

DGF High School

Teaching Tips

February 2008

1. When working with a student who has difficult behavior, it is important to give that student a clean start every day. Don't carry over behavior issues from the previous day. It's import to start fresh, and be happy to see them even if you have to fake it.

2. Only one unnecessary question per day/per class period is allowed.

An example of an unneccary question would be: " What page are we on?"

Questions such as: " Why is it only a half step and not a whole step? "would be a NECESSARY question.

3. My newest organizational tip is to color code the worksheets/hand outs for each choir. At Semester time, I was driven crazy by all white hand-outs, reviews, test, etc. Concert Choir is green.9th grade choir is yellow. (Go Bison). And Guitar Class is orange.

4, Downtime Activity - I put two words on the board (storm caused, team rode, dogs barked, etc.), and the students add adverbs, adjectives, phrases, causes, etc. to make an expanded sentence.

5. STUDENT MOTIVATION

It seems more students today are living in the present and think of their future as tomorrow or next week. Without instant gratification for their

efforts fewer students seem to be self-motivated to strive to do well in school. These same students however, often have very high quality-of-life expectations when they enter the world of work or begin a profession. It appears that many students have missed the link between educational success and career success.

A significant part of my discipline involves career exploration. I have found that student participation/motivation is enhanced by sharing observations of a brighter glimpse of their future more so than the gloom and doom associated with failure. Students often set high expectations or lofty goals for their futures. In my classroom I can provide **positive** and **realistic** outcomes to encourage students to begin to work and strive for higher academic achievement to reach their goals. A student's dreams can be our biggest ally in realizing student motivation.

6. Word of the Day

Each day we review a vocabulary word relevant to what is happening in the student's environment. For instance, tomorrow's word is - caucus. We go over the definition and use it in a sentence. The students have a notebook for new vocabulary words. After discussion, they write a sentence using the word of the day. The last week of the month, we review all the words for that month.

7. Classroom management: Keep students engaged in work - no down time where they can cause discipline problems. Have a small core set of rules for behavior and stick to them. Be consistent and fair.

8. When having a whole class discussion, I have the students raise their hands and call on each other (rather than being called on by me). Students actually listen to each other (!!), and I can facilitate, rather than dictate, the conversation.

9. NOTEBOOK/JOURNAL

- GOAL(S):**
- A. Reasons for using a notebook.
 - B. Writing skill.
 - C. Grading method.
 - D. Study guide.
 - E. **MOST IMPORTANT** - Develop an understanding of the importance of personal health and life skills.

REQUIREMENTS:

- A. Thumbprint - each notebook will have the students thumbprint stamped in it. The thumbprint shows the individual uniqueness of ones self.
- B. Notebook entries - weekly activities.
 - 1. Monday's log - **Health Attitude**. Each student will write a poem, dream, or statement about what they are pleased or unhappy about in daily health behaviors.
 - 2. Friday's log - **Health Goal**. Each student will write about a health skill that they have learned through

out the week that needs to be changed, worked on, or added to health behaviors they already have.

C. Notebook - strive to make sure that students use their notebook for daily note taking for class and follow the goals stated for its usage.

10. Schedule time to spend working with/learning the new technology (and even the old technology!). It has the capability to make you more efficient! The key is to write the training into your schedule. Opportunities that I am aware of include attending one of the monthly training sessions (dates and topics are sent out via email), or taking advantage of one-on-one training that has been offered in the past. Simply taking 5-10 minutes and using the "Help" on a program can also answer many questions you may have. Beth is also very helpful if you call her and ask a question (sorry Beth...)! Once you have the training, practice, practice, and file those helpful handouts in a technology binder!

11. I have a cup with tongue depressors in it . . . on each stick I have written the essential items which they need to bring with them to class each day [covered textbook, pen & pencil, AR book, notebook . . .] Students are responsible for reminding me to draw sticks during the class period [or they don't get the points] . . .

I spot them 220 [5 points a day] daily points at the beginning of the quarter . . . If they don't have the item drawn, they lose 5 points . . . they lose an additional 5 points for tardies, bad behaviors . . .

3rd & 4th quarter = 3 points a day . . .

My daily points are only 15% of the final grade so it doesn't actually make a big negative difference but for those kids who are responsible on a regular basis . . . it helps to "round" their grade up at the end of the quarter when they are scrambling for extra credit points.

12. Routine... the kids know that general routine each day... therefore they know whether I am here or not what format each day will bring...

Accountability...they are always responsible for themselves... without exception...

Leaders...putting them in leadership roles...choosing teams, explaining rules

Jean Lopez

13. For test reviews, I either create a Jeopardy board in PowerPoint or I use the on-line review games on a website that come with my textbooks. I use the "Eggspert" buzzer (for up to 6 players) so I don't have to rely on me to call on the first raised hand I see. I can either take 6 students at a time to read review questions while the rest of the class reviews questions online individually or in pairs OR put students in 3 teams and review all at once.

Beth Tollefson

14. Some of the students I work with like to create control battles which creates a stressful classroom environment. I try and give my students choices within limits. According to Jim Fay and David Funk's Teaching with Love & Logic, "Offering many tiny choices to students sets up an

environment in which students feel a sense of healthy control, which makes them less likely to be defiant or resistive."

Here are some examples of choices:

"Would you rather study in a group or by yourself?"

"You may choose to journal first or get started on your reading."

"Would you like to choose your partner today, or should I choose for you?"

"Would you like to call you parent and let them know what happened, or should I call you parent?"

"You can read your book in your seat, or you can get comfortable around the classroom."

15. For my ninth-grade *Geography* classes, I use the first five minutes of the period for daily writing. Topics are either germane to what we are studying (What do you like best about living in a humid continental climate?) or based on current events (Are you as excited about Hillary Clinton becoming president as I am?). I do this because freshmen have the MCA writing test in the spring and this allows them a little time every day to practice their writing (remember, teaching reading and writing isn't just the English Department's job!!). During this time I take attendance and check in

16. Rubistar - find this site on the Internet. The site is for designing rubrics to help in grading. For those types of assignments, this is a great tool.

Puzzlemaker - this is a great tool for making a variety of puzzles - particularly vocabulary study or studying term.

Shakespeare Side by Side - this is tool that is probably for English teachers only, but I found this book at Barnes and Noble. On one side of the page is the original Shakespeare text. On the opposite side is an updated version of the text. I use it for some of the complex scenes that I know students will have trouble understanding. It's a good deal for some students.

Citation Machine or Son of Citation Machine - great for trying to work through citing sources - both MLA and APA styles.

Finally, any time I can employ a game for reviewing. My students respond well to Jeopardy style games for reviewing. I know Paul M. uses this regularly. It takes a little while to set up, but it works well.

17. I have to color code everything. Example: In Per. Finance everything is green. (it reminds me of money or the color your textbook). The student's assignment folders, class assignments on the whiteboard, and my resource folders are all green. The students can even coordinate their notebooks, folders, or binders the same color. It is the only way I can keep track of everything.

18. Discipline: The Greatest Killer of Teachers

By William J. Rush

19. The greatest teacher in the world cannot teach unless good classroom discipline is maintained. Likewise, a good disciplinarian does not necessarily make a good teacher. Although none of the following principles is new how many of them do your teachers apply?

- Learn all you can about previous school experiences of your students (but do not let this information bias you).
- Be prepared for class. Ten seconds of idle time can develop into 10 minutes of problems.
- Make your assignments reasonable and clear.
- Be a good and neat dresser, be businesslike, and be friendly.
- Be prepared for the unexpected (whatever it may be).
- Keep rules to minimum - basic rules are needed, but many rules have no real purpose.
- Be consistent (for 180 school days)
- You're a fool if you punish the entire class for the actions of a few.
- Never say anything to a student in front of a class that you would not say in the presence of his or her parents.
- Never, never, never humiliate a student in front of others.
- Students have plenty of buddies. Don't be a buddy; be a teacher.
- Don't be afraid to apologize.
- Use the telephone. Let the parents work with you.
- Never argue with a student in front of the class. The odds are 25 to 1 that you'll lose.
- Believe it or not - don't see and hear everything.
- Be enthusiastic - it's contagious.
- Don't be a screamer. A barking teacher does nothing but make noise.
- Don't make study a punishment. You cannot motivate a student to "learn a punishment."

Think about that statement.

- Know your students' hobbies, interests, problems, friends, etc., and show a sincere interest in these things.
- Keep administrators informed when dealing with problem students.

William J. Rush is principal, Wilbur Watts Middle School, Burlington, N.J.

20. STAY CURRENT and RELEVANT

I find it very useful to relate all the material I am teaching to current societal tendencies. I always try to ask myself - "Why do I want my students to learn this, and how can I make it interesting?"

Advanced Make-Up Work

****Please let me know at least 3 days in advance.****

Talk to me before or after school, or during lunch. Not during class!!

1. Name:

2. Date(s) you will miss:

3. Reason:

4. Any quizzes or tests missed?

5. If yes, when will you make them up? Specifically list the date and time.

6. Any lesson or worksheets you're going to miss?
 - o If yes write them down and I will provide the worksheets or notes for you before you leave?

****Please sign your name below**

Student Signature

Note: Failure to make up the assigned work you missed by the date will result in **NO CREDIT** given.

Tony Soderberg

Returning from an Excused Absence

****You have N+1 days to make up your work.****

Talk to me before or after school, or during lunch. Not during class!!

1. Name:

2. Date(s) you missed:

3. Reason:

4. Any quizzes or tests missed?

5. If yes, when will you make them up? Specifically state the date and time.

****Please sign your name below**

Student Signature

Note: Failure to make up the assigned work you missed by the date will result in **NO CREDIT** given.

Tony Soderberg

Helpful hint for students - I always talk to them about the school days and weekend days they have been given to complete their work. That they need to consider how long it takes to complete each part of the assignment and that they need to plan for the completion of the work. They need to look at their schedule and plan time for working. If they can't do it all one night they need to spread out the work so that they give themselves enough time. Waiting and then telling me they didn't have enough time is their decision. They need to become a better student by using their time wisely.

Before the assignment is due I try to ask them how many have started the assignment. Did they plan for it or will their weekend plans take residence?

Organizational tip - I have to make myself a list and then prioritize so that I don't allow the little things to get in the way. What HAS to be finished first! Or, which one is the most important.

Classroom management - I always tell myself that what I permit, I promote. If I don't want to send the message to my students that their behavior is ok. Then I'm the one that has to make sure it changes!

Shelli Fenske

Biology/Anatomy/Environmental Science:

1. Students play bingo by having cards with scientific terms and I draw out slips of paper with common descriptions or terms.
2. The students do research and see a video on an environmental topic. Later in the week, teams are formed and we have a debate on the specifically chosen topic. They must have an opening statement, information to back up their viewpoint, and a closing statement.
3. Selected students work as lab assistants helping elementary students do a cell lab.
4. Students do an extra credit lab at the beginning of the year which involves them looking up specific organisms may be studied during the year. The students are in pairs and have to match up the organisms on the list with the correct slide.
5. A scavenger hunt is done at the end of the year as a recap to the Biology course. Items are listed with specific point values that they can bring in and earn up to 100 points. It's a hands on review of topics we covered and items we did not have time to get through.

Mike Anderson

Teaching tip: I allow students one pass per quarter. I have a folder at the front of the room in which they must sign out when they use their one pass. This limits interruptions.

Pat Reider

Name _____ Class Period _____

Article Review

- Name of Article:
- Date:
- Author and Page Number of Article:
- Briefly state the main idea of this article (using a minimum of 3 sentences):
- List three important facts that the author uses to support the main idea:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- What information or ideas discussed in this article have also been discussed in class or other readings that you have done?
- List any examples of bias or faulty reasoning that you found in the article.
- List any new terms or concepts that were discussed in the article, and write a short definition.

Amanda Bagne

After I have taught and re-taught a grammatical concept in Spanish I ask a small group - say 2 or 3 - to explain it to the class from the front of the room, using the board with examples. I usually do this instead of ME re-presenting it again for review. I then ask annoying questions. It helps them get a better/different look @ the concept.

Catherine Olsen