

Jump Start for Success

Washoe County School District
Department of Professional Learning
789-3475

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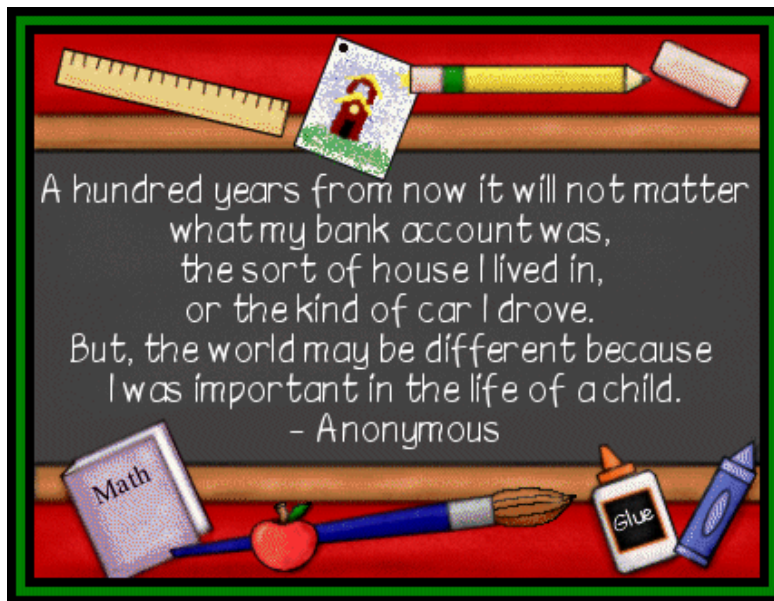
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Getting Started



The Effective Teacher

Harry Wong, Ed.D

The art of teaching is
the art of assisting discovery.

You can teach a lesson for a day
but if you teach curiosity, you teach for a lifetime.

It's too bad that the people who really know how to run the country
are busy teaching school.

When truth stands in your way,
you are headed in the wrong direction.

When teaching the love of truth,
never lose the truth of love.

Teacher's task: take a lot of live wires
and see that they are well-grounded.

Nothing improves a child's hearing
more than praise.

The mediocre teacher tells,
the good one explains,
the superior one shows,
the great one inspires.

Be Prepared

Things To Do Before The First Day Of School

ROOM ENVIRONMENT

- _____ Prepare or purchase bulletin board materials
- _____ Make decisions of where to post materials
- _____ Make classroom "Welcome" sign
- _____ Setup learning centers, display tables, and student work areas
- _____ _____
- _____ _____

SUPPLIES

- _____ Purchase or obtain class supplies from the school office:
 - _____ Writing paper
 - _____ Drawing paper
 - _____ Construction paper
 - _____ Duplicating masters
 - _____ Duplicating paper
 - _____ Pencils / pens
 - _____ Crayons
 - _____ Paste / glue
 - _____ Stapler and staples
 - _____ Paper clips
 - _____ Rubber bands
 - _____ Straight pins
 - _____ Transparent tape
 - _____ Manila folders
 - _____ Marking pens
 - _____ Rulers
 - _____ Art supplies
 - _____ Grade book
 - _____ Lesson plan book
 - _____ Seating chart
 - _____ Attendance materials
 - _____ Textbooks / workbooks
 - _____ _____
 - _____ _____
 - _____ _____

STUDENT PREPARATIONS

- _____ Make student name tags
- _____ Prepare materials for student take-home the first day
 - _____ Emergency cards
 - _____ School rules
 - _____ Classroom rules
 - _____ Bus regulations
 - _____ Letter to parents
 - _____ Classroom schedule
- _____ Prepare class list
- _____ Prepare seating chart
- _____ Check records for students with special needs
- _____ Select reading groups

GETTING ORGANIZED

- _____ Post class discipline rules
- _____ Arrange student desks
- _____ Pin up bulletin boards
- _____ Write lesson plans for the first week
- _____ Duplicate material needed for the first week
- _____ Write daily schedule and your name on the board
- _____ Prepare files for:
 - _____ Correspondence – parents
 - _____ School bulletins
 - _____ Substitute teacher
- _____ _____
- _____ _____
- _____ _____

The First Day of School

Douglas M. Brooks

Classroom teachers have always been concerned with the important first weeks of school. We investigated the *first day* of school at the junior high level by videotaping and comparing first-year “brand new” teachers with veteran “superstar” teachers during their first, second, tenth, and 28th days of school. The resulting videotapes, teacher interviews, and student interviews have left us with a profile of successful junior high school teachers and one dramatic conclusion: A successful first day of school can literally set the stage for a successful school year.

Here is what we discovered about students’ needs, and how the superstars go about meeting them.

Student Needs

Adolescent students come to school with specific first-day needs. They want to know, in sequence:

1. Are they in the right room?
2. Where are they supposed to sit?
3. What are the rules of this teacher?
4. What will they be doing in the course?
5. How will they be evaluated?
6. Who is the teacher as a person?
7. Is the teacher going to be interested in them as individuals?

High-ability students are more interested in the grading practices of the teacher, while low-ability students want to know about the teacher’s personality and how the teacher will treat them.

Superstar Activities

Superstar teachers have a simple formula for effectively beginning the school year. This formula includes their selection of activities, the sequence of these activities, and their behavior within the activities they select. Specifically, they (1) select activities that let them meet student needs, as well as their own; (2) sequence the activities to meet first needs first; and (3) adjust their verbal and nonverbal behaviors within each activity, consistent with the message they are trying to communicate.

We recommend the following selection and sequence of first-day teacher activities:

1. Call the class to order when the bell rings.
2. Take roll, organize seating, and establish a seating chart at the same time.
3. Explain classroom rules and procedures.
4. Introduce the course content and grading procedures.
5. Solicit student information on 3 x 5 cards.
6. Talk about yourself, your school experiences, and so forth.
7. Close with a preview of what materials will be needed the next day and what the content will cover.
8. Dismiss the class at the bell.

Most important is the explanation of rules and procedures. If the rules are not reviewed or are confusing, ambiguous, or irrelevant, the consequences can be serious. Five categories of rules are important:

1. *Entry* – Be in your seat when the bell rings.
2. *Interactive* – Raise your hand to talk with the teacher.
3. *Attention* – Don’t talk while the teacher is talking.
4. *Exit* – The teacher, not the bell, dismisses you.
5. *Classroom* – Specific rules for sharpening pencils, bathroom, equipment, gum, and so forth.

The method of presenting rules to the class is also important. Explain them using a particular sequence:

1. State the rule (to communicate that it is important enough to talk about).
2. Provide a student-centered rationale for the rule (to communicate that the rule is for them as well as you).
3. Explain the consequences of breaking the rule (to communicate student accountability).
4. Give a good example of what the infraction looks like (to demonstrate that you know what you are talking about).

The superstar teachers in our studies shared common practices. They began classes in a businesslike manner. They checked roll and established seating charts at the same time (overlapping). They minimized the frequency and length of transitions between activities (lag time). They were deliberate and no-nonsense in their explanations of rules and procedures, but smiled when talking about course content and projects. The old adage “Don’t smile ‘til Christmas” could probably be modified to “Don’t smile during rule and procedures.”

The superstar teachers maintained eye contact with the entire class (scanning). They didn’t play name games to acquaint students with one another. Instead, they simply began calling out students’ names from the seating chart for questions and answers. The students learned each other’s names by listening. We didn’t observe any public disclosures from students in these teachers’ classrooms (such as “What I did on my summer vacation”).

Not-So-Superstar Activities

The less successful teachers in our studies also shared common practices. They were slow to begin their classes with any call to order. There was no “overlapping,” thus everything took longer and less was accomplished. The number of transitions was much higher and they lasted longer, thus providing more opportunities for student disruption. These teachers were less clear and persuasive when presenting rules. They used fewer rationales for the rules and spent more time just listing them. Their choices of activities were often questionable. One math teacher had her 8th graders spend 15 minutes drawing self-portraits! These teachers tended to play name games, quickly resulting in student misbehavior. This preoccupation with individual students dramatically reduced the amount of time these teachers spent scanning the entire class. One teacher smiled only when she explained the consequences for misbehavior, and at no other time during the session! These teachers struggled with their classes the entire year.

In summary, good school years begin with well-planned and executed first days that permit the teacher to establish a cooperative learning environment and permit the students to find out what is expected in the classroom. Effective first-day procedures meet teacher and student needs and increase the likelihood of an effective second day.

New teachers often don’t know when *some* student noise is *too much* student noise because they haven’t experienced the consequence, in May, of *some* noise in September.

– Douglas M. Brooks

Douglas M. Brooks is Associate Professor of Education, Center for Professional Teacher Education, at The University of Texas at Arlington. This article appeared in Educational Leadership in May 1985.

The Seven Things Students Want to Know on the First Day of School

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Those Very Important "3's"

First 3 Minutes of the School Day

The teacher is "very much in charge." Time is spent greeting children, establishing order, and starting pupils on assigned learning tasks. Traditional "opening activities" are delayed.

First 30 Minutes of the School Day

A no-nonsense, get-down-to-work approach to learning may be observed. A "slice of the day's work" will be accomplished. The usual opening activities follow the first half hour.

First 3 Days of the School Year

Class routine has been established. Pupils know what is expected and go about doing it. Learning is taking place in an orderly and productive manner. The die has been cast.

First 3 Weeks of the School Year

- a) A "get-acquainted-early report" in the form of a brief note and/or phone call will be made to the parents of all pupils.
- b) Severe learning and behavioral problems have begun to surface. Intervention plans are made and implemented. Parents are notified of the problems.

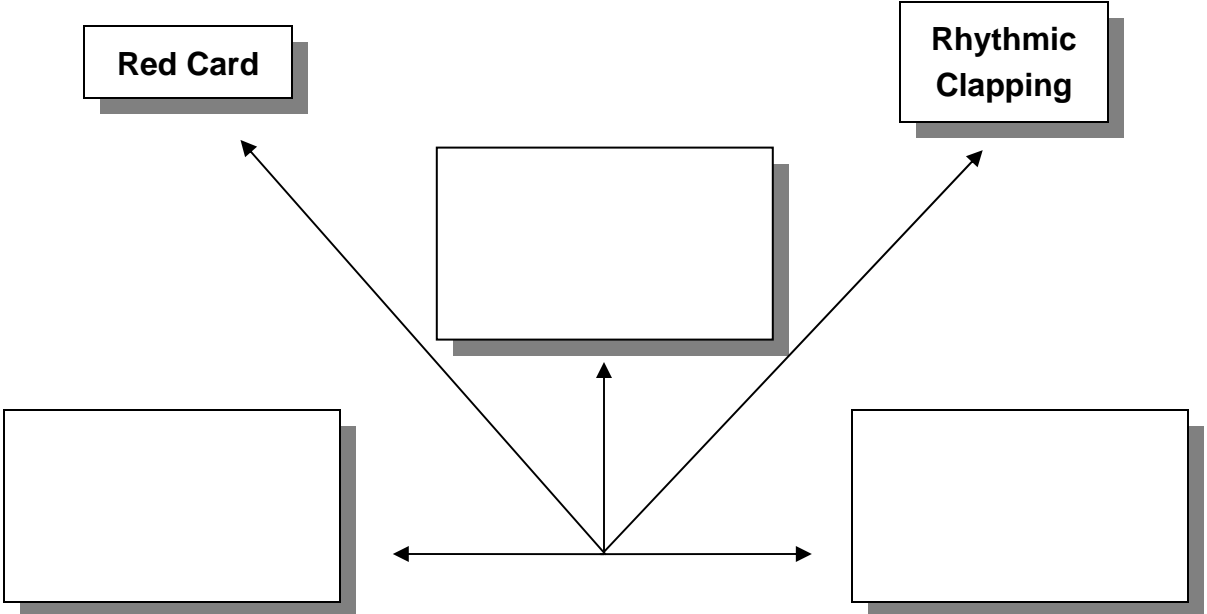
First 3 Months of the School Year

Critical learning, behavior, and/or health problems have been identified. A call for help is made to the immediate supervisor, nurse, psychologist, and other specialists in a position to assist. A remedial course of action will be determined and shared with parents for approval.

The First Day of School

1. Be prepared with everything in its place. This includes textbooks, desks, materials, lesson plans, nametags, etc.
2. Stand in the doorway as students enter. This sends a message that you are in control and prepared.
3. Have instructions (sponge) on the overhead projector. Keep students busy while you are taking roll, etc.
4. When the bell rings, begin class immediately. Call roll, take book numbers, memorize names, and organize seating at the same time.
5. Explain the rules/consequences – giving a student-centered rationale for each one and an example of what an infraction looks like. Give students a copy. Walk up and down the aisles. Use direct eye contact. Stop in the back of the room. Use short sentences.
6. Explain the content of the course and grading procedures. Give students a copy. Now is the time to be enthusiastic and smile!
7. Have students begin taking notes on the procedures. Explain the rationale for procedures.
8. Give a short homework assignment – be sure they can do it successfully without any trouble. This sends a message that students will “work” in your class.
9. Close with a preview of the next day. Praise them for their attention and good behavior.
10. When the bell rings, dismiss by clean, straight, quiet rows, one at a time. Stand at the door as students leave. Smile!

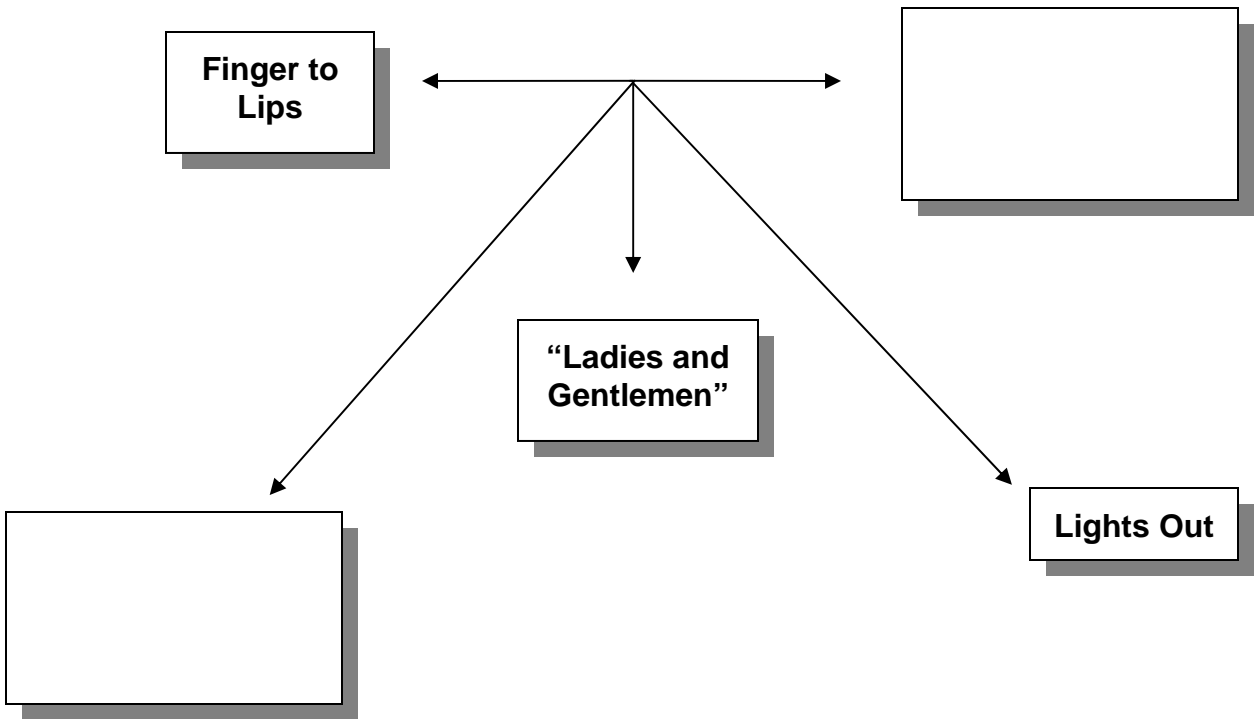




Gimme Five

Hand Up

Quiet Signals



Rules for Rules

Experts say there are a few guidelines to follow when setting rules in your classroom:

- Rules should be positively stated.
- Rules should contain simple language.
- Your list should have no more than five rules.
- The rules need to be posted prominently in the room.
- You should review your rules often with your students.



What will your classroom rules be? List below the rules for your classroom:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Procedure Potpourri

Planning procedures and evaluating the effectiveness of those procedures for conducting the business of the classroom is crucial in creating a productive learning environment. Read through the regularly occurring events listed below. Describe the procedures currently in place in your classroom and rate their effectiveness. In rating, consider the time and energy each is costing you and the students as well as the results achieved. If the record keeping or the “nag factor” is too time and energy consuming, then either the procedure or the process for implementing the procedure needs to be adjusted. Identify which procedures need rethinking and/or reteaching in order to maximize their effectiveness.

Entering the classroom

Beginning the school day or the class period

Taking attendance

Returning from absences

Dealing with tardies

Procedure Potpourri *(continued...)*

Distributing materials

Collecting materials

Dealing with broken or missing supplies, restroom visits, drinks, etc.

Asking for and receiving help

Making transitions

What to do when work is finished

Leaving the classroom

Procedure Potpourri...Add Your Own Ideas!

Procedure for . . .

Procedure for . . .

Procedure for . . .

Potential Problem Times . . .

Careful thought and attention to detail in advance is essential for these moments. It is best to have "Plan B" ready to roll on a moment's notice, because even those procedures which have been working well up until this time may fall apart here! Do not be surprised and do not take it personally!

- The day(s) before a big holiday or school break
- The day of or the day after Halloween
- The day report cards and/or progress reports are distributed
- The first few minutes after a long weekend or holiday
- Friday afternoons before a three-day weekend
- The last week of school (especially if the swimming pools are open and/or it's hot)
- Immediately before or after a pep rally or assembly
- Right after a fire drill
- The last few minutes before lunch and the first few minutes after lunch
- The first substitute of the year
- Power outages
- First snow of the year (especially in Florida)

Effective Role Taking in an Effective Class

The effective teacher starts the class immediately with an assignment, not roll taking. The effective teacher not only starts the class, but has trained the class to start working on its own.



Students That Have Been Effectively Taught Know . . .

- ✓ How to enter the room quickly and courteously.
- ✓ How to go to their seats and take out their materials.
- ✓ Where to look for their assignment.
- ✓ To begin their work immediately.

There are many ways to take roll; however, your first priority is to get the students on task.

- ✓ As soon as the tardy bell rings, your first task is to scan the room, not to take roll but to look for students who are not at work.
- ✓ You quietly signal these students to get to work immediately. Use a firm smile and a hand gesture that clearly indicates that you want them to work.
- ✓ They know where the assignment is located, and they know what to do. You are maximizing academic learning time.
- ✓ As soon as the class is at work, proceed to do whatever administrative chores are necessary. Taking roll is usually one of these.

The Student Who is Absent

I have a procedure for roll taking and for students who are absent. I have three students trained to take the roll on a rotating basis. They do this while the students are completing their opening assignment.

If a student is absent, they complete a form that says, "Makeup work for Mr. Hockenberry," clip it to the work for the day that has already been prepared, and place it in an envelope along one of the walls marked with the appropriate period.

A returning absent student does not come to see me. The procedure is that when absent students return, they obtain their work from the envelope and ask one of the three students if something is not understood before coming to me for help. They seldom do, and class proceeds quickly with the lesson for the day.

Ed Hockenberry
Midlothian Middle School, Virginia

Three Ways to Take Roll Efficiently and Effectively

1. Look at your class and refer to your seating chart. Mark whoever is absent.
2. Have folders or something personal in a box at the door. When the students come in, they are to take their folders, go to their seats, and get to work on the posted assignment. After the students are at work, you look in the box. You see three folders left, note the names, and mark these students absent.
3. Have each student's name on a clothespin. Clip these pins to a cutout, such as an animal or a seasonal object like a jack-o-lantern or heart. When the students come in, they move their clothespin to a cutout indicating they are in attendance. After the students are at work, you note which pins have not been moved and mark these students absent. Assign a student the task of transferring the clothespins to the original cutout at an appropriate time.

There are many other ways to take roll. **Regardless of which method you use to take roll, you are to take roll quickly and quietly without disturbing the class.** There is no need to involve the class in the roll-taking process.

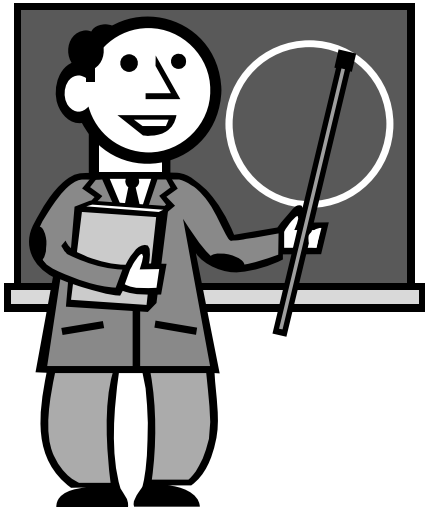
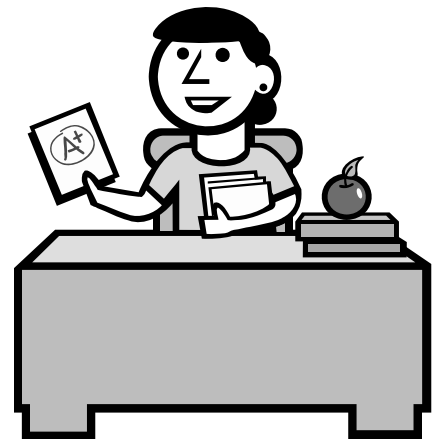
You Are Treated As You Are Dressed

You do not get a second chance at a first impression.

Make no mistake, we judge others by their dress, and they judge us too. It may not be fair. It may not be right. But people tend to treat other people as they are dressed.

It's common sense. You will be treated as you are dressed. A salesperson sees two shoppers approaching, one appropriately dressed and the other inappropriately dressed. You know very well who will get immediate and better service.

How much credibility would a bank have if the teller who processes your paycheck was dressed in jeans and wore a T-shirt with a hole in it? Would you buy life insurance from a salesperson who called on the family wearing a bowling jacket with the inscription "Ma's Donuts" on the back?



In an ideal world, viewed through rose-colored glasses, it would be wonderful to be accepted for ourselves alone, not for our appearance. In the real world, however, our all-too-visible selves are under constant scrutiny.

One of the reasons we have schools is for students to learn what is appropriate. Young people learn what is appropriate in society by looking at their adult role models. Your dress and your behavior are what young people will take to be appropriate.

By the end of the first or second week, the entire class will have taken signals from you as to how they should behave for the rest of the school year.

Things to Know at a New School

Ask the Office:

- Where do I get my classroom keys?
- What are the procedures for working after-hours and on weekends and holidays? Do I need to call Security?
- Who are the other teachers in my grade level? Who is the Grade Level Chairperson?
- When, where, and how do I get classroom supplies? How much can I “spend”?
- Whom do I contact for assistance with furniture, maintenance, etc.?
- Where do I get audio-visual equipment? Who can show me how to order films and use the TV?
- Is a class list available? Where can I locate my students’ phone numbers and addresses?
- What are my school hours? What is the bell schedule? Do students go to library, P.E., music, and art? If so, when will they go?
- How do I do attendance and lunch count? When do they have to be done each day?
- When and where do faculty meetings take place?
- What deadlines am I expected to meet (ordering, Class Schedule, Long Range Plans, etc.)?
- Which telephone may I use? When and for what is it appropriate to use the phone at school? How do I make long distance calls or calls requiring more than 7 numbers?

Ask Grade Level Chairperson or Other Teacher:

- Where can I get curriculum guides, literature sets, textbooks, math manipulatives, lesson plan book?
- Are there extra resources available for me to use in my classroom (maps, globes, encyclopedias, magazines, professional publications, Scholastic News, Weekly Reader, etc.)?
- How should I take grades? Do we use portfolios or a traditional grading system? Where can I get a grade book and a copy of our report card?
- Whom do I see about scheduling students for speech, resource room, Title I, gifted education, reading improvement, second language, etc.?
- What whole school activities do we participate in?

Ask the Principal:

- What are the school goals and mission?
- What are the school guidelines for discipline? If I have an emergency or chronic discipline situation, what procedure should I follow?
- How and when will I be evaluated? What do you expect to see when you visit my classroom?
- How do you want my lesson plans to look? How often will I need to turn in my lesson plans to you?
- What format would you prefer to have me use for my Long Range Plans? Is an example available?
- Do you want me to submit parent letters that I am sending home for your approval?
- What are the school guidelines for homework at my grade level?
- What non-instructional duties am I expected to perform (before school, during lunch, recess, after school)?
- Who would be a good teacher for me to talk to about school policies, planning, and quality instructional practices?
- What are the school procedures for starting the school day (pledge, 30 seconds of silence, whole school announcements, etc.)?

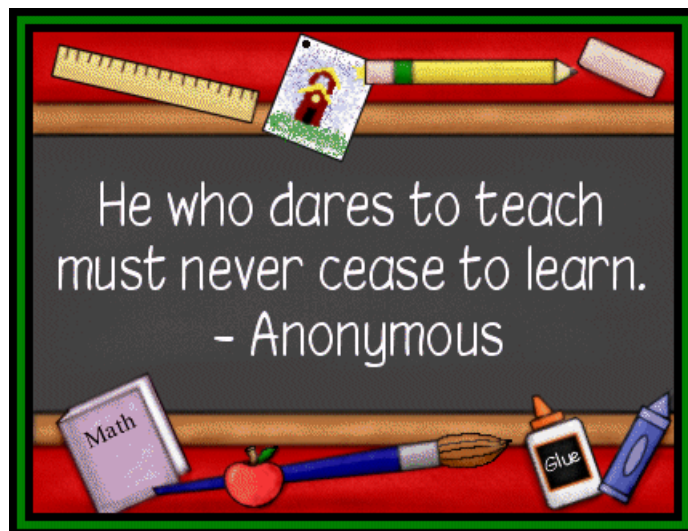
Look in Your School/District Handbook:

- What is the district calendar for this year (workdays, holidays, report cards, testing, etc.)?
- What procedures do I follow when I am absent? Whom do I call? How? When?
- What are the procedures for scheduling field trips?
- When and under what conditions may I take a break?
- What are the guidelines for celebrating birthdays and holidays? Are students allowed to bring treats?
- What is the school policy on recess?
- What are the procedures for emergencies (fire drill, earthquake, toxic spill, missing child, universal precautions, etc.)?

Ask Your Custodian:

- How should the students stack chairs/clean?

Classroom Space and Facilities



Classroom Space and Facilities

Following is a list of areas for which you may need to establish procedures. Included in this list are questions to ask yourself about each area and some procedures used by effective teachers. This list is not exhaustive, nor are all suggestions appropriate for all grades.

Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

STUDENT DESKS/TABLES AND STUDENT STORAGE SPACE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. What standards do you want to establish about student upkeep of desks and storage areas? | Some teachers set aside a particular period of time each week for students to clean out their desks; others suggest this be done every day. |
| 2. If students must use tote trays for materials, what rules do you need to establish concerning when and how these areas are to be used? | It is probably a good idea to limit the number of times a student can go to his/her tote tray, and the number of students allowed at the trays at any time. |
| 3. What rules do you wish to have regarding placement and usage of desk chairs? | You may want to demonstrate how to use and store chairs under desks, as well as how to sit correctly in chairs. |

LEARNING CENTERS/STATIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. How many students are you limiting to each area? | Some centers may be appropriate for several students while others will accommodate only one or two students. |
| 2. What student responsibilities will you require for the proper care of materials/activities in each area? | In some cases, a student may be able to handle his own material quite easily. In a center with more than one student, it may be helpful to have a rotating monitor to be in charge of materials and equipment. |
| 3. What standards of behavior will you set for each area? | Some teachers allow some quiet talking if it does not bother the rest of the students (as when a game is being played). |
| 4. What conditions do you want to place on student use of centers (e.g., when all work is finished; with other students in the same reading group, etc.)? | You may wish to make some centers contingent upon turning in completed work (a reward). |

SHARED MATERIALS, BOOKSHELVES, DRAWERS, AND CABINETS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. What responsibilities do you want students to have in taking care of these items and keeping them in their proper places? | Most teachers label and point out to students materials and storage spaces which are available for them to use. Some teachers appoint a helper to make sure materials are returned to their proper places after being used. |
| 2. What rules do you need to establish concerning when and how these areas are to be used? | You may wish to tell students that certain materials may be used anytime, while others may be used only when you give permission. |

Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

TEACHER'S DESK AND STORAGE AREAS

1. What conditions do you want to establish about students' use and contacts with your desk and storage areas?

Some teachers tell students that they will not bother the students' desks and the students should not bother the teacher's desk, except when specific permission is given.

DRINKING FOUNTAIN, SINK, PENCIL SHARPENER, AND BATHROOMS (IF IN ROOM)

1. How many students do you wish to limit to these areas at any given time?
2. What rules do you need to establish concerning when and how these areas are to be used?

Most teachers prefer not to have lines waiting at any of these locations except in rare instances, since trouble may arise and time is wasted.

Some teachers allow students to use these facilities at any time except when they are teaching a lesson.

Rules for the bathroom, especially, will need to be clearly specified. A system should be established to let a student know if the bathroom is occupied (e.g., a sign on the door with a green light and a red light; a system for knocking quietly but firmly two times, etc.).

3. What cleanliness standards do you wish to set for each area?

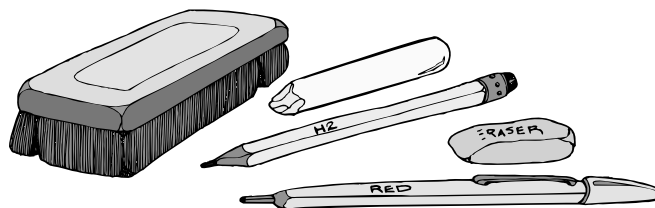
If cleanliness becomes a problem, you may need to establish a monitor system to check to see if students are keeping the bathroom clean.

OUT-OF-CLASS BATHROOMS, DRINKING FOUNTAINS, OFFICE, LIBRARY, RESOURCE ROOMS, HEALTH ROOM, ETC.

1. When and how do you wish students to have access to these areas?
2. How will you monitor the number of students using these areas at any time?
3. What student behavior standards will you require while using these areas and while en route to and from them?

A hall pass system may be established to monitor the number of students out of the room and to let students know if they may leave or not. A bathroom hall pass for boys and girls may be hung next to the hall door, to be placed around the neck or carried by the student en route to the bathroom. A similar pass system could be used for the library with a particular time limit established for when and how long it could be used.

If there are no school rules dealing with hall, library, resource room, etc. behaviors, you will want to set standards. If there are school rules, they will need to be reviewed and enforced.



Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

STUDENTS LINING UP TO LEAVE THE ROOM

1. What procedures will you establish for students to line up?

Do you expect areas to be clean and materials put away before students line up?

Do you wish students to be still and/or silent before lining up?

2. Have you considered all the factors which enter into a student's ability to line up and move appropriately? (i.e., Where should hands, eyes, feet be?)

You will need to decide how you plan to have students line up to go from your room to the playground (and other locations in the school). Some techniques used include separate lines for boys and girls, boy/girl boy/girl, quietest tables first, quietest individuals first, etc. You may also want to have line leaders.

Some teachers find it necessary to specify exactly where hands, eyes, feet, etc. should be while in line. Some teachers have students clasp their hands behind their backs; others have students keep their hands down at their sides.

PROCEDURES FOR BEGINNING CLASS

1. When the tardy bell rings, what are students supposed to do?

When the bell rings, most effective managers expect talking to stop. A good idea is to have a regular beginning class routine for the first 4 or 5 minutes of class. Students should begin the activity as soon as the bell rings.

2. If PA announcements come on, what is expected of the students?

Tell the students specifically what their expected behavior is during announcements (e.g., no talking, stop or continue working).

3. What materials are students expected to bring to class and/or have ready when the bell rings? If these vary from day to day, how will you let them know?

Most effective managers expect students to have all of their materials ready to use when the bell rings. This includes sharpened pencils, headings on papers (if needed), homework papers, textbooks, project materials, etc. Having this requirement also discourages tardiness.

4. What procedures will you use for checking out books to students?

You will want to have something for students to do while you are recording book numbers. This may be either an academic activity such as a worksheet or exercise from the chalkboard, or a procedural activity, such as covering the books and filling out forms. Determine ahead of time where and how you will record book numbers. Take as little time as possible in this activity.

5. What procedures will you use for distributing supplies and equipment?

If students will be using books or supplies which are kept in the room, you will need a system whereby students pick up their own materials, or monitors pass them out. Monitors may be specially chosen students or the first or last person on each row. Make sure your directions to monitors are clear and specific.

Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

PROCEDURES FOR BEGINNING CLASS *(continued...)*

6. What responsibilities do you want students to have in taking care of materials or equipment?

If there are specific instructions for the care and use of equipment or materials, the instructions should be given and demonstrated, if appropriate, prior to passing them out. You may also wish to have a chart with step-by-step directions for students to follow in dealing with materials.

PROCEDURES DURING INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. How will students contact you if they have questions or need help?

Where will you work with individual students who need extra help?

Most effective managers require students to raise their hands in order to be called on, with no exceptions. When students are working at their seats and need help, you should have them raise their hands and you go to them, or they may come to you. This will avoid long lines or chatty groups by your desk, it will allow you to control where you give individual assistance so that you can better monitor the class, and it will allow quiet, private contacts which will not disturb the class nor embarrass the student you are helping. If you choose to help students at a location other than their desks, choose a location with plenty of room, out of the way of traffic and the chalkboard or other displays students must be able to see.

2. Under what conditions may students leave their seats (to go to the pencil sharpener, turn in papers, etc.)?

To eliminate unnecessary wandering around the room, you should indicate when students are allowed to leave their seats. For example, students may sharpen pencils only when you are not actively teaching a lesson or only during seatwork or before a class.

3. Under what conditions will you allow students to leave the room to go to the bathroom or other locations (e.g., the office, library, lockers)?

What procedure will you need for allowing students to leave the room?

This procedure must be established early in the year and consistently followed. Students should not be allowed to leave the room except in emergencies, as determined by the teacher. Students should be told that the passing period is normally sufficient time for going to the restrooms, lockers, etc. If an unusual circumstance arises, they should talk to you first.

4. What signal will you use to get students' attention?

Some of the techniques used by teachers are: a timer bell, turning on the lights, sitting down by the overhead projector, standing by the chalkboard, or a particular phrase such as "Let me have your attention." It is helpful to consistently use a particular signal that will let students know you are ready to begin a presentation or lesson.

Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

PROCEDURES DURING INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES (*continued...*)

5. What procedure will you have for students to head their papers?
6. Will you allow students to talk to one another and/or to work together during seatwork activities?
7. What will students do if they complete a seatwork assignment early?
8. What kinds of equipment or materials will require special instructions or a demonstration?
9. What procedures will you need for laboratory work or student projects?
If the students must leave the room, how many may go at a time and what type of permission form will be needed? What other rules and procedures will you need for moving from one room to another?
How will you pass out and collect materials and supplies?
What safety routines and equipment will you need to have and explain to the students?
Will the students work alone, in pairs, or in groups? How will these be assigned?
What supplies will the students need to bring and how will you let them know?

This procedure should be decided upon prior to the first day and presented to the students the first time they do a written assignment. It is very helpful to prepare a sample heading on a large sheet of paper and post it where the students can see it. Some effective managers do not accept papers without the proper heading.

If this will be allowed, you will need to establish specific limitations. For example, you may say that during certain activities you will allow quiet talking, but if the talking gets too loud, then the privilege will be lost. If quiet talking is allowed, monitoring is still necessary.

If you have enrichment activities for faster working students, you will need to specify exactly when these materials may be used, how many students may be involved in any single activity, where the materials will be kept, and what the procedures are for returning any materials to their proper place.

Wait until the first time the equipment or materials will be used to do a demonstration or give instructions. You should also make a list of specific instructions and post it or display it each time the materials or equipment are used.

If you are sharing facilities with other teachers, you will want to cooperate with them in standardizing these procedures for all classes.

To avoid traffic jams, plan distribution stations carefully. Use more than one station. When possible, save time by placing some or all necessary materials or supplies on students' desks or work tables before class starts.

Assign student helpers to:

- ☆ help pass out supplies and materials
- ☆ monitor supply stations or check out/in special equipment, and
- ☆ monitor cleanup or work areas or equipment.

Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

PROCEDURES DURING INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES (*continued...*)

10. What procedures will be needed for cleaning up?

Guard against leaving too little time for cleanup at the end of activities. Use a timer, alarm clock, or (at least) some student volunteers to help you remember when to begin cleanup. At the beginning of the year, it is wise to allow extra time for cleanup. Use any time left over after cleanup to lead a discussion of the activity or give students feedback on their performance.

All students should be expected to participate in cleanup, but appoint certain students to act as monitors. For example, two students could monitor two equipment stations, checking for return of all equipment in clean working order. Three others could be monitors who check to be sure that certain other areas of the room are clean and straight.

PROCEDURES FOR ENDING THE CLASS

1. What procedures do you need for putting away supplies and equipment?

Leave enough time for students to put everything away and to pick up things in their area. If monitors are to do anything other than pass out or take up materials, you will need to have specific instructions for them. If students return materials or supplies individually, you might appoint a student monitor who has the responsibility of checking to be sure all materials have been turned in (e.g., counting to see that all the dictionaries are on the shelf, all the scissors are in the box).

2. How can you keep your own teaching materials, supplies, and student papers organized?

Do not let the papers, materials, records, etc., from different periods get jumbled together. Use file folders, boxes, baskets, etc., to store things. Keep student material in a separate file for each period. Check your desk or other instructional storage areas during closing; rearrange loose material so you will not lose time at the beginning of the next period.

3. What standards of neatness do you require before dismissing the class?

You should expect students to leave the room as clean as it was when they came in. Remind the students to check around their chairs for paper or other trash.

4. What procedure will you use to dismiss the class?

Most effective teachers require all students to be in their seats and quiet before they may be dismissed. Because students do not want to be late for their next class, they will generally settle quickly if you enforce this requirement.

Things to Ask Yourself

Suggestions

OTHER PROCEDURES

1. What conditions do you want to establish about students' use of and contact with your desk and storage areas?
2. What procedures do you need to teach your students regarding fire and disaster drills?
When do you need to teach these procedures?
3. If your class is split for lunch, what additional procedures will you need to have?

You will probably want to specify areas of your rooms off limits to students except with your permission. It is better not to leave on your desk a lot of materials that could be disturbed by students. It is helpful to have a table or other area away from your desk where you can work individually with students.

Generally these will not need to be taught on the first day. Because most junior high students know the basic procedures, a few timely sentences during the first week about which door to leave from, the procedure for leaving the room (e.g., by row), and a designation of who will turn off the lights and close the door will be sufficient. You may want to post a map of where the students are supposed to go during the drill.

Tell students whether they should clear their desks, or leave their work out. Tell them if it is safe to leave personal belongings in the room. Show or tell the class what route they should take from your room to the cafeteria and what halls are off limits. Let students know what they are allowed to do and where they may wait after lunch.



Setting Up Your Classroom

Classroom setup can dramatically affect students' attitudes toward and habits of learning. Students need an environment that is organized, stimulating, and comfortable in order to learn effectively. Creating such an environment entails arranging a practical physical layout, supplying diverse materials and supplies, and encouraging students to have a sense of belonging and ownership.

Tips for Getting Started

- ☆ Ask students where they think the different learning centers should go.
- ☆ Let students help to define what behavior is appropriate for each learning center.
- ☆ Help students learn how to behave appropriately by role-playing and practicing with them.
- ☆ Post procedures for learning centers where students can refer to them.

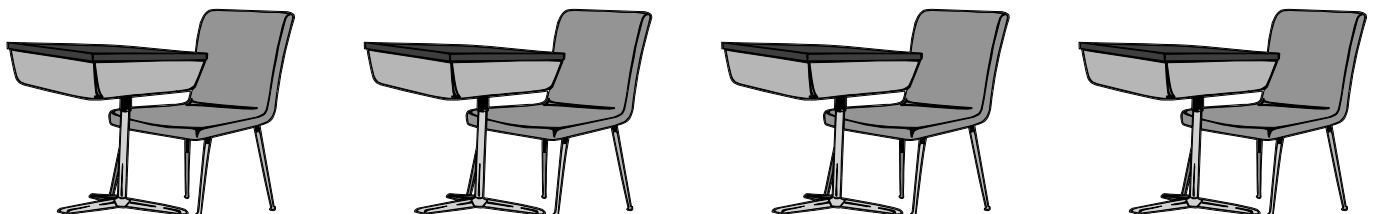
Arranging the Learning Centers

Take the physical features of your classroom into account when planning. As the year progresses, you can add different kinds of learning centers to fit your class's evolving needs.

- ☆ Keep computers facing away from windows to keep glare from sunlight off the screens.
- ☆ Use bookshelves to isolate different areas.
- ☆ Provide comfortable seating
- ☆ Save space by using walls for posters, display shelves, books, and supplies.
- ☆ Build a loft to save space while creating a private spot for independent reading.
- ☆ Separate learning centers of high activity, such as the Cross-Curricular Center, from areas like the Reading/Language Arts Center, where students need quiet.
- ☆ Set aside an area to meet with small groups. Allow enough seating for about eight students.

Arranging the Whole-Group Area

- ☆ Make sure that all students will have an unrestricted view of the chalkboard.
- ☆ Consider using a rug to mark off the area if you have a primary-grade classroom.
- ☆ Consider what whole-group activities will take place to determine how to arrange student desks. Keep in mind that arranging desks in a circle promotes discussions and small clusters of desks can double as small-group meeting areas.
- ☆ Your desk should be out of the way, but in an area where you can view the entire classroom. Set aside an off-limits zone for your records and supplies.



Learning Areas

Whole-Group Area

This is for whole-class lessons. This includes informal discussion, direct instruction, and student presentations. This is a good place for an Author's Chair from which students can read their writing to the class.

Small-Group Area

Here you can give small-group instruction or allow groups of students to gather for peer-led discussions.

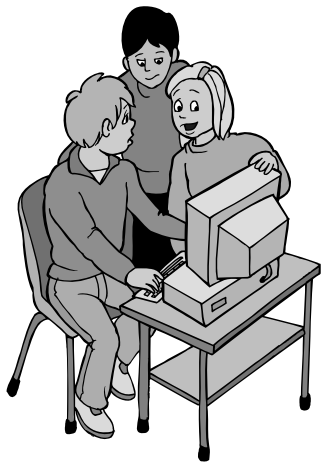
Reading Area

This is a place for students to read independently or quietly with a partner. It should provide comfortable seating, a variety of books, and a quiet, secluded atmosphere.



Writing Center

Here students write independently and collaboratively. The area should contain comfortable space for writing and a variety of supplies.



Cross-Curricular Center

This is an active center where students explore relationships across different curricula, including literature, science, social studies, art, and math.

Computer Station

This area is for computer use in writing, math, reading, keyboard practice, research, telecommunications, and creative games.

Creative Arts Center

This area is where students can get involved in visual art and dramatic play. It should have a variety of art supplies, costumes, and props.

Communication Area / Post Office

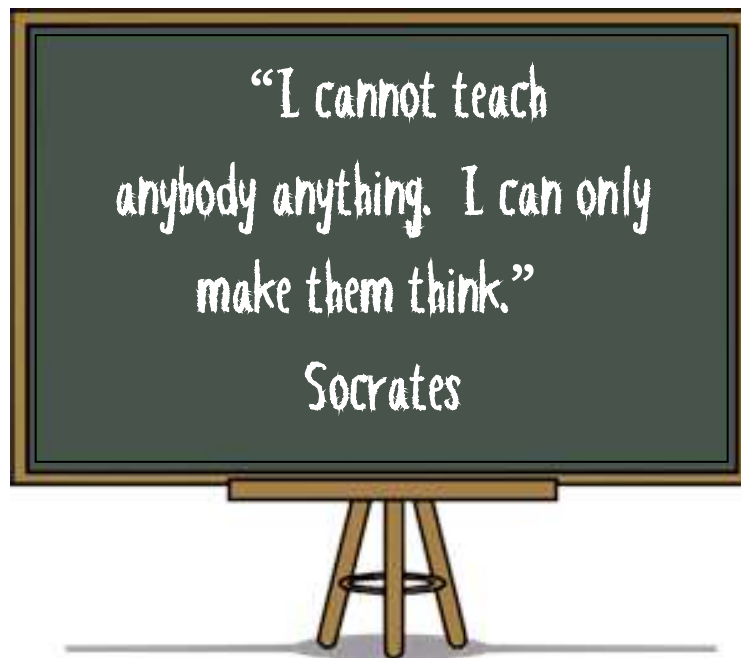
This area has mail slots for students and teacher to exchange written messages and suggestions.

Listening Station

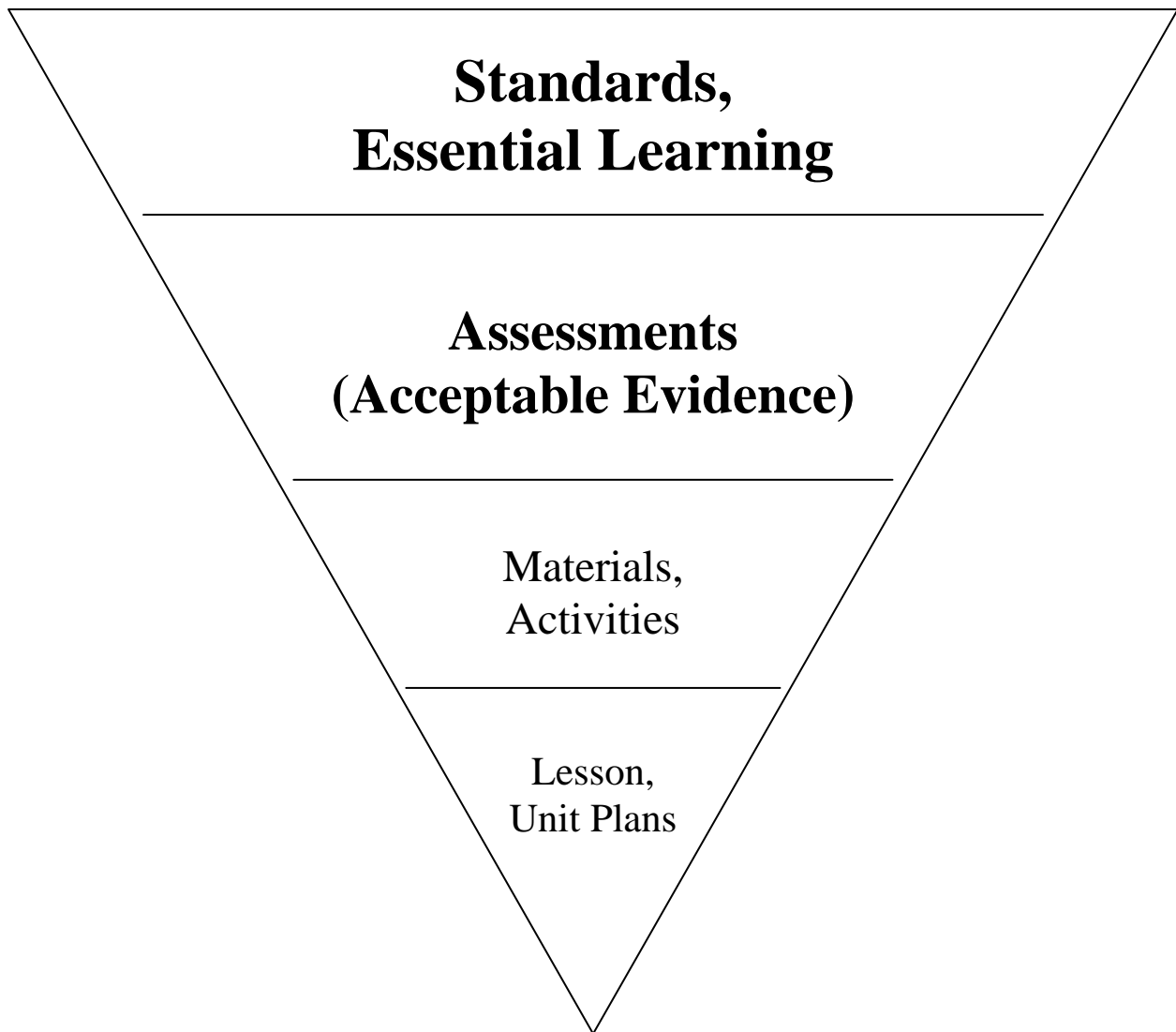
Here students listen to tapes of books, stories, songs, and poems.



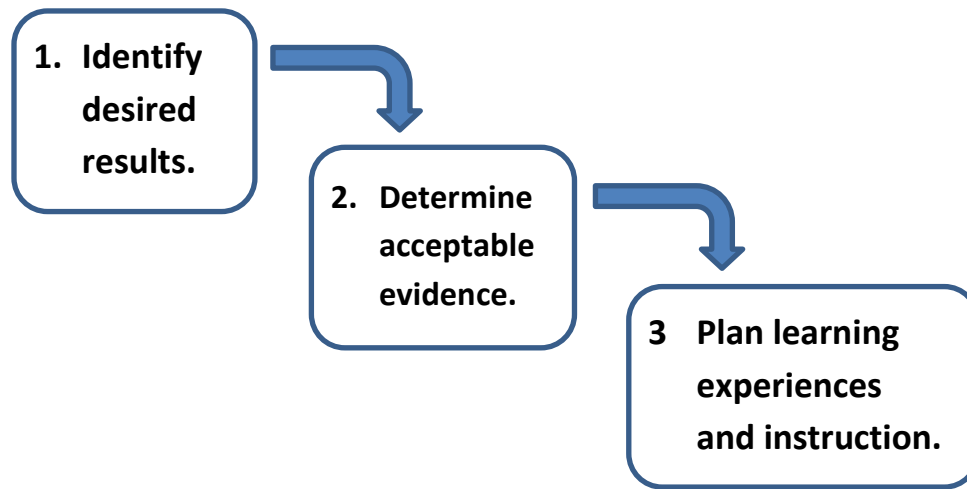
Lesson Planning



Standards-Based Lesson Design



Understanding by Design: Stages of Backward Design



Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

What should students know, understand, and be able to do? What content is worthy of understanding? What *enduring* understandings are desired? In Stage 1 we consider our goals, examine established content standards (national, state, district), and review curriculum expectations. Because typically we have more content than we can reasonably address within the available time, we must make choices. This first stage in the design process calls for clarity about priorities.

Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

How will we know if students have achieved the desired results? What will we accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency? The backward design orientation suggests that we think about a unit or course in terms of the collected assessment evidence needed to document and validate that the desired learning has been achieved, not simply as content to be covered or as a series of learning activities. This approach encourages teachers and curriculum planners to first “think like an assessor” before designing specific units and lessons, and thus to consider up front how they will determine if students have attained the desired understandings.

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

With clearly identified results and appropriate evidence of understanding in mind, it is now the time to fully think through the most appropriate instructional activities. Several key questions must be considered at this stage of backward design: What enabling knowledge (facts, concepts, principles) and skills (processes, procedures, strategies) will students need in order to perform effectively and achieve desired results? What activities will equip students with the needed knowledge and skills? What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of performance goals? What materials and resources are best suited to accomplish these goals?

Madeline Hunter Lesson Plan Template

Est. Time		
	Anticipatory Set	What might I do to focus the attention of the students on the concepts we are about to study?
	Communicate Objectives	How shall I let students know what it is that they are to know and be able to do? How will I let them know what is worth learning?
	Modeling	How shall I present / explain the new skill or content?
	Guided Practice	How will I help the students practice the new skills with immediate feedback and corrections in class?
	Independent	What assignments and homework shall I have the students complete to facilitate long-term retention?
	Checking for Understanding	How will I know if and when the students are learning the new information?
	Input	What new content, concepts, information, and skills are to be studied?

Top Ten Questions

To ask myself as I design lessons



1. What should students know and be able to do with what they know as a result of this lesson? How are these objectives related to national, state, and/or district standards or proficiencies?

2. How will students demonstrate what they know and what they can do with what they know? What will be the assessment criteria and what form will it take?

3. How will I find out what students already know, and how will I help them access what they know and have experienced both inside and outside the classroom? How will I help them not only build on prior experiences but deal with misconceptions and reframe their thinking when appropriate?

4. How will new knowledge, concepts, and skills be introduced? Given the diversity of my students, what are my best options for sources and presentation modes of new material?

5. How will I facilitate student process (meaning making) of new information or processes? What are the key questions, activities, and assignments (in class or homework)?

6. How will I check for student understanding during the lesson?

7. What do I need to do to differentiate instruction so that the learning experiences are productive for all students?

8. How will I “Frame the Learning” so that students know the objectives, the rationale for the objectives and activities, the directions and procedures, as well as the assessment criteria at the beginning of the learning process?

9. How will I build in opportunities for students to make real world connections and to learn and use the varied and complex thinking skills they need to succeed in the classroom and the world beyond?

10. What adjustments need to be made in the learning environment so that we can work and learn efficiently during this study?

SPONGES



Waiting Time

What are Sponges?

- Sponges are quick (5-10 minute) engagement activities.
- They are used to focus students on upcoming lessons.
- They set the expectation that the classroom is a working environment.
- There should be an academic relation to the subject currently being taught.

Sponges can be used:

- To recall information from a previous lesson;
- To summarize information from a previous lesson;
- As a pre-assessment to access previous knowledge; or
- As an admission ticket from a previous lesson.

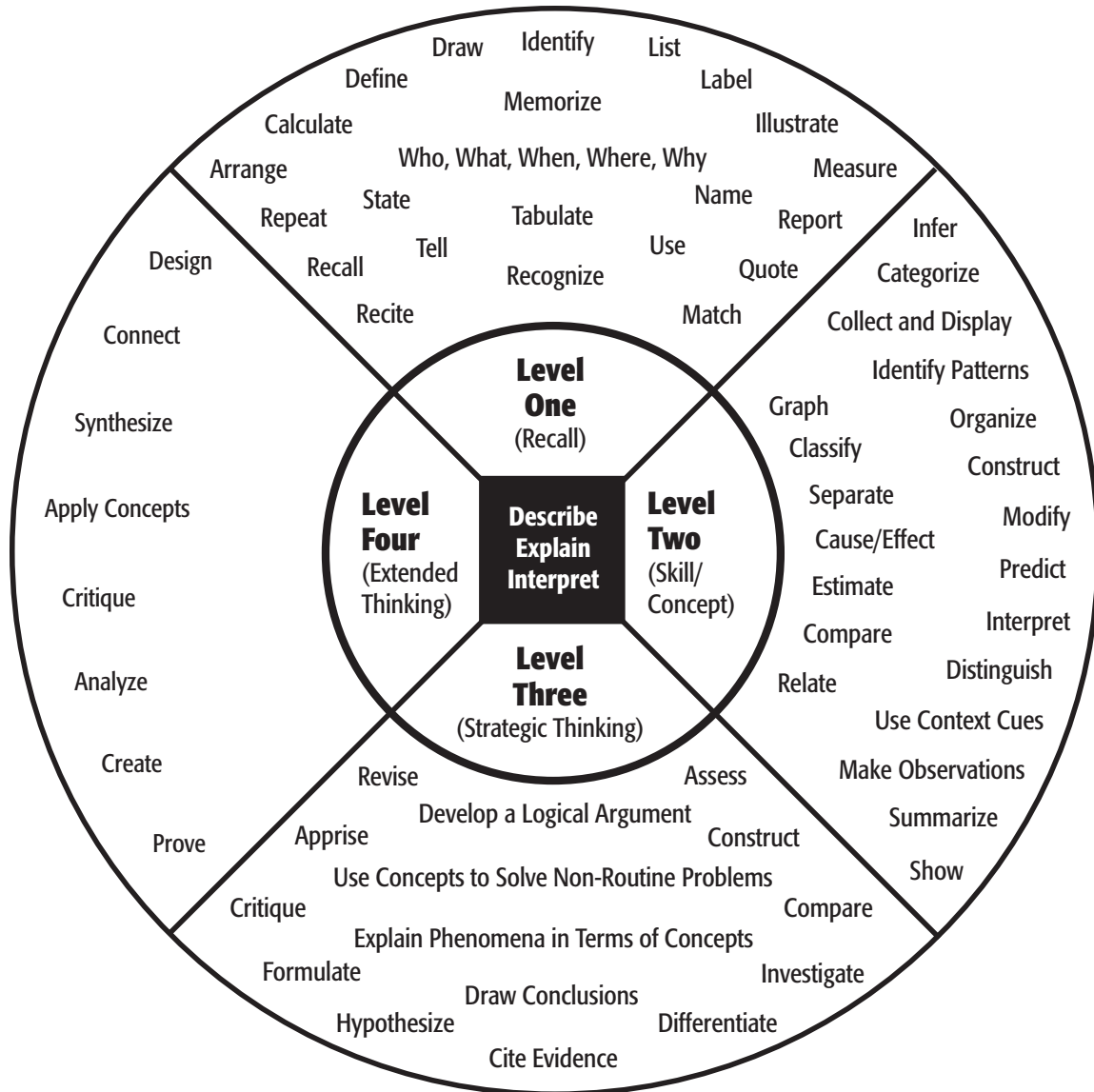
Resources:

- http://www.caepa.org/docs/rend/Sponge_Activities_handout..pdf
- <http://tips.atozteacherstuff.com/407/sponge-and-transition-activities/>
- <http://tepservers.ucsd.edu/courses/tep129/EducationalSponges.pdf>

How can you use sponges in your class?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels



Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.	Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.	Support ideas with details and examples.	Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/solutions.
Conduct basic mathematical calculations.	Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.	Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.	Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.
Label locations on a map.	Solve routine multiple-step problems.	Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.	Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship.	Describe the cause/effect of a particular event.	Develop a scientific model for a complex situation.	Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.
Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly.	Identify patterns in events or behavior.	Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.	Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.
Describe the features of a place or people.	Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.	Apply a concept in other contexts.	
	Organize, represent and interpret data.		

Level 1 Recall

Key Words

who memorize where
what draw which
when identify spell
why repeat label
how state list
match tell recite
choose arrange use
define quote repeat
name

Question Stems

- * How would you describe ...?
- * Who was ...?
- * Where is ...?
- * Can you recall ...?
- * When did ___ happen?
- * How would you write ...?
- * Can you identify ...?
- * How would you describe ...?
- * Who was the main ...?

Level 1 Recall

Activities

Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.

Conduct basic mathematical calculations.

Label locations on a map.

Describe the features of a place or people.

Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation correctly.

Level 2 Skill/Concept

Key Words

graph estimate
classify summarize
compare show
infer extend
separate predict
relate outline
organize categorize
distinguish construct
make observations
identify patterns

Question Stems

- * Can you explain how ... affected ...?
- * How would you apply what you learned to develop ...?
- * How would you compare ...?
- * How would you summarize ...?
- * How could you organize ...?
- * What do you notice about ...?
- * What can you say about ...?

Level 2 Skill/Concept

Activities

Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.

Solve routine multiple-step problems.

Identify patterns in events or behaviors.

Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.

Organize, represent and interpret data.

Use context clues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Level 3 Strategic Thinking

Key Words

revise investigate
construct differentiate
critique hypothesize
draw conclusions
formulate assess
cite evidence
survey categorize
apprise compare
develop a logical
argument

Question Stems

- * How is ___ related to ___?
- * What conclusions can you draw?
- * What facts would you select to support ...?
- * Can you elaborate on the reason ...?
- * How would you test ...?
- * How would you describe the sequence of ...?
- * Can you predict the outcome of ...?

Level 3 Strategic Thinking

Activities

- Support ideas with details and examples.
- Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.
- Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.
- Apply a concept in other contexts.
- Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of the text.

Level 4 Extended Thinking

Key Words

design connect prove
synthesize critique
apply concepts
create analyze test
imagine suppose
modify elaborate
maximize minimize
happen formulate
compile combine
solution

Question Stems

- * What information can you gather to support your idea about ...?
- * How would you improve ...?
- * Can you construct a model that would change ...?
- * How would you adapt ... to create a different ...?
- * How would you estimate the results for ...?
- * Can you think of an original way for the ...?

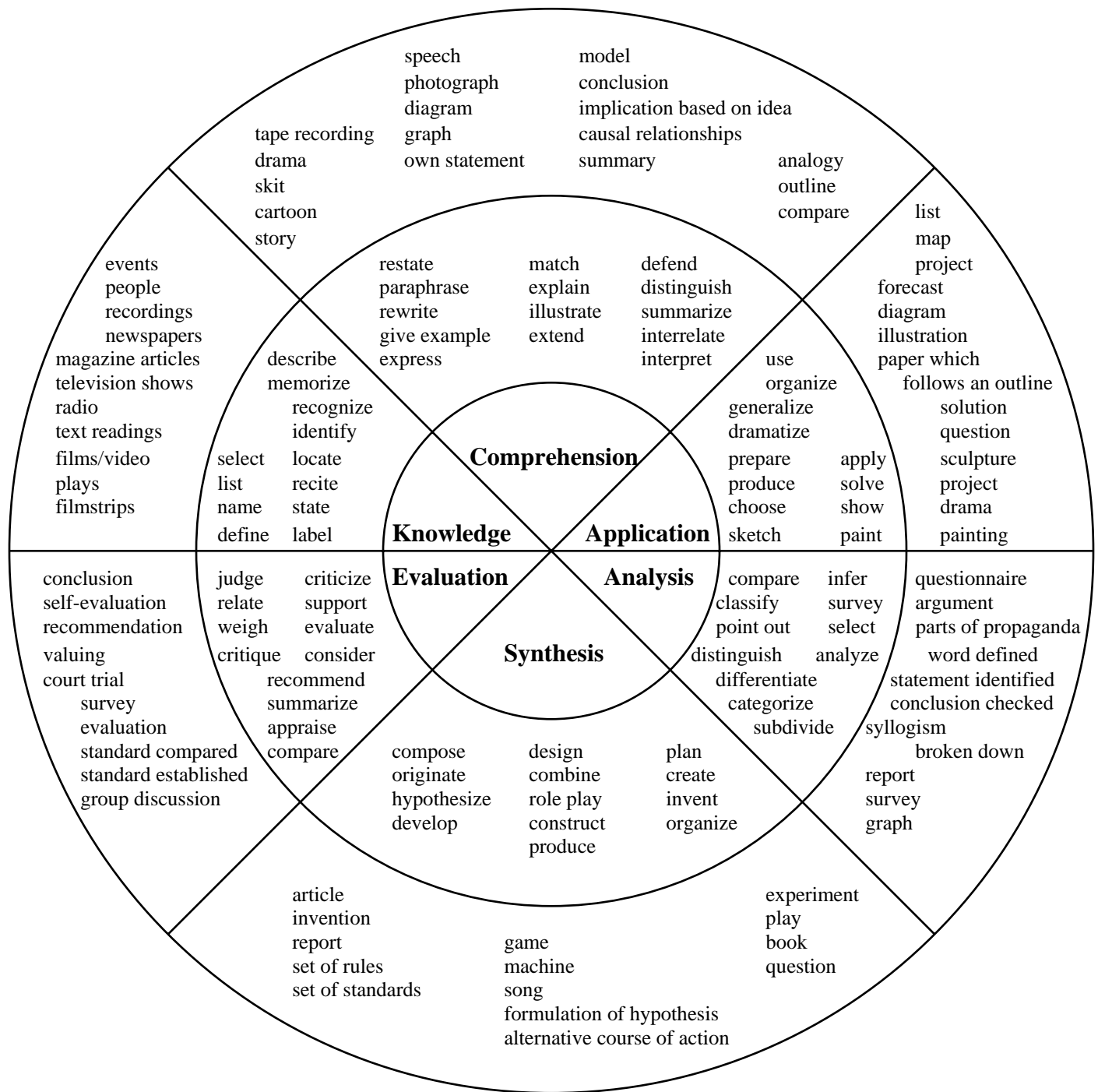
Level 4 Extended Thinking

Activities

- Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/solutions.
- Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.
- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
- Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across text from different cultures.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Question & Task Design Wheel



Analyze your district standards and outcomes. To promote student thinking at the same level as the indicators, use the appropriate levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to design questions and tasks for your students to complete.

Bloom's Slide

What is a Bloom's Slide? A Bloom's Slide is a series of questions in a specific area or within a specific topic that starts with questions at the lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and builds to the higher levels. It is a design that supports students' abilities to handle the more difficult questions built on a solid foundation of basic comprehension.

Purpose: To provide students with questions that stretch their thinking but also support their processing by using the answer from the prior question to help support the thinking for the next higher level question. Thus students *slide* into more difficult questions with ease!

Process: Begin at the lowest level of Bloom's Taxonomy ("Knowledge") with a topic in mind. The topic might be based on character traits, the lesson the story teaches, personification, etc. Using a copy of Bloom's question stems as a guide, scaffold the questions starting from the basic comprehension ("Knowledge") and build to "Evaluation".

An example of a Bloom's Slide based on the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears:

Knowledge: the recall of specific information

1. *What did Goldilocks' mother specifically warn her not to do?*

Comprehension: an understanding of what was read

2. *Why didn't her mother want her to go to the forest?*

Application: the converting of abstract content to concrete situations

3. *If you made a poster to be placed near the edge of the forest, what would it say?*

Analysis: the comparison and contrast of the content to personal experience

4. *Have you ever received a warning? Compare the warning you received to the warning that Goldilocks received.*

Synthesis: the organization of thoughts, ideas, and information from the text

5. *Create a two-line rhyme Goldilocks could carry in her head to keep her out of trouble.*

Evaluation: the judgment and evaluation of characters, actions, outcome, etc. for personal reflection and understanding

6. *Why has the story of Goldilocks been told to children for many, many years?*

Where in the process of reading instruction will you use a Bloom's Slide?



Creating a Powerful Product Assignment

1. Identify the essentials of the unit/study:

What students must...

- know (facts)
- understand (concepts, generalizations)
- be able to do (skills) as a result of unit/study

2. Identify one or more formats or “packaging options” for the product:

- required (e.g., poetry, an experiment, graphing, charting)
- hook
- exploratory
- talent/passion driven

3. Determine expectations for quality in:

- content (information, ideas, concepts, materials)
- process (planning, goal-setting, defense of viewpoint, research, editing)
- product (size, construction, durability, expert-level expectations, parts)

4. Decide on scaffolding you may need to build in order to promote success:

- brainstorming for ideas
- developing rubrics/criteria for success
- time lines
- planning/goal setting
- storyboarding
- critiquing
- revising/editing

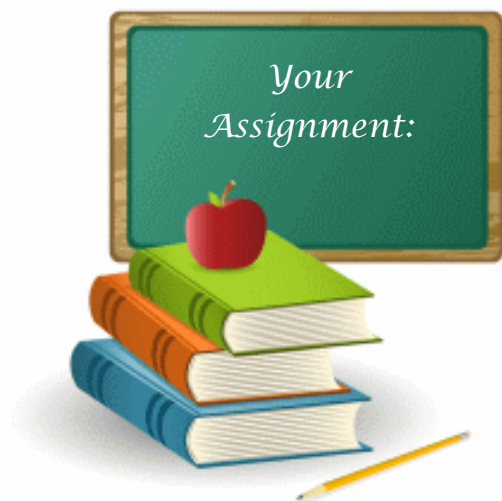
5. Develop a product assignment that clearly says to the student:

- You should show you understand and can do these things
 - Proceeding through these steps/stages
 - In this format
 - At this level of quality.

6. Differentiate or modify versions of the assignment based on:

- student readiness
- student interest
- student learning profile

7. Coach for success.



Product Possibilities

Design a web page	Design political cartoons	Design and teach a class	Develop an exhibit
Develop a solution to a community problem	Formulate and defend a theory	Present a photo essay	Conduct an ethnography
Create a public service announcement	Conduct a training session	Design a structure	Write a biography
Write a book	Present a news report	Make and carry out a plan	Develop and use a questionnaire
Design a game	Generate and circulate a petition	Create a series of wall hangings	Write a new law and plan for its passage
Conduct a debate	Make a video documentary	Design and conduct an experiment	Write a series of letters
Make learning centers	Create a series of illustrations	Design a simulation	Present a mime
Create authentic recipes	Write poems	Go on an archeological dig	Design and create needlework
Choreograph dances	Develop tools	Collect and analyze samples	Lead a symposium
Build a planetarium	Present a mock trial	Write a musical	Make a plan
Design or create musical instruments	Conduct a series of interviews	Design and make costumes	Develop a collection
Compile and annotate a set of internet resources	Develop an advertising campaign	Plan a journey or an odyssey	Compile a booklet or brochure
Write letters to the editor	Design a new product	Develop a museum exhibit	Write a series of songs
Draw a set of blueprints	Present a radio show	Present an interior monologue	Interpret through multimedia
Create a subject dictionary	Do a puppet show	Make an etching or a woodcut	Be a mentor
Generate charts or diagrams to explain ideas	Submit writings to a journal, magazine, or newspaper	Write or produce a play	Compile a newspaper

Source: *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*, Carol Ann Tomlinson

Creating a Powerful Product Assignment

Using this scaffold and the ideas on the previous page, create one to three different products based upon the lesson you have worked on.

- 1. Identify the essentials of the unit/study:**
- 2. Identify one or more formats or “packaging options” for the product:**
- 3. Determine expectations for quality in:**
- 4. Decide on scaffolding you may need to build in order to promote success:**
- 5. Develop a product assignment that clearly says to the student:**
- 6. Differentiate or modify versions of the assignment based on:**
- 7. Coach for success.**

Web Sites

<http://www.rbteach.com/rbteach2/Home.html>

<http://www.eduplace.com>

<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers>

<http://pblchecklist.4teachers.org>

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>

<http://janebluestein.com>

<http://braingym.org>

<http://www.brainpop.com/>

<https://HBOarchives.com>

<http://coolcatteacher.blogspot.com/>

<http://KNPB.org>

<http://www.teachingblogaddict.com/>

<http://www.edutopia.org/>

<http://www.edzone.net/~mwestern/>

<http://schoolexpress.com/>

<http://funenglishgames.com/>

<http://www.educationworld.com/>

<http://www.prometheanplanet.com/en-us/>

<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>

http://goanimate4schools.com/public_index

<http://www.technologyrocksseriously.com/>

<http://www.classdojo.com/> (classroom management on the ActivBoard)

<http://www.wholebrainteaching.com/> (classroom management and instruction)



Parent Communication

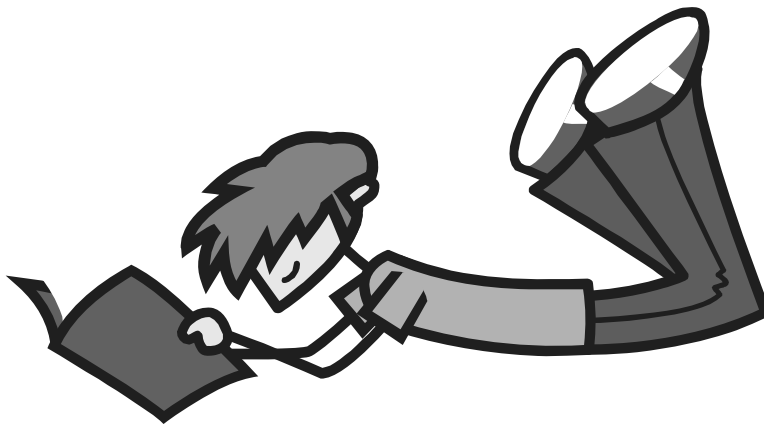


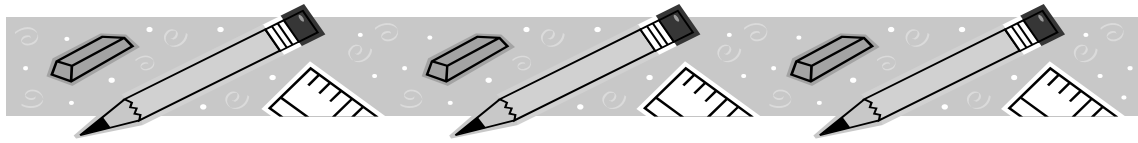
Bridging Home and School



What is your plan of action for initial parent contact?

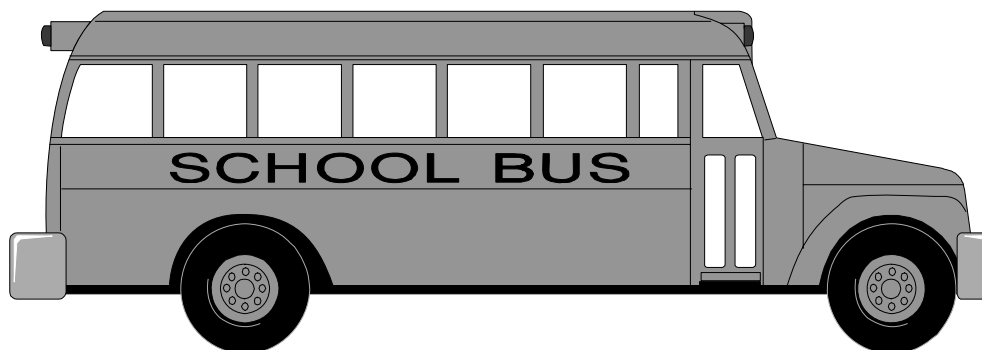
1. Back to school night
2. Grade level parent meetings
3. Summer letters home
4. Phone calls during the first week
5. Notes home during the first week
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.





What is your plan of action for ongoing parent communication? (Otherwise known as 3:00 and all is well.)

1. Newsletters
2. Invitations to group presentations
3. One positive note home every day
4. Student-made invitations to school wide functions
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.



Parent Communication Reminder Checklist



_____ Phone calls to be made by _____
(date)

_____ Letter sent home by _____
(date)

I need to include:

_____ my grading policies

_____ my classroom discipline policies

_____ my homework policies

_____ my office hours and phone number

_____ dates of upcoming events

_____ what I expect from parents

Parent Involvement Letter

Dear Parents:

I'm writing to ask you to help me become a partner with you in your child's education. I know my teaching must begin with making your child feel at home in my classroom and with helping all the children come together in a learning community. Please help me get to know your child better by completing the following questions. Thank you for your time in sharing with me your thoughts about your child.

Sincerely,

Your child's name: _____

What are your child's strengths? _____

What do you as a parent feel would be important for me to know? _____

What does your child enjoy doing? _____

Other comments: _____

Your name: _____

Date: _____

Effective Parent Communication



Commendations

Lonnie's enthusiasm and interest are assets to our class. She tries very hard to do her best.

Ruth is a happy student. Reading is an area of difficulty for her, but she puts forth much effort. Continual reinforcement at home is helpful to her.

Ricardo has a mature attitude towards all aspects of school. He shows keen interest and participates well in all school experiences. He has a strong desire to succeed and works hard at it.

Her pleasant personality and cooperative attitude are an asset to our class.

Your help and encouragement at home keeps him motivated.

Joe is a cooperative and capable student. He is achieving well in all areas.

Mark is a strong student achieving in all areas.

He is steadily improving and can be very proud of his work.

Matt has very high standards. He is always precise and thorough, but with the additional good qualities of initiative and imagination.

The help you give at home is very evident in his work at school.

Kathy is a very capable student who grasps new ideas with ease.

Heidi is a very enthusiastic student.

Gets along well with the class

Allison shows satisfactory progress in all her work.

Karen's report card shows her outstanding work and effort. She contributes a great deal to our class.

Sue's delightful personality is an asset to our class. She tries hard to do her best.

Joe tries very hard in school. I appreciate the extra help and support he receives from home.

Enthusiastic about work in general

Performs well in everything he undertakes

Doing strong work in all areas

Has good organization of thoughts

Makes friends quickly and is well-liked

Works well in groups, planning and carrying out activities

Takes an active part in discussions

Grasps new ideas readily

Accepts responsibility well

Shows pride in his work

Attitude toward school is excellent

Has a sense of humor

Expresses himself well through art/with words

Is hardworking

Dean is an outstanding citizen in our classroom. He is well liked, cooperative and reliable. All in all he is a conscientious student.

Work Habits

Tom is capable of much better work. Grades are low because many assignments are missing or done carelessly. His effort this quarter has been sporadic.

Barbara is much more capable than her work indicates. When she puts forth genuine effort, she does a great job. I hope that her attitude towards school will become more positive.

Lengthy absences have affected Jim's achievement level and subsequently, his grades.

Shirley needs to work more carefully to avoid careless mistakes.

Sheri is a careful, methodical worker a majority of the time.

Liz has been conscientious about getting her work done and turned in on time.

Steve is a very astute young man. He grasps ideas quickly and is a clever writer. He needs to take more time and care, however, in completing his assignments.

Joe works well when he gets special attention and extra help. He is easily frustrated and often gives up quickly.

She works slowly but persistently to finish assignments.

Joe needs to be a little less social during class time, which will help him complete his assignments on time.

Kellie has a strong desire to succeed and works hard. I would like to see her slow down and work a little more neatly.

Inclined to hurry too much

Must use time to an advantage

Struggles to complete assignments in allotted time

Potential is much greater than she is exhibiting

Keith is an enjoyable student. Added effort and attention on his part could raise his writing and math grades and strengthen his other academic subjects.

Needs to work to respect viewpoints of others

Danny is a capable student, but he spends too much time day dreaming. He needs to become a more persistent worker.

She has a slight tendency to hurry through her work. In these instances her papers are not as neat or carefully done as they could be.

Sandra is an alert child. She is interested in everything around her. She needs to concentrate on her own assignments to become a more consistent and persistent worker.

Ryan is progressing well in all areas. He could improve by slowing down and taking more care in his work.

Marie is very conscientious about her work and often needs reassurance that what she is doing is acceptable.

Must improve work habits if he is to gain the fundamentals needed for 5th grade work

Needs to develop a better sense of responsibility

Has shown improvement in his academic work but more self-control would still be beneficial

Rarely completes assignments on time

Shows difficulty in distinguishing between imaginary and factual material (*lies*)

Needs to develop a respectful attitude towards others (*rude*)

Needs ample supervision in order to work well (*lazy*)

Needs guidance in learning to express himself respectfully (*insolent*)

Needs to develop quieter habits of communication (*noisy*)

Shows lack of maturity in relationships with others (*babyish*)

Sacrificing accuracy for unnecessary speed in his written work

Is doing work hastily rather than carefully

Fails to finish independent assignments

Lack of interest in work

Not working to full capability

Linda is doing well but is capable of doing better. When she uses her time a little more wisely, I am sure there will be a great improvement.

With more attention to her work and less socializing with her neighbor, Angela will be able to improve her school work.

Kim still allows her attention to wander when she should be concentrating on her work. Her difficulties in her relationships with classmates continue to affect her work habits.

Samantha seems to have difficulty settling down to the school situation. She tends to be quite impatient and gets upset easily. However, with her enthusiasm and sincerity, I'm sure she will develop greater stability. I appreciate the patience and support on your end.

Work Habits (con't)

Susie's capability in academic areas is hampered by her consistent failure to do her assignments carefully and to the best of her ability. She must realize that being the first one finished is not as important as doing it correctly.

Jane finds it difficult to pay good attention. She will make better use of her abilities when she can learn to listen when explanations are given. She needs to do less socializing and apply herself to her assignments.

Jill has fine mental ability and does her work quickly and accurately. However, she needs to be more considerate of other people, including teachers. She has a tendency to want to manage other people too much.

Emily still daydreams, and because her attention is elsewhere, she depends upon others to help her with what she should be doing. She needs to focus on the task at hand, taking responsibility for herself and not relying on others.

Catherine is a cooperative and alert 1st grader who completes her work quickly, neatly and accurately. She needs to find desirable ways to occupy her extra time however.

Walt takes a keen interest in all his work and has shown growth in all areas. He is a conscientious and dependable child.

Nick has been progressing nicely. His greatest problem has been his inability to listen attentively and keep his mind on what is happening. He is inclined to daydream, which makes it necessary for directions to be repeated.

Alex does grade level work. He is capable of doing better if he would concentrate more on his studies. He tends to be too interested in what his neighbors are doing.

Judy has learned to speak out loud only when it is her turn. She still tends to talk to her neighbors and is consequently inattentive. She needs to learn to concentrate on the right things at the right time. The reading of easy library books at home will help her achieve fluency in oral reading.

Sharon works hard on her assignments and is anxious to please. She needs to be reminded frequently of our class rules because she tends to be talkative and bothers those around her.

Linda has been doing good work generally, although she is not consistent. She is a happy person, but very talkative and restless in class. Her work would improve if she keeps her mind on the job at hand. She'll continue to need guidance along these lines.

Joe is not working up to his capabilities. He can improve in all areas. His behavior hampers his learning.

Playground Behavior

Gary's class work is frequently affected by difficulties that start on the playground. He must remember to play in his own area, and a little less roughly.

Joseph is a serious student and does satisfactory work in 3rd grade. It would help him to show more self-control while on the playground, keeping body parts to himself.

Leslie has shown progress academically, but is still having difficulty conforming to school and room rules. Please continue to talk with her at home regarding these areas.

Resorts to physical means of winning his point or attracting attention (*too free with fists*)

Needs help in learning to adhere to rules and standards of fair play (*cheats*)

Has qualities of leadership but needs help in learning to use them democratically (*is a bully*)

Is aggressive on the playground

Needs to improve in self-control so she will find greater social acceptance

Self-Confidence

Kathy is showing nice improvement in all her work. She is beginning to contribute to the discussions in class and is gaining self-confidence.

Liz is inclined to be timid and shy. Practice in reading at home will give her more confidence.

Debbie is overanxious and worries excessively about her work being perfect. She does well with a great deal of praise and attention.

Jose needs more confidence in himself in order to put forth his best work. He is inclined to be dependent upon others for help or directions.

Needs to take a more active part in class discussions

Is easily discouraged

Is timid about asking for help

Doesn't volunteer often but is willing to take part in all class work when requested

Responds best to praise

Poor Attendance and Tardiness

Frequent absences are reflected in the quality of Joe's work.

It is difficult to make an accurate evaluation of Kerry's grades at this point due to her frequent absences.

Ed's frequent tardiness disturbs his classmates as well as negatively affects his own work.

Needs guidance in developing habits of punctuality and attendance.

New Child

It is difficult to make an accurate evaluation of Terra's work since she has not been with us too long. She is quickly becoming familiar with our school and classroom and seems to be making the adjustment well.



Showing Progress

Michael is really trying hard and has consequently shown good progress this quarter. All the extra reinforcement he receives is helpful and makes him feel more secure.

Robin is using more self-control in the classroom and on the playground. Her work is improving, although she remains below grade level at the present. Daily practice with computing number facts would strengthen these skills.

Bob's work is improving. He would benefit from daily reading practice to strengthen his reading skills.

Joey is a very conscientious student. He always tries to do well and his work is improving daily.

Kim is progressing very well. She takes a great deal of interest in all her work.

Work habits are improving

Has been consistently progressing

Seems eager to improve

Volunteers often

Needs to apply skills to all written work

Your constant cooperation and help are appreciated.

Needs Extra Help

All the practice and encouragement she can get at home will help in her class endeavors.

Appears to have difficulty with motor control and muscular coordination

Accomplishes tasks when interest is frequently stimulated.

Average Child

Melissa has done a fine job continuing to make academic progress. She is having difficulty understanding division and would benefit from regular practice.

Continued extra reading of library books and drills on number facts will be of benefit to John.

Terry is a sweet girl who assumes responsibility well.

Karen is showing good growth in the basic skills. She takes pride in doing her work neatly and correctly. With time spent daily on math facts, her speed will improve.

Bill is showing improvement with the extra help at school, but is still working below grade level. With more effort on his part, I feel his work would improve even more.

Peter is a helpful member of our class. He is making steady progress academically.

Although 1st grade is difficult for Marilyn, she is doing satisfactory work. The extra reinforcement provided at home is helpful.

Is learning to be a better listener, which enables her to follow directions more promptly

Is continuing to grow in independence

Never reluctant about participating

Is learning to share and listen

Is becoming more dependable during work periods

Is learning to occupy his time more wisely

Can be very helpful and dependable in the classroom

Quality of work is improving

Is maintaining grade-level achievements



CALLING ALL PARENTS.....CALLING ALL PARENTS.....

One way to build trust and a partnership with parents early in the school year is to call them before problems develop. At first parents may seem surprised by a positive phone call from school, but once they realize that you are sincerely calling in an effort to establish a partnership with them for the benefit of their child, they will usually open up and share with you information about their child that you might not have learned otherwise. If the day should ever come when you have to call home about a problem, parents will be much more open and willing to work with you. The benefits that result in the classroom as children hear about the positive calls home are in and of themselves priceless, in terms of developing rapport and trust.

Sample OPENING LINES:

- Hello. This is Mrs. _____. May I please speak with _____'s mother or father? I'm _____, your son's teacher this year. I wanted to call and introduce myself and tell you how excited I am about being your son's teacher. I want to work with you to help him succeed, so if there is anything you'd like to share with me to help me better understand how _____ learns best, please let me know.
- I thought perhaps we could share some information about _____ that would help him succeed at school.
- Hello, Mr. or Mrs. _____, this is _____. I am calling to let you know how things are going for _____ at school and I wanted to let you know that you may always call me if you have any questions or concerns. How does _____ feel about school at this time?

Sample CLOSING STATEMENTS:

- I really appreciate our conversation, and I'll be following through on the questions/concerns you expressed.
- You've been really helpful in providing information about _____.
- I'm really pleased I had an opportunity to meet you over the phone, and I look forward to meeting you in person soon. Thanks for your understanding and support.
- I really appreciate your honesty and assure you that I'll do my best to satisfy your concerns. If you have any more questions, please let me know.
- You have some concerns which I would really like to address more fully. Would you be able to drop by the school sometime this week so we can discuss the situation in depth?
- I would really appreciate you dropping by and talking further about this. I could meet with you any morning or afternoon...or possibly at lunch if that is better for you.
- Feel free to call me at work during the hours of _____. I'll be happy to give you a status report.

Sample Form for Recording Parental Contacts

PARENTAL CONTACTS:							
Name	Phone #	Date	Delighted	Satisfactory	Problem	Alert	Comments
Kathy B.	438-6312	Sept 9	✓				<i>Kathy and Mother happy. Mother mentioned Kathy's weakness in math and her willingness to help her at home.</i>
Michael R.	549-5914	Sept 10	✓				<i>Mother very pleased about Michael getting help in reading from Daisy.</i>
Celine C.	731-3120	Sept 10	✓				<i>Mother hopes Celine will be able to stay at Northridge for the year. Mentioned Celine is a scatter brain (she is) but pleased she has started in a new class and has some friends.</i>
Michael C.	487-1545	Sept 11		✓			<i>Seems pleased but I can't say for certain. Mother is very concerned about Michael's lack of memory recall - asked if school could help. Mentioned Michael has asthma.</i>
Brian K.	498-3498	Sept 12	✓				<i>Talked to Barb at school and on phone. Brian has very positive attitude about school. Mother likes homework. Some concern regarding Brian's immature behavior.</i>

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are a part of our professional lives that can be an opportunity to establish or extend a positive and productive partnership in the education of the children.

Plan on putting your best foot forward and be sure that both your feet and the rest of you are clothed in the most professional attire you have in your closet . . . or you can borrow! This is not the time for jeans, tee-shirts, and tennis shoes, or any garments in need of ironing.



The following list looks long, but most of the items are common sense. If people have always said that you have wonderful manners and are a terrific listener, then all you will need to do is continue to use those admirable skills, determine the desired outcomes for the conference, and make an agenda for the meeting.

The reality is that while you may be nervous because you are the teacher and want to appear perfectly prepared and professional, the parents are just as nervous, if not more nervous, than you. Keep that in mind when you meet with them! Also keep in mind that they are hoping to hear that either their child is en route to Harvard, or at the very least, has turned a new leaf and now has the potential to be a super star student. Remember each student is someone's baby!

Before the Conference

- Extend a personal invitation to both parents.
- Check for the need for a translator.
- Be explicit about the purposes of the conference.
- Allow enough time for meaningful discussion, and be sure all parties understand the beginning time as well as the closing time.
- Get your papers organized in advance. This includes student work, rubrics, standards of learning, and assessment results. Copy segments of your grade book, or create a form, so parents cannot see the grades of other students, and remember that they really want to SEE the numbers/grades you have recorded.
- Make a “conference plan.” What end do you have in mind and what topics do you think would help the team get there?
- Check names. Children's names may be different from parents AND if you have more than one “Smith” or “Gonzales”, be sure you have the right family matched with the right student.

At the Conference

- Greet parents near the entrance to the school.
- Eliminate physical barriers. Do not sit behind your desk and do not make parents sit in small, primary student chairs.
- Be mindful of your body language.
- Open the conference on a positive note.
- Ask for their opinions and reactions throughout the conference.
- Focus on strengths, interests, and anecdotes that capture the learner and the parents “being right.”
- Be specific with your comments.
- Back any generalization up with data or artifacts.
- Listen carefully to what parents say. Pause, probe and paraphrase!
- Focus on solutions and emphasize collaboration.
- Be careful of the professional language you use with the parents. If there are certain terms you need to use, consider the conference one of many opportunities to inform and educate the community.
- Check for understanding and agreement throughout the conference and at conference closure.*

After the Conference

- Write up a brief summary for your records. You may think that you will remember, but you won't! Jot down any pertinent information or impressions you received from the parents.
- Record and assess your behavior and the results you obtained from the conference. If you are pleased, make a note of what caused that to happen. If you did not obtain the outcomes you wanted, make a note of your thoughts on what went wrong.
- If you have any strength left, write a brief thank you note or email message to express your appreciation of their time and interest, as well as the opportunity to work with their child.

* If the conversation becomes confrontational, keep both feet on the ground, use your active listening skills as your default response and use your assertiveness skills as necessary.



Sample Parent-Teacher Conference Letter

Date: _____

Dear Parents:

Next week, you and I have a special opportunity to talk about a very special person. That special person is your child.

I want to be as well prepared as possible, and I know you feel the same way. When we meet, I'll be talking about the following:

1. What we're doing in class this year and what I expect of all students.
2. How well your youngster is doing and what he or she needs to work on.
3. How you and I can work together to help your youngster get the most out of this class (school).

You probably have some things that you want to talk about, too, and perhaps some questions on how you can help. Because of the limited time we have scheduled, it would help if I knew what questions and concerns you have ahead of time. There is some space below to jot down any questions or concerns that you might have. Either send them back to school with your child or bring them with you when you come to conferences.

Questions I have:

Thank you for your help.

Cordially,

Teacher name



Back to School Night Open House



Parents come to Back to School Night and Open House with the following questions:

- Who is this person to whom I have entrusted my child?
- Does this person realize how special my child is?
- Does this person know what she is talking about?
- Is this person a good role model for my child?
- Has this person established a safe, nonthreatening, but challenging learning environment? And hopefully . . .
- What is my child going to learn this year?

Teachers often prepare for Back to School Night or Open House by planning to tell parents the following:

- The school rules
- The classroom rules and consequences for not following them
- The forms that need to be completed
- Expectations for parental support at home
- Desires for parental support at school

When you review the two sets of expectations, you can see the potential for a missed connection. It is, however, quite possible to accomplish both sets of outcomes. You will need to develop a thorough and thoughtful “lesson plan” for the evening.

The bottom line is “Be prepared, positive, and professional!”

Personal Invitations

Even though the event is advertised school-wide, send an invitation or flyer home to let parents and guardians know how much you are looking forward to meeting them. Depending on the age of your students, you may want to have the student write a letter to their parents inviting them to the open house.

Focus of Information

Focus on student learning rather than on rules and regulations. Prepare a packet of materials on the rules and regulations for the parents to read later at home. During the evening, share orally and in writing an overview of the learning outcomes for the year, the learning experiences that students will be involved in, and how they will be assessed. If at all possible, have student work on display. In the elementary classroom, you can have the students leave a folder of work on their desks. Have copies of the textbooks and supplementary materials used by students available for parent review. A video of students working is a great way to let parents experience classroom life.

Expectations

Given that you are working to establish a partnership, the expectations have to include the expectations of all parties. While you certainly want to communicate your positive and appropriate expectations for both the students and their parents, you need to also clearly articulate what they can expect from you as an advocate for their child's education.

Who Are You?

What are your beliefs about education and learning? Why are you excited to be a teacher? What life experiences or people have influenced you? What are your hopes and dreams as a human and as an educator? You can be really brief but do reveal enough about yourself to let the parents know what you stand for and that they can count on you to be a partner with them in the education of their child. Let them know that you are prepared, positive, and professional!

Student Information

If you have not already done so, this is a good opportunity for you to ask parents to provide information about their child that might not be available from another source. You might ask about interests, successes, fears, concerns, and influential people in the child's life.

Parent Interests

Develop a system for finding out about the interests of the parents and asking them how they would like to partner with you in the education of their child. You may want to develop a survey that asks about their hobbies, their travels, their collections, their careers, etc., and whether or not they are willing and able to share their knowledge and skills with the class.



Appendix



Rich Rewards on a Poor Pocketbook

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☺ A smile | ☺ A high five |
| ☺ A pat or handshake | ☺ A positive note home |
| ☺ A positive phone call home | ☺ A “Warm Fuzzy” |
| ☺ Lunch with teacher | ☺ Lunch with your favorite person |
| ☺ Help the teacher teach a lesson | ☺ Sit in a different seat for one day |
| ☺ Sit in the teacher’s desk for one day | ☺ Be teacher’s assistant for the day |
| ☺ Game time | ☺ Free time to draw |
| ☺ Take care of classroom pets | ☺ Theme day – dress up in a costume |
| ☺ Use clay during free time | ☺ Draw on the chalkboard |
| ☺ Choose any class job for the day | ☺ Be the first in line |
| ☺ Make a bulletin board | ☺ Be a helper in another classroom |
| ☺ Read to a younger child | ☺ Help the custodian |
| ☺ No homework for the day | ☺ Use stamps and ink pads |
| ☺ Special sharing time | ☺ Use the tape recorder to tape a story |
| ☺ Be first to be dismissed for lunch, recess... | ☺ Earn a certificate |
| ☺ Coupon from McDonalds, Taco Bell... | ☺ Earn a badge |
| ☺ Have a 3-minute uninterrupted talk with the teacher | ☺ Keep the class mascot/trophy on your desk for the day |
| ☺ Stay in at recess with a friend to play a game | ☺ Bring in a tape or CD of your choice to play during free time |

Remember that the investment of your time and attention is one of the most desired rewards.

Sincere encouragement goes a long way to keeping student behavior positive.

Let's Get Acquainted

Try to use the names of all your classmates to fill in the boxes. For example, look at the first box. It says: "Has black hair." Find a student with black hair. Write his or her name in that box.



Has black hair	Middle name is the same as yours	Favorite color is blue
Loves to write	Likes vegetables	Shoe size is the same as yours
Has a cat	Is taller than you are	Is wearing tennis shoes
Plays a sport	Went to the zoo this summer	Wants to be famous
Has a garden	Likes to draw	Has an older brother

Human Treasure Hunt

My name is:

This year I want to learn:

My favorite subject is:

I wish I could live in:

When I grow up I want to be:

Something I am good at is:

© B. J. Lewis, 1996

What Is In Your Backpack?

My name is: _____

Family members... _____

After school I... _____

A surprise in my bag... _____

Favorite subject... _____

My favorite game... _____

My favorite music... _____

I like to eat... _____

Most proud of... _____

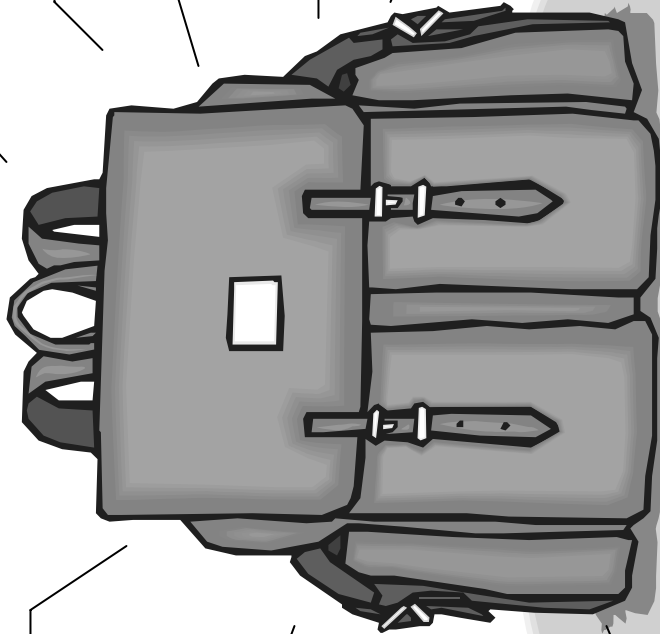
My favorite reading... _____

I want to learn... _____

Something you don't know about me is... _____

Favorite past-time... _____

Oh yeah... _____



Learning Buddies or Partners

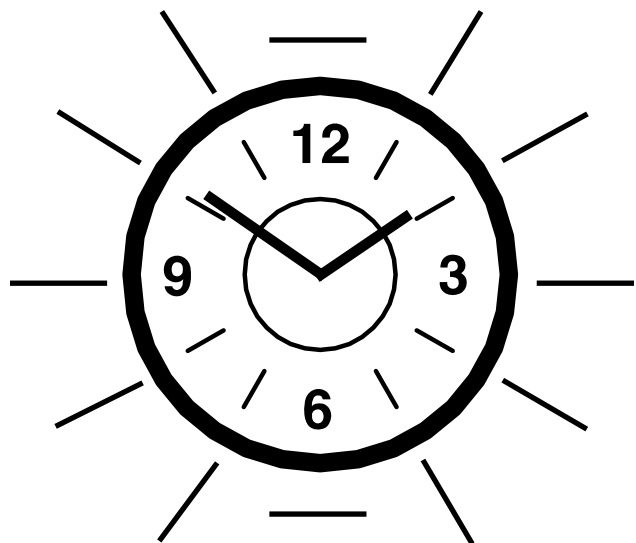
Process

- ◆ Students can self-select another student with whom to do 10:2 processing or with whom to do Think-Pair-Share.
- ◆ The teacher announces a processing time. A focus question or process direction is given to define the task for the partners.
- ◆ To build in movement, have the partners stand together as they follow the teacher's directions or answer the question. The time for these processing discussions is generally brief; 2-4 minutes is the norm.
- ◆ Teacher circulation and listening in on the discussions provides a great deal of information about what the students are learning and/or are puzzled about. It also helps hold the students accountable for talking about the designated topic.

Variations

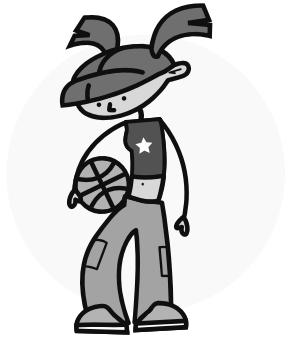
- ◆ Pairs can be carefully crafted by the teacher or randomly partnered by pulling names out of the hat, matching cards, counting off, etc.
- ◆ Clock Buddies, Element Buddies, Parent Function Partners, etc. are efficient, long-term, content specific adaptations of this structure. Students are given a graphic with slots for ten or twelve "appointments." At each slot, two students record each other's name. This sign-up period takes about four to five minutes and provides an efficient way for students to interact over the next few weeks. Whenever the teacher announces a time for students to process learning, a partnership is identified and students meet with their partner.

Clock Buddies



Learning Partners

Name: _____



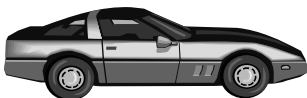
Same color of hair:



Same birthday month:



Favorite vacation the same:



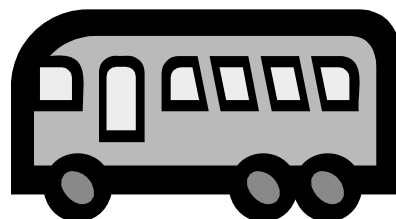
Likes the same kind of cars:





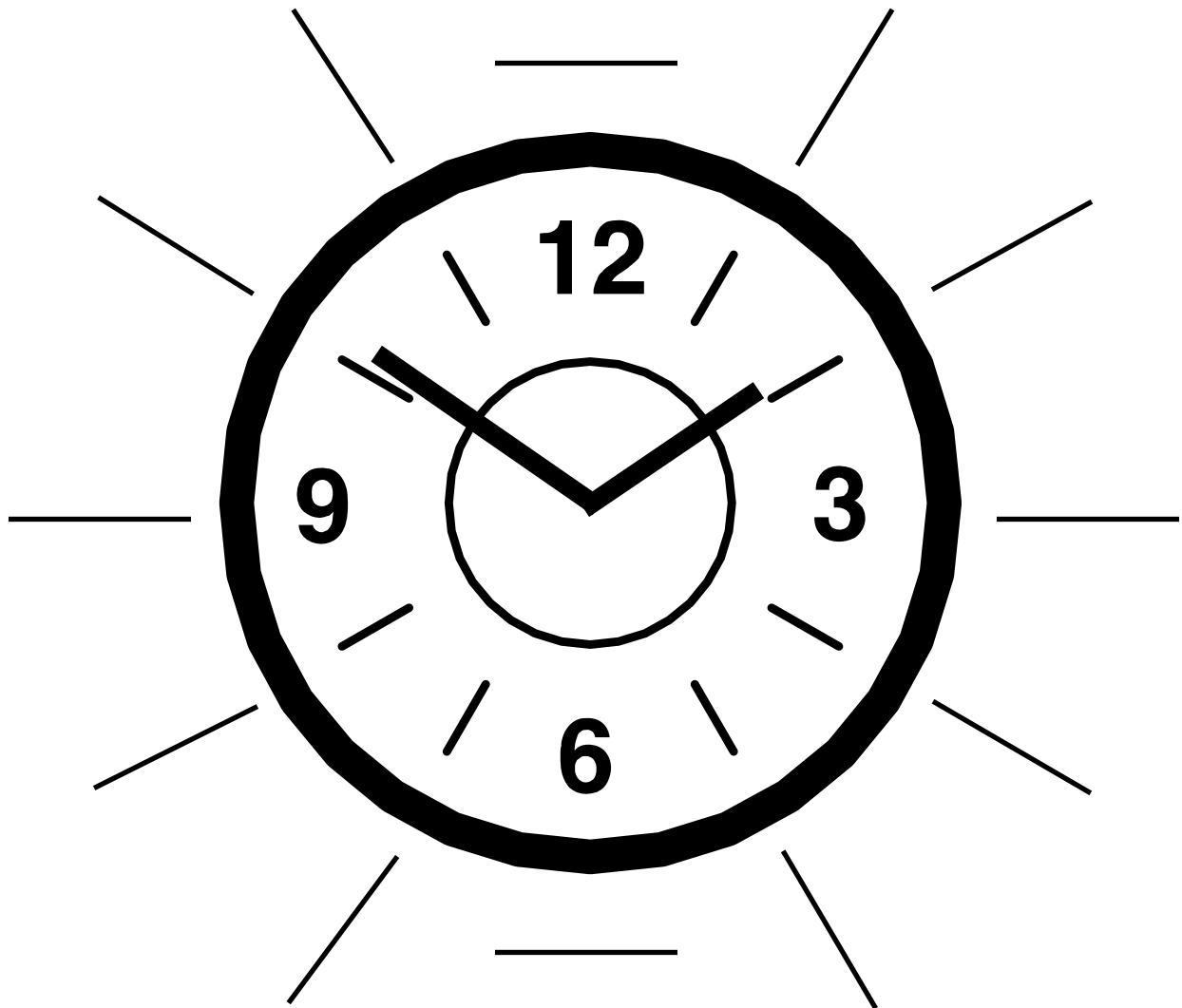
Lives nearby:

OR...rides the same bus:



Clock Appointments

As you have been told, make an appointment with one person for each hour. Write their name on the line next to the hour you will meet them. Remember that you can make an appointment only if both of you are free that hour.



South America Learning Buddies



Mike Rutherford, Manassas City Schools, Manassas, Virginia
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Give One, Get One

1. On your own, fill in **three** of these boxes with ideas you remember or found interesting or useful from the last class. Be prepared to share and explain these ideas with other members of the class.
2. As soon as you have completed Step 1, get up and find someone else who is standing and ready to share. Give one of your ideas away and get an idea from each person you meet. As soon as you have swapped ideas with one person, move on to another. Your goal is to have a different idea in each box – 3 of your own and 6 others from 6 different members of this class.
3. Each time you interact with a different person, **give one** – one of the ideas on your sheet – and **get one**. Record key words or phrases to remember each idea and get the person's name in the box. **When you have completed all nine boxes, return to your seat. Go for it!**
