



Texas Beginning Educator Support System

Handbook for Beginning Teachers and Support Team Members



Region 10 ESC, 400 E. Spring Valley Rd., PO Box 831800
Richardson TX 75083-1300

**Texas Beginning Educators Support System
(TxBESS)
Handbook for Beginning Teachers and
Support Team Members**

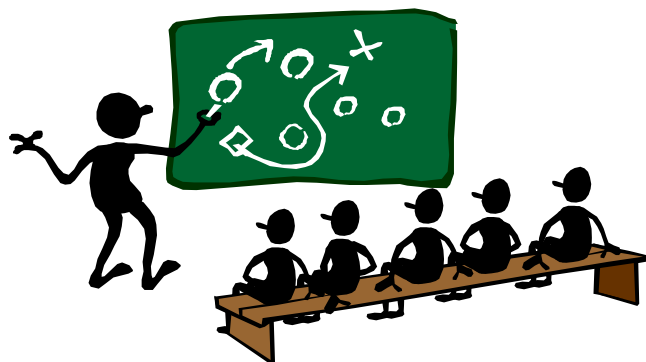
The Texas Beginning Educator Support system (TxBESS) project is a Region 10 Education Service Center partnership with several school districts, teacher preparation entities, the State Board of Educator Certification and the Texas Workforce Commission. Two local workforce areas, specifically, the Texoma Workforce Development board and the Worksource for Dallas County are also partners. The TxBESS project is focused on increasing the retention rate of early career teachers in Texas. The partnership endeavors to create school cultures that welcome, encourage, and assist beginning educators. Goals for the partnership include providing each new educator with a local support team, providing each team member with training in mentoring and coaching, and administering the TxBESS Activity Profile (TAP). The TAP is a vehicle for providing formative feedback and reflective thinking opportunities for the beginning teacher. The partnership is committed to providing two years of support for beginning educators that includes mentoring, professional development opportunities and access to resources and materials.

This handbook is a compilation of information and resources that have proven helpful to novice educators as well as to support team members. Principals, mentors, central office personnel as well as beginning educators will find many helpful ideas. Districts and campuses are encouraged to select sections from this document in order to construct a locally created handbook. Campuses and districts will add specific pages that address local goals for support and retention of beginning educators.

This handbook, compiled by Region 10 TxBESS consultants, is for the support of beginning educators. Please contact Angela Gutierrez at 972-348-1518 or email gutierrez@esc10.ednet10.net for additional information.



Texas Beginning Educator Support System



Beginning Teacher Handbook



Texas Beginning Educator Support System
New Teacher Handbook
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ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT



An Outline for Successful First Year Teachers

A. Ask for help

1. Day one
2. Paperwork
3. Lessons
4. Classroom management
5. Policies

B. Adapt and change

1. Use common sense
2. Accept/try suggestions
3. Observe others to further develop own style
4. Realize class differences

C. Discipline

1. Consistent
2. Fair
3. Proactive/not reactive
4. Pre-set procedures
5. Built on respect
6. Caring relationship/not “buddies”
7. Clear expectations
8. Accepts responsibility for classroom interactions

D. Organization

1. Establish set procedures
2. Is prepared before class begins
3. Aware of class climate/environment
4. Back-up plans in place
5. Room is “user-friendly”
6. Develop positive relationships (students, parents, peers, administration)

E. Flexibility

1. Adapts to constant changes
2. Sees more than one way
3. Remains positive-change will happen

F. Accept mistakes as part of learning

1. Recover/learn from mistakes
2. Admit personal mistakes
3. Avoid defensiveness



Goals for Beginning Teachers for the First Days of School

When establishing your classroom expectations, remember that the goal is to help students become more responsible. The intent for administering rules and procedures is to help students learn appropriate and productive life skills within a comfortable environment. Also, keep in mind that your responsibility goes beyond content information. Teaching and developing student behaviors conducive to learning is a critical part of your job as a teacher.

The activities of the first days of school (examples listed below) should lead to some specific goals. These goals might fit into three categories:

- A. The teacher getting to know the students**
- B. The students getting to know the teacher and each other**
- C. Classroom organization and management**

Teacher getting to know students

- Review and diagnostic activities, both formal (testing) and informal
- Maintain a whole-group focus on instruction and review
- Monitor student activities, both academic and social
- Actively engage all students in learning activities

Students getting to know teacher and each other

- Teacher greets students, demonstrates personal interest
- Students introduce themselves to each other
- Design activities to make students feel unique and successful. Keep activities simple but meaningful. Hands-on activities resulting in a product or a sense of productivity are beneficial.
- Establish an accepting climate
- Student self-assessment activities

Classroom organization and management

- Acquaint students with room and materials they will use (supplies, texts, building)
- Teach appropriate behavior, rules, procedures, consequences, attention signals
- Explain homework
- Demonstrate that teacher is well-prepared and purposeful
- Provide an overview of curriculum to be studied
- Preview curriculum as motivational device



Time-Saving Tips from Veteran Teachers

*The New Elementary Teacher's Handbook,
Kathleen Feenay Jonson, Cowin Press Inc, 2002*

- ❖ Review your “To-Do” list every morning. Check off tasks as they are completed.
- ❖ Assign each student a partner. When a student is absent, the partner can gather assignments that the absent student has missed. Have partners exchange phone numbers.
- ❖ Have students use an answer column along the right margin of the paper when doing math or similar short-answer assignments from textbooks. Students transfer answers from the problem to the answer column. (Learning to copy answers into an answer column carefully is an important skill, especially for taking standardized tests). You can correct half a dozen papers at a time by looking at several answer columns.
- ❖ Train students to place assignments right side up with their names at the top into “Completed Work” basket or bin. Have a labeled basket for each subject so papers are sorted for you.
- ❖ When you put students’ names into your grade book, number the names in consecutive order. Have students always write their names and numbers on their papers. You (or a student) can quickly put papers in order. You can easily see which papers are missing. Papers will be in numerical order to readily mark into your grade book.
- ❖ Teach students to do as many clerical tasks (attendance, lunch count, etc.) as possible.
- ❖ Put answers on an overhead projector transparency so students may check their homework while you deal with morning “administrivia”.
- ❖ Designate one spot on the chalkboard on which you write what students should do as soon as they enter the classroom. Teach students to look there and begin without wasting time. It will give an orderly beginning to your class at the start of the day and after recess and lunch breaks.
- ❖ Write frequently used directions on a chart instead of the chalkboard. When needed, hang up the chart. This is a good idea for assignment guidelines, book report outline, paper heading, studying tips (e.g., survey, question, read, recite, review—SQ3R), and many other procedures or reminders.
- ❖ Save time by designing your own lesson plan book. Take a page from the standard book and write in times, subjects, morning routine, recess, lunch, special classes, and other constant features. Duplicate this page so when you make your weekly lesson plans, you need only add the specific lesson topics for that week.
- ❖ Identify your supplies (pencils, scissors, markers, etc.) with a masking or colored tape strip.

- ❖ Use an overhead projector transparency instead of chalkboard to write class notes or graphic organizers during presentations. This way you can date and save them, use them again, lend them to a struggling student, and/or review them on another day.
- ❖ Designate one day a week, usually Friday, to send student work home to parents.
- ❖ Refile your materials as soon as possible so you can find them later.
- ❖ Set up a permanent bulletin board that includes class schedule, announcements, lunch menu, and other important information you (or your substitute) need regularly.
- ❖ Laminate frequently used materials for reuse in subsequent years.
- ❖ Introduce lessons with visuals—transparencies, posters, slides or artifacts.
- ❖ Use the overhead projector—it allows you to face the class and helps focus students' attention.
- ❖ Keep your seating chart in a plastic sheet protector. You can write on it with an overhead marker to keep a tally of student participation and other observations.
- ❖ When you check out textbooks to older students, have them complete a colored book charge card with all the appropriate information except the return date. These are easily alphabetized and you won't have to fill the cards out later.
- ❖ Stamp your name inside all the books you use, both class sets and personal books you lend to students. If a book is misplaced, it finds its way to your faculty mailbox.
- ❖ Laminate a piece of construction paper and write your assignments for the week on it using an overhead marker. Absentees won't have to ask you about missed assignments. You won't have to worry about accidentally erasing the list from the chalkboard.
- ❖ Maintain an index card file or 3-ring binder with name tabs for each student. Keep a separate card on each student to make notations on behavior (both positive and troublesome) and to record parent contacts. These cards become a great source for providing additional information when talking to parents.

***I touch the future...
I teach.***

Christa McAuliffe

BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST

Before School Opens

I. Curriculum Overview

- A. Preview course of study/teacher's editions of textbooks and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
- B. Develop skills agenda for first six weeks (including Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) focus)
- C. Preview mandated allotments of time and create class schedule
- D. Prepare thematic/unit outline plan for semester/year
- E. Identify school/district wide testing dates
- F. Plan first day of school lesson in detail

II. School Policies and Procedures

- A. District policies
 - 1. Sick/personal leave and attendance days
 - 2. Substitute procurement
 - 3. Conduct code
- B. School culture and environment
 - 1. Faculty and staff
 - 2. Parents (volunteer process)
 - 3. Students (identify special needs)
- C. School policies
 - 1. Bus/hall duties
 - 2. Substitute notebook
 - 3. School handbook
 - 4. Homework
 - 5. Field trips/class parties
 - 6. Dress code
 - 7. Emergency procedures (i.e. tornado-fire drills, injuries, etc.)
 - 8. Inventory procedures
 - 9. Ordering supplies/materials

III. Room Environment

- A. Set-up and prepare classroom
- B. Large/small group areas
- C. Bulletin boards
- D. Quiet areas
- E. Teacher's desk
- F. Materials and supplies
- G. Filing system/student procedures
- H. Seating arrangements and traffic flow



BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST

Before School Opens

IV. Classroom Management and Discipline

A. Records

- 1. School policies and procedures
- 2. Lunch money and charges policy
- 3. Receipt books and procedures
- 4. Grade book (establish system)
- 5. Daily attendance records
- 6. Absentee excuses
- 7. Plan book
- 8. Parent conference file
- 9. Textbook/workbook distribution
- 10. List borrowed items for future reference

B. Discipline

- 1. Individual classroom plan and procedures for all tasks
- 2. Classroom transitions (i.e. movement from one area/class to another)

C. Organization

- 1. Create filing system

V. Reasonable Expectations

- A. Immediate
- B. Long range

VI. Professional Development

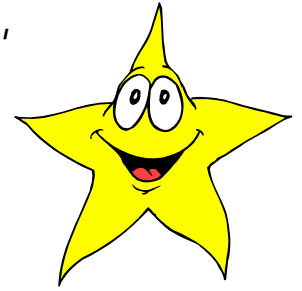
- A. Professional organization (obtain insurance)
- B. Review checklists/guides and add comments

Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:

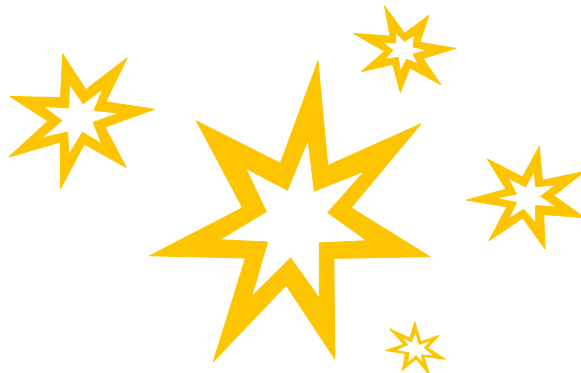


Advice from Becoming a Star Teacher,
By Patricia Hart and James Rowley



- Develop a thematic unit to teach that excites you.
- Do what works for you in the classroom.
- Continue to develop outside interests.
- Surround yourself with people who love teaching rather than those who bring you down.
- Continue to develop new goals.
- Always look for new ways to do things.
- Relax, read, and spend time alone or with people you enjoy.
- Attend some of the extracurricular activities in which students in your classroom participate.
- Model some of your teaching strategies after your favorite teacher.
- Always come back to “what is best for the children I teach.”

Practical Strategies and Inspiration for K-6 Teachers,
October 1997



10 Insights into Developing a Productive Career in Education *by Wayne Carlson*

During my 30+ years as a professional educator—a teacher—I have faced many challenges and have had many incredible experiences. I have taught American history to Navajo Indians in a Bureau of Indian affairs boarding school in Utah, and world geography to the children of nuclear physicists in Los Alamos, New Mexico. For the past 18 years, I have taught social studies in Brush, a small rural community on the Great Plains of Eastern Colorado. Most of my experience has been at the middle school level. I have come to the firm conclusion that what you teach is not nearly as important as how you teach. Kids don't really care what you know until they know that you care. I have had the privilege of having all three of my sons in my class and have had the opportunity to work with many wonderful people. I would like to share some of the insights that I have gained over the tenure of my career. I believe they are the keys to a productive career in education.

#1 Be Consistent. Deliberate carefully about the rules that you want to establish in your classroom. Keep them simple and be prepared to follow through. The fewer rules you have, the fewer will be violated. Be clear about the consequences and never make threats unless you plan to carry them out, because someone will invariably test you. I have three rules in my classroom: 1) be on time, 2) be prepared for class, and 3) respect the rights of others.

#2 Be creative. Change directions frequently. Pretend that your classroom is a vehicle that has 24 gears. Use each and every one of them periodically. Variety truly is the spice of life. Kids like active learning. I believe the most effective way to learn is by making discoveries and the best way to teach is to provide opportunities for these discoveries.

#3 Be friendly. I have found that I am the one who sets the tone for each of my classes. If I stand at the doorway and greet each student with a friendly and personal greeting, he/she treats me and the rest of the class differently than if I don't. Take the time to get to know at least a little bit about each of your students. I have nearly 140 students and I know this takes a great deal of time, but it is an invaluable investment. Be cheerful and friendly with your colleagues, even the ones that can be difficult to get along with. Take the initiative and go the extra mile to promote congenial relations, especially with the people with whom you work closely. It is equally important that you maintain good relationships with the administration and support staff. Many teachers look at the principal as "The Enemy" and treat him/her as such, which can become a self-fulfilling situation. Be positive, cooperative and helpful. Make a special effort with the janitorial staff—they can make your life miserable if they don't like or respect you. Try to maintain good relationships on every level.

#4 Utilize community resources. Talk to parents at conferences and find out about their jobs, hobbies and interests. Use resource people whenever you can. Get to know the education reporter from the local newspaper. Don't forget that the local library and/or museum are full of interesting resources. Take field trips into the community, and get to know as many local people as you can. Try to invite local people into your classroom on a regular basis. They will become your support system.

#5 Be flexible. I remember the day in my first year as a classroom teacher when my principal was due to visit for an “official observation”. I had a dynamic lesson planned that would undoubtedly “knock his socks off”. I had my anticipatory set, and my objectives, activities, and closure down pat. A key part of my lesson involved a short filmstrip (this was 30 years ago), and wouldn’t you know it, the bulb on the filmstrip projector went out! Fortunately, having been a classroom teacher himself, the principal understood the situation and I survived. Ever since, I have always kept an extra “bulb” on hand and have learned to roll with the punches. You can bet that sometime during your career, a lesson or activity that you consider absolutely essential will be messed up by a fire drill or some other eventuality, so be flexible and keep your cool.

#6 Be involved. Take an active role in your professional organization. Be a leader. Be an innovator. Let others walk in your shadow. Join the educational sorority. Get involved in your church. Join the local museum. I really believe that you get out of life what you put into it. Don’t sit there and watch the parade pass you by. Grab a baton and jump on the bandwagon. Volunteer for as many things as your schedule will allow. But don’t get involved heavily your first two years in the classroom while you are still getting the feel for teaching. I have personally been a leader in the effort to establish a local museum. I was elected to the initial board of directors of the Brush Area Museum and Cultural Center. I chaired a committee of local citizens who placed a marker commemorating the Texas Montana Cattle Trail, which passed through Brush during the late 1800s. I was primarily responsible for obtaining national historic designation for the school building that will soon house our museum. I met and got to know many wonderful people whom I now use as a resource people in my history classes. This was a wonderful experience for me and has made me a better teacher.

#7 Continue your education. Some of my most wonderful and most meaningful educational experiences have occurred during the last few years. I have taken groups of middle school kids to Washington D.C. for each of the last 10 summers. They love it and learn a great deal, but I have gained much more than any of them. The opportunity to meet new people and to see new things is incredible! Two summers ago I camped and lived with traditional Navajo people and experienced their culture. I even got to participate in a sweat ceremony at the bottom of Canyon de Chelly in Arizona—an opportunity few Anglos get. This year I am planning to take a group of my students on an exchange program to visit these same wonderful people.

#8 Interact with your colleagues. You will be amazed at what a wonderful bunch of people you work with. At Brush Middle School we have a team of five teachers who teach the core subjects (reading, English, science, math and social studies). We work together on a daily basis and share a common planning period. We really help each other to be the best we can be. We have developed several interdisciplinary units that help our students understand the ways in which different types of learning are connected. You may not like some of the people you work with, but it is important to realize that each one is an individual with many ideas that can make you a more effective teacher.

#9 Have fun! Sometimes your days will seem to pass so slowly that you will feel like the next vacation will never come. But when you get to the point in your career that I have reached, you will wonder what in the world happened. How could time possibly have gone by so quickly? My most important piece of advice to you is to have fun. Don’t worry about the car payment. Be silly

sometimes. Let your hair down. Act like a 13-year-old once in a while. My friend and colleague Ken and I play ping-pong nearly every night after school for half an hour. We never talk about school or students. This is probably the most important time for each of us because we just relax and have a good time.

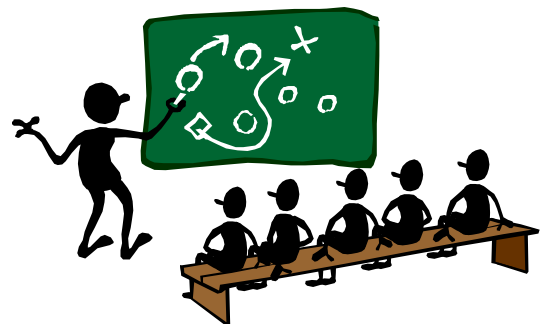
#10 You are important. The financial rewards of teaching school are not great. My oldest son is in his third year as an electrical engineer. I have taught for 30+ years. He makes more money than I do. But the intrinsic rewards of this profession are greater than any other. The chance to influence young like we do is an awesome privilege and a tremendous opportunity. I was recently reminded of that fact. Last fall I welcomed about 125 new seventh grade students into my classroom. Most of them were naturally a bit nervous about the new school year and all the new teachers. After a few days they realized that seventh grade was not going to be so bad and settled into the routine.

I had one student who was different from most. He was new to the community, new to the school, and was very shy and anxious. He was as cute as could be with freckles, dimples and a cowlick. He could easily have passed for Tom Sawyer or the Beaver. The only kids he knew were a group of bullies who had taken it upon themselves to “initiate” him and make his life generally miserable. He was relatively small and easy to intimidate. He was introverted, polite, and vulnerable. His name was Matt Brown. Matt was a very average student who had to work hard to achieve decent grades. He figured out quickly that in my room he was safe and that I could be his friend. He and I had a lot of common interests, especially collecting football and baseball cards. I started calling him Brownie (which he loved) and made sure he got lots of positive attention. Gradually the other students started viewing him differently and he developed several friendships. Even the class bullies began to treat him decently. Throughout the year, Brownie and I developed a special relationship. He brought in his autographed John Elway card and I brought in my Brett Favre. When I was on lunch duty, he hung around and we talked about all kinds of things. Since his parents were divorced, I became one of his adult male role models. He became a happy, well-adjusted, “normal” middle school student with lots of friends. The last day of school, I received one of those invaluable intrinsic rewards that make teaching worthwhile. I received a letter from Matt’s mom. It read:

Dear Mr. Carlson,

When my son Matt entered seventh grade at Brush Middle School this past fall, he was scared to death. He had no friends. He was being bullied and harassed unmercifully by a group of boys and absolutely hated school. Many mornings I literally had to force him out of the door. Your classroom was a safe haven for him. When you started calling him “Brownie” and joking around with him in your class, he gradually became “one of the guys” and really started loosening up and making friends. Now he is ornery and happy and actually looks forward to going to school. Thank you so much for the way you helped “Brownie” fit in. I will forever be indebted to you.

**Sincerely,
Linda Short**





Beginning Teacher Checklist

August – September

I. Instructional Preparation

- A. Lesson plans identifying key concepts taught
- B. Activities to support learning concepts
- C. Projects to extend/motivate learners
- D. Evaluation/assessments/Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) reviews
- E. Grade Book
- F. Groups/centers
- G. Outside resources/materials for instruction
- H. Student work displays
- I. Substitute teacher plans
- J. Guidelines for classroom celebrations (if appropriate)

II. Instructional Strategies

- A. Awareness of student needs
 - 1. Identify students with Individual Education Plan (Special Education)
 - 2. Identify students' cultural/diverse needs
 - 3. Identify students in specific activities (band, athletics, etc.)
- B. Evaluation of students
 - 1. Evaluation of instructional goals/key concepts/TAKS targets
 - 2. Multiple sources for assessment
- C. Assignments for groups/individuals
 - 1. Experiment with teaching strategies
 - 2. Design assessments or rubrics for assignments
- D. Creation of alternative/modified activities for individualization
- E. Homework for students
 - 1. Volume of work
 - 2. Assignment sheet for homework
 - 3. Coordination with other teachers (when appropriate)

III. Behavior Management

- A. Review school/classroom discipline plan
- B. Establish class rules (3-5) and consequences
- C. Determine reinforcement for positive behavior/class procedures
- D. Establish documentation process for student behaviors
 - 1. Look for students' strengths and weaknesses
 - 2. Collect information for parent conferences

Beginning Teacher Checklist

August –September

IV. Communication Skills

- A. Orient parents
 - a. Plan and implement parent's night
 - b. Parent introductory letter
 - c. Supplies list/letter
- B. Write notes or make phone calls to parents
- C. Develop personal communication skills of teacher
 - Oral
 - a. Voice control and correct grammar
 - b. Clear directions
 - Written
 - a. Review for correct grammar and mechanics
 - b. Use of chalkboard
- D. Develop plans to get student work home
- E. Review progress reports, procedures and identify students
- F. Prepare report cards for students
 - 1. Filling in information
 - 2. Marking of attendance
 - 3. Averaging of grades
 - 4. Reporting on conduct
 - 5. Documenting for special education (if appropriate)
 - 6. Checking for signatures and conference requests

V. Professional Development

- A. Modeling by mentor teacher
- B. Observing other teachers
- C. Record personal reflections

Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:

Questions To Ask Your Mentor

- Whom do I see if I need office supplies?
- Whom do I see if I have a student needing to be tested for special education services?
- Whom do I see if a student needs counseling?
- Whom do I see if I need help with a student who is having discipline problems?
- Whom do I see if I need textbooks?
- Whom do I call if I need a substitute?
- What are my hours?
- What is the coffee procedure?
- What is the cafeteria procedure? How much do teachers pay for lunches?
- What do I do if I need to leave my classroom?
- What are the bathroom and hallway rules?
- What time do students come to the room?
- What special programs do we have?
- When, under what circumstances, is it appropriate to write a discipline referral for a student?
- Where do I park?
- Where do I eat lunch?
- Where do students go in the morning before school starts?
- Do students need a hall pass?
- Are there any assigned duties?



Organizing Physical Space in a Classroom

Student Desks.

How do you organize the students?

- _____ groups—number in group, location in room, student or teacher choice
- _____ rows—number in row
- _____ other patterns for desks—partners, triads, large horseshoe shape, circle

Teacher Workspace.

How do you organize your workspace?

- _____ file cabinet (how do you organize each drawer or file?)
- _____ teacher use only
- _____ extra worktable
- _____ teacher mailbox
- _____ other

Supplies and Materials.

Where do you keep personal supplies vs. supplies for student use?

- _____ for teacher use only
- _____ available for student use

Bulletin Boards/Interactive Learning Centers. Where are they located?

- _____ seasonal information
- _____ subject or enrichment centers

Other Areas in Classroom. What and where?

- _____ lost and found
- _____ student mailboxes/folders
- _____ reference materials/computers
- _____ other

Equipment Checklist

Before you put your plan into action and start moving heavy furniture around the room, first design a blueprint on a piece of paper, positioning each piece of furniture and equipment. Consult the following checklists for items you might wish to consider in your plan:

Permanent Features

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Placement of door | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of windows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric sockets | <input type="checkbox"/> Chalk or dry-erase boards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light switch | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone line |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil sharpeners | <input type="checkbox"/> Immovable cabinets |

Technical Equipment

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Television |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VCR | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser disc player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio tape player | <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead projector |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CD Player | |

Furniture

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher's desk and chair | <input type="checkbox"/> File cabinet(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrels | <input type="checkbox"/> Table(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student desks or tables | <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waste basket(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookshelves |

RESOURCE CHECKLIST FOR YEAR-LONG ACCUMULATION/ORGANIZATION

Listed below are resources that are easy-to-find and that will enhance your teaching while adding interest and variety to the curriculum.

Newspapers

Journals –Check local university

Diaries

Government documents

Photographs – libraries & museums

Artwork – museums of art

Letters

Artifacts – museums of natural history

Periodicals

Newsletters

Local societies – such as Audubon or Humane

Art or historical museums – offer tours

County courthouse

Park rangers and environmental groups

Major oil companies

Local zoo

Local businesses – often involved in partnerships

Speakers bureaus at colleges

County parks – might have geologists

Supplies Checklist

Once the furniture is arranged, you will next need to concentrate on supplies that will be useful in your work. First, take inventory of what is already available in your room. Then, make a list of items you will need based on these suggestions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lined paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Plain paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper punch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scotch tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Masking tape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book covers | <input type="checkbox"/> File cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stapler | <input type="checkbox"/> Staples |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper clips | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-it notes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pens | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rulers | <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer disks | <input type="checkbox"/> Video tapes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging folders | <input type="checkbox"/> File folders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead markers | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry-erase markers or chalk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance book | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson plan book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scantrons (machine-scorable answer sheets) | <input type="checkbox"/> Glue/Paste |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil Sharpeners |

In addition to these general supplies, you will also need those related to your subject—chemicals for science teachers, balls for physical education, paint for art. Consult with your department head and other colleagues for suggestions in this area.

Class Participation Assessment

Name _____ Quarter _____

Your class participation is an important part of this course. You will assess yourself and your teacher will also assess you. This gives you an opportunity to reflect upon your own performance and attitude. You will rank yourself on a scale of 5-10 in each of the following areas listed in the chart. You should consider your overall participation as well as your improvement (if any) during the quarter.

Key to rankings:

- 5 = Ouch!—did not exhibit the quality at all
- 6 = Very Weak—needs great improvement in this area
- 7 = Fair—occasionally exhibits quality but not on a consistent basis
- 8 = O.K.—exhibits quality a good deal of the time
- 9 = Good—exhibits quality almost all of the time
- 10 = Outstanding—an area of excellence and source of pride for you

Quality	5	6	7	8	9	10
● Behavior —Are you respectful of teachers and peers? Do you avoid unnecessary talking? Do you listen to others? In lab, do you follow instructions and maintain safety standards?						
● Preparation —Do you complete your homework and turn it in on time? Do you bring your notebook and book to class? Do you think about the ideas and get help when you don't understand?						
● Effort —Do you do your best work? Do you analyze your mistakes, learn from them, and do better the next time? Is your work of high quality-neat and thorough? Are you on time to class?						
● Attitude —Do you volunteer to answer questions? Are you cooperative and enthusiastic about class activities? Do you take a leadership role in your groups? Do you avoid whining and complaining?						
● Focus —Do you pay attention for the whole period? Do you take good notes and ask questions? Do you avoid packing up your materials before the bell rings?						

Student Total _____ Teacher Total _____

Comments: _____ Comments: _____

Adapted from Revisit, Reflect, Retel, by Linda Hoyt, Heineman 1999

Knowing Your Students

Now that we've got your room out of the way, it's time to concentrate on the students you will soon be meeting. Within a very short period of time, you may be working with over a hundred students, each with individual needs and unique names to memorize and pronounce correctly. If you think that's overwhelming, just think about foreign language teachers who not only have to learn the real names of each student but also their assigned Spanish, French, German, Russian, Japanese or Latin names.

Learning the names of students quickly is only one of your initial tasks. You will also want to accumulate some basic data on each of your students.

Collecting Information

D. Sample Information Card

Cary Jay Kottler call me Cary Spanish name: Carlito
Born: Nov. 25, 1986 I'm 16

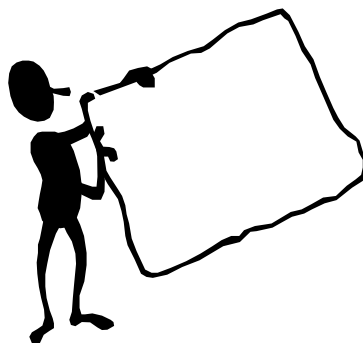
We speak English at home, although my first language was Spanish when I lived in Peru when I was 2.

My mom works at the school district so I can't get in trouble. My dad works at the university.

Baseball is the most important thing to me. We've won 5 State Championships in a row. If I can't play baseball professionally, then I have no clue what I'm going to do.

Besides baseball, I guess I like music, movies, and girls. Once in a while, I will read a book.

I gotta tell you: I'm not crazy about Spanish. Hopefully, you will change that for me.



Self-Evaluation

This activity is designed to help you take inventory of your use of instructional strategies that can help meet individual student's needs. Please read the specific strategy and check F (frequently), O (occasionally), or N (never) to indicate the frequency of usage in your classroom.

	<u>F</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>N</u>
Cooperative learning	—	—	—
Small-group work	—	—	—
Peer teaching	—	—	—
Remediation	—	—	—
Extension activities	—	—	—
Conferencing with students	—	—	—
Use of technology	—	—	—
Teacher observation	—	—	—
Student choice of assignments	—	—	—
Alternate use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies	—	—	—

Scoring:

- Give yourself 5 points for every **Frequently**
- Give yourself 3 points for every **Occasionally**
- Give yourself 0 points for every **Never**

My total score is:

- 0-10 Needs improvement!
- 10-25 Not too bad!
- 25-35 Keep up the fabulous work!

Tips for Classroom Management

- ▶ Maintain an organized, pleasant, functional classroom environment.
- ▶ Always greet your students at the door.
- ▶ Never arrive unprepared.
- ▶ Adopt only a few rules, and establish procedures for all activities.
- ▶ Give copies of your rules and procedures to students and parents.
- ▶ Engage learners in meaningful activities.
- ▶ Maximize instructional time.
- ▶ Enable all students to experience success.
- ▶ Nip potential problems by being proactive.
- ▶ Treat all students with dignity.

*A Better Beginning Supporting and Mentoring New Teachers, Marge Scherer, 1999
ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*



A Review of Things to Remember When Connecting with Students

- Listen carefully without interrupting.
- Listen not only for what the student is saying but also for what is being implied beneath the surface.
- Stay neutral and don't judge the student or trust may be breached.
- Communicate with your body, face, eyes, your whole being, that you are intensely interested in what students are saying.
- Show compassion and empathy in your manner and style.
- Whenever possible, don't let yourself be interrupted or distracted when a student is confiding in you.
- Prove that you've understood what was said by occasionally responding with reflection of feeling and content that you heard.
- Avoid giving advice or telling students what to do with their lives.
- Make yourself as visible and accessible as you can.
- If you must ask questions, don't interrogate kids; instead, ask open-ended inquires that encourage them to elaborate.
- Look carefully for signs of severe distress; if a student does seem to be in danger of harm or abuse, you must report it to the administration.
- At the end of a conversation, summarize what you heard and ask the student to do the same.
- Make appropriate referrals to the counselor or other professionals when a student could profit from such help.
- Follow up on the conversations by remembering to ask students how they're doing and what they've done since you last talked.

Summarized from Kottler, J.A.(1993) Teacher as Counselor: Developing the Helping Skill You Need, Newbury Park, CA Sage

Connecting with Difficult Students

In spite of your best intentions, there may be a number of students who don't respond to your noble overtures. Don't let them get you down. As a beginning teacher, you are often assigned to some of the most challenging groups of kids, those who are unmotivated or somewhat difficult to handle.

Although all teachers wouldn't necessarily share the same definition of who a difficult student is, there is some consensus as to which ones may challenge you the most in your efforts to reach them:

- The angry student looks sullen, with a chip on his shoulder. No matter what you do, he will resist your efforts.
- The withdrawn student is certainly not a behavior problem, quite the opposite, she may sit passively in the back of the room or even sleep with her head on the desk.
- The quiet student just doesn't talk at all. He may or may not be paying attention, you really can't tell. No matter what you do to try and draw him out, he is so shy that he just smiles enigmatically.
- The student who is in over her head and feels like she is so far behind there is no point in even trying to cooperate in your class. She has given up all hope.
- The procrastinator continually plays games with you. He always has excuses for why he doesn't have his work completed. He may be wickedly charming, but manages to avoid doing much that is useful.
- The addicted student is strung out on drugs or alcohol. Her attention is, at best, fleeting. She sits in the back of the room with a glassy-eyed stare.
- The overly social student is always flirting or disturbing others around him. You stop him a dozen times, but he doesn't seem to respond to the corrections.
- The class clown may be motivated by either a sense of humor or something more perverse. Regardless of his intentions, he is constantly the center of attention.

*Adapted from Common-Sense Classroom Management,
by Jill Lindberg and April Swick, Corwin Press, Inc. 2002*



Maintaining Discipline

The establishment of rules is one of the first steps to managing a classroom efficiently. Students are more likely to follow rules if they have participated in developing them. The following guidelines should be helpful:

- Limit the number of rules; five or six positive ones are usually sufficient.
- Solicit students' ideas and suggestions for consideration as rules.
- Design rules that enhance student learning.
- State the rules in language that the students understand.
- Determine, in advance, the consequences of keeping or breaking the rules.
- Print, display, distribute, and sign contracted rules with the students.

“At the beginning of the year—on the very first day, and then each day of the first week—I establish the expectations I have for my students. I make them realistic, sensible and fair. I test students for their understanding of these rules as I would for any other information.”

An effective classroom management system should provide opportunities for group discussion. You may want to use class meetings or discussion groups to obtain students' opinions on specific topics or problems. Your role at these discussion sessions should be that of guide, moderator and arbitrator.

“Throughout the year as problems arise, I rely on the classroom meeting discussion strategy to help the class determine changes and improvements that need to be made. Classroom meeting rules are established and agreed upon by the total group before discussion begins:

1. Everyone sits in a circle in order to be seen and heard easily.
2. The president of the class or the teacher opens the meeting by stating the area of concern.
3. One person speaks at a time. Each student has the right to be heard. No talking or whispering is allowed. Any student causing a disturbance will be asked to leave the circle.
4. The first time around the circle, everyone can have input on the topic. The second time around, suggestions are made to solve the problem or make changes.
5. The class secretary keeps notes on suggestions made, so that a final decision based on consensus can be reached.

“The classroom-meeting strategy enables students to learn to respect each other's ideas, to listen, and to make decision that affect the individual as well as the group. It also develops a sense of commitment to the goals that were established during the first weeks of school. Students can learn to accept responsibility for their actions and abide by the decisions they have made.”

Disruptive behavior will be minimized, and learning enhanced if students are encouraged to interact positively and support one another's efforts. To maintain a friendly but task-oriented classroom atmosphere, it may be helpful to grade more than just written work. For example,

when a student gives an oral presentation the other students could be graded on their listening skills. Points may be deducted if students talk during a presentation by another student. After a presentation, you might ask a student to repeat one fact he/she learned from the report, and another student to explain one thing he/she liked about the presentation. This also helps the speaker, who receives at least two positive comments before sitting down.

Unfortunately, every classroom has one—or several—students who provoke negative attention. They seem to set up situations that elicit constant responses from you. Try to play up positive behavior with attention-demanders.

“A few years ago, I began using index cards to communicate with these students, politely asking them to refrain from... or begin working on..., always ending it with, ‘I’ll help you if you need it.’ Amazingly, the students complied with my written requests. I felt as if I had discovered a magic wand. I carried it further. When a student improved in some way, I’d write a personal note as a compliment and casually drop it on the student’s desk. More than once, I have seen an ‘incurable’ retrieve my note from a jacket pocket to reread several times during the class period. One young man even asked me if he could show the note to his mother and probation officer!”



Adapted from Classroom Management for Elementary Teachers, by Carolyn Evertson, E. Emmer, and M. Worsham, Longwood Books, Allyn & Bacon, 2002

Removing Behavior Problems

Best suited for Grade 1 to Grade 10

Problem: Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of your classroom, a behavior problem student will do his or her best to disrupt the proceedings. (Sound Familiar?)

This is especially true if in the normal course of events you cannot keep an eye on the particular student one hundred percent of the time.

How can you remove the behavior problem from your midst in the quickest and most efficient way possible? How do you avoid a confrontation with the behavior problem student while removing him or her from class?

Solution: Write the following message on a note, “This student is causing a disturbance in my classroom. Please keep him/her in the office until I am able to talk to this student”.

Seal the note in an official-looking envelope on which you have written, “Please give the student a response.” You now ask for a volunteer (if you think your problem student would volunteer) to take the letter to the office. If you feel the student would not normally volunteer, the just send the student with the letter.

You tell the student not to return to class until he or she has obtained a response from the office.

The behavior problem student will thus successfully transport him or herself to the office to deal with the consequence he or she deserves.

In order for this idea to work, it is necessary for you to have the prearranged cooperation of your school’s central office.

If office support is not available, it is possible to make an arrangement with a colleague in another classroom. You can send your behavior problem to that other cooperating teacher, thus putting the student out of the environment of his or her peers.

If you are cooperating with another teacher on this, it means you will probably have to accept a behavior problem student from that other class; therefore, you should keep a desk in a corner of your room for this purpose.

Adapted from Discipline Strategies by Carol Fuery, Sanibel SandDallar Publications, Inc., 1994

Learning Logs

The purpose of learning logs is to compile useful information, to record notes about thinking and learning, and to promote reflection and self-evaluation. Students are required to record a minimum number of comments, questions, ideas, reflections, concerns, concepts or skills learned. Periodically, students are also asked to evaluate their learning and to compile entries indicating “significant learnings”. The evaluation process would require students to compile lists of the most important concepts/skills learned over specific periods of time. Students would defend these choices with written reasons supporting their opinions. Learning logs can be used school-wide including sections for each class or they can be used by individual teachers for particular classes.

Entry questions for accessing world knowledge and setting goals:

- What do you already know about it?
- What would you like to find out?
- What might this be about?
- What does this remind you of?
- Has anything like this ever happened to you or anyone you know?
- How is this different from what you already knew?

Entry questions for accessing text content:

- What is this about?
- What are the most important ideas?
- What is most interesting?
- What did you find out that you didn't know before?
- What surprised you?
- What is (might be) happenings?
- How can you explain this?
- What does this mean?

Presenting Yourself to Students' Families and Enlisting Their Support

Begin in September to reach out to students' families. Several avenues of communication should be explored as you work to establish a strong partnership. Regular written communications, parent conferences, phone calls, and encouraging parent volunteers can each play an important role in developing good rapport with students' families. The following suggestions can help get you started.

1. **Be positive.** Parents, guardians, and other family members want the same thing you do for their children: a good education. You will win support if you let them know you expect that you and your students will have a successful, productive year. They will want to be part of the good things happening for their children.
2. **Clarify expectations—yours and theirs.** Introductory newsletters, bulletins, or parent/student/teacher commitment forms can all be used effectively to establish communications. Let students' families know how you will direct the learning in your classroom, and what you expect from your students. What are your goals for the class? What are your class rules and grading system? When will report cards or other forms of assessment come home? When can parents come to school conferences? How can a telephone conference can be arranged when necessary? What special activities will families be invited to attend? What can parents do if their child is having difficulty with you or your class? How can students' families support you? Try to make your written communications brief and regular, and be sure to provide an opportunity for questions, responses, and suggestions on any communication you send home.
3. **Encourage students' families to take part in their child's learning.** Let them know how important they are to their child's progress by sending corrected work home regularly. You might want to keep a folder for each student's work, which can be sent home, signed by a parent or family member after review, and returned to school.
4. **Be realistic and flexible in your expectations.** For some families, reasonable involvement may be limited to reading school notices, overseeing homework, and talking with their child about school. Others will have the time and inclination to become much more involved. Be ready to acknowledge all parents and family members in their efforts to support you.
5. **Provide guidelines for help with homework.** Include your personal ideas along with any school homework policy. Here are a few to consider:

- ❖ **Make students responsible for understanding and completing their assignments.** Homework, as you will assign it, is an extension of your classroom activities. Students will be practicing concepts and processes you have introduced and explained, or they will use ideas from your classroom as a foundation for creating something new or exploring a subject further. Make it clear that you do not expect parents or caregivers to teach or to try to guess what you are asking their child to do.
- ❖ **Let parents know that if a child forgets his/her book or does not remember how to complete an assignment,** they can make this a learning experience by helping the child think through the steps or options for solving the problem. Can the child write down what he/she does not understand and ask you the next day? Can he/she call a classmate to clarify the assignment? This approach minimizes dependence on parents and helps avoid confusion for students whose parents explain subject matter in a different way that you have taught it.
- ❖ **Explain the difference between long- and short-term assignments.** Let parents know that you expect students to work within a schedule for longer assignments. If it seems appropriate, ask parents or family members to sign daily assignments and weekly progress checks on long-term homework.
- ❖ **Ask parents and family members not to correct their child's homework.** This helps to discourage an overzealous parent from taking on the assignment and relieving the child of his/her responsibility. Tell your students' families that you must see the child's independent work to know whether he/she understands the assignment. Parents and family members can help best by showing interest in the children's work, emphasizing the importance of homework, and providing a time and place to study.
- ❖ **Invite parents' comments on your homework assignments.** Do they feel the assignments are too difficult or too easy? You may want to designate an hour or two each week as telephone conference time. Encourage parents and family members not to wait for formal conferences to talk with you about their concerns.

*Summarized for 501 Tips for Teachers: Kid-Tested Ideas, Strategies, and Inspirations,
by Robert D. Ramsey, Contemporary Books 1997*

Student Accountability

Keys to the Classroom: A Teacher's Guide to the First Month of School, by C. Moran, J. Stobbe, W. Baron, J. Miller, and E. Moir, Newbury Park, CA, Corwin Press, Inc. 1992

Allow students to take responsibility for themselves by letting them know that specific work is due each day and where to put completed work so it can be corrected and returned in a timely way.

Passing out or collecting materials.

- Do as quickly as possible to keep students from getting restless.
- Have someone in charge of passing out papers and collecting them.
- When passing out numerous items (such as during art) have a lesson or activity to keep students occupied.

Student's responsibility for turning in work. It is vital that your students be taught to be responsible for their work.

Finished assignments. At the beginning of the year, be alert for students who do not finish their assignments. Act promptly by speaking to the student, warning that should the behavior continue, you'll have to talk with the parents. It may be necessary to place the student on a daily contract to be sure all work is completed as assigned.

A contract can be as simple as a 3x5 card with the student's name and date at the top and your signature with either a happy or sad face, depending upon completion of work. When parent cooperate, this is a good tool to use for getting work finished. When they do not, you'll need to come up with a contract between you and the student to ensure he/she understands the work must be finished.

Teacher accountability for student incomplete work. If you are getting a lot of incomplete or inaccurate work in your classroom, there may be a problem in your presentation. You'll want to ask yourself these questions:

- Do my students understand what I expect from them regarding written lessons?
- Did I remember to show them a sample of the work? Did I allow enough time for answering questions before they began the assignment?
- Did I give clear instructions before they began the lesson?

REMEMBER: As your students have specific responsibilities to you, you in turn are accountable for providing clear, concise and understandable directions to them.

TEACHER TIP: During the first month of school, establish a homework buddy system. Pair off students according to where they live. By selecting students who live near each other, when one buddy is absent, the other student takes work home and returns the completed work.

Special Problems

Keys to the Classroom: A Teacher's Guide to the First Month of School, by C. Moran, J. Stobbe, W. Baron, J. Miller, and E. Moir, Newbury Park, CA, Corwin Press, Inc. 1992

Not all students fit into the same mold. Some work well in groups while others do not. In order to run an efficient classroom, you must try to meet these individual needs. Here is an example: Tony was a behavior problem from the time he entered fourth grade. He talked too much, bothered those around him and seldom got his work in on time. One day he surprised his teacher by asking, "Mrs. S., could I move my desk over in that corner and sit by myself? I just want to be alone." The teacher agreed and helped Tony move his desk. He stayed in that corner, by his own choice, for the remainder of the year. Both his grades and behavior improved.

Incomplete work. Particularly during the first month of school, you must let your students know your policy regarding work not completed. Here are some questions you need to ask yourself about accepting work not finished:

- Will I expect most work to be completed in class?
- When work is not completed in class, will it be due the next day? Two days? End of week?
- If turned in unfinished, will I return the paper to the student to complete? If so, how will I keep track of this? In a notebook? On the chalkboard?
- When students finally complete overdue assignments, where will they turn in the work? In a special basket or where I collect regular work?
- If I accept incomplete work, how much will I deduct from the total grade?
- If I have students with special needs, such as bilingual children with reading and language problems, should I expect them to complete as much as others in the classroom?
- How can I best motivate my students to complete their work?

When a student needs extra help. During the opening weeks of school, you must decide what students should do when they need extra help and you're not available. Here are some suggestions from veteran teachers:

- During math, have your best math student walk about quietly for a few minutes helping the other students.
- Ask your students to put their names on the chalkboard and tell them you'll get to them as soon as possible.
- Tell your students to go to the next problem when they are stuck and tackle the difficult problem last.

TEACHER TIP: Provide a "Time-Out" place for your students. This could be a desk in a quiet corner, a large refrigerator box with a door cut in one side and a desk inside, or a large pillow where a student can go to be alone. This special spot may be used by a student for only five minutes, or longer, as needed.

Summary of the First Month

- ❖ Feel confident that you are a capable teacher and in charge.
- ❖ Blend love with firmness.
- ❖ Walk about the classroom to discourage the beginning of poor behavior.
- ❖ Set an example of a stable, loving adult for your students.
- ❖ Model what you want your students to do.
- ❖ Implement your rules, procedures and management system during the entire months of August and September.
- ❖ Be sure all rules are posted.
- ❖ Allow time each day to teach rules and procedures.
- ❖ Provide a lesson on how to head papers.
- ❖ Be explicit in telling your students what papers need to come in and where to place them.
- ❖ Tell your class what to do when they need help and you're not available.
- ❖ Use body language to let students know when they are breaking a rule.
- ❖ Respond quickly when rules are broken.
- ❖ Provide a quiet place in your classroom for students who need to be away from the group for a time.
- ❖ Keep your recess and lunch hours free from dealing with discipline problems.
- ❖ Choose an opening ceremony.
- ❖ Be sure you've given concise and accurate directions before assigning lessons.
- ❖ Begin to present longer lessons.
- ❖ Decide on how you'll deal with students who finish work early.
- ❖ Keep parents informed about school policies and homework requirements through a school-issued Parent Handbook.
- ❖ Decide if you wish to do an oral roll call for homework on certain days.
- ❖ Grade, record and return papers to students as soon as possible.
- ❖ It is important that students correct errors immediately so you'll not have to reteach information.
- ❖ Find a way to correct papers that will work for you.
- ❖ Establish a buddy system for getting work to and from absent students.
- ❖ Pass out materials as quickly as possible.
- ❖ When many things need to be returned to students, provide a short lesson to keep students occupied.
- ❖ Be aware of children who do not complete their assignments.
- ❖ Consider putting students who consistently do not complete assignments on a contract.
- ❖ Do not accept "silly stories" for not turning in homework.
- ❖ Discuss with your class your methods for dealing with incomplete work.
- ❖ Enjoy your new class.



Beginning Teacher Checklist

October

I. Conferencing Skills with Parents

- A. Initiated by teacher
 - 1. Materials
 - a. Student work samples
 - b. Teacher grade book
 - c. Conference agenda/notes
 - d. Discipline documentation
 - 2. Environment for conference
 - a. Utilize positive body language
 - b. Consider time constraints
- B. Initiated by parent
 - 1. Coordinate conference with concerned teachers
 - 2. Create a base of information
 - 3. Alert principal if applicable
 - 4. Plan for unscheduled visits
 - 5. See “Initiated by teacher” above
- C. Conference in retrospect
 - 1. Initiate agreed upon plan of action
 - a. Arrange seating
 - 2. Schedule follow-up

II. Identifying Special Needs of Students

- A. Document, collect and organize information
 - 1. Anecdotal records
 - 2. Work samples
 - 3. Discipline record
 - 4. Instructional modifications- Individual Education Plan (IEPs)
- B. Informal conferencing
 - 1. Special education teachers
 - 2. Peer teachers
- C. Formal conferencing
 - 1. Admission Review Dismissal (ARD) meeting procedures and roles of classroom teacher
 - 2. Parent conferences

Beginning Teacher Checklist

October



III. Structuring the Classroom for Individual Student Differences

- A. Establish individual expectations
- B. Examine various teaching strategies
 - 1. Peer tutoring
 - 2. Reduced work load
 - 3. Individualized instruction
 - 4. Alternative evaluation techniques
- C. Recognize student successes
- D. Explore alternate seating arrangements
- E. Investigate behavior modification alternatives
- F. Coordinate efforts with parents

IV. Questioning Strategies for Teachers

- A. Plan for kinds of questions
 - 1. Recall
 - 2. Single questions
 - 3. Probing questions/with clues
 - 4. Inference/open ended
 - 5. Inductive/divergent
 - 6. Deductive/convergent
- B. Waiting time of teacher (5-7 seconds)
 - 1. Time to reflect
 - 2. Time to answer
- C. Feedback of teacher
 - 1. Paraphrases answers of students
 - 2. Responds positively to partially correct/non-answer
 - 3. Refrains from answering own questions

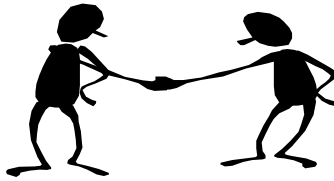
V. Individualizing Professional Growth for Teachers

- A. Visit other classes
- B. Review Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) information
- C. Observe the mentor teacher using the PDAS process
- D. Attend in-service activities/workshops/school board meeting

Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:

PARENT CONFERENCES



Parent conferences are generally an opportunity for teachers to learn more about their students. Parents or caregivers will trust your opinion more if you make it clear to them that **you view them as the experts when it comes to understanding their child.** It is also important for parents to know that the school is aware of the difficulties and challenges of parenting, and that teachers are available with information and support when needed.

One way to open positive communication with even the most difficult parents is to assure them that **you value and cherish their child,** too. Do not put them in the position of having to take a stand against you in order to protect their child. Before you begin running down the list of what needs to be improved by that child, let the parents know some of the things you have noticed that make the child special to you and to the class as a whole. It puts you on a more empathetic footing with the parent and gets everyone on track for working together in the best interests of that child.

Whenever I am faced with a tough conference, I spend some quiet time imagining how **I would feel if I were the parent of the student** in question. Is the student bright but responsible? Is the student hostile or uncommunicative? Is the student truly a slow learner who will always have difficulty with this subject?

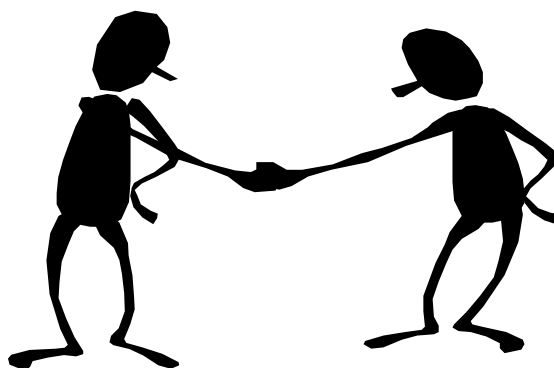
You may decide quite accurately that the parent or family is at fault for not teaching the child responsibility or for causing the child stress. But try to remember, it is quite painful to face your own child's lack of success in school; it is even more painful to accept the fact that you might be part of the problem. So when you sit down, **be prepared to offer a sympathetic ear and some words of understanding** for the pain the parent or family member is experiencing, and be willing to try some of his/her suggestions. Offer your own solutions not as mandates or subtle judgments, but as helpful ideas.

It is true that families are hoping a teacher will offer a miracle. But more often than not, they recognize our humanity; in the face of true understanding, most parents are friendly, helpful, and quite reasonable. It is a good idea to ask the parents or family members if the child has had problems in other classes. Invariably, the answer will be "yes," which depersonalizes the situation and makes problem-solving more objective. If you sense an adversarial situation, your responsibility is to diffuse it and to create an environment where **the primary goal – helping a young person** – can be met.

In the case of high school students, it is important to **have the student present for most conferences.** There is not much value in conferencing with only the parent when you are dealing with a reluctant or disinterested student. You will rarely find a solution unless you include the student and listen to what he/she has to say. Ask the student for suggestions on how to help him/her become more successful. Occasionally you will find that though the student is present, the parent or family member does all of the talking, even when you turn to the student and ask a direct question. In this situation, it is helpful to tell the parent or caregiver that you are interested in his/her view, any would also like to hear what the child has to say.

When students are not doing their work, parents will often ask you to send home lists of missing work so they can control the completion of it. You might want to agree to this as a temporary measure, but remind the parent that **your mutual goal should be to develop a self-motivated and independent learner.** Help parents develop a long-range plan so that they won't have to go to college with their child when he/she has graduated! Whenever possible, try to meet students' families halfway. This will diffuse their frustration and make them more open to suggestions.

Occasionally, you may find yourself dealing with an unusually intrusive parent who makes demands on your time that you feel are unreasonable. There are techniques you can learn to protect yourself, educate the parent, and keep the relationship friendly. For example, if a parent or family member asks you to call and notify him/her every time the child fails to turn in an assignment, explain that you have many other students and you simply do not have time to call parents each time a child misses an assignment. **Let the parent know, however, that you appreciate how anxious he/she is to help the child become more responsible.** You could give the parent or family member your home phone number and suggest that he/she call you to check in periodically (be specific about frequency). You might want to offer to send updates directly to the parents when you are preparing grades (ask that they provide you with a self-addressed, stamped envelope). Never say yes to the impossible, but do what you can to offer parents **something that may be useful.**





Beginning Teacher Checklist

November - December

I. Verbal Performance and Body Language

- A. Speaks clearly, correctly, and coherently at all times
 - 1. Adjusts speaking rate, volume, and tone
 - 2. Uses appropriate vocabulary and style
- B. Gives clear directions to students
 - 1. Sufficient and concise information
 - 2. Logical sequence
 - 3. Written and/or teacher demonstrated/modeled
- C. Uses positive nonverbal cues to students
 - 1. Shows willingness to listen
- D. Engages uninvolved or off-task students

II. Lesson Development

- A. Writes a plan identifying skills, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives, and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) connections
- B. Presents activities in logical sequence and plans for smooth transitions
- C. Matches materials to objectives
 - 1. Uses materials/aids to accommodate student differences
 - 2. Has materials and aids at hand for lesson
 - 3. Accesses resources for instruction, i.e., video, Digital Video Disk (DVD),
Compact Disk (CD)
- D. Integrates multi-media strategies when appropriate
- E. Provides review and summary
- F. Plans for reteaching over time and assessment

III. Student Evaluation

- A. Sets performance standards
 - 1. Time lines for task completion
 - 2. Correctness, neatness, form, and consistency of assignments
 - 3. Accountability for assigned activities
- B. Measures student progress
 - 1. Uses multiple means of assessment
 - 2. Keeps accurate, comprehensive records of performance/progress
- C. Makes instructional decisions based on data
 - 1. Assessment results
 - 2. Student performance
- D. Reports achievement and progress
 - 1. Students
 - 2. Parents
 - 3. Professional staff

Beginning Teacher Checklist

November - December



IV. Conferencing Skills with Students

- A. Establishes a climate of trust and cooperation
- B. Implements due process of the law
 - 1. Describes teacher's position
 - 2. Listens to student's view
 - 3. Clarifies for mutual understanding
- C. Minimizes negative effects of the situation
 - 1. Avoids personal criticism
 - 2. Avoids emotional outbursts
- D. Stresses positive accomplishments and behavior of the student
- E. Establishes a plan of action
- F. Prepares plans for follow-up

V. Individualizing Professional Growth

- A. Plan visits to other schools or classes
- B. Observe modeling by mentor teacher
- C. Plan informal gatherings with peers
- D. Revisit goals for the year (both administrative and personal)
- E. Mentor teacher uses Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) process in observation of mentee

Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:

ESTABLISHING A PLAN OF ACTION
Beginning Teacher

Mentor
 Teacher: _____
 Beginning Teacher: _____

District: _____

Campus: _____

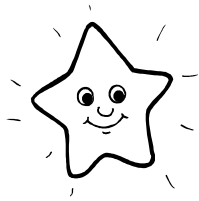
In what areas do I feel I need assistance?

Need #1: _____

What activities can I do to address the Issue?	By when will I accomplish each activity?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Need #2:- _____

What activities can I do to address the Issue?	By when will I accomplish each activity?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	



BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST

January

I. Developing Lessons for Individual Learning Styles

- A. Global learner
 - 1. Sees whole picture with all the parts
 - 2. Uses more visual learning in the process
 - 3. Makes integrated connections with material
 - 4. Likes informal setting for learning
- B. Analytical learner
 - 1. Sees parts related to the whole
 - 2. Uses more auditory learning in the process
 - 3. Likes bright, formal settings with set routines
- C. Perceptual preferences
 - 1. Auditory
 - 2. Visual
 - 3. Kinesthetic/Tactile

II. Making Plans for Transitions and Time on Task

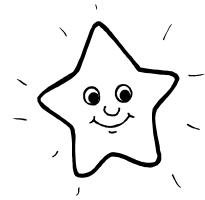
- A. Strategies of time and momentum
 - 1. Within the lesson
 - 2. Between subjects
 - 3. Between classes
- B. Time on task
 - 1. Active engagement (what percentage of class time?)
 - 2. Passive receiver of content (what percentage of class time?)

III. Considering the Possibility of Retention/Course Failure

- A. Gather work samples of students
- B. Assemble recorded grades of student
- C. Collect notes of previous conferences
- D. Review modified program strategies for students
- E. Arrange conference with parents (see October "Conferencing Skills with Parents")

BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST

January



IV. Integrating Special Projects into the Curriculum

- A. Attend workshops
- B. Develop unit plans
- C. Contact consultants
 - 1. Teachers
 - 2. Community resources
- D. Gather resources/materials
- E. Adjust schedule
- F. Implement activity
- G. Incorporate Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) focus in activities

V. Behavior Management

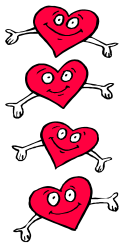
- A. Revisit class rules/procedures
- B. Identify motivational strategies to reengage students
- C. Elicit new ideas/techniques from peers

VI. Individual Professional Growth

- A. Ask mentor teacher to model a strategy
- B. Observe other teachers
- C. Attend in-service activities/workshops

Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:



BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST

February-March

I. Problem Analysis

- A. Analyze interactions with students
 - 1. Positive strategies
 - 2. Negative strategies
 - 3. Resolution strategies
- B. Investigate potentials for parent confrontation
 - 1. Contact prior teachers of students
 - 2. Check cumulative records for documentation
 - 3. Check completion of "Structuring the Classroom for Individual Student Differences" (see October)
- C. Avoid conflict situations with teaching peers

II. Computer Awareness

- A. Examine computer use in the classroom/school
 - 1. Simulations
 - 2. Tutorials
 - 3. Drill and practice
 - 4. Games
 - 5. Multi-media
 - 6. Word processing
 - 7. Graphics
- B. Explore grade appropriate software for the computer
- C. Consult district technology plan and technology support avenues
- D. Devise management scheme for classroom/lab use

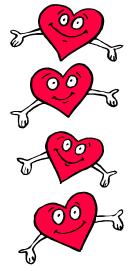
III. Teacher Flexibility and Adaptability

- A. Maintain reserve plans for schedule changes
- B. Prepare plans for supplemental programs or Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) testing emphasis
- C. Implement supplemental programs within time constraints
- D. Remain calm under duress
- E. Keep a sense of humor
- F. Allocate time and attention to multiple demands in an appropriate manner
- G. Identify deadlines (referrals, budget expenses, end-of-year, etc.)

IV. Professional Growth

- A. Modeling by mentor teachers
- B. Observing other teachers
- C. Focus on self-evaluation
- D. Revisit Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) (or other district evaluation processes) information
- E. Attend an extracurricular activity/school board meeting

BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST
February-March



Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:



BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST

April-May

I. “Learner’s Attitude” for Teachers

- A. Sustain a positive outlook
- B. Set personal goals based on experience/reflection
- C. Remain open
 - 1. New ideas
 - 2. Suggestions
- D. Keep up-to-date on grading/deadlines
- E. Take reasonable risks
- F. Revisit stress management strategies

II. Teaching Strategies for Interdisciplinary Teaching

- A. Develop units and gather examples from peers
- B. Mesh lessons and subjects

III. Activities for Culmination

- A. Transition to next grade
 - 1. Student recognition
 - 2. Summer school requirements/list
 - 3. Report cards
 - 4. Cumulative folders
 - 5. Register
 - 6. Inventories
 - a. Book
 - b. Furniture
 - c. Equipment
 - d. Return borrowed items
- B. School procedures for closure
 - 1. Update grade books
 - 2. Final exam requirements (if applicable)
 - 3. Report cards
 - 4. Cumulative folders (permanent records)
 - 5. Lesson plans
- C. Lost books
 - 1. Classroom
 - 2. Library
- D. Repairs list
- E. Orderly room

BEGINNING TEACHER CHECKLIST
April-May



IV. The Year in Retrospect

- A. List highlights that occurred
- B. Discuss changes that were made
- C. Reflect about what worked/what did not work
- D. Participate in campus/team debriefing

V. Professional Growth

- A. Modeling by mentor
- B. Observing of other teachers
- C. Attend Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) training/workshops
- D. Explore the summer workshops offered (see Region 10 Calendar of Events)
- E. Review/update teacher portfolio

Additional Information Needed:

Comments/Reflections:

BT

TxBESS Needs Assessment

OBSERVING A SMALL GROUP

Date: _____ Number in Group: _____

Subject/Grade Level: _____ Teacher: _____

1. Why is this small group working together?

2. Who is the leader of the group? Self-appointed or teacher appointed?

3. How effective is the leader?

4. Is the group completing the assigned task? What do you observe? -

5. Are all member of the group participating? What are the differences in the individual members? Which ones are making contributions to the group? Give an example.

6. Do all/most members of the group have assigned jobs? What are they?

7. What did you find most helpful/applicable to you?

Source: *A Guide for Cooperating Teachers, Mentors, and Teacher Supervisors, and Teacher Educators*
Carol Marra Pelletier, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1995

OBSERVING A TEACHER

Name of Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Subject Area/Grade: _____

1. How would you describe the teacher’s styles of presenting a lesson?

2. What materials or resources were used in the lesson? Technology?
Media?

3. Give examples of motivational techniques that the teacher used during the lesson.

4. How did the teacher relate the lesson to the students’ lives and/or the real world?-

5. How was the lesson culminated? -

6. Describe an effective management strategy the teacher used during the lesson.

Source: *A Guide for Cooperating Teachers, Mentors, and Teacher Supervisors, and Teacher Educators*
Carol Marra Pelletier, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1995

SCHOOL/DISTRICT CONTRIBUTION LOG

Teacher _____ School Year _____

Grade/Subject _____ District/Campus _____

Date(s)	Event Attended <i>Workshop, conference, course</i>	Contribution(s) Made

TxBESS Participant Information



Please complete entire form.

Mentor Teacher

First Year Teacher Beginning Educator
(zero years experience)

Second Year Teacher (one year
experience)

Non-certified instructor

Other: _____

Name: _____ D.O.B _____ SS# _____

District: _____ Campus name
and Address: _____

Campus Phone: _____ Work E-mail: _____

Principal: _____ Planning Period: _____

Home Address: _____
street city state zip

Home Phone: _____ Home E-mail: _____

Degrees completed:

Texas Certifications held:

Where did you receive your teacher preparation?

Did you complete an alternate-route teacher-training program? YES NO

Are you completing an alternate-route teacher-training program? YES NO

Grade assignment _____ Content assignment(s) _____

List prior teaching experience and indicate number of years taught (i.e., daily substitute, instruction aide, student teacher, etc.)

Mentor Name: _____ Mentee Name: _____

Please FAX to 972-348-1519 or forward by Region 10 Van Mail to Angela Gutierrez. For information please call Rita Martin 972-348-1414 or email; martinr@esc10.ednet10net.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Think back through your first year of teaching. Use the following prompts to focus your reflection and record your thoughts below.

- ə How have you changed and grown?
- ə What have you learned from your experiences?
- ə List the “positives” which occurred across the year.
- ə List areas of target for change next year.
- ə What experiences have had the greatest impact on you?

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Review the secrets of success that others have shared and then describe your own secret of success. Focus on “small” successes first because they probably led you to “large” successes.

I get to know the background of my students, emotionally, socially, and academically.

I look at each day as a privilege.

I believe that school should not be a preparation for life; it should be life.

Although knowing your “content” is important, parents want to know how much you care about their children.

---- YOUR SECRET OF SUCCESS----

SUMMER CONTRACT

Although you will often find yourself reflecting on your first year and planning for your second, be sure you also find time to pursue those activities that you find personally renewing. To help you identify and commit to those activities, complete the following contract prior to the last day of school.

Remember contracts should not be broken...

I, _____, hereby agree to take it easy on myself this upcoming summer break. During this time, I promise to have fun and to take part in the following NON-SCHOOL activities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I understand that continual reflection on the past year may become unproductive. I know that the first year of the teaching profession is very challenging for every professional. Since mistakes are part of learning, I acknowledge learning from the mistakes I made. I have already begun to improve as an educator and I will continue to focus on lifelong learning.

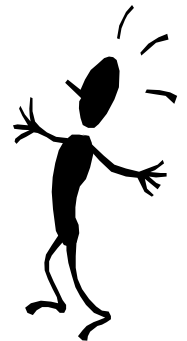
Signature

Date

Seven Things Kids Want to Know on the First Days of School

- Am I in the right room?
- Where am I supposed to sit?
- What are the rules in this classroom?
- What will I be doing this year?
- How will I be graded?
- Who is the teacher as a person?
- Will the teacher treat me like a human being?

From "Induction: The First Five Days", by Sandra Martin and Kathryn Robins, A better Beginning, Supporting and Mentoring New Teachers, edited by Marge Scherer



One hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, how big my house was, or what kind of car I drove. But the world may be a little better, because I was important in the life of a child.