



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2009-2010

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Teacher Tip of the Week
New Teacher Support
Program
Wilson County Schools
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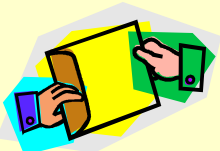
Help for the “time-challenged” teacher

HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



Making Up Work When Absent

Prepare make-up packets for students who are absent. First label several large envelopes as make-up work. Then organize and label a file for each period or subject you teach. Later, when you pass out work to a class, create enough packets with the extra papers for each absent student to receive one. Include a list of any other assignments the student needs to do. Place the make-up work envelopes in the file for the appropriate period.



Teaching takes time. And in school, as elsewhere, there's never enough of it. Like any executive responsible for the efforts of others, you will find that managing time — yours and the students' — is one of your biggest challenges.

The following is a list of suggestions that might help you have a more successful year:

1. **“Take a time out.”** Sometimes it is so easy to get caught up in our classroom that we forget about real life. We need to make sure we have an outlet for our creativity outside the classroom or we will get burned out.

2. **“Find your essentials.”** Find out what is really working in your class. Make a list of 4-5 positive things and make sure you focus on them each day.

3. **“Find your time-wasters.”** Ask yourself if you are wasting too much time giving negative attention to students who don't deserve the attention. Are you spending too much time gossiping or encouraging negative attitudes when you get with other teachers? Do you spend too much time complaining about things you can not change?

4. **“Schedule the time.”** It has really helped me if I make a list of all the things that I have to get done that day. Then once I can visualize the tasks, I am able to prioritize them and then mark them off when they are done. Not only do I get more things done this way but I also feel better about myself.

5. **“Consolidate.”** Sometimes you can see things on your list and notice that someone may have already done something like this already. If so, check with them and ask if you could look at what they have done and adapt it to your needs. Why reinvent the wheel? Sometimes I tell other teachers about a topic or idea I want to introduce in my classroom and usually they are willing to offer suggestions, help, or even some of their own work they have done.

6. **“Cut out meetings.”** Use email as much as possible. Make a wiki for exchanging ideas. This can be done with colleagues or parents. I contact parents very often so they don't feel a need to have a face to face meeting which is harder for me to schedule.

7. **“Declutter your schedule.”** If there are things you are doing that are not essential to what needs to be done, stop doing it. Many times I would make too many unnecessary trips to the library and office instead of consolidating all my errands. This freed up 30 minutes of my time.

8. **“Re-think your routine.”**

Think about when you do things and why you do it. Is this the best time to do them? I used to check my email at the end of the day and found out that it really overwhelmed me. If I checked it at lunch time and at

the end of the day, I usually didn't have so many emails to respond to all at once.

9. **“Cut back on email.”** I learned to make folders in my email and then make a rule to send emails to different folders. Then I could concentrate on only the important ones first and when I had time, I could check and respond to the others. This rule also sent junk mail to one folder and I didn't even have to waste time sorting through them.

10. **“Learn to say no.”** Learn to say no. Sometimes we want to impress others or feel like we can't say no to our friends. Practice different statements so that you can feel comfortable saying them face to face. Statements that worked for me are: “I would love to help but I'm overextended right now. Maybe next time.” Or “I have already committed myself to some other projects and I wouldn't be able to give this my best. I don't want to let you down so maybe next time.” Or “I've already committed to spending my free time with my family and I keep my promises to them so I won't be able to help you this time. It is really hard to tell your administrator these things but



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Help for the “time-challenged” teacher (cont.)

many administrators will respect you more if you stand up for your priorities.

11. **“Keep your list to three.”** I have started to make myself write down three goals each day. These are the most important things I want to accomplish this day. By writing them down, I find it easier to keep them in focus and usually accomplish them if at all possible. I would try to find one for each category: what I want my students to do in school today, what I want to do with my teaching today, and what I want to do for myself today.

12. **“Do your Biggest Rock first.”** If at all possible, pick the task of your “To do” list that you hate the most and get it out of the way. Once you do that, the rest of tasks should be a downhill prospect and be easier to get done. Again, I use my colleagues as a sounding board if necessary so they can support and encourage me if possible. Once I verbalize the task, I feel even more obligated to get it done.

13. **“Delegate.”** If at all possible, let your students help you. They love to help the teacher, no matter what age they are. Teens feel trusted and worthy if the teacher asks them for help.

14. **“Cut out distractions.”** Many times I have been deep into work when another teacher has stopped to chat and never want to leave. Even though I want to be a good colleague, I know I have to get this work done and then I begin to feel anxious. I have learned to listen for a few minutes (it won't hurt to take a few minutes break and it is worth it to keep a good relationship

with a colleague) but then explain that you would love to hear more, but can you do it at another time because you have a lot of work to do. They may feel a little embarrassed but it is better than feeling resentful and not getting any work done. I have also learned to lock my door and put a note on the door



that you are working on a serious project, please disturb only if absolutely necessary. I don't use this often so when I do, everyone respects it and lets me get my work done.

15. **“Disconnect.”** Sometimes you have to physically move yourself away from things that distract you. I have taken my work to a corner of the library where no one expects me to be and I get my work done. I have turned off the overhead lights and moved to a corner of the classroom away from the window on the door so no one can see me.

16. **“Make use of your mornings.”** Mornings are the best time to plan. Just like going to the doctor's office, he is usually on schedule early in the day but as things get off schedule, by the end of the day, he is very backed up. Try to plan and prioritize early in the day so that when things get backed up, you won't feel so anx-

ious.

17. **“The Golden Right after-work Time.”** Take time after the school day is over to regroup. A good way to do that is to keep a blog and write your reflections in it while things are still fresh in your mind. Blog about your concerns or your successes during this time.

18. **“Your evenings.”** Spend evenings doing things for yourself and don't let your teaching consume your life. This is a good way to get burned out quickly. There is more to life than teaching and after you retire from teaching (yes, it will happen), you will need something in your life to turn to.

19. **“Lunch breaks.”** Do not work consistently through lunch time. I have a friend who never stops for lunch and uses this time to do class stuff. I think if she used her time more wisely, she would have time for lunch. Not only does your body need nutrition, but your brain needs a break too!—Pat Hensley, *Successful Teaching*

TWO YOUTUBE VIDEOS ON TEACHER TIME MANAGEMENT

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REPtrGtvqxy>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kREB1w9OGso>



“An excellent teacher should be judged by whether or not that teacher outside of the classroom improves themselves and their teaching skills.”

—Vice-President Joe Biden

FACTS ABOUT TEACHING

Today's teachers spend an average of 50 hours per week on all teaching duties, including non-compensated school-related activities such as grading papers, bus duty and club advising.

Today's teachers teach an average of 21 pupils (elementary). Secondary school teachers have an average class size of 28 pupils.

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Rachel Walton

W. A. Wright Elementary

First grade

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I have always enjoyed being around children. From a very young age my mother worked at an elementary school, so I was able to see some of the "behind the scenes" things that went on over the summer. Teaching always looked like a lot of fun! As I finished my senior year of high school I really began to think about what I wanted to be. It was a very easy choice! I love children. I love to learn. I love helping others. There couldn't be a better job out there! As I began my fifth year of college I really started thinking that I made a bad choice, but I was almost finished so I just pushed on through.

Then, I was ready to student teach. The most terrifying thing in my life! As it turns out, I LOVED IT! Working with those children on a day to day basis and seeing their progress was the most enjoyable experience I could have imagined! Why I became a teacher doesn't seem nearly as important as what made me decide to stick with it. Also, and I'm sure every teacher, summers off are a very attractive benefit!

Having a lot of GREAT teachers growing up was a huge influence on me. A special thanks to those teachers for helping build my future."—Rachel Walton



OFF THE BOOKSHELF



Spaces & Places: Designing Classrooms for Literacy by Debbie Diller

From Debbie Diller, author of numerous best-selling books and videos on literacy work stations and small group reading instruction, comes another practical resource filled with ideas you can use immediately to better manage your classroom and support student learning and independence.

In *Spaces & Places* you'll find a wealth of full-color photos from all sorts of classroom spaces in PreK-5th grade, including well-organized areas for whole group and small group reading instruction, classroom libraries, literacy work stations, teacher desks, and storage areas. You'll love the "before and after" pictures and the step-by-step processes outlined for organizing your furniture and cabinets, setting up your room space by space, and using your walls thoughtfully. Debbie has even documented how to pack your room at the end of the year to save time next fall (so you can focus on thinking about instruction) and what to do if you must move all your belongings.

Charts, reproducible forms, motivating quotes, a list of shopping sources, and reflection questions are included, along with a section outlining ten specific suggestions for ongoing staff development. Whether or not you implement literacy work stations in your classroom, *Spaces & Places* includes everything you need to look deeply at classroom space and how it supports instruction.



TEACHER WEBSITE OF THE WEEK:

<http://mathforum.org/>

The Math Forum

Got a math problem? Well come visit the Math Forum and tell your troubles to Dr. Math. In addition to getting help with their homework, students will find lots of challenges in mathematics and ideas for math activities relating math to other subjects. Teachers will also find ideas and lesson plans to make math more interesting and lively.



Strategies for New Teachers . . .

SETTING THE TONE

Creating a classroom environment that is safe, respectful and conducive to learning is paramount. Learning cannot happen in a classroom where chaos reigns and disruption is the norm. Your plan should include:

- ◆ Clearly communicating your expectations
- ◆ Teaching students fundamental classroom rules
- ◆ Enforcing rules consistently and respectfully

CLASSROOM RULES

Inform students of your expectations in regard to classroom behaviors and procedures. Rules should be explicit, positive in tone and taught ahead of time. For example:

- ◆ Raise your hand and wait to be called on.
- ◆ One person talks at a time.
- ◆ Respect others and their property.

Use time during the first days of school to introduce, explain, model, and practice classroom rules. Focus on only a few rules at a time to teach and reinforce in this way.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NATIONAL INVENTORS MONTH

GOLF MONTH

ELVIS WEEK August 8-16

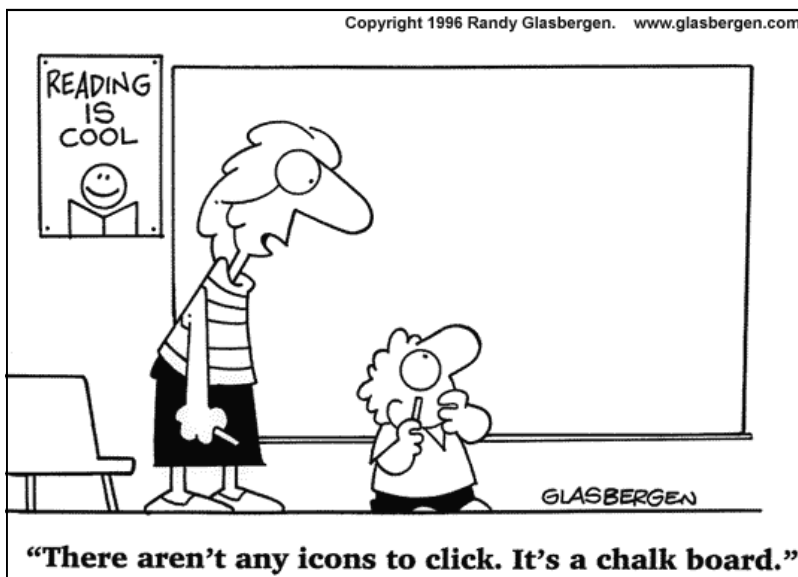
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY
August 12

KOOL AID DAYS
August 14-16

BEST FRIENDS DAY
August 15

NATIONAL RELAXATION DAY August 15

CUPCAKE DAY August 18



Back to school



Mother: How do you like your new teacher?

Son: I don't. She told me to sit up front for the present and then she didn't give me one!