an excuse. Therefore, ask, “*What* can you do the next time to get it in on time?” or “*How* can you study to do better on next week’s quiz?” *What* and *how* are motivating in these situations. *Why* is not.



Teacher FAQ

Question: Many parents view inexperienced teachers with a certain degree of wariness. How can a new teacher quickly gain parents' trust?

Answer: Parents' trust is gained through open, honest, and frequent communication. That communication needs to begin early in the school year with an introductory phone call or letter and continue throughout the year with every effort being made to keep parents informed of positive as well as negative happenings. That type of communication helps parents understand that the teacher is working in their children's best interest.

For a Laugh!

