

# 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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### Make Objectives “Clear” for Each Lesson

**FACT:** *If you know where you’re going, you’re much more likely to get there.*

“What did you learn in school today?” ask many parents when their children return home. “I don’t know,” answer far too many children. “Well, what did you do?” ask the parents. “Well, we had to write a lot and read some stories and read a chapter and answer the questions at the end of the chapter and fill out a lot of stupid worksheets!” Okay, so now we know what they did, but we still don’t know what they learned! Therefore, we must ask the question here, “Does a teacher who engages students in the aforementioned activities have clear objectives for each lesson—and does the teacher make those objectives known to the students?”

Imagine going on a vacation and having no destination. How would you know what to pack? Imagine a doctor performing surgery with an objective. “Oh well, I’ll just open him up and take a look around and see what’s what!” Or imagine being the patient, where you know you’ll be undergoing surgery, but you have no idea why! I know it seems ridiculous. But is it just as ridiculous for students to be unclear on exactly what it is they’re supposed to be accomplishing.

Simply stated, an objective defines what the students should know or be able to do at the end of each lesson. I’ve often watched teachers tell students to read a chapter and answer the questions at the end of the chapter when they are finished. The students reluctantly get busy, but they have no idea “why” they have to do this. In fact, it is a good rule to know that when

students ask, “Why do we have to do this?” it is like a red flag reminding you that you have obviously forgotten to make the objective clear for the lesson. It goes without saying that you, the teacher, must write clear, measurable objectives for every lesson you teach. But that is not enough. You must now make those objectives clear to your students. Make it a point, as you begin each lesson, to tell your students, “Guess what you will be able to at the end of this lesson,” and then tell them. That way, you will know where you are going, students will know that they are learning, and you will arrive home from your vacation safely with no unexplainable surgical scars!



#### HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

Journey North engages students in a global study of wildlife migration and seasonal change. K-12 students share their own field observations with classmates across North America.



#### Cutting Corners

##### ADOPT A HALLWAY:

To keep your school looking neat and clean, suggest an ‘Adopt a Hallway’ program. Classes volunteer to police the halls for litter and post signs reminding students to keep THEIR school clean. The volunteering classes will be recognized at the end of the year for their hard work.”

#### THE ABCD METHOD

The ABCD method of writing objectives is an excellent starting point for writing objectives. In this system, “A” is for audience, “B” is for behavior, “C” for conditions and “D” for degree of mastery needed.

**Audience – Who? Who are your learners?**

**Behavior – What? What do you expect them to be able to do? This should be an overt, observable behavior, even if the actual behavior is covert or mental in nature. If you can’t see it, hear it, touch it, taste it, or smell it, you can’t be sure your audience really learned it.**

**Condition – How? Under what circumstances or context will the learning occur? What will the student be given or already be expected to know to accomplish the learning?**

**Degree – How much? How much will be accomplished, how well will the behavior need to be performed, and to what level? Do you want total mastery (100%), do you want them to respond correctly 80% of the time, etc. A common (and totally non-scientific) setting is 80% of the time.**

## Campaign in the Classroom—Election 2008

There is never a more exciting time to be a history-social science teacher than during a presidential campaign. It brings government, economics, and history classes alive as students examine the issues, observe the line-up of backers for each candidate, and evaluate the influence of the media. The issues of today are rooted in the events of history. The costs and benefits of various policy options and the economic interests of groups within the society make discussion of economics more important to

students.

The electoral process itself, issues of government power and the varied perspectives on the nature of the “common good” are open to analysis by students as they examine the party maneuverings, the primaries, and the campaign process.

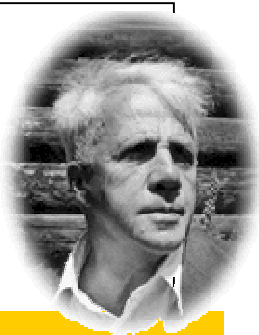
C-SPAN has developed a website to bring these issues to the classroom in a timely, and easily accessible manner. No more late night video taping for teachers, the film clips and discussion

questions are here. Find all you need at the C-SPAN Classroom Election Cycle site:

Educators are invited to enroll in free membership service for ideas, information and resources for teaching U.S. government and civics with C-SPAN's television programming and web sites.

<http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Registration.aspx>  
through FAQ's

<http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/FAQ.aspx>



“Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.”

—Robert Frost

## Develop pride in old school

Educational opportunity is not determined by the structure which houses a school.

Granted, a shiny, modern building which is designed for the specific curriculum of a school is ideal. But an understanding, creative approach can overcome some of the deficits of an again or old school building.

Here are some activities for developing pride in an old school facility:

- Develop a history of the school.
- Present an assembly to the student body emphasizing a significant aspect of the structure and heritage it represents.

- Redecorate a room in the building and publicize it.
- Let students plan and paint murals on the hall walls.
- Display old papers, awards, etc. from the past.



- Plan and finance a project to leave something behind to add to the history of the building.

- Work with parents on needed improvements such as outdoor athletic areas and commons areas.
- Sponsor an alumni open house. Encourage all age groups to take part.
  - Encourage alumni to hold their reunions in the building.
  - Get involved with community projects to develop positive community attitudes.
  - Maintain a display case exhibiting student work and awards.
  - Encourage the school newspaper and yearbook staffs to provide a history of the building in their publications.

## New Teacher Support Participants:



**Cynthia Emens**  
Rutland Elementary  
2nd grade

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*"I became a teacher to be with children. My own, as well as others. I thoroughly enjoy the experience of witnessing the developing minds of children. Nothing compares to the look on a child's face when they realize they understand what you are teaching."*—Cynthia Emens



**Dana Harrison**  
Mt. Juliet High School  
Health Science

### WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

*"My desire to become a teacher is the love for children. Being a mentor to each and every child, I hope to bring new life to my class. I also want to let them know they are truly unique and that I CARE about each and everyone of my students. I want them to know they can have a good future and be inspired."*—Dana Harrison`



## Teaching Behaviors

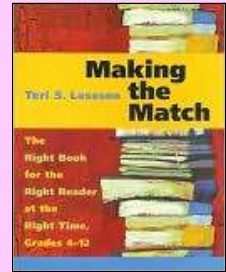
Although effective teacher behaviors vary with context, several studies have identified teaching behaviors which are common across grade levels:

**EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SCORE HIGH ON THESE BEHAVIORS:** 1) accepting 2) adult involvement 3) attending 4) consistency of message 5) conviviality 6) cooperation 7) student engagement 8) knowledge of subject 9) monitoring learning 10) optimism 11) pacing 12) promoting self sufficiency 13) spontaneity 14) structuring

**EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SCORE LOW ON THESE BEHAVIORS:** 1) abruptness 2) belittling 3) student defiance 4) billing time 5) illogical statements 6) oneness (treats whole group as "one") 7) recognition-seeking

Source: *Good Teachers, What to Look For*

## From the Bookshelf:



**Making the Match : The Right Book for the Right Reader at the Right Time, Grades 4-12**  
by **Teri S. Lesesne**

Sam Houston State University Library Science Professor Teri Lesesne is a legend in her professional universe. She has a magic -- a knowing -- when it comes to literature for teens. That magic makes her latest book, MAKING THE MATCH: THE RIGHT BOOK FOR THE RIGHT READER AT THE RIGHT TIME an essential for any professional educator serious about making literacy a priority on and off the job. It is a resource well worth the fiscal investment, but more to the point, it's a work well worth your time. Years of practical experience and interaction with other experts shine with each passage. And as is always the case, Lesesne is a pleasure to read thanks to her warm but professional tone.



**The Homework Machine**  
by **Dan Gutman**

5th grade students ban together and refuse to do their homework. Age range 8-12.



## Master Teacher Tips... Student Relationships

Whining is a heavy-duty irritation. It can be grating. It can't be ignored. And, unfortunately, it often works because students learn to say the same thing over and over again until they wear adults down. Remember, you cannot give in. If you do, you reinforce the behavior. You prove to young people they have a super technique to get what they want. Never forget, it is not enough to tell whiners what not to do. You have to tell them what to do.

If you want students to have a good relationship with each other and you, be careful about doing anything which might make students think you are "very hard" on some classmates or that you have "pets" or favorite students. Remember, jealousy thrives when students feel insecure and deprived. When such is the case, good student-student relationships and good student-teacher relationships are almost impossible.



### Teacher FAQ

**Q: You advise new teachers to be careful about taking the advice of veteran teachers? Why should they be wary of such advice? Whose advice *should* a new teacher take?**

**A: When a veteran teacher offers a new teacher advice about how to teach a lesson or discipline a class, she is speaking as a teacher who already has developed her own teaching style. Those techniques might work well for her, but they may prove to be a disaster for the new teacher. A new teacher should seek advice from veteran teachers who are respected by administrators and fellow teachers, and then adapt that advice to fit his own personality, teaching style, and classroom dynamics.**

### For a Laugh!



**High school — where you meet the people you'll be avoiding all your life.**