

THE BEGINNING TEACHER'S HANDBOOK
FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Dedication

To my dad, who inspired me to teach.
To my mom, who instilled in me a passion for life.
To my brother, who taught me to laugh.
To my students, whom I learn from every day,
And to my husband,
Who is the very foundation beneath
my successes.

Abstract

The primary focus of this project is the development of an idea-rich, practical handbook for beginning teachers of elementary school. Current research emphasizes the following six most common problems facing beginning teachers. Appearing in rank order, they are: classroom management, student motivation, assessment, meeting the individual needs of students, developing positive relationships with parents, and handling job stress. There is a chapter dedicated to each of these topics in the handbook, complete with practical strategies, numerous ideas, and suggested activities with accompanying reproducible pages for new teachers to use. Information is presented in check-list or point form whenever possible, and space is provided for the reader to record notes and ideas. All sections of the handbook are supported by a rigorous analysis of current literature on the topic of beginning teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress...tensions...vexing dilemmas...sleepless nights. The first year in any new profession is demanding, but the challenges a new teacher face seem particularly overwhelming. Although I had three years' experience teaching adults in Canada and two years' experience teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to all ages of Asian children in Hong Kong and Japan, I wrestle with the realization that perhaps nothing could have prepared me for my first teaching assignment within the public school system. I am currently teaching grade 2, and it has proven to be a shocking awakening to the reality of the problems 'beginning' teachers face. Never having had to deal with discipline and classroom management issues in the Hong Kong and Japan school systems, I can strongly relate to the feelings of desperation expressed by one first year teacher: "I feel really young and naive right now. I do not want to lose my idealism but I feel it being squelched and my attitude becoming cynical" (Merseeth, 1992, p. 678).

Upon reviewing the research on experiences of first year teachers, I am relieved to discover that I am not alone in my struggle, and have consequently designed three questions that I would like to explore. First, are the problems of first year teachers necessary transitional states along the road to higher levels of performance? Second, can they be dealt with at the root through better training programs? Third, are these problems arising from the job of teaching as a profession? My hypothesis is that although there are strategic improvements teacher-training programs can implement to help new teachers understand and prepare for the reality of the job they are entering (not characterized as

‘good’ or ‘bad’), the nature of teaching as a profession itself invites many of these problems.

I will first examine the research on common problems of first-year teachers (as perceived by first-year teachers), and talk about possible causes of these problems. I will then discuss how the problems of beginning teachers compare to those of experienced teachers, and note the differences in perception and methods of solving problems by first-year teachers and veterans. Then I will review samples of beginning teacher handbooks designed to help beginning teachers cope during their first year of teaching. This will be accomplished within the framework of a check-list I have designed to aid in determining the characteristics of an effective and user-friendly handbook. The research and sample handbooks discussed in this paper come not only from Canada and the United States, but also from an international study on beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984), which strongly correlates with research carried out in North America.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The number one problem, as perceived by first-year teachers, is that of classroom management and discipline (Dollase, 1992; Housego & Badali, 1996; Nielbrand, Horn, & Holmes, 1992; Veenman, 1984). As Housego & Badali (1996) note in their article published in *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, “During our study of 16 graduates of the 1989-1991 University of British Columbia Faculty of Education Program, we discovered that...despite the likely emphasis on management during the practicum and some preparation in university coursework, it continued to be a problem for many of the teachers” (p. 362). Richard H. Dollase (1992) draws the same conclusion regarding American beginning teachers: “The ‘tough’ problems centered on classroom control and authority” (p. 93). Further, in his international analysis including 83 different studies, Veenman (1984) discovered that “the most seriously perceived problem was classroom discipline” (p. 153). Even more convincing, Veenman notes “There were no perceptible differences between the studies of the 60's and 70's or between the studies executed inside and outside of the U.S.” (p. 156). This causes me to question why a method has not been found to remedy this problem if we have been aware of it for decades; are our teacher preparation programs responsible, the school system/profession itself, or a combination thereof?

According to the research collected for this analysis, the four most common problems of beginning teachers, after classroom management/discipline, are the following: student motivation, dealing with individual differences between students, assessment tasks,

and ability to develop effective relationships with parents (Dollase, 1992; Housego & Badali, 1996; Nielbrand et al., 1992; O'Connell Rust, 1994; Veenman, 1984). Veenman (1984) found that motivation of students ranked the second highest in the list of perceived problems (with classroom discipline ranking first) and dealing with individual differences among students was the third most frequently mentioned problem (p. 156). Badali (1996) notes that, "Another area of difficulty...was assessment, which was also one of the topics beginning Newfoundland and American teachers highlighted as needing attention" (p. 364). Veenman (1984) notes that assessing students' work and relations with parents are "problematic activities". This was characterized by the inability of beginning teachers to actually get in touch with the parents, the "parents' insufficient support for their [the teacher's] ideas, and...the parents' lack of confidence in the beginning teachers' competence" (p. 156). All other difficulties identified in the studies analysed here, commonly expressed by first-year teachers, are outlined in the chart below (in no particular order) alongside the study they were cited in. When noted in more than one study, both are listed.

Table 1

Problems of First Year Teachers Cited in Literature

Problems of First Year Teachers	Study the Problem Was Cited In
Evaluation of curriculum materials	B.E.L. Housego (1994) & S.J. Badali (1996) R.H. Dollase (1992)
Organization of class work	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Inadequate teaching materials	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Problems of individual students	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992) S. Veenman (1984)
Confusion about “personal teaching style”	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Mismatch with Mentor Teachers	K. Tellez (1992)
Confusion about ‘theory’ and ‘practice’	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Non-supportive administration and colleagues	H. Dollase (1992), C. Neilbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Fear of asking for help, appearing inadequate	K. Tellez (1992)
Planning of lessons	R. H. Dollase (1992)
Relations with students	R. H. Dollase (1992)
Heavy workload and job stress	R. H. Dollase (1992)
Overwhelming paperwork	F. O’Connell Rust (1994)
Not being accepted as a ‘real’ teacher	R. H. Dollase (1994)
Teacher having difficulty seeing themselves as an authority figure	R. H. Dollase (1994)

Morality questions (i.e.) students cheating R. H. Dollase (1994)

Feelings of helplessness and loneliness K. Merseth (1992)

So why is the first year of teaching riddled with problems, particularly in the area of classroom management and discipline? Many different suggestions have been offered in the research, and a common tendency is to lay the blame on teacher education programs. Pre-service programs have been criticized most often for offering courses with “an excessively theoretical focus and redundancy” (Housego & Badali, 1996, p. 388). One beginning teacher sums up her feelings about this quite eloquently when she says, “What good is all this theory junk, if there is no practice? I’m not really equipped or trained to know about all the programs and avenues to take with the discipline problems.” She goes on to ask, “How come we were never warned of the effects of discipline problems in the classroom? My student teaching did not prepare me in the least” (O’Connell Rust, 1994, p. 209).

Richard H. Dollase (1992) notes that “the application of theory to practice in the real and messy world of the beginning teacher’s classroom” (p. 89) is unrealistic. Further, “many studies provide evidence that students become increasingly idealistic, progressive, or liberal in their attitudes toward education during their pre-service training and then shift to opposing and more traditional, conservative, or custodial views as they move into student teaching and the first years of teaching” (Veenman, 1984, p. 145).

Therefore, beginning teachers often find themselves in a dilemma similar to this first-year teacher: “She was conflicted between her desire to teach using the methods and techniques that she learned in her pre-service program and her feeling that she had to gain control of the class” (O’Connell Rust, 1994, p. 209). O’Connell Rust (1994) suggests this

is because beginning teachers are only schooled in the “front stage behaviors of teaching, those behaviors that are obvious and well-known to them and anyone else who has spent time in classrooms as a student observing teachers; they are unaware of the complexities of teaching that are hidden from view” (p. 205). Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1989) add that “beginning teachers lack useful understandings of the contexts in which they work... and consistent, grounded, and accurate understandings of themselves as teachers” (p. 231). Housego & Badali (1996) agree with this finding, “pointing out the limited impact of teacher education programs.” They note that this is “particularly disappointing, because the statements [reflecting the ineffectiveness of teacher education programs] are from graduates of a recently designed and considerably revised teacher education program that has been continually modified in both superficial and fundamental ways since its inception” (p. 390) in British Columbia.

Other explanations offered for the numerous problems of first year teachers stem from a lack of support from colleagues and administration. It is important to note that “teaching is the only profession that expects its beginners to be responsible for the same work expected of experienced veterans” (Tellez, 1992, p. 215). In a study that directly measured teachers’ help-seeking, Tellez concluded that, “Two social norms inhibited help-seeking and help-offering: (a) the belief that teachers should be thought of as equals and (b) the belief that a request for help implies that the help seeking teacher is of low status.” The results of this study can be characterized by a simple axiom: “Teachers neither seek nor offer help” (p. 216). Often, even if support services are available, beginning teachers are ‘reluctant’ to use the support services of the school. As one first-year teacher notes: “I’m

embarrassed to. It seems like I'm a failure when things aren't working" (O'Connell Rust, 1994, p. 209). Further, beginning teachers lack the support of their peers they had throughout their practicum experiences, and suddenly find themselves alone in their classrooms and lack the feedback they are used to. This is coupled with the fact that many beginning teachers are "typically given the most difficult or undesirable teaching situations" (Tellez, 1992, p. 215).

Although most school administrators and teachers themselves are well aware of this need for help, many barriers stand in the way of providing any meaningful form of aid and support. "For building administrators, the desire to provide support is confounded by a responsibility to evaluate new teachers. At the state level, formal programs that would fit the diverse needs and resources of multiple districts are difficult to design and hard to fund" (Merseth, 1992, p. 679). When properly implemented, mentoring programs have been successful in offering this support. However, as Dollase (1992) notes, "for a mentoring program to be effective, mentor teachers must be freed from at least 10 percent of their teaching loads. Few mentor programs provide such released time for experienced teachers" (p. 132).

Further, because of poorly planned mentoring programs, mentor teachers and first-year teachers are sometimes 'mismatched'. One study conducted in the Boise, Idaho School District found that, "pairing a novice teacher with a master teacher, a common component in a mentoring program, is not always the perfect solution...administration sometimes choose mentors on the basis of such personal criteria as responsibility, ability to articulate, skill in classroom management, and popularity with parents and students.

However, this same mentor may intimidate the protege, or vary so much in personality or philosophy that communication with the mentor becomes another stressor on the beginner's list of anxieties. In addition, some master teachers have no desire to be mentors, and this wish should be respected" (p. 85). It is obvious that, "the success of any mentoring program hinges on whether the beginner is comfortable seeking help from the mentor" (Tellez, 1992, p. 215), which is not always the case under these circumstances, especially when beginning teachers lack confidence and are known for being their own worst critics! Unfortunately, "the experiences of beginning teachers fail to evidence organized, ongoing professional education during first-year teaching, the dawning of the 1990's 'decade of induction'" (Housego, 1992, p. 366).

It appears that one of the main reasons why beginning teachers have so many problems and why mentoring programs don't really work is because experienced, veteran teachers are in fact struggling with many of the same problems novice teachers are? How can a 'mentor' teach the protege when he or she doesn't know the answers him or herself? Whether this is due to a lack of effective training, the way the school system is organized, or is resultant of the nature of the teaching profession is unclear, but the research clearly shows a link between problems of first-year teachers and those of veteran teachers. The table on the next page is taken from a study led by Richard H. Dollase (1992) examining "major problems encountered in everyday teaching" (p. 85) of recent graduates of teacher training programs in the U.S. "Both first and second year teachers and the veteran teachers surveyed were asked to list the three most serious problems they faced in their teaching" (p. 86).

Table 2

Problems of Beginning and Veteran Teachers

Problems	Beginning Teachers		Veteran Teachers	
	Rank of Problem	% Citing Most Serious	Rank of Problem	% Citing Most Serious
Classroom discipline	1	48	2.5	29
Student motivation	2	43	1	62
Curriculum	3	38	2.5	29
Planning of lessons	4	24	0	0
Relations with students	5	24	4	25
Heavy workload	6	13	7.5	12
Job stress	7	13	12	8
Lack of time	8	12	6	16
Grading and assessment	9	11	0	0
Clerical/hall duties	10	8	0	0
Relations with colleagues	11	8	7.5	12
Relations with parents	12	2	5	16

Dollase (1992) notes the following:

While the two lists differ, it is clear that the top two problems of the beginning teachers are quite similar to those of the veteran teachers and center on the issues of classroom power and authority and students' attitude toward learning and academic achievement. At first sight there may appear to be an appreciable difference between beginners and veterans in regard to their perceptions of the seriousness of classroom discipline versus lack of student motivation. If, however, these problems are viewed as interrelated, the distinction disappears. That is, classroom discipline/student motivation are viewed by 91% of the beginners and 91% of the

veterans as their most serious ongoing dual concern” (p. 86).

Therefore, perhaps it should be asked why teachers who are technically skilled and experienced are suffering from the same problems as their rookie counterparts - were they never effectively taught during their teacher education programs and therefore never really learned effective classroom management skills? It seems unlikely that preparation programs can be blamed entirely. For Dollase (1992), “These tentative findings support the supposition that the beginning teachers’ problems cannot be viewed in isolation or regarded as only ‘rookie problems’ that will go away with time. Student compliance and students’ achievement and motivation are ongoing concerns of young and old teachers” (p. 87).

An international study conducted by Simon Veenman (1984) further supports the link between problems of beginning teachers and those of veterans. Although this research is dated, nonetheless, it is fascinating to see an international link on this subject. Veenman notes that, “A number of the problems of beginning teachers were also problems of experienced teachers” (p. 159). He states that in Germany, “primary school teachers with more than 10 years of experience were hindered by the following ‘disturbing factors’ [in rank order]: too large classes, an unsatisfying social position, lack of interest from parents, discipline problems, extra school obligations, and inadequate teaching materials” (p. 159). Further, he states that various studies designed for American teachers revealed the following main problems: “motivating students, lack of motivational assistance from the school, finding time for individual and remedial work and counseling, adapting instruction to the needs of slow learners, time-consuming routine demands, and teacher-parent relationships” (p. 159). These problems “illustrate that not only beginners experience

problems and that these problems are not linked solely with entrance into the profession” (Veenman, 1984, p. 159).

Although novice and experienced teachers may share many of the same problems, it should be noted that their perceptions of these problems and the way that they deal with them are often different. As Dollase (1992) has found, “While the beginning teacher seemingly focuses on the more immediate and surface manifestations of the problem of reaching and controlling young adolescents in her classes, the veteran teacher emphasizes the underlying causes that lead to some of her students’ inappropriate classroom behavior” (p. 87). For example, as a beginning teacher I tend to blame my inexperience for unmotivated students and classroom discipline problems. The veteran teacher may remark that her most serious problems are student emotional problems due to abuse or neglect by parents. Therefore, the way that I attempt to solve this problem will obviously be different than the solution posed by my experienced counterpart. I may “focus only on acquiring better classroom management techniques, basically a ‘band-aid’ approach” (Dollase, 1992, p. 87), whereas the veteran teacher may focus on increased, supportive communication with the parents of the child in combination with arranging for formal support services. However, as Dollase suggests, “There is, of course, another interpretation of the veteran teacher’s thinking. Some school critics would argue that the experienced teacher’s analysis of the underlying causes of students’ poor classroom performance may be an attempt to justify her failure to reach or teach these troubled and often difficult-to-handle adolescents” (p. 87). This second interpretation is supported by a study conducted by Tellez (1992): “This study suggests that experienced teachers do not seek help, whereas beginning

teachers do” (p.219).

It can be concluded, then, that first-year teachers share many of the same problems of experienced teachers, even though they may perceive and deal with them differently either due to experience or, in a negative view, because they have learned to mask their failure. It needs to be asked once again if the major problems teachers are reporting began with an ineffective teacher training program which gave everyone an ‘equal disadvantage’ from the beginning which has never been remedied despite numerous reform efforts, or if the nature of the school system and the profession itself is partially or entirely responsible for these issues. It seems to me that these problems are simply a part of what Dollase (1992) describes as “the natural ‘problematic’ nature of teaching” (p.95). Classroom management and student motivation are huge issues for both beginning teachers and veterans, and “There is no ‘neat solution’ to control ‘acting out’ students, to deal with a hostile youngster who enters your classroom without permission, etc.” (Dollase, 1992, p.95). Clearly, more research is necessary on this topic, specifically on the link between problems of beginning and veteran teachers. Although there are strategic changes that can be suggested for teacher training programs, reform within these programs may meet with only limited success if a clear understanding of this connection is not established. ‘Problems faced by beginning teachers’ is an extremely broad category, but we cannot ignore the common difficulties faced between beginning teachers and veterans within our profession, both within our own country and globally.

METHODOLOGY

So what can I do to help beginning teachers deal effectively with these inevitable problems during their first year? There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of handbooks published across Canada and the United States designed to aid first year teachers in their struggle. The quality of these handbooks is as diverse as the districts they are designed to serve. The following is a review of 10 handbooks selected for their diversity in layout and content as well as for their variation geographically. Strengths and weaknesses are noted for each in two areas.

Firstly, quality content of a handbook is of the utmost importance. This means that the handbook identifies the six most common problems of beginning teachers as cited in current research. These are: classroom management, student motivation, assessment, meeting the individual needs of students, developing positive relationships with parents, and handling job stress. Further, a useful handbook must provide practical strategies and numerous ideas and activities to guide the beginning teacher in addressing these problems. So as to limit one of the most common problems cited by the beginning teacher, job stress, it would follow that suggested ideas and activities in the handbook be clearly explained and easily identified in the body of the text. To maximize usefulness the ideas presented must be appropriate to the beginning teacher. This means very little classroom experience is assumed in the explanation of the ideas and strategies. Finally, the quality of the content of each handbook is assessed in its delivery of the information presented: Is it inviting, warm, and supportive to the panic-stricken and overwhelmed beginning teacher?

Secondly, each handbook is assessed in its lay-out and design. The definition of *handbook* in the Merriam Webster Dictionary reads: “a concise reference book”. However, many of the ‘handbooks’ I have come across read more like a textbook than a handbook. Although couched in current research, the reader can become immediately overwhelmed because the information they are looking for is not easily found, lost in a barrage of quotations and background theory. Beginning teachers have been educated in the theoretical aspects of teaching, and the handbook should serve to lessen anxiety about practical classroom matters that cannot be easily taught in a university class setting. Therefore, a careful balance needs to be maintained between a strong and supportive link to current research and ensuring that the handbook is visually appealing and organized in an inviting manner.

With this in mind, the following characteristics are desirable with regard to lay-out and design. A lot of white space on the page, with practical ideas and strategies clearly listed in check-list or point form, allows the reader to quickly find needed information. Room for the reader to jot down ideas and/or take notes for personal use is desirable, as (s)he will only take what is necessary or applicable to his/her classroom situation and individual teachings style. To minimize job stress and to support the beginning teacher as much as possible, flexible and relevant blackline masters should be included in the handbook, along with sample letters to parents to facilitate a positive parent/school relationship. Finally, a coil-bound text is most desirable to allow for easy photocopying.

All points discussed above are summarized in a checklist of qualities attractive for a handbook of this nature (please see next page). The rationale for including the sections I

have in the checklist is supported by a rigorous analysis of the literature pertaining to the problems experienced by beginning teachers, and the benefit of being a beginning teacher myself, therefore allowing a thorough understanding of what type of layout would be most inviting and least intimidating for the user. The handbooks will be reviewed in alphabetical order by title.

Table 3

Checklist for Handbook Analysis

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of:	<input type="checkbox"/> Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/> Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix to facilitate quick and easy use and minimize potential for further stress.
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Needs of Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes sample letters for parents. Experienced teachers take for granted how hard these can be to write!
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Relationships with Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
<input type="checkbox"/> Handling Stress	
<input type="checkbox"/> Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Caters to a specific audience (ie) beginning teachers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Warm, supportive, and positive tone.	

ANALYSIS OF HANDBOOKS

Title of Handbook: A Handbook of Basic Skills and Strategies for Beginning Teachers:
Facing the Challenge of Teaching in Today's Schools.

Author: MacDonald, Robert E.

Date and Publisher: (1991) York, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of: ✓ Classroom Management ✓ Student Motivation ✓ Assessment ✓ Individual Needs of Students ✓ Positive Relationships with Parents ✓ Handling Stress ✓ Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas. ☐ Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely. ✓ Caters to a specific audience. ☐ Warm, supportive, and positive tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text. ☐ Much of the information in check-list or point-form. ☐ Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas. ☐ Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix. ☐ Includes sample letters for parents. ☐ Coil-bound for easy photocopying.

Comments on Content:

This is the most extensive and well-researched handbook I have come across. It is thorough and packed with information, particularly in chapters on classroom management (p. 205), evaluation (p. 225), and communicating with students and parents (p. 249). However, it reads like a textbook. There is too much theory for a busy beginning teacher, and a lot of jargon; perhaps it would be better suited as a text in a teacher training course. This handbook caters to a K-12 teaching audience and is less useful for the elementary teacher. Further, I was not provided with concrete examples of activities and/or ideas in many areas which would be invaluable to a beginning teacher (such as ideas for the first week of school, getting-to-know-you activities, etc).

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

Although this document is very rich in research and theory, it lacks the desirable components of an easy to use, idea rich format.

Title of Handbook: Alphabet Soup: A Primer for Beginning Teachers

Author: Lynn, Karen

Date and Publisher: (2001) U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational
Research and Improvement.

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Motivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual Needs of Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes sample letters for parents.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive Relationships with Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
<input type="checkbox"/> Handling Stress	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caters to a specific audience.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warm, supportive, and positive tone.	

Comments on Content:

This handbook is a synopsis of anecdotal examples from a daily diary of an experienced teacher, and asks for solutions to be offered by beginning teachers. It is an opinion paper and includes no table of contents, but is organized according to the letters of the alphabet. For example, “A = Administration” and a story/problem associated with this aspect of teaching is included for a beginning teacher to attempt to resolve. The experience this teacher has is very valuable as it provides a realistic (if not somewhat cynical and negative) view of the subtle, hidden aspects of our profession not often openly discussed in teacher handbooks. Although ‘quotes’ are interspersed throughout the document, they do not come from reliable sources; many are taken from “The Little Brown Book of Anecdotes” (p. 3) and “Familiar Quotations” (p. 5). Therefore, this document should be taken with a “grain of salt.”

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

This is a completely different approach to a beginning teacher’s handbook and is very creative and original in its design. However, it would perhaps be more useful in a teacher-training class to be used as real-life problem solving activities, or as a role-playing activity. Although this ‘primer’ brings up a lot of interesting points and is valuable for a beginning teacher, its lack of a sequential time-line to guide the beginning teacher through his/her first year of their teaching assignment fails to meet the requirements of a handbook deemed necessary here.

Title of Handbook: Beginning Teachers' Handbook 2001

Author: The Alberta Teachers' Association

Date and Publisher: (2001) The Alberta Teachers' Association, Edmonton

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
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- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Classroom Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Much of the information in check-list or point-form. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individual Needs of Students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Includes sample letters for parents. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Positive Relationships with Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coil-bound for easy photocopying. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Handling Stress | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Caters to a specific audience. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Warm, supportive, and positive tone. | |

Comments on Content:

This is a very well-researched handbook and is easy to use. I was really surprised that there was no chapter on student motivation as this has been found to be one of the most difficult problems in the research for beginning teachers, especially considering how well the other major topics are covered. There was also very little information on dealing with the individual needs of students. In every classroom there are varying levels of ability. How can a beginning teacher deal with this effectively? There is some information provided on teaching strategies, for example, “What does a successful lesson look like?” but fails to tell how to achieve this. More practical application suggestions are needed on this topic. Further, the tone of this handbook was not very warm and supportive or inviting.

Comments on Lay-Out/Design

This handbook is very close to the perfect model with regard to the lay-out and design of a beginning teachers’ handbook. Although well-grounded in research, the reader is not inundated with too much theoretical jargon (often an immediate turn-off for the panicked beginning teacher) and I really appreciate the ‘list’ format of the ideas and suggested activities. However, I would provide empty boxes instead of check-marks so that the handbook could be used as a product, with the teacher physically ‘checking off’ items as they are completed. The liberal use of white space is pleasing to the eye and is inviting. I also really appreciate the motivational ideas from research provided in the margin of some pages. The one main criticism I have of this handbook is the lack of reproducibles or ideas/activities for the first day/week of school.

Title of Handbook: Before School Starts: A Handbook for the Inexperienced Elementary School Teacher.

Author: Schell, Leo M.; Burden, Paul R.

Date and Publisher: (1982) Paper Presented at the Fourth Annual Rural and Small Schools Conference, College of Education. Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS.

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classroom Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/> Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix.
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Needs of Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes sample letters for parents.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive Relationships with Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
<input type="checkbox"/> Handling Stress	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caters to a specific audience.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warm, supportive, and positive tone.	

Comments on Content:

This handbook does not seem to be couched in a framework of what research has indicated to be the predominant problems for beginning teachers. There are no sections on developing student motivation, dealing with individual differences between students, or dealing effectively with stress. When topics are covered, the suggestions (although having potential) are very general. For example, the section on Pupil Assessment (p. 17) is only one paragraph! The organization of this handbook makes finding information difficult; the beginning teacher is not guided to think about planning activities before school starts and work sequentially to the first parent/teacher interview. In the table of contents, it is not even mentioned that there is a section on what to do for your first few days/weeks - this is under the third topic titled Plans and Schedules at the back of the book! However, on a positive note, there is a wonderfully warm and positive introduction to this handbook, especially with the statement "We don't expect you to be able to do everything suggested in this book" (p. 1).

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

Taking exception to the sporadic organization of this handbook as described in the comments on content, the physical appearance of this handbook is quite inviting! Most of the information is provided in a check-list form, and a variety of suggestions and easy-to-implement ideas are offered for each topic. It is frustrating that once again, reproducibles and sample letters to parents are not included in this handbook.

I am not aware of how this handbook is bound but I am assuming it is stapled as it is not a lengthy document.

Title of Handbook: **Beginning Educator Handbook: A Resource for First Year Educators.**

Author: **Idaho State Department of Education**

Date and Publisher: **(1994) Idaho State Department of Education Teacher Education and Certification.**

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Classroom Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Student Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individual Needs of Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Includes sample letters for parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Positive Relationships with Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Handling Stress 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Caters to a specific audience. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Warm, supportive, and positive tone. 	

Comments on Content:

This is obviously a very well-researched document. It deals with all of the problems beginning teachers struggle with, and these sections are very clearly outlined in the table of contents. The handbook is very user-friendly in this way! This handbook deals very effectively with classroom management, compartmentalizing from broad/general management to specifics. I also really appreciated the sections on student motivation, (p. 21), and on individual needs of students (p. 22-25) as these areas have been lacking in many of the other handbooks, despite an obvious need as indicated by the research. However, the section on student motivation could benefit from further expansion regarding ideas on how to motivate students rather than only a theoretical look at a beginning teacher's philosophical view of motivation. Again, an excellent section is provided on establishing relationships with parents (p. 47), but reproducibles would enhance this section.

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

This document is similar to the handbook produced by the ATA (discussed earlier) in that much of the handbook is written in point-form and/or employs the use of checklists throughout. Sections are also provided where notes can be jotted down, a lot of white space is included on each page, and the writing is in point-form on one half of the page.

This handbook begins with a section on the 'myths' of teaching, which serves as a nice overview of some of the major issues associated with our profession, and is a refreshing way to introduce the topic. The section on stress management (p. 47) is placed at the end - would these techniques be better served directly following the myths of teaching, before teachers dive in and try to do too much from the beginning?

Title of Handbook: **Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook**

Author: **Tennessee Education Association**

Date and Publisher: **(1988) Tennessee Education Association & Appalachia Educational Library, Inc., Washington, D.C.**

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Classroom Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individual Needs of Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Includes sample letters for parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Positive Relationships with Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Handling Stress 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Caters to a specific audience. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Warm, supportive, and positive tone. 	

Comments on Content:

This handbook effectively covers all of the main topics outlined in the research to be problematic for beginning teachers with the exception of student motivation. However, a more exhaustive list of 'to-dos' could have been provided for before school starts; the list given was too general to be of great use for an elementary school teacher, but it provides a nice framework for expansion. This handbook provides excellent tips for the first day of school and offers sample class rules for different grade levels from K-6, but does not provide concrete examples of first day/week activities. I appreciated the attention paid to classroom environment (not only physically but visually) as first impressions are lasting - for both parents and students! This handbook provides a really informative section on stress management which is again broken down clearly.

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

I really enjoyed the set-up of this handbook. The table of contents is designed in a very positive and non-threatening way. For example, at the beginning a "Welcome" takes the place of "Introduction". The following chapters are titled "Ready," "Set," and "Go!" with sub-titles within each. This makes the reader want to pick up the handbook because just then you are looking for support and warmth, particularly if you do not have a positive mentor relationship in place. Again, I really appreciated the check-list format utilized throughout the handbook, and again, the inclusion of reproducibles would have been wonderful, particularly in the section on Getting Ready for Parent/Teacher Conferences (p. 14). This handbook includes a wonderful section in its final stages on resources and references for the beginning teacher to access.

Title of Handbook: New Teachers Handbook. Second Edition

Author: IMPACT II

Date and Publisher: (1991) New York, NY

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Classroom Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Student Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individual Needs of Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Includes sample letters for parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Positive Relationships with Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Handling Stress 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Caters to a specific audience. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Warm, supportive, and positive tone. 	

Comments on Content:

Obviously well researched, this guide is extensive and explores in-depth the main problems beginning teachers experience based on the research for this project, with the exception of Student Motivation and Assessment. It offers a lot of wonderful and easily applicable ideas for beginning teachers (although it is necessary to read through the entire guide to find them due to the conversational approach of the writer). I especially appreciate the suggestions for field trip interviews (p. 34) and the resource checklist offered (p. 34). An excellent chapter on Parents as Partners (p. 37-41) is also provided. The informal, conversational style of the handbook puts the reader at ease and is therefore able to accomplish the warmth and supportive tone lacking in many other handbooks. However, due to the time crunch and panic many beginning teachers are experiencing at the time they usually seek out a handbook, this may not be the most suitable vehicle for the information due to its heavy emphasis on theoretical perspectives.

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

As has been mentioned many times before in the critique of prior handbooks, the in-depth theoretical approach of the guide may be overwhelming to a beginning teacher. There are, however, five essays interspersed throughout this handbook. They are 'light' reads with interesting content. If the remainder of the handbook were in point form and employed the use of checklists, perhaps the essays would be more enticing to the reader. However, I doubt how valuable they are in a handbook of this nature. If my goal is to minimize the stress beginning teachers experience, would the inclusion of these essays be a hindrance towards my objective? Would the space be better utilized with reproducibles for

some of the suggested activities?

Title of Handbook: The New Elementary Teacher's Handbook: (Almost) Everything
You Need To Know for Your First Years of Teaching.

Author: Jonson, Kathleen Feeney

Date and Publisher: (1997) Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Quality of Content	Lay-Out/Design
✓ Couched in research, and includes an in-depth analysis of:	☐ Lots of white space so as to not overwhelm the reader and give the appearance of a text.
✓ Classroom Management	✓ Much of the information in check-list or point-form.
✓ Student Motivation	☐ Room provided for the user to take notes and/ or jot down ideas.
✓ Assessment	✓ Includes all necessary blackline masters in appendix.
✓ Individual Needs of Students	✓ Includes sample letters for parents.
✓ Positive Relationships with Parents	✓ Coil-bound for easy photocopying.
✓ Handling Stress	
✓ Includes practical, hands-on activities and ideas.	
✓ Suggested ideas are easily found in the text and layed out clearly and concisely.	
✓ Caters to a specific audience.	
✓ Warm, supportive, and positive tone.	

Comments on Content:

This is an excellent handbook, and the one I would recommend above all others included in this review. Included are extensive sections on all aspects of the problems experienced by beginning teachers, in addition to an especially helpful chapter titled Frequently Asked Questions (p. 170-190) which deals with specific problems many beginning teachers encounter along with practical and positive methods to help solve them. This section is particularly praiseworthy as the suggestions offered take into account individual student personalities and differing teaching styles. The author also offers an excellent list of "Outstanding Read-Aloud Books for K-6" (p. 87), and helpful examples of student/teacher contracts for behaviour and homework goals (p. 117-120). This handbook is geared to first-year teachers in grades K to 6, and the author's voice is an obvious blend of years of teaching experience and a solid understanding of research on problems beginners face.

Comments on Lay-Out/Design:

Although much of this handbook is in checklist form, in parts it does read like a textbook and would perhaps be even more user-friendly if more white space and room for notes were exchanged for text in parts. Unlike any handbook I have looked at in this review, some reproducibles are offered for the activities and ideas presented. Bravo! These are included at the end of the section they were suggested in - it might be easier for the user to have all of the reproducibles at the back of the text instead for quick and easy reference. Also, unlike any other handbook reviewed here, sample letters to parents for various occasions are offered.

CONCLUSIONS

Many of the different handbooks reviewed in this paper are missing some or many of the aspects I have identified as necessary and desirable as indicated in the literature and in my own experience to be successful in helping beginning teachers with their struggles.

Most often, the handbooks suffer from the following flaws:

- (1) Although couched in current research, they have a highly theoretical approach, thereby hampering quick and easy access to ideas and activities. Beginning teachers are professionals, and they should have learned the theory in university - now they need practical ideas for practice!
- (2) Vague or non-existent chapters pertaining to assessment and student motivation. Perhaps this is due to the wide range of possibilities inherent in each of these topics, or because motivation is rarely much of a concern in the lower elementary grades.
- (3) A lack of blackline masters/reproducibles for suggested activities, as well as few or no samples of letters to parents. Many experienced teachers take for granted that they have numerous ready to use activities in their filing cabinets and binders, in addition to a wide range of teaching possibilities now being offered via the internet. Beginning teachers are just starting to build up their sources. The best gifts I was given when I first started teaching were ready-made activities that were easy to prepare and photocopy; tried and tested by experienced teachers.

In light of these findings, the handbook I will be designing for the project portion of my M.Ed. program will contain all necessary reproducibles and sample letters to parents, and

will include comprehensive chapters offering a wealth of ideas and activities to facilitate student assessment and motivation at the elementary school level. In addition, although grounded in the literature, it will not take on a theoretical approach. Rather, it will include an abundance of clearly explained, easy to find and prepare practical ideas and strategies to aid beginning teachers in elementary schools. Because of thorough and intelligent research, it will encompass all of the necessary points by which I have measured pre-existing handbooks of this nature, thereby (hopefully) aiding beginning teachers with the problems they have encountered as clearly outlined in the literature.

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Appendix

**THE
BEGINNING TEACHER'S
HANDBOOK
FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**WRITTEN BY
LORI FRIESEN**

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INTRODUCTION:

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

So there I was. Twenty-five years old, having just returned from a two year overseas teaching and travelling adventure in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, South East Asia and Japan, now being offered my first teaching assignment for Lethbridge School District #51. It was a moment I will never forget, for the idealism and excitement I felt was overwhelming. I walked out of the room and with every step, my panic rose. Where was I to begin?

That very moment became the motivation behind my decision to design a handbook to help beginning teachers of elementary students in Lethbridge School District #51 get ready for their very first teaching assignment. My main concern at that time, as a beginning teacher, was not knowing what I needed to do to make my first year successful; knowledge of practical techniques and ideas would have made a world of difference. Most importantly, I learned very quickly that although I had chosen this profession because I truly loved children, I was often not able to give the students my full attention because I was continually pre-occupied with other matters which could have been dealt with beforehand, if I only had the foresight and knowledge to do so. The numerous problems that first year teachers face (as perceived by beginning teachers) are well documented in the research. Almost certainly, the number one problem for first-year teachers is that of *classroom management and discipline* (Dollase, 1992; Housego & Badali, 1996; Nielbrand, Horn, & Holmes, 1992; Veenman, 1984). This is "despite the likely emphasis on management during the practicum and some preparation in university course work" (Housego & Badali, 1996).

After classroom management/discipline, the four most common problems experienced by beginning teachers are: *Student motivation, dealing with individual differences between students, assessment tasks, and*

ability to develop effective relationships with parents (Dollase, 1992; Housego & Badali, 1996; Nielbrand et al., 1992; O'Connell Rust, 1994; Veenman, 1984). Veenman (1984) found that *motivation of students* ranked the second highest in the list of perceived problems, and "*dealing with individual differences among students* was the third most frequently mentioned problem" (p.156). Housego & Badali (1996) note that "another area of difficulty...was assessment, which was also one of the topics beginning Newfoundland and American teachers highlighted as needing attention" (p.364). Other problems commonly expressed by first-year teachers are outlined in the chart below (in no particular order) alongside the studies in which they were cited. When noted in more than one study, both are listed.

PROBLEMS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS	STUDY THE PROBLEM WAS CITED IN
Evaluation of curriculum materials.	B.E.L. Housego & S.J. Badali (1996) R.H. Dollase (1992)
Organization of class work.	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Inadequate teaching materials.	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Problems of individual students.	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992) S. Veenman (1984)
Confusion about "personal teaching style."	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Mismatch with Mentor Teachers	K. Telez (1992)
Confusion about 'theory' and 'practice'.	C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)
Non-supportive administration and colleagues.	H. Dollase (1992) C. Nielbrand, E. Horne, R. Holmes (1992)

Fear of asking for help, appearing inadequate.	K. Tellez (1992)
Planning of lessons.	R. H. Dollase (1992)
Relations with students.	R. H. Dollase (1992)
Heavy workload and job stress.	R. H. Dollase (1992)
Overwhelming paperwork.	F. O'Connell Rust (1994)
Not being accepted as a 'real' teacher.	R. H. Dollase (1994)
Teacher having difficulty seeing themselves as an authority figure.	R. H. Dollase (1994)
Morality questions (i.e.) students cheating	R. H. Dollase (1994)
Feelings of helplessness and loneliness.	K. Merseeth (1992)

It is difficult to determine exactly why beginning teachers are riddled with these difficulties. However, based on my own experience and the research I have analysed, I have come to the following conclusion. While there are strategic improvements teacher-training programs can implement to help new teachers understand and prepare for the reality of the job they are entering, the nature of teaching as a profession itself invites many of these problems. Therefore, I have developed a practical, idea-rich handbook to guide beginning teachers in their preparation for and implementation of their first year of teaching in an elementary school in Lethbridge School District #51. My hope is that this handbook will guide beginning teachers through their first year of teaching, and minimize the potential stress and problems typically experienced by beginning teachers, as documented in the research.

WELCOME!

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Dear Beginning Teacher,

You are about to embark on a wonderful career. There is nothing more rewarding or fulfilling as teaching children. This next year will be unlike any you have ever experienced; you will laugh, you will cry, and you will be incredibly challenged. However, you are probably feeling a little bit scared and overwhelmed right now; this is completely natural. Even experienced teachers feel this way from time to time!

The purpose of this handbook is to help guide you through times like these. To truly be there for children and their needs, YOU need to be organized and prepared in advance. Therefore, I have included checklists to help to get you on the right track at the beginning of the year. You will also find a wealth of ideas, strategies and activities that work, and come from experienced teachers to use throughout the year. However, please do not feel that you have to do everything suggested in this handbook! Be gentle with yourself - the biggest problem that we seem to have as beginning teachers is trying to do too much in our first year. Only select ideas that match your personal teaching style and context, and do them well.

Finally, remember to take time for yourself this year. You can only remain enthusiastic for students if you maintain a life outside of the classroom. Be proactive and keep your stress levels to a minimum by scheduling time for yourself.

I hope that this handbook will make your first year successful and enjoyable.

Sincerely,
Lori Friesen

CHAPTER #1: THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS!

CHECKLISTS OF TO-DO'S BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

A love of children and the desire to guide them to a higher level of knowledge intellectually, socially, and emotionally. It is the driving force behind why we have chosen this profession. Yet to be effective, we need to be organized and therefore prepared to meet children's needs. During my first year of teaching, I learned quickly that this is a fundamental quality in a dynamic, effective teacher. To truly be there for children with their hundreds of curious questions and 'guess what?' stories, we need to be well-organized. Therefore, I have designed five checklists for you to help keep track of what you need to do (if possible!) prior to that first day.

1. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES

Please modify this list as you deem necessary for your grade level and instructional situation:

- grade book, with dividers for specific subject areas
- attendance book
- note paper
- blank white paper
- pens and pencils
- markers
- crayons
- chalk and chalk holder
- chalkboard erasers
- ruler(s) - a class set if possible
- metre sticks
- scissors
- paper clips

- stapler and staples
 - thumbtacks
 - tape
 - mac-tak
 - construction paper
 - other arts and crafts materials
 - late/absence notes
 - receipt book if money is to be collected
 - first-name checklist of students to keep track of returned field trip forms, money for special activities, lunch money etc.
-
- reference books
 - maps
 - charts
 - globe
 - number line
 - alphabet (manuscript display or cursive)
 - manipulatives for math and science activities
 - sets of texts or instructional materials for each content area
 - accompanying teacher guides for these texts
 - curriculum guides for your grade level
 - books for your classroom library
-
- whiteboard
 - whiteboard markers and eraser
 - bulletin board paper
 - bulletin board borders
 - laminated letters for bulletin boards
 - overhead projector
 - TV and/or VCR (or find out where and how to access these)
 - library/media resources
 - educational games/free time activities
 - pencil sharpeners that work
 - trash cans
 - clock
 - timer

- cleaning supplies (paper towels, rags to clean up spills, all-purpose cleaner, dust pan and brush)
- party supplies (napkins, cups, drink crystals, plastic plates, cutlery)
- My shopping list:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Children and parents gain a very lasting first impression when they walk into your classroom. Your objective should be to let the children know immediately that they are loved and cared for, and that they belong in this room. Do you have a welcome sign on the door of your classroom? On my door I've made several huge flowers in bright colours with each child's name and picture on their own petal. The title above the flowers says "Love Grows Here". When children enter the classroom they should be able to see their names in at least 5 places, regardless of the grade you are teaching. You can label the door when they first enter, their desks, their name-tags, where they will keep their jackets/shoes/lunch kits, where they will store their personal supplies, the helper board, etc. It is my opinion that upper elementary students need these 'warm fuzzies' more than anyone! Your classroom needs to be a warm and welcoming place, and a well-designed space to facilitate easy movement of students. What message are you sending to students and parents? Here are some things you will need to keep in mind when setting up your classroom:

Desk Arrangement:

- Organization of desks (rows, small groups, pairs, u-shape)
- Location of teacher's desk. Be sure that you can easily monitor the classroom while at your desk, and remain physically close to your students as this will help to minimize discipline problems.
- Location of filing cabinet(s)
- Will children have a choice as to where they sit?
- Be sure to accommodate for children with special needs with regard to your seating plan (I.e) vision, hearing impaired, learning disability.
- Be sure all students are able to comfortably see the board and/or projection screen from where they are sitting.
- Can students move easily between desks?

* I recommend keeping the students in the traditional, straight rows for at least the first week of school. Although it may not sound like your teaching style, it may help to minimize behaviour problems and give you an opportunity to understand how the children interact before making any permanent decisions about seating arrangement. Further, it is important to change the seating arrangement every month or every two months. This encourages children to get to know everyone in their classroom, and facilitates moving children who may find it difficult to work together.

Furniture Arrangement:

- Will you have a reading table for small group instruction?
- Will there be a calendar corner? I especially encourage this for younger children for calendar time, morning meeting activities and for story time.
- If not, is there a space where the whole class can meet?
- Will you have a rug, cushions, stuffed animals, soft chairs or a small couch in your calendar corner? (I have found garage sales to be a wonderful source for these things!)
- Where will your classroom library be? How will you organize/display books? Will your books be levelled for varying ability levels?
- Will you have a puppet theatre?
- Will you have a listening centre with a tape player, earphones, and recorded books?

- Do you have a computer in your classroom? If so, how will you keep track of who has used it? In my classroom I have clothes pins attached to one side of my computer using a long piece of masking tape with student names on them; when students have had a turn at the computer, they put their clothes pin on the other side of the computer. Once everyone has had a turn, we put the clothes pins back on the left side randomly and begin again!
- Will you have a 'construction centre' with lego sets or other building materials appropriate to your grade level?
- Will you have an 'art area' with an easel and paints, or a crafts table?
- Will you have some plants in your room?
- An aquarium?
- Are the electrical outlets easily accessible with your chosen furniture arrangement?
- Where will you store your overhead projector?
- Test any equipment to make sure it works before you intend to use it.

General Classroom Organization:

- Where will your students hand in their work? In/out baskets work well and are inexpensive to buy, beg and borrow!
- Where will your students store their personal belongings (coats, hats, shoes, lunches, etc)?
- Think about storage space for students' supplies (shelves, filing cabinets, tote trays, cans, or manila envelopes in a basket all will do the trick!)
- Prepare a class list and post it outside your door along with your name
- Make or buy a welcome sign and put it on the door!

Bulletin Boards

Please be sure to start early on this one - it takes a lot longer than you think! Here are some possible topics:

- Announcements and school information
- Calendar and current events
- Classroom/school rules
- Emergency/fire drill procedures
- Student work display. A nice way to keep this as a permanent display

all through the year is to make a checkerboard pattern using two different colors of construction paper across your bulletin board, and label each square with a child's name. This way, any time that you or the student wishes to display a piece of work, the space is available!

- Birthday chart with students' names on it
- Classroom 'helpers' chart (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2)
- Daily/weekly schedule
- Student of the week
- Quote of the week
- Word of the week
- Word wall
- Fall (and other seasons later)
- Guess who? (student baby pictures)
- Safety (walking to/from school, school bus etc.)
- Things done over the summer (photos)
- Student-created bulletin board by project or topic/theme
- "Bookworm" . Put up the head in September, and then have students add a paper plate for each new book they read throughout the year, recording their name, the title of the book, and their rating (from 1-10) on each plate.

3. THE STUDENTS

They are the reason that we are all here... now that you have all of the materials, and you have set up your classroom for success, let's meet the students (prior to the first day!)

- Obtain a class list.
- Include a copy of students' addresses, phone numbers and birthdays in your grade book (and record birthdays on your wall chart).
- Record the name of the parent/guardian for each child.
- Keep the emergency contact for each child in an easy access location.

You may wish to look at the students cumulative files (cum files) for the following information on your students. However, I feel that a word of caution is necessary here. Try to remain objective. Be careful to not form opinions about children prior to getting to know them!

- Look at student pictures and do your best to learn children's names before the first day.
- Learn about students' family/home life situation.
- Health status
- Allergies
- Special needs - which children were previously involved in any special programs?
- Outstanding strengths or weaknesses, interests, and capabilities, both academic and non-academic
- Is there a larger than expected number of high or low achievers? Will grade level texts be appropriate?
- Talk with children's former teachers if you have specific concerns.
- Prepare a file folder for each child in which to keep samples of their work, diagnostic tests, and other information.
- Make name cards for students to wear on the first day.
- Put names on desks with mac tak (or have students make them and choose where they will be sitting).
- Prepare a package to go home with students on the first day, including:
 - a welcome newsletter (please see samples at the end of this section)
 - forms required by the school
 - classroom timetable, including library exchange date
 - explanation of homework assignments
 - information regarding your Home Reading Program (if applicable)
 - supply list
 - calendar of upcoming special events/field trips and/or school calendar
- Alternatively, you may decide to send a letter home BEFORE school starts, either to the parents or to each student.
- Or, visit the home of each student before the beginning of school.

4. THE STAFF

Building strong relationships with the people you will be working with can be your lifeline to help you through your first year of teaching. Sometimes just knowing that there are people who you can talk to when you've had 'one of those days', or when you have questions about the school or your teaching, co-workers can be the boost that you need if and when you are feeling overwhelmed. Here are some of the people I would strongly encourage you to get to know early on in the year:

Other Teachers

Take the time to:

- find out where their rooms are
- ask lots of questions!!!
- go out for lunch together sometime before school starts in the fall
- have coffee together

Mentor

A mentor can be a wonderful working relationship during your first year.

- find out if your school has a mentoring program
- what do you need to do to become involved in this program?

Teacher Aides

- find out if you have an aid assigned to your room
- if so, which child is (s)he assigned to work with?
- have they worked with this child before?
- if so, do they have any suggestions or strategies that have worked well with this child in particular?
- what is their schedule?

Grade Level or School Specialists

Who is your grade level's or the school's:

- Secretary: _____
- Librarian: _____
- Nurse: _____
- Counsellor: _____
- Speech Therapist: _____
- Media Specialist: _____

- Early Literacy Specialist: _____
- English as a Second Language teacher: _____
- Gym Teacher: _____
- Art Teacher: _____
- Music/Band Teacher: _____
- Bus Drivers: _____

5. THE SCHOOL

Each school is different and the policies and regulations within each school reflect this. Take some time to become familiar with how your school is run prior to the first day so that you can reduce stress when you begin teaching. Ask your principal, the secretary, or other teachers as many questions as you can! Get a school map and become familiar with where rooms for special classes will be (ie) music, speech therapy, gym, early literacy/remedial reading specialist etc. Your school should also have a handbook and a school calendar (ask your principal) which may answer many of these questions:

- Keys to my classroom/the school? _____
- How do I get materials and supplies? _____
- How do I order materials I need? _____
- What photocopying equipment is available, and what is the policy for its use?
- How can I get furniture I need in my classroom?

- Do you have a schedule for students who attend special classes?
- When are my gym, music, art, computer and library classes scheduled?
- What are the school rules I will need to present to my students?
- When is meet the teacher night? _____
- Where are the cum files, and what is the policy regarding their use?
- When are staff meetings? _____
- What are the principal's requirements for lesson plans?
- What audiovisual materials and equipment are available, and what is the procedure for checking them out?
- What is the office phone use policy? _____

- Where is the lost and found? _____
- Is there a policy on room parties? _____
- What is the policy on field trips? _____
- Do classroom helpers need to check in at the office? _____
- Playground duty? _____
- Lunchroom duty? _____
- Is there a lunch program? If so, how is it run?
- Bus loading/unloading? _____
- Do I have any bus students in my classroom? _____
- Do bus students leave my classroom several minutes early? _____
- Where do they meet? _____
- Assembly procedures? _____
- Are there any assemblies during the first week(s) of school that I should be aware of?
- How do I attain a copy of the report card I'll be using?
- Grading system to be used? _____
- When are report cards issued? _____
- When are parent/teacher interviews? _____
- Is the building open on evenings and weekends? _____

6. SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Your district will have a handbook which will answer all of your questions regarding contacts, curriculum, payroll, and benefits. Ask your principal for a copy of this handbook.

CHAPTER #2: THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!

TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAY

It is natural to feel nervous about your first day of teaching, but you are not alone. Almost every new teacher, and even many veteran teachers, have told me that they feel this way. Here are some tips to help you to prepare for that very first day:

- ✓ maintain a positive attitude
- ✓ plan everything for you and your students to the minute
- ✓ plan extra activities
- ✓ choose activities for the first day that allow the children many small successes
- ✓ remember to be flexible
- ✓ ENJOY YOURSELF! This is going to be fun!

A great way to start your first day is to greet your students at the door, and then show them to their seat or have them choose a seat for themselves. Involve the children in a short, interesting activity as everyone gets settled and while you attend to the many administrative duties associated with the first day of school. The children could do one of the following:

- a colouring activity set up at their desks
- goodie bags or tubs filled with lego, markers/crayons and paper, finger puppets, books, beads and string, math manipulatives, or puzzles.
- a summer fun word search
- a crossword puzzle
- a 'find-someone-who' activity (explained later in this chapter)

- an interest inventory
- make their own name tags
- Your own ideas: _____

Once everyone has arrived and is settled, gather the children together in a large group (in a reading corner or other comfortable area), and share some information about yourself. For example, I have done quite a bit of travelling, and so my favourite thing to do is to pull down a map of the world, show the kids the various countries I have been to, and then show them something special that I brought back from that country or tell them a story about what happened to me there. They love learning about their teacher, and it's a lot of fun for me, too!

Once the students are feeling more comfortable with you (and you with them!), it's a great opportunity for you to share the class rules with your students, or have them generate a list of class rules with your guidance. I've done this both ways, and the success of this strategy seems to depend on the group of children. Some classes come up with great rules (better than I could have!) whereas other classes require I take the lead on developing rules. Here are some examples of behaviour rules and policies that teachers have found successful at various grade levels (Canter, L. & Canter, M., 1976). However, you will need to tailor your rules to your own teaching style and needs. I have found that 3 to 5 rules maximum works best, always including the golden rule of respect: treat others as you would like to be treated.

Examples of Simple Class Rules

Primary: Kindergarten - 3rd Grades

- A.
1. Follow directions.
 2. Only walking is allowed in the classroom.
 3. Raise your hand and wait to be called on unless given permission to do otherwise.
 4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
 5. Return materials to their proper storage place when you are finished

with them.

- B.
1. Follow directions given by all teachers and parent helpers.
 2. Be seated quietly in the listening centre when the bell rings.
 3. When directed to change centres, do so without talking.
 4. Leave playground balls outside the classroom.
 5. Get permission to bring toys and playthings to class.
- C.
1. Follow directions.
 2. One person may speak at a time. No disruptions are allowed.
 3. Have pencils and paper at your desk, ready for work.
 4. Speak kindly to one another.
 5. Scissors, paint, and other art supplies may be used in the art corner only, unless permission is given.

Upper Elementary: 4th - 6th Grades

- A.
1. Follow directions.
 2. Be in your seat when the bell rings.
 3. Have all appropriate materials and supplies at your desk, ready to begin work when the bell rings.
 4. Permission and a pass must be granted before leaving the classroom.
 5. Keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
- B.
1. Follow directions.
 2. Use kind and respectful language.
 3. Put away all materials and wait to be excused by the teacher before leaving for recess.
 4. Respect the furniture in our classroom.
 5. You must be in your seat with pencils, paper, and reading material ready when the bell rings.

- C.
1. Follow directions.
 2. In classroom discussions, raise your hand and wait to be called on.
 3. Remain in your seat unless given permission to do otherwise.
 4. Complete all assignments and have them checked by the teacher before going to the "free time" centre.
 5. Have all homework assignments, books, and writing materials at your desk, ready to begin work when the bell rings.

Routines

Getting off to a great start means knowing exactly what you will be expecting of your students, and stating your expectations in a clear and positive manner. Be sure to think through routines for your classroom in advance, and teach your expectations to your class on the very first day regarding:

- attendance
- how to enter the classroom
- fire drill procedure
- use of playground equipment
- use of rest room
- use of water fountain
- use of pencil sharpener
- expected supplies (and consequences of not bringing them)
- issuing of textbooks
- work that is missed due to absences
- movement of students in room
- assign new students a student 'guide'. This person is responsible for showing the new student around your classroom and school, and answering their questions about rules and routines.
- distributing, turning in, and picking up assignments
- what to do when finished work early
- transitions between classes/subjects
- name and date on assignments
- recording assignments given and when due (homework)
- conduct in the hallways

- conduct on the playground
- classroom schedule (can be posted on the wall in the form of a chart)
- end of the day duties
- discussion of classroom helpers/jobs

Some examples of jobs you may wish to have students do daily are:

- ***Hand-out - 2 children.***(scribblers, texts, supplies)
- ***Pick-up - 2 children.***
- ***Attendance*** (if you need to send it down to the office daily)
- ***Line Leader*** (for lower elementary grades)
- ***End of the Line***
- ***Water Plants***
- ***Lights*** (turns lights on and off)
- ***Sink*** (keeps the sink clean)
- ***Board Monitor*** (in charge of erasing and cleaning boards at the end of each day).
- ***Chairs - 2 children.*** In our school, the caretakers ask that we put all of the chairs up on the tables or desks at the end of the day.
- ***Librarian.*** In my classroom, this is the person in charge of keeping the library in order. He/she is also in charge of watching for other kids who regularly put the books they are reading back where they belong. At the end of the week, he/she is in charge of rewarding those kids with a small prize from me. This job is very popular and is taken very seriously by the kids!
- ***Special Helper*** (for all other little jobs you may need a helper for - this is always the favourite in my classroom as there are all sorts of little opportunities that pop up for kids to do, and they just love being the 'special person' who gets to do them! A note to the wise: be sure to keep track of who has already been the special helper due to its popularity!)
- Your own ideas:

It is important to keep track of which children have done the various jobs to ensure that all students have an opportunity to try all of the jobs. Ask the children which job is their favourite, and ensure that (s)he has an opportunity to do that job.

CHAPTER 3:

FUN GETTING-TO-KNOW-YOU ACTIVITIES!

Now this is where the real fun begins! We have talked about all of the rules, routines, and preparation, and now here is a feast of activities to help make your first day and week of teaching a real success! The first week of school is a wonderful time to really get to know your students before the demands of a heavy curriculum set in, so sit back, plan, and enjoy your students!

Please note: I have attempted to indicate the grade level that would be appropriate for each activity. However, many of the activities can be modified for different age levels. Any activities with accompanying reproducibles are included in the appendix at the back of this handbook, and are indicated by *****beside their title.

The Name Game (Gr. 1-6)

The objective of this activity is for the students to learn each other's names. Have the students sit in a circle so they can easily see each other's faces. One person says his or her name. Then the person next to him/her says their name in addition to the first person's. The third person says their name in addition to the first two names, etc. It's a very simple activity but a quick and effective method of learning everyone's names right from the start!

Ball Toss (Gr. 1-4)

This is a fun, interactive way to begin the year! Use a soft ball such as a nerf ball, and have the students sit in a large circle on the floor. Begin by tossing the ball to someone across from you while introducing yourself and saying your favourite food/sport/color/animal etc. That person then tosses the ball to someone else, introduces him or herself and tells their favourite thing. Continue until everyone has introduced themselves. As a fun follow-up, see if the kids can remember their neighbours's favourite food/sport etc. for that

round. Shuffle spots and then play again!

Memory Name Game (Gr. 2-4)

This is a fun way for students to get to know each other. Have each student write his/her name on two index cards. Divide students into small groups. Instruct each group to combine and shuffle their name cards before putting them face down on the floor in front of them. The kids take turns turning two cards up at a time. If the two names match, they get to keep those cards. If they don't, they have to turn them over and try again next time. At the end, the player with the most cards wins. When they are finished, have the children return to their seats (with their original own 2 name cards), and form new groups.

Mystery Door (Gr. 3-6)

Seal about 30 questions in 30 separate envelopes, asking information about the school, the teachers, the kids' summer vacations, their favourite sport etc. Then post these randomly outside your classroom door. For kids to gain entrance, they need to select and answer one of the questions in the envelopes!

Jar of Jelly Beans (Gr. 1-3)

Have a large jar of jelly beans/marbles/candies/blocks/lego at the front table. When the kids enter the room, they get to make a guess as to how many jelly beans are in the jar on a piece of paper. Record children's guesses on the board beside their names. (This can be an easy way to introduce students to graphing. The children can make a bar graph indicating their guesses as compared to that of the other students, and later find out who was closest to the actual amount!) The child who has the closest guess gets to help you to distribute the jelly beans/candies or other treat equally to the rest of the class for everyone to share!

Mystery Gift (Gr. 1-3)

Bake a plate of cookies or some other treat for your new class, and then wrap it in a large box with a big ribbon. Put the box at the front of the room where everyone can see it, and begin a discussion about "I wonder what's in the box?!" Once everyone has had at least one guess (and the discussion can

become quite hilarious - I've had guesses about baby elephants and Dalmatians), choose 2 or 3 of the 'best listeners' help you to unwrap the gift and share with the class!

*******Classroom Scavenger Hunt (Gr. 2-3)**

Give the students a chance to explore their new classroom with this activity. Put the children in pairs, and have them answer a list of questions about your classroom by walking around, looking at and touching things in the room. Then, talk about what they found as a large group and clarify any questions the students might have about where things are in the classroom.

*******Find Someone Who....(Gr. 3-6)**

These activities are very easy to make up, and are excellent for helping students to get to know one another better. The objective is for students to fill in the answers to all of the criteria on their sheets, for example: "Find someone who loves black licorice". The nice thing about these activities is that they can be easily adapted to special themes and used throughout the year as well.

Class Collage (Gr. 1-3)

This is a fun, interactive way to get kids working together and sharing information about themselves. Divide children up into groups of 4 or 5. Have each child select a piece of construction paper in their favourite colour, and put their name in black felt in the centre of the page. Give each group some magazines and ask them to find pictures of things that they love or love to do. Then put all of the finished collages together on the bulletin board to make a large classroom collage!

*******Secret Student (Gr. 2-6)**

To begin this activity, have the kids fill in the Secret Student form (this may need to be modified depending on your grade level). Collect all of the forms (be sure the students have put their names on them!), and then redistribute randomly. Have each child read out one form and see if anyone can guess who the Secret Student is! Students can keep track each time they guess correctly at their desks on a small piece of paper. The children who get at least 5 secret students correctly earn a small prize or privilege!

Secret Pals/Random Acts of Kindness (Gr. 1-3)

This is a great activity to do during the first week of school. First, brainstorm with the children different compliments we can give to each other, and talk about a variety of kind and respectful words we could use to describe ourselves (descriptive adjectives). Then, read stories to the students about friendship (books by Kevin Henkes are wonderful for this!). Make a list of random acts of kindness that they could do for each other (that cost little or no money). Then, have the children label a large envelope clearly with their name, and decorate it with at least 3 descriptive adjectives to describe themselves. Put all of their envelopes along the bottom of one of your bulletin boards. Then, have each child write his/her name on a small piece of paper to be put into a hat. Each child draws out a name; this will be their secret pal for the week. The kids can write secret little compliments to their pals each morning as their warm-up when they first enter the room, and last thing before they go home at the end of the day. The kids absolutely love this activity! The secret pals reveal themselves at the end of the week. **Note:** Be sure to monitor this activity carefully until it becomes a routine, so that a child is not left out when a secret pal does not participate.

Classroom Quilt (Gr. 3-6)

This is a wonderful way to decorate your bulletin board with information about your new students! Put a large piece of paper up on your wall, and distribute one piece of square paper to each student (these could be white or have your students choose their favourite colour). Inside the 4 edges of the paper, the students write 4 sentences about themselves - you can brainstorm as a class to decide what information they would like to include. In the middle of the square the students write their name in their favourite colour and using any lettering they wish (bubble, script, block), and then illustrate their four sentences around their name. Put the squares up on the paper to form a patchwork quilt! (A variation could be to have the students glue yarn around their square first, or actually stitch their squares to the butcher paper).

Two Facts and a Fib (Gr. 3-6)

This is a really fun activity to do just after summer holidays, but is best suited to upper elementary classes. The kids write down two things that they actually did or things that really happened to them during their summer holidays this year, and one thing that they would like to have done but didn't. Each child reads out his/her three 'facts' and the rest of the class needs to figure out which of the three is the fib.

Interviews (Gr. 2-6)

This activity can be modified for the different grade levels. Simply pair children up, have them ask one another predetermined questions (either class generated or teacher-generated), and then introduce their partner to the class with the information they've learned.

********T-Shirt Activity (Gr. 2-6)***

The students design a 't-shirt' made of construction paper. Then, they fill in various types of information about themselves. This may include information on the left sleeve about the kinds of foods they like to eat, their favourite holiday around the collar of the shirt, and so on. (This can be decided by you in advance or student-generated). Students should fill in all of this information BUT NOT THEIR NAME. The teacher puts all of these t-shirts on display on a 'clothesline' across the room, and the students must go around and guess which t-shirt belongs to whom. The student to guess them all correctly wins a prize or a privilege. Then, students can introduce themselves and tell ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION from their t-shirt. (You can place a sticker beside this piece of information on their shirt after they have spoken as this will help you in the next activity!) Instruct the other students to listen carefully, as the next activity will depend on their remembering this information!

********Guess That Person Bingo (Gr. 3-6)***

As a follow-up to the t-shirt activity, it's fun to test the students' knowledge of their classmates by playing a game of bingo. List all of the students' names on the chalkboard (the kids will enjoy seeing if they can stump you on THEIR names!), and give students a blank bingo card. Have them fill in the squares

with one student's name for each space (no doubles allowed). Then, call out one piece of information about one of their classmates. If they know who the information is about and have his/her name on their card, they get to put a marker on it. Continue until someone gets bingo. To win the game, the student needs to tell the names of the students he/she has marked on their card. Have students switch seats and play another round!

Summer Journal Writing (Gr. 2-6)

Another fun way to get to know your students while gaining some insight into their writing abilities right from the start is to begin journal writing the first week. Have students decorate their journals in any way they wish (within reason, of course) to help the kids gain a sense of ownership over their writing. Then provide journal prompts (if students seem to need these) that will help you to learn more about them, such as:

"The best thing I did during the summer was..."

"What I enjoyed most about school last year was..."

"This year I hope..."

********Something in Common (Gr. 4-6)***

For this activity, the students must walk around and find something they have in common with each member of the class and write it down. The first person to find 10 different people with whom they have something in common wins!

********Human Bingo (Gr. 3-6)***

Give each student a copy of the "Human Bingo" card. Then the students walk around and try to find other people who, for example, 'get up at 7:00 a.m.'. Each time they find a person who answers yes to their question, they get to put their name in that box (as a marker). The first person to fill in their card completely and correctly needs to tell the rest of the class what they learned about their classmates.

********Biopoems (Grades 4-6)***

This is a wonderful way to get acquainted with your students. A poem of eleven lines, you can expect to take up to a two-hour period to get them finished. The poem is strictly about students themselves, so it is useful to do some preliminary work on adjectives and expressing feelings. You will need

sheets of colored construction paper, scissors, glue, colored markers, and (if desired), glitter pens and other decorations. Introduce and model the biopoem, and then brainstorm adjectives to describe people together. Instruct the students to make a rough copy for you to look at first, and then make a good copy which they will cut out and paste onto their construction paper. While the students are working, go around and take pictures of the students to put above their poems on the construction paper. The students can then decorate their poems. Again, as a follow-up activity, these poems can be collected at the end of class, and then randomly handed out the next class. The students need to read each poem (omitting the first line and the last two), and the other students must try to guess whose poem it is! These poems are a great way to brighten your classroom and feature your new students.

Your own ideas/Notes:

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

TIPS TO ENSURE SUCCESS YOUR FIRST YEAR!

In his international analysis including 83 different studies, Veenman (1984) discovered that "the most seriously perceived problem of beginning teachers was classroom discipline" (p.153). Research carried out by other scholars has come to the same conclusion (Dollase, 1992; Housego & Badali, 1996; Nielbrand, Horn, & Holmes, 1992). Being a beginning teacher myself not too long ago, and based on discussions I have had with many other beginning teachers, I concur with the findings of this research. "Classroom management refers to all things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place" (Wong & Wong, 1998). Good management is key to a pleasant, relaxed working atmosphere for you and your students. In this chapter, I have attempted to provide you with as many practical tips as possible to help make your first year of managing your classroom a success.

Here are three important tips I would like to share for your first year as a classroom teacher:

- ✓ Deal with any problems immediately - don't put them off! Other students will take their cue from how you handle (or choose not to handle) each situation.
- ✓ Focus on prevention of problems by anticipating possible difficulties rather than on punishment.
- ✓ Grow eyes in the back of your head - quickly. Keep an active eye

on everything that's going on in the classroom!

Here are some more general classroom management tips:

- ✓ Organize your classroom well at the beginning of the year. This will save you running around like a chicken with its head cut off just prior to your lessons, and then feeling 'frazzled' with the kids!
- ✓ A well-managed classroom is a predictable environment for the kids.
- ✓ Remain genuinely positive and friendly - yet firm.
- ✓ Laugh! Keep your sense of humour!
- ✓ Be flexible. If something isn't working, don't be afraid to change it after a healthy try. On the other hand, be careful not to make too many drastic changes too quickly, especially with regard to seating arrangement and rules. Talk to the students, ask them what they think is working well and why (classroom meetings are a great way to do this).
- ✓ Give directions clearly and simply. As a general rule, give only two directions at a time.
- ✓ Be prepared and well-organized in lessons.
- ✓ Keep kids busy in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.
- ✓ Establish and maintain routines as outlined in Chapter 2.

The Characteristics of a Well-Managed Classroom

1. Students are deeply involved with their work, especially with academic, teacher-led instruction.
2. Students know what is expected of them and are generally successful.
3. There is relatively little wasted time, confusion, or disruption.
4. The climate of the classroom is work-oriented, but relaxed and pleasant.

(Emmer, Edmund, Evertson, Clements, & Worsham, 1997)

"Remember that children are basically good, and that inappropriate behavior is a purposeful response to a need for attention, power, revenge or avoidance of failure"
(ATA Handbook, p.13).

TIME MANAGEMENT

How well you manage your time is key to running a smooth classroom, but it is also important in successfully maintaining a healthy balance with your personal life. Expect to put in long hours as a beginning teacher - it's a steep learning curve and the only way you will learn what works for you is by 'doing the time'! However, you are going to find that it becomes difficult to give your personal life the attention it needs, too. Be sure to schedule in your own personal time as carefully as you would any of the subjects you teach, or you could quickly suffer from burn-out.

Here are some healthy tips from successful time managers:

- ✓ Learn to say NO! (Especially with regard to too much extra-curricular involvement) during your first year.
- ✓ Break down large tasks into small ones, and do a little each day.
- ✓ Plan your lessons at the same time and at the same place every week (at home or at school).
- ✓ Ask a lot of questions about how other teachers plan and manage their time.
- ✓ Become a list person and make one for yourself at the end of each day so that you have clear goals in mind when you are fresh the next morning.
- ✓ Have a clear routine for transitions between classes.
- ✓ Think of a variety of quick and easy ways to get student's attention when you need to speak or are ready to begin a lesson - be creative here! Here are a list of some possibilities that may work for you:
 - Count down from 10 to "zero noise" - everyone needs to have their hand up in the air by the time you reach zero, eyes on you
 - Say, "Freeze please!"
 - Teach students to stop, look, and listen
 - Ring a bell
 - Clap a pattern (kids repeat after you)
 - Play music
 - Say, "Put your finger on your nose/hands on your head if you can hear me!"
 - Honk a bicycle horn (if your classroom walls are thick!)
 - Use noise makers
 - Use a hook such as "You know, I have a question that I've been thinking about...."

- Begin singing a Christmas song... in June
- And my personal favourite: Say, "Smile if you can hear me!" In response I get a sea of beautiful little smiling faces beaming back at me!

- And finally, when in a panic for time, ask yourself, "Would anything really terrible happen if I didn't do this?" If the answer is no, don't do it (Metropolitan Nashville Education Association, 1987).
- Your own ideas: _____

PLANNING

You will need to do two different types of planning, short term (weekly/monthly) and long term (yearly). Be sure to ask your principal what his/her requirements and suggestions are before you begin:

- Do lesson plans need to be turned in to the principal?
- Do yearly plans need to be?
- Is there any preference regarding what type of plan book you will be using?

How effectively you plan will determine how effective your teaching will be. Take the time to develop well thought-out lessons. Write them out step by step in the beginning so that the development of your lesson is clear in your mind and makes sense to the students.

The margin for misbehaviour in your classroom is greatly reduced when kids are on task, challenged, understand your directions and feel there is purpose to their work.

Here are some planning tips to help you to manage your classroom:

- Implement a pattern for a smooth start each day. This could be in the

form of :

- ✓ calendar time (for younger children) when you discuss the temperature outside, the day of the week, how many days of school we've had, and/or learn a poem/sing a song chorally.
 - ✓ a list of 3 directions listed on the board. This could include sharpening pencils, getting book(s) ready, and reading silently.
 - ✓ have students write in a journal to you, which you can then reply to once a week or more
 - ✓ a morning meeting where you discuss the schedule for the day and/or any upcoming events
- Be sure to work from curriculum guides and approved teacher guides specifically designed for your grade level.
 - Plan one subject at a time, and plan for the entire week or for the next two weeks. I still only plan for one week at a time because things seem to change so much during the week, or I think of new ideas!
 - Plan in pencil! Lessons should not be written in stone.
 - Decide how you will organize your lessons. Your school may have a required plan book. If not, you can either buy a commercially prepared plan book at teacher supply stores, or make one of your own. I made my own with subject headings already written in each section, which cuts down on planning time. For an example, please see the appendix.
 - Ask other teachers at your grade level how they plan.
 - Allow for a variety of different learning experiences for your students by using a variety of teaching strategies. The following list may spark your enthusiasm and creativity when planning.

Teaching Strategies

Flash cards	Cooperative learning	Pets
Autobiography	Invention	Films and videos
CD's/tapes	Brainstorming	Student ideas
Quiz	Competition	Letter to expert
Graphs	Drama	Correspondence
Advertisements	Albums	Puppets
Plays	Overhead transparencies	Dialogue
Case study	Meditation	Interviewing
Skits	Puzzles	Computers
Jigsaw	Sand table	Bingo
Posters	Debate	Murals
Choral reading	Book review	Pantomime
Team teaching	Manipulatives	Cartooning
Mind mapping	Independent projects	Journal writing
Reports	Centres	Games
Crafts	Replica	Simulation

☐ Have activities on hand at all times for kids to do if they are finished their work early. These are often called "sponge" activities and can be kept either at a centre or posted under the title 'The Sponge of the Day!' Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ✓ Draw or list as many objects/animals/things in this room/at a circus as you can that start with the letter "B".
- ✓ List all the things in your bedroom/bathroom/living room/back yard.
- ✓ Write as many adjectives as you can think of.
- ✓ List one proper noun for every letter of the alphabet.
- ✓ Write a riddle (provide a funny example).
- ✓ List or draw as many cartoon characters as you can.
- ✓ List all of the provinces and territories in Canada.
- ✓ Draw and label as many different dogs as you can.

Other activities children can do when they are finished their work are:

help others (directed by you)	complete unfinished assignments
read stories and poems	go to the listening centre
crossword puzzles	play educational games
word searches	brain stretchers
experiment with math manipulatives	write a story
make a card for someone they love	fun art activities
puzzles	riddles

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

"Discipline problems are minimized when students are regularly engaged in meaningful activities geared to their interests and aptitudes" (Brophy & Good, 1996).

Consequences

Regardless of how clearly you teach the rules of your classroom or how many times you review them and practice them with your students, there will still be moments when students will test the boundaries if for no other reason than to see if you will follow through with the consequences you have laid out. However, there are some important points to remember about consequences:

- ✓ **Consequences are not punishment. They are a natural, fair outcome that suit the behaviour.** For example, if a student is running in the hall and there exists a very clear rule that states that no running in the halls is allowed, the consequence should be that the student go back and walk. If a student is speaking out of turn, the behaviour could first be ignored (because any attention is 'good attention' in the student's eyes). If the behaviour continues, have a short talk with the student about it. If an understanding is not reached, the student could be politely asked to wait in the hall for the remainder of the discussion.

- ✓ **Consequences are extended only to the individual who has broken the rule.** If only one or two children were yelling in the hall when coming back from gym class, the entire class should not have to deal with the consequences for that action.
- ✓ **The consequences extended should be fair.** However, 'fair' does not mean that the same consequences exist for all students at all times. Rather, it means that you are being consistent. Individual personalities and situational contexts need to be kept in mind. For example, if a student is late to class and has been late for five times in a row, the consequences for that student may be different than for the child who has never been late until today.
- ✓ **Avoid consequences that are related to an academic grade, such as lowering a student's 'points' for that day.** Again, consequences should relate to the behaviour in question.
- ✓ **Student discipline means consequences for breaking a related rule.** If a child breaks their pencil on their desk, the related consequence could be to write a letter of apology to their parents with the broken pencil inside, and a second letter to you for disrupting your class to be kept in his/her individual file.
- ✓ **Remember that consequences are a result of a choice the student made.** Remind students that they are in control of their situation.
- ✓ **Finally, it is necessary to have a series of consequences, depending on the rule broken and the seriousness of the behaviour.** Here are some examples of strategies you may use when children break the rules:
 - ☐ pause and look directly at the student with a "I'm watching you" stare
 - ☐ work the student's name into whatever you are saying, for example, "Therefore, a spider is not really an insect, Tanner, because it has 8 legs."

- physically walk over and stand by the student without interrupting what you are talking about
- lay a hand on the student's shoulder
- DO NOT STOP THE LESSON TO DELIVER CONSEQUENCES!**
This simply gives the student the attention (s)he was looking for.

If the behaviour continues, you may wish to:

- hold an individual conference with the student
- have the student take a 'time out'
- remove the student from the group
- withhold special privileges
- phone parents
- detention (ask about your school policy on keeping kids after school hours first)
- ask the previous teacher and other teachers at your grade level for advice on the situation
- assignment to write five ways to correct the problem
- if the child seems depressed or seems to be experiencing other emotional and/or social difficulties, you may wish to obtain parental permission for a referral to your school counsellor
- ask for administrative assistance

*"Effective teachers MANAGE their classrooms.
Ineffective teachers DISCIPLINE their classrooms"*
(Wong, H.K. & Wong, R.T., 1998)

Rewarding Positive Behaviour

Conversely, positive behaviour should be reinforced so that there exists a careful blend of both positive and negative reinforcement in your classroom. Positive reinforcement can be rewarded either to individuals or to the entire class, depending on the situation. Following are some ideas to positively encourage students, and don't cost a lot of money!

INDIVIDUAL REWARDS	CLASS REWARDS
<p>A smile Stickers Pencils Erasers Certificate Note to parents Phone call home Verbal praise A pat or handshake Chew gum in class for a day</p> <p>Privileges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lunch with the teacher ■ extra recess ■ choice of where to sit ■ keep stuffed animal on desk ■ write with gel pen for a day <p>Draw on chalk board Wear 'Special Student' ribbon Recognition on morning announcements from principal</p>	<p>Stickers Pencils Erasers Certificates Extra recess/gym Play a game the class loves Verbal praise Free time Video Chew gum in class for a day</p> <p>Compliment on morning announcements from principal</p> <p>Add marbles to a jar - when it's full the class earns a larger reward such as a popcorn or ice-cream party</p>

CHAPTER #5: STUDENT MOTIVATION

INTRINSIC OR EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION?

How you attempt to motivate your students depends on what you believe about human nature. Motivation can be either **intrinsic** or **extrinsic** in nature. Intrinsic motivation has been defined as "self-initiating and unrelated to the need for social approval or economic reward" (Stipek, 1988), whereas extrinsic motivation takes the form of an external reward such as stickers, certificates, candies, coupons, certificates, etc. I have designed the chart below to give you further examples of what characterizes these two different types of motivation:

INTRINSIC MOTIVATORS	EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ uses student curiosity as a motivator■ focuses on the natural, inner desire for personal competence■ involves the use of mental challenges, such as problem solving, puzzles, conflicts, and mysteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ token systems (ie) marbles in a jar for groups or individuals■ high grades■ display of student work■ a special guest■ inviting parents in to see high quality work, or sending 'warm fuzzy' notes home■ positive phone calls home

It is common to see teachers utilizing a combination of these two different types of motivation in their classes. For example, a teacher may awaken children's curiosity and inner desire to learn through interesting and challenging, well-designed lessons (intrinsic motivation), while also displaying outstanding student work and rewarding the class for its hard work with a

popcorn party at the end of the semester. However, it can sometimes be very difficult for the beginning teacher to maintain intrinsic motivation in their classrooms due to outside influences. For instance, knowledge that you have to 'cover the curriculum', and trying to simply get through all of the required material tends to discourage teachers from arousing intrinsic motivation in students. It is a common error for beginning teachers to make statements such as "I know this is boring, so let's just get through it". However, the results of intrinsic motivation are an exquisite reward offered only to teachers, and from my personal experience, I can tell you that it is worth the extra effort it may take for you to foster. Here are some techniques you can use to promote students' intrinsic interests in your class, offered by Macdonald and Healy (1999):

- Make individual self-expression a major priority in designing your teaching objectives.**
- Design learning activities that are problem-based.** By approaching learning from the standpoint of questions rather than answers, and incorporated in projects in which they have some choice, rather than set assignments, you help students recognize the practical value of organized knowledge in meeting human problems and needs.
- Let students know that you are as concerned about HOW they arrived at an answer or a solution (the process) as you are interested in the outcome itself - and that there may be more than one solution in some cases (or possibly none, for sure).**
- Build a sense of drama into your teaching style.** Use well-placed humour and devil's advocate ploys to maintain interest.
- Offer good-natured challenges to students' performance skills as a means of initiating and maintaining interest in class activities, for example, "Who would like to go to the board and try Problem 6?"**
- Use frequent pair or small-group discussions in class.** Shy or inhibited students often find their voices and reveal their personalities

in close encounters with peers.

- Regularly share with students details of interesting reading you are doing, unusual personalities you have met, exciting trips you have taken, or strange events you have witnessed.
- Make your teaching as concrete and visual as possible. Bring in, and encourage your students to bring in, relevant real-world material such as current newspapers and magazines, videotapes you or they have recorded, and things you have picked up in your travels (or they in theirs).

Some further tips and hints to help you to spark motivation are:

- Keep lessons relevant and meaningful to students' lives.
- Provide a safe, accepting learning environment.
- Stimulate kids - you have a lot of competition with today's video games and movies.
- Give choices.
- Emphasize each child's strengths, either quietly in a whisper to the child, or in front of the class. Use discretion here.
- Avoid communicating to students a feeling of urgency just to get through lessons.
- Invite student participation in planning (their day, the topics and means of study).

Ask yourself these questions:

- How does self esteem relate to student motivation?
- Do students feel a sense of success and accomplishment in my classroom?
- What am I doing to establish and maintain motivation in my classroom?

PRAISE

One of the most effective forms of motivation comes in the form of verbal praise, if it is awarded correctly. Here are some tips on how to deliver effective praise:

- Be honest.**
- Be specific.** For example, rather than "Good job, Nathan" say, "Thank you for putting the chairs back at the table, Nathan. You really saved us some time by doing that without being asked!"
- Be creative.** Not everything a child does should be described as "wonderful" or "very good". For example, instead of "Wonderful printing!" You could say, "Thank you for your extra effort in your printing, Callie. Your letters are very straight and tall, and you have a finger space between each of your words. Would you like to do some printing for a class project for me?"
- Avoid comparing children to each other.** For example, don't say "Good for you - you are almost as fast as Riley in your math facts!"
- Use "I" statements.** For example, "I really appreciate how quietly you walked down the hall, Ryan!"
- Appreciate students' individual and unique efforts and abilities.** For example, "You have a special gift for solving math problems, Ashley."

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

It was Howard Gardner who put together what he called a "theory of multiple intelligences" (1983). This term acknowledges the multifaceted profile of the human mind, and it is highly applicable to the students you will be teaching in your classroom. According to Gardner, there exist 8 intelligences.

Specifically, these intelligences are:

- verbal-linguistic: word intelligence
- logical- mathematical: number and reasoning intelligence
- visual-spacial: picture intelligence
- musical-rhythmic: music and rhythm intelligence
- bodily-kinesthetic: body intelligence
- interpersonal: social intelligence
- intrapersonal: self intelligence
- naturalist: natural environment intelligence

Gardner stresses that although intelligence is a biological function, it is inseparable from the cultural context in which it exists. To be an effective classroom teacher, you will need to first observe your students informally on a day-to-day basis to gather important information about their unique intelligences. It is then your responsibility to design learning experiences which incorporate a wide variety of teaching strategies to ensure that you reach all of your students.

Teachers "have to acquire a variety of teaching approaches and of materials that will allow any group of students to learn in ways that they individually presently favour while making it necessary and reasonably agreeable for each of them to develop other ways of acquiring knowledge and skill, especially since all of them will need to be able to learn in varied ways throughout their lives"

(MacDonald & Healy, 1999, p.161).

For examples of strategies you can use to incorporate the multiple intelligences in your classroom teaching, please see the following resources:

Resources on Multiple Intelligence

Armstrong, Thomas (1994). Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom. Alexandria, VA: Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Campbell, L., Campell, B., & Dickerson, D. (1996). Teaching and Learning Through Multiple Intelligences. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Gardner, Howard (1993). Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York: Basic Books.

Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Haggerty, Brian A. (1995). Nurturing Intelligences: A Guide to Multiple Intelligences Theory and Teaching. Menlo Park, CA: Innovative Learning, Addison-Wesley.

Lazear, David (1994). Seven Pathways of Learning: Teaching Students and Parents about Multiple Intelligences. Tucson: Zephyr Press.

Seven Ways of Knowing: Teaching for Multiple Intelligences. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training, 1992.

CHAPTER #6: ASSESSMENT

SOME USEFUL INFORMATION TO GET YOU STARTED

Ask any teacher what they do not appreciate about their job, and they will more than likely tell you that it is having to assess and evaluate their students. This is because there is nothing more difficult than having to assign a simple letter grade to everything you know about the complex picture of a student's abilities, talents, and knowledge. Learning to develop assessment tools that will authentically evaluate what a child knows is a skill which will become easier the more you teach. Here are some general guidelines to guide you in this endeavour:

- Get a copy of the report card early in the year and become familiar with it. Emphasize report card objectives when planning your units, and be sure you know how you will evaluate each objective.
- Assess students regularly rather than only close to the reporting period.
- Plan how you will assess each unit as you design each unit (not towards the end of the unit).
- Whenever possible, involve students in choosing the type of assessment.
- Be sure that your evaluation is authentic - does your assessment strategy truly assess what the students know?
- Be sure your evaluation reflects the current content that you are

- teaching.
- DON'T TRY TO ASSESS EVERYTHING!** Be selective and choose only to evaluate student work that reflects benchmarks in learning.
 - Keep in mind that you are evaluating students to help you to make informed decisions regarding future instruction.
 - Remember that your goal is also to make students aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.
 - Ask yourself - do your assessment methods have some value beyond your evaluation?

"When people write letters, news articles, insurance claims, poems; when they speak a foreign language; when they develop blueprints; when they create a painting, a piece of music, or build a stereo cabinet, they demonstrate achievements that have special value missing in tasks contrived only for the purpose of assessing knowledge (such as spelling quizzes, laboratory exercises, or typical final exams)"
(Archibald & Newman, 1988, p.3).

Three Types of Evaluation

There are three different types of evaluation that you should be aware of when planning assessment. These are defined by Burke (1994) as:

✓ **Diagnostic Evaluation**

This type of evaluation is often done at the beginning of a course, quarter, semester, or year to assess the skills, abilities, interests, levels of achievement, or difficulties of one student or a class. Diagnostic evaluation should be done informally; therefore, it should never be used for a grade.

✓ **Formative Evaluation**

These evaluations are conducted continually throughout the year. They are used to monitor students' progress and provide meaningful and immediate feedback as to what students have to do to achieve thoughtful outcomes;

their purpose is to improve instruction rather than grade students.

✓ **Summative Evaluation**

"Summative evaluation occurs at the end of a unit, activity, course, term or program. It is used with formative evaluation to determine student achievement and program effectiveness" (Board of Education for the City of Etobicoke, 1987, p.9).

EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Authentic assessment means using a variety of evaluation strategies that are suited to your current topic of study. Here are some strategies available to you:

Standardized tests	Teacher-made tests
Portfolios	Performances
Projects	Oral Exams
Peer Assessment	Exhibitions
Pre-tests	Essay style questions
Learning logs	Journals
Cloze activities	Miscue Analysis
Observation checklists	Multiple choice
Short answer	Matching
Graphic organizers	Quizzes
Interviews	Homework checks
Anecdotal comments	Conferences
Author's chair	Take-home tests
Open book exams	Self assessment
True or false	Self reflection

- ✓ Remember to consider the pros and cons of each type of evaluation. For example, multiple choice exams take a great deal of time to make, but very little time to mark, and may not authentically reflect what the student knows.

USING RUBRICS AS AN ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Alberta Assessment Consortium (August 1995 Draft 1.2) defines rubrics as "sets of criteria that describe levels of performance or understanding" (p.15). They (are):

- ✓ A set of criteria.
- ✓ A list of traits and qualities.
- ✓ Refer to the levels of understanding, proficiency with a skill or process, and/or the quality of a product or performance.
- ✓ Provides standards.
- ✓ Scales (2 or more levels) to help to differentiate levels of performance based on criteria.

Morris (2001) defines the rubric as "the ultimate assessment tool." She has found that the rubric:

"simplifies assessment by providing a framework for teachers. Teachers can use it for both objective and subjective assessments (presentations, performances, and projects). The rubric provides a system for clearly assessing accountability. It is an authentic assessment tool that takes the guesswork out of evaluating student work. It is fast and efficient, and you can involve students in the development of the rubric through to the actual work assessment at the end of the unit" (p.51).

Here are some examples of rubrics to get you started:

- 4 Demonstrates exemplary performance or understanding. *Ie: higher level thinking skills such as inference and synthesis are applied.*
- 3 Demonstrates solid performance or understanding.
- 2 Performance/understanding emerging or developing; makes errors; has a grasp that is not thorough.
- 1 Might attempt but has serious errors or misconceptions.

(Alberta Assessment Consortium, August 1995 Draft 1.2)

5	Excellent	5	Consistent
4	Proficient	4	Mostly consistent
3	Satisfactory	3	Usually consistent
2	Limited	2	Inconsistent
1	Not evident	1	Rarely consistent

(Morris, 2001, p.52)

Some other qualitative and quantitative descriptors suggested by Morris (2001) are:

5	4	3	2	1
Exemplary	Proficient	Usually	Sometimes	Barely
Excellent	Mostly	significant	Somewhat	Very little
Mastery	Significant	Successful	Slightly	Not at all
Highly	Regularly	Average	Below	Insufficient
significant	Very	Quite	Inconsistent	Not evident
Exceptionally	successful	thorough	Minimal	Rarely
successful	Above	Usually	Sketchy	consistent
Exceeds	average	consistent	Has some	No
In-Depth	Thorough	Usually	success	independence
Consistent	Mostly	independent	Limited	Attention
Self-reliant	consistent	Adequate	Little	required
Advanced	Approaches	Generally	Few	Incomplete
Completely	excellence	Satisfactory		Not
Beyond	Independent			successful
	Almost			No attempt
	completed			

CHAPTER #7: ESTABLISHING POSITIVE PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

SOME HELPFUL TIPS!

As a beginning teacher, the most intimidating moment for me was walking into a room of adults who had come to "check out the new teacher", the parents of the children I would be teaching, and hope to become partners in their child's learning when I was younger than most of the parents! Couple this with the fact that beginning teachers have received little to no information on how to handle this situation, and it can be a very intimidating experience. Yet what I learned was that I was successful even before I opened my mouth to speak, because the approach I had taken to establishing my classroom and the relationships with my students and their parents spoke volumes for my professionalism. Parent involvement is fundamental to effective teaching, and the approach you take from the beginning of the year will in part determine how much support you will receive throughout the year. Here are some tips to get you off to a wonderful year!

MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT/OPEN HOUSE

Here is some information you may wish to share with your parents on this night:

- A letter from you (this could also be sent before school starts) including an introduction from you, telling a bit about your background, special events this year, and any other of the following information.
- Inform parents of exactly which classes you will be teaching along with your grading system.

- Your classroom daily/weekly schedule.
- Your year plans.
- When regular tests will occur(spelling, math) and how they can help their child to study.
- Your expectations regarding illness, absence, and homework.
- Offer suggestions on how parents can help at home.
- Your class rules and/or your discipline plan. On this plan, indicate when they would be receiving a phone call from you (for example, when their child has broken a rule 3 times in one week). Remember to also tell parents that you will also be phoning with POSITIVE comments on occasion (if you intend to do this).
- Information regarding breakfast or lunch programs available through the school.
- School supply list.
- Special upcoming field-trips/performances.
- Make up a schedule and ask for parent volunteers (name and phone number) during specific times for specific activities/subject areas, field trips, birthdays, and/or special occasions.
- Offer an invitation for parents as guest speakers for upcoming future units of study.
- Are parents allowed to drop in to observe your class? If so, is there a procedure they need to follow, such as checking in at the office?
- ASK PARENTS WHAT THEY HOPE THEIR CHILD WILL ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR

What do parents do if their child is having difficulty with you or with your class? Encourage parents not to wait until conference time if they feel there is a problem!

Other information:

Here are some fun ways to get your classroom ready for this event!

Play some soft music in the background.

Provide some adult-sized chairs.

Provide some toys for youngsters to play with who come with their older brothers and sisters.

Have a sign-in sheet for parents, or a table covered with butcher paper where parents can comment on your classroom (by writing right on the table!)

Have the children put their names on their desks or make desk cards with your students.

Have the children write a letter to their parents or make a card to thank them for coming, to tell them what they've learned, or what (s)he likes most about school, and include a schedule of events or topics you will be covering that evening.

Put other student work on desks in folders for students to show parents.

- Have the students give their parents a tour of their classroom, or design a short scavenger hunt for students to do with their parents. For example, "Find the reading corner and write down the temperature" The kids who finish can come to you to be rewarded with a sticker.
- Have the parents sit in their children's desks. At each child's desk have one question you think the parents might want to ask or have answered by you. Alternatively, you could have the children answer the questions (you would need to plan this carefully before hand).
- Have the children write three clues that describe themselves and leave them on their desks for their parents to find that evening.
- Have your bulletin boards decorated with student work.

MAINTAINING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- Make a point of phoning all of your parents to introduce yourself and ask if there is any important information that you should know about their child. For example: nick-names, allergies etc.
- Keep file cards with positive things that happen on them, and then send post-cards or happy grams home with positive remarks. Send one or two per day.
- Make a habit of sending home weekly or monthly newsletters, either student or teacher generated.
- Send corrected work home regularly and on a timely basis. In my classroom, each child has a manila envelope which their work goes home in, to be signed and returned the next day.
- Send home positive praise for good work the first few weeks of school

in the form of a small progress report - something for students to take home and brag about! This could also be in the form of a checklist for parents to sign and return.

- Take pictures of your students doing various different activities in your classroom. Have students write captions for each photo and bind in an album. Students can take turns bringing this home for the weekend!
- Throughout the year, invite parents to come in to listen to individual children read, particularly for those children who rarely have the opportunity to have someone listen to them at home.
- Start a home-communication notebook. As the students come in in the morning, have some information on the board about the day or an upcoming event. The students first copy your message, and then respond to it in their books. These go home for parents to read each night and write additional comments or concerns in.
- Provide each child with a chart with space for 20 stickers. Reward positive behaviour/good work with a sticker. When the student has filled his/her chart, they earn the privilege of inviting mom and/or dad to school for lunch. Set up a table complete with a vase of flowers in a corner of your room for this purpose (parents bring the lunch). After lunch, the student can give mom and dad a tour of the classroom or show them current work!
- Your ideas:

PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES

Although your first round of parent-teacher interviews may seem daunting, remember that there is no enemy here! You are both on the same side, concerned about the well-being and educational growth of their child. Some parents seem to come into parent-teacher conferences unsure or upset, perhaps due to their own negative memories of school, or because they are afraid that their child's educational problems are their own fault. Nonetheless, it is important to remain calm, professional, and positive.

"Parents are a powerful, usually underutilised source of knowledge about youngsters. Parents are often made to feel unwelcome in schools, and we too often dismiss their insights as too subjective and overly involved. In fact, the insights of parents - urgent, invested, passionate, immediate - are exactly what we need"
(Ayers, 1993, p.41)

Prior to the Conference

- Send home list of questions the parent might want to ask. Please see the appendix for an example.
- Determine whether or not the student will be present at the conference.
- Review the student's cumulative file. Students' home lives and background are helpful to know.
- If you are aware that a student's parents do not speak English, arrange for an interpreter.
- If you feel that you will need administrative support for a particular conference, arrange for this in advance with your principal.
- On an index card, in a binder, or on a file folder, list in point form:
 - ✓ 1 or 2 positive qualities about the student

- ✓ 1 or 2 goals for this term/semester
- ✓ Be sure this is supported by current samples of the student's work from his/her portfolio or file.

- If you wish, collect student notebooks/binders and put them on display in the hallway for the students to show parents while waiting. I have my parents come 15 minutes early for their interview for this purpose.

- If you anticipate that a certain child may need longer time than the scheduled interview, prearrange to have the interview at a different time.

- Also put on display any relevant current research you have come across regarding student learning in relevant curriculum areas.

- Have parents help themselves to a copy of a current newsletter outlining topics of study and upcoming events.

- All appointments and your name should be clearly marked on the outside of your door. I also post a sign asking parents to knock if it is their scheduled time. This helps me to keep track of time, and I can either wrap up or schedule a second interview for the parent who requests more time.

Setting the Stage

The atmosphere in which you set up parent-teacher conferences should be welcoming and professional. Keep the following points in mind:

- An empty classroom, free of distractions, is best.

- Be sure the time and place of the conference is clear to both you and the parent.

- Do not sit across from the parent(s) with furniture between you such as a desk - sit side by side on adult chairs at equal height.

- If possible, offer refreshments such as coffee/juice and mints or cookies in the hallway.
- Provide books and toys for young children accompanying parents to play with.
- Consider putting a plant or some fresh flowers on the table with a bright tablecloth.

During the Conference

- Be prepared to listen.
- Greet the parents/student at the door with a warm welcome and smile.
- Open with a positive comment about the student's attitude, work habits, or achievements.
- Stay open to hearing the parent first. Avoid rushing in to defend your practise. Display clarity and confidence in your own philosophy and classroom practise.
- Be open to suggestions and to working together. Ask for the parent's perception of their child's strengths and weaknesses before offering yours.
- Remain sensitive to what the parent is feeling.
- Remain positive with both your words and your body language.
- Speak plainly and avoid the use of educational jargon.

- Discuss the child's:
 - Educational progress
 - Social skills
 - Work habits
 - Emotional growth
 - Physical health (if necessary)
- When discussing behaviour problems and educational issues, stick to the facts and support what you are saying with specific incidents and/or work samples.
- Keep writing to a minimum during the interview, but keep brief notes about what was discussed.
- Stay on schedule! Parents may have other interviews scheduled for siblings of the child in your class, or other appointments to be at.
- If a parent becomes verbally abusive, stop the conference and arrange to meet at a different date (with administrative support if necessary).

Concluding the Conference

- Summarize the important topics of discussion. Reflect parents' statements back to them and do further inquiry if necessary.
- Establish goals for the next term (no more than 3) and give parents a copy.
- Review the plan of action to be sure everyone (including you), understands and agrees.
- Ask parents if they have any further concerns.
- End with another positive comment about the student.

- Thank the parents (and the student) for coming and for their continued support.
- Write short anecdotal notes once the parents leave (if possible!) to remind you of further plans of action.
- Add any items to your "Post-Conference To Do List" to remind you of follow-up after the conference, including extra work/support/enrichment to be sent home, student/teacher contracts, phone calls, referrals, etc.

CHAPTER #8: SURVIVAL

TIPS FOR PREVENTING STRESS

Here are some words of wisdom I have been taught along the way of my own beginning career. This may sound like a cliché, but you are no good inside the classroom if you aren't taking care of yourself outside of the classroom.

Please, be sure to:

- Learn how not to be a perfectionist.
- Get enough sleep.
- Watch what you eat. Eat plenty of high energy, nutritious foods. Pack your lunch the night before and keep a stash of healthy snacks in your classroom for YOU, not for the students! I keep low fat granola bars, power bars and fresh fruit on hand at all times.
- Drink plenty of water. It's easy to fall into the trap of drinking 5 cups of coffee a day!
- If you get sick, STAY HOME! Beginning teachers especially seem to have this belief that they simply can't miss a day or everything will fall apart. Take the time to allow your body to heal itself or you will never fully recover.
- Not try to do too much in your first year. You simply cannot expect to have fully developed units completed for each topic the first time that you teach them! Choose one subject to develop fully your first year, and another for the next. Your administrator will discuss this with you

as well. Be gentle with yourself.

- Continue to exercise. Plan this as religiously as you would the classes you teach.
- Leave your work problems at work and your home problems at home. Easier said than done sometimes, but very good advice.
- Laugh at yourself! You're going to make some pretty silly mistakes this year. When you crash into the filing cabinet or knock over the book display, remember that you can teach a valuable lesson to your students by learning to take mistakes in stride.
- Keep a clean desk. Psychologically, this may help you to keep a clear mind.
- Worry only about things that are under your control or that you can change.
- Maintain your personal interests outside of the classroom. The most popular reward in my class, and the one that gets the attention of the one child who doesn't seem to care about anything, is the offer of one of my travel stories. I have a growing list of the countries I've been to, and the 'best worker in the class' gets to choose which country I'll tell a story about. I love to tell them because I am talking about my passion, and I am appearing more 'real' to my students who someday may wish to travel themselves.

WHEN YOU'VE HAD "ONE OF THOSE DAYS"....

We've all had them, those days when nothing seems to go right, when the lessons we've worked so hard to create flopped miserably or we've had a negative run-in with someone in the building despite our very best efforts. You are not alone, and it does not mean that you are not a good teacher. This is a natural part of the roller coaster of emotions experienced by beginning teachers. Here's what you need to do:

- Talk to other beginning teachers. Go out for coffee together and discuss your concerns. (But be careful of FOIP here!)
- Talk to your mentor. Ask a dozen questions!
- Indulge yourself. Whatever you do to help yourself relax, do it. Go for a nice, long walk, take a bubble bath, get a massage, meditate.
- When stress begins to mount, take 5 minute breaks either mentally or physically. Close your eyes and escape to another place in your mind, or take a short walk on your lunch break. Taking 5 or 10 minutes alone in my classroom listening to music at lunch was an absolute for me during my first year!
- Focus on your strengths and on your successes. Write these down in a journal and read them when you are feeling low.
- Write down one of the many positive incidents that have happened in your classroom, or things that make you laugh, in a special book that will bring you a smile when you are down.
- Keep special notes/pictures/positive letters from students, parents, and those you love in an envelope to leaf through when you need a pick-me-up.
- Let yourself cry. We've all been there, and it does get better.

Appendix



Sample Beginning of the Year Newsletter



Monday, September 9, 2002

Welcome Grade Four Parents and Students,

I hope that you had a wonderful summer! Here are a few items of information about the grade 4 program and expectations you may wish to know.

Mr. Legg teaches science to all three grade 4 classes.

Mrs. Goertz teaches all of the grade 4 french. She also teaches a modified language arts program for selected students.

Mr. Bakke teaches the grade 4 social studies.

Mrs. Fender teaches all of the grade 4 art.

Mr. High teaches all of the grade 4 music.

Mathematics - The course is heavy and the children are able to progress much more rapidly if they have their basic facts memorized. Our goal is to memorize the addition and subtraction facts by the end of November. We will then spend the time necessary to memorize the multiplication facts (probably 3 or 4 months). At that point, we will start on the division facts. Although the children will practice these facts at school, your continued support in this area at home is greatly appreciated through the use of flash cards.

Reading - The children need to continue daily reading at home supervised by an adult. Supervision may be no more than providing a quiet time and place, or it

may be much more intensive, with the adult sitting down and listening to the child read aloud. At school we read a variety of genres, and I would encourage you to supply a variety of reading materials at home. This could include magazines, newspapers, poetry, mystery novels, etc.

Writing - The children learn/review cursive writing this year, and after Christmas, many assignments will be done entirely in cursive writing.

Composition - In grade 4, the children will write autobiographies, fiction, friendly letters, formal letters, poetry, narrative stories, photo essays, and fantasy stories, and learn the basics of note-taking using point form.

Social Studies - Grade four concentrates on Alberta; it's geography, resources, and history, and features a comparison with the province of Quebec. Research is an important skill here and is developed throughout these units.

Science - The units we study are Waste in Our World, Wheels and Levers, Building Devices That Move, Light and Shadows, and Plant Growth.

Miscellaneous - Please label all supplies and outdoor clothing.

- Library day is Wednesday.

- Spelling lists go home on Monday to be studied for a Friday test.

Thank you in advance for all of your support, and we look forward to a fun and rewarding year in grade four. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

The Grade Four Teachers



Class Newsletter

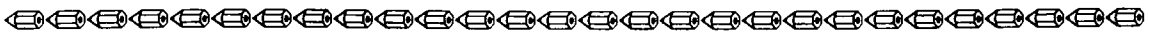


LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPECIAL PROJECTS

JUST A REMINDER...





Division One

Home Reading Program



Dear Parents,

Our home reading program will be run as follows:

Each day, your child will bring home two books (or one chapter book) in a ziplock bag to read. Please write down in the blue half-scribbler the name of every book s/he reads (include personal and library books as well as the ones s/he brings home from school), and number them. The children will receive a sticker on our class sticker chart for every ten books they read at home. Certificates, bookmarks, and books will be awarded to children who reach their monthly reading goal of 40 books/month. Please return the bag to school **every morning**. I will exchange the books that day and send home new ones. **Reading EVERY night is top priority!** This will encourage the students to read more, and increase their chances of success this year. Thank you so much for your commitment to this program, and for your assistance in carrying it out!

Sincerely,

Mrs. A. Chinn





Division Two

Home Reading Program



Dear Parents,

Welcome back to school. I hope you and your family had a great summer. To get the year started off on the right foot, I would like to begin an at home reading program. Students are asked to continually read at home throughout the year. Depending on the student, they do not necessarily need to do all the reading. You may wish to take turns, or you can perhaps read to your child. Whichever you choose, encourage your child to read, read, read. The practice will pay great dividends in all subject areas!

😊 Some Suggestions 😊

1. **Let your child choose reading material that they are interested in.** You may want to encourage them to read a variety of types of literature. Some examples include newspapers, poetry, comics, magazines, and notes from you. Also encourage your child to read chapter books of varied genres, such as mystery, fiction, autobiographies and biographies.
2. **Ensure the reading material is of the appropriate reading level.** The "Five Finger Rule" seems to work well. Students choose a book and turn to a random page of text. They begin to read it aloud, and every time they encounter an unknown word, they put down a finger. If five fingers are down and they're still on the same page, the book is too difficult for them. If a book is too difficult, it will only create frustration. Let's build on successes!
3. **Set a regular time each day to read.** A thirty minute block of time may be enough (hopefully the children will soon say it's not long enough!). During that time, mix things up. Have them read silently, out loud, or listen to you

read.

4. **This time will provide you with a time to read as well! Be a role model. If children see you read, they will have a greater desire to read as well.**

5. **Discuss the things you read about. What a great way to stimulate conversation! Believe it or not, reading can become a very interactive family activity!**

☺The Reading Record Sheet☺

A very important part of the reading program is record keeping. At the conclusion of each book (or other reading material), students will fill out and return a "Reading Record Sheet". This way, children will be able to enjoy and respond to reading material together. (It is not meant to be 'busy work', but a wonderful opportunity to concentrate on writing skills in conjunction with reading!). The information from this sheet will then be stored in your child's file to create individual reading profiles.

☺ <u>READING RECORD SHEET</u> ☺	
Student Name:	Date:
Title of Reading Material:	
Type of Material:	No. of Pages:
About the Book:	
Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Parent Signature:

The Reading Record Sheet is quite self-explanatory. However, I would like to comment on a few sections:

☺Type of Material

In this space, indicate if the reading material was a book, comic, magazine, etc. If it was a book, what kind was it? Drama, mystery, joke, non-fiction, etc.

☺About the Book

In this space, your child writes a brief response to the selection. For example, what was your favourite part? What was something that bothered you? Why did you like/not like the selection? If you were the author, what would you change? Did you correctly guess who committed the crime? This is a very open category, with endless possibilities. Encourage your child to write a different kind of response for each selection they read!

☺Rating

In this small space, indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 (one being the worst, and ten being the best), how you would rate the selection. If you felt the selection was outstanding, give it a ten! If it was the pits, give it a one!

☺Parent Signature

I don't want the parents to feel left out! You're an invaluable part of the overall process.

☺Other

STUDENTS are to fill out the Reading Record Sheet, NOT parents! (Except for the parent signature, of course!).

If a student reads a number of 'longer' stories in one book, they may fill out a sheet for each story. They may also fill out a sheet if a book was read to them, or if it was a 'shared reading' with their parents or another member of the family.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this program. The final goal is to develop a love of reading, and all the joys that it can bring! As S.I.

Hayakawa notes, "It is not true that we have only one life to live. If we read, we can live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish".

Happy Reading,

Ms. A. Grant
Grade 4 Teacher

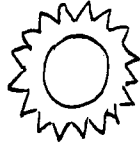
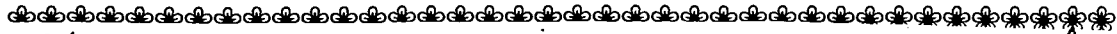


☺ READING RECORD SHEET ☺	
Student Name:	Date:
Title of Reading Material:	
Type of Material:	No. of Pages:
About the Book:	
Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Parent Signature:

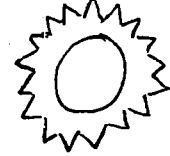
☺ READING RECORD SHEET ☺	
Student Name:	Date:
Title of Reading Material:	
Type of Material:	No. of Pages:
About the Book:	
Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Parent Signature:



Summer Fun Word Search



I B H E A R V S L E E M A W O



N F A N C D E E P N E R R F U

S L U S L I M M I O S A U M R



E M E N E O T H M E R W R R E



C N V V N B S S A U C T E C C

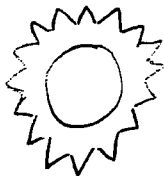


T A U A A N A T L I S C S I R

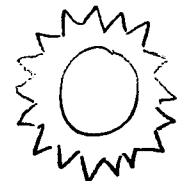


S O D J U R N L J O C G R N E

A E N S X O T Z L O S N O C A



H I K I N G U H S F S I P I T



T S U G U A E T H I T H A P I

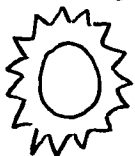
P M A A J A K K D A L S R T O



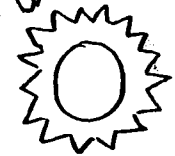
M L I N T E L B C O Z I K K N



I V A W W L E A P R O F U Z Y



J U L Y S X V V E Q C R M O R



L G E K B N K U Y B O F B T P

August
baseball
hiking
insects
solstice
swim

outdoor
fishing
picnic
July
sports
travel

park
fun
play
June
summer
vacation

lemonade
heat
recreation
soccer
sunshine
warm



Interest Inventory



Grade: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

If I could do anything I wanted to on the weekend , I would _____

because _____.

If I could go anywhere in the world, I would want to go to _____

because _____.

If I could study one subject all day long, it would be _____

because _____.

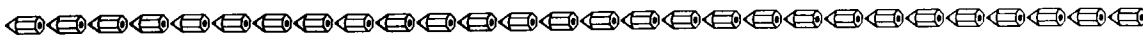
The subject I like least in school is _____. I don't really like it

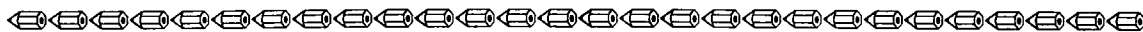
because _____.

The best book I ever read was _____.

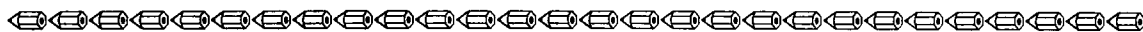
I liked this book because _____.

My best friend(s) in the world is/are _____.



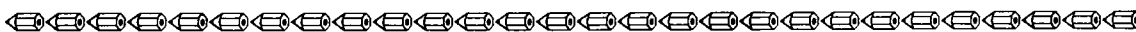


If I Ran The World

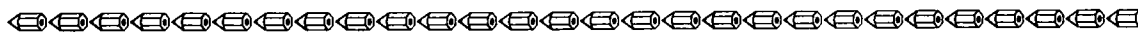


If I ran the world, there would be no _____ or
 _____. Children would never have to _____
 or _____, and grown-ups would always _____.

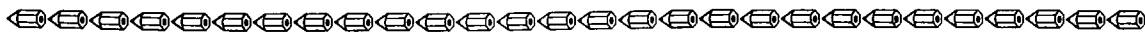
If I ran the world, the first thing I would do would be to _____
 _____. Then, I would
 _____.



When I Grow Up



When I grow up, I am going to be a _____. I have
 decided to be a _____ because _____
 _____. I am certainly NOT going to be a _____
 or a _____. That would be a _____ way to
 spend your life.



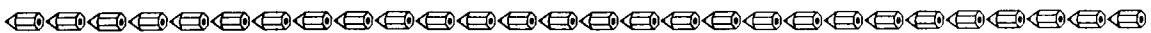
My father is a _____, which is very _____,
and my mother is a _____, which is very _____.
If you ask me, they spend too much time _____.

When I grow up, I am going to go to _____ and
_____.

I will call my parents every _____ and tell them to
_____. And when they say, " _____,"
I will tell them to _____.

When I grow up, I will buy a _____ and then I will be
able to _____.

There are three things that I will NOT do when I grow up. These are:
_____,
_____, and
_____.



~~~~~

What is the name of our school librarian?

~~~~~

~~~~~

What is the name of our school secretary?

~~~~~

~~~~~

Name one of the grade five teachers.

~~~~~

~~~~~

Name one of the grade three teachers.

~~~~~

~~~~~

Name one of the grade one teachers.

~~~~~

Cut the following sentences into strips and put them in envelopes on your classroom door. Students must answer the questions to gain entrance to the classroom. Or, put them in a hat for kids to answer when lining up or in that extra five minutes of class time!

??

Mystery Door

??



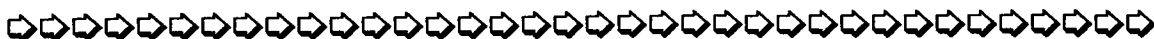
Find Someone Who...

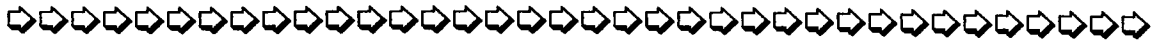


Find someone who can answer YES to one of these statements.
Put his or her name beside the statements. You may only write a
person's name ONCE on this sheet. Good luck and have fun!

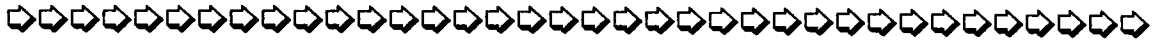
Find someone who...

1. Is wearing something yellow. _____
2. Is wearing a watch. _____
3. Has brown eyes. _____
4. Likes to go jogging. _____
5. Plays a musical instrument. _____
6. Likes doing jigsaw puzzles. _____
7. Eats Cheerios for breakfast. _____
8. Has a pet with four legs. _____
9. Can play soccer. _____
10. Has never swum in the ocean. _____
11. Thinks hot dogs are wonderful. _____
12. Can stand on his or her head. _____

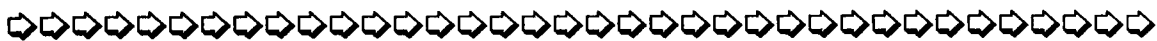




Find A Classmate Who...



has been to Disneyland	
had a headache last week	
is going shopping this weekend	
is older than you are	
has a first name that begins with the same letter as yours	
loves to do homework	
has met someone famous	
has flown over the ocean	
has a pet	
loves pepperoni and mushroom pizza	
is afraid of mice	
loves to sing in the shower	
can type	
walks to school	
has more brothers than sisters	
has freckles	
has a birthday in May	



Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shh!

Secret Student

Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shh!

I am _____ years old.

My favorite food of all time is _____ .

My favorite sport is _____ .

My favorite subject in school is _____ .

I have _____ eyes.

I have _____ hair.

My favorite thing to do in my spare time is _____ .

I am a (boy/girl) _____ .

WHO AM I?

Secret Student Name: _____

Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shhh!Shh!

T-Shirt Template





BINGO



		FREE		





Human Bingo



Likes chocolate	Wears glasses	Has a dog	Stays for lunch	Plays baseball
Plays soccer	Loves juice	Plays the piano	Gets up at 6:30	Has never had a filling
Has a pet fish	Has been to Hawaii	FREE	Has a little brother	Has green eyes
Loves math	Is a good skier	Had cereal for breakfast	Has seen the ocean	Loves tacos
Can stand on their head	Loves to read	Has moved before	Is taller than you	Has their ears pierced





Biopoem Template



Line #1: First name only.

Line #2: Four traits that describe you.

Line #3: Sibling of/Son or Daughter of...

Line#4: Lover of (3 people or ideas)....

Line #5: Who feels (3 things)....

Line #6: Who needs (3 things)...

Line #7: Who gives (3 things)...

Line #8: Who fears (3 things)...

Line #9: Who would like to see (3 places/things)...

Line #10: Resident of (town/city)... _____

Line #11: Your last name only. _____



Sample Completed Biopoem



Lori

Enthusiastic, outgoing, adventurous, cheerful

Sibling of Chris, Daughter of Larry and Jo-Ann

Lover of puppies, travel, and smiles

Who feels spontaneous, passionate, and spirited

Who needs activity, challenges, and fun

Who gives encouragement, hugs, and smiles

*Who fears becoming complacent, taking those I love for granted, and mistreatment of
animals*

Who would like to see Africa, South America, and Greece

Resident of Lethbridge

Friesen

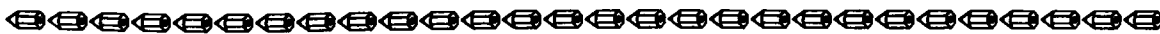



Lesson Plan Template


Subject: _____ Grade Level: _____ No. of Minutes: _____ Date: _____

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES	PROCEDURES	AIDS/MATERIALS	EVALUATION
	<p><u>Introduction:</u> Review</p> <p>Communicate purpose and importance</p> <p>Communicate objectives</p> <p><u>Learning Activities:</u></p>		

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES	PROCEDURES	AIDS/MATERIALS	EVALUATION
	<p data-bbox="730 456 1094 492"><u>Learning Activities cont'd:</u></p> <p data-bbox="730 753 951 789"><u>Early Finishers:</u></p> <p data-bbox="730 924 940 959"><u>Special Needs:</u></p> <p data-bbox="730 1094 846 1130"><u>Closure:</u></p> <p data-bbox="730 1265 957 1300"><u>Self-Evaluation:</u></p>		



Sample Day Plan Template



	Date:
8:25 – 9:00	
9:00 – 9:30	
9:30 – 10:00	
10:00– 10:15	RECESS
10:15– 10:45	
10:45– 11:15	
11:15 11:45	
11:45– 12:45	NOON HOUR

12:45 – 1:15	
1:15 – 1:45	
1:45 – 2:15	
2:15 – 2:25	RECESS
2:25 – 3:00	
3:00 – 3:30	

Supervision Duties:

Important Meetings/Things to Remember:


Sample Weekly Plan Template


	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 - 9:00					
9:00 - 9:30					
9:30 - 10:00					
10:00 - 10:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
10:15 - 10:45					
10:45 - 11:15					
11:15 - 11:45					
11:45 - 12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:45 - 1:15					
1:15 - 1:45					
1:45 - 2:15					
2:15 - 2:30	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
2:30 - 3:00					
3:00 - 3:30					

Year Plan Template

Subject	September	October	November	December	January
Language Learning					
Math					
Social Studies					
Science					
Phys. Ed					
Art					
Music					
Health					

Subject	February	March	April	May	June
Language Learning					
Math					
Social Studies					
Science					
Phys. Ed					
Art					
Music					
Health					



Sample Meet the Teacher Night Parent Letter



Monday, September 9, 2002

Dear Parents,

In preparation for our school Open House tomorrow evening, I wanted to inform you of sign-ups for various activities in our classroom this year. If you will be unable to attend our Open House but would like to volunteer for some of the following events/activities, please include a note in your child's communication book indicating how you would like to help out, and I will confirm by writing back to you. I can't thank you enough in advance for all of your support and dedication!

Regular Classroom Helpers

If you would like to help out in our classroom on a regular basis to assist with the preparation of instructional materials, work with individual or small groups of children, and read with children one-on-one, please let me know what day(s) would suit you. This could be a commitment of one hour/morning/afternoon each week, or every two weeks.

Special Occasions

Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to bring/send cookies or cupcakes on Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, The 100th Day of School, Easter, or at the End-of-the-Year party, or if you would be willing to pop some popcorn should our class earn this reward! I will send a reminder home closer to the event, as these dates are not yet set.

Scholastic Book Orders

I am looking for a parent who would be willing to set aside approximately a one-hour time commitment each month to put together and send our

Scholastic book orders for our class. I will send out the initial notices each month and collect the orders/money from the children; your responsibility would be to simply place our order.

Donations for our Class Auctions

I will be holding two class auctions this year. The first will be at the end of January and the second at the end of June. During these auctions, the children will be able to spend the "money" they have earned from bringing their communication books to and from school on a regular basis. This is a very valuable activity as it teaches children money skills while they earn positive rewards for being responsible. While on your travels to the dollar store or book store, should you find an item or items you would like to donate to our class auction simply send it to school with your child, and I will collect and keep all items until January. We will then begin a second collection for the end of June. I believe this will prove to be a fun and worthwhile activity, and one that the children are really looking forward to!

Field Trips/Special Events

As field trips and other special events come up I will send home notices explaining the details of the events and requests for parent drivers at that time. Possible field trips/events for this year are listed below, with confirmed dates in bold:

September 20	Class Pictures
September 26	Book Fair
October 1	Afer-School Skating begins
October	Recycling Plant/Waste Treatment Plant field trip to supplement our science unit on "Waste in Our World" (yes, the kids are really excited about this one - ha ha).
November	Safety City Presentation on Bullying
December 17	Christmas at the Fort
December	Swimming at Nicholas Sheran
January 30	Class Auction
February 27-28	Book Fair
February	Safety City Presentation on Internet Safety
February	Galt Museum Field Trip: Making Do or Doing Without (The

	Great Depression)
March	Safety City Presentation on Outdoor Play
April 28-May 2	Trickster (Professional Drama Company)
May	Bicycle Safety field trip to Safety City
May	Field Trip to Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump
June	Second Class Auction

Just a reminder that our Open House begins tomorrow evening with a general introduction to the staff at 7:00 p.m. in the gym, individual classroom sessions at 7:15, and the slide show in the gym at 7:45.

I am looking forward to an exciting and rewarding year, and I hope to see you tomorrow evening!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lori Friesen



Parent Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet



Halloween

Fruit and/or vegetables with dip _____

Cheese and crackers _____

Cookies, cupcakes, or muffins _____

Drinks and napkins _____

Christmas

Fruit and/or vegetables with dip _____

Cheese and crackers _____

Cookies, cupcakes, or muffins _____

Drinks and napkins _____

Valentine's Day

Fruit and/or vegetables with dip _____

Cheese and crackers _____

Cookies, cupcakes, or muffins _____

Drinks and napkins _____



100th Day of School

Fruit and/or vegetables with dip _____

Cheese and crackers _____

Cookies, cupcakes, or muffins _____

Drinks and napkins _____

Easter

Fruit and/or vegetables with dip _____

Cheese and crackers _____

Cookies, cupcakes, or muffins _____

Drinks and napkins _____

Last Day of School

Fruit and/or vegetables with dip _____

Cheese and crackers _____

Cookies, cupcakes, or muffins _____

Drinks and napkins _____



Home Communication Book Parent Letter



September 4, 2002

Dear Grade 4 Parents,

This year, I would like to try something new to improve my communication with you, the parents. It is called "The Communication Book." Very often, it is difficult to touch base by phone to keep you up to date due to both yours and my own busy schedule. This doesn't mean that I don't welcome your phone calls, particularly about 'delicate' issues, but that I can better keep you informed about the daily events in our classroom by using your child's Communication Book.

This is how I would like the program to work. Each morning, as the children come in for the day, they will bring their Communication Book. They will place it on one corner of their desk. As I begin the day, I will check each book for a parent's initial or signature (whatever you are comfortable with). If there are announcements or upcoming events that I would like you to know about, the children will spend a few minutes and write these into their Communication Books. If you have a written message to the teacher, these books will be collected and at some point in the day a note will be written back to you. It would also be a convenient place for you to tell me about doctor or dentist appointments, or other events that might keep your child out of school.

These Communication Books will also be a place where your child will write down their homework assignments each day. This way, you will be informed about the work that is due or in some cases overdue.

On occasion, I may need to inform you about a behaviour issue concerning your

child. I will only mention the incident in the communication book. If the concern is of a more serious nature, I will contact you by telephone. If you need more details, I would welcome a telephone call.

I am just initiating this process for the first time and would appreciate your feedback as we go through the year. I would like to thank you for taking the time to ask for the Communication Book each evening, if it isn't offered to you. I have talked to the children and have asked that they don't pull this book out of their backpack just as you are heading out the door to work or school in the morning, but that they talk to you and decide how you would like to handle the process at home. I hope that it will become a routine that takes very little time to complete each day, so that it isn't a burden to your family.

Finally, I would like to thank you in advance for your help in making this project a success, and most of all for helping me to better communicate your child's progress and successes this year.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Lori Friesen



Individual Student Sticker Charts



☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆				
Student Name: _____				
Objective: _____				
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆				

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆				
Student Name: _____				
Objective: _____				
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆				

☺☺☺ Report Card Comments for _____ ☺☺☺

Personal Growth
Work Habits
Reading Comprehension Fluency
Writing Content Organization Conventions Writing/Printing
Math Basic Skills Problem Solving Communicates Math. Thinking
Science
Social Studies
Other:
Term Goal #1:
Term Goal #2:
Parent Concerns:
Follow-Up:

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