Guilford County Schools- Striving. Achieving. Excelling.

Right Start Newsletter

January, 2007 Happy New Year! Elementary Edition

Register for Right Start Seminars Today

You should be attending monthly Right Start Seminars with the Induction Coordinator in your school**. In order to receive 1.0 CEU, you must click on the link below to register and attend a minimum of 10 hours of seminar.**

GCS-Right Start Academy Seminars 2006-07

(Note: *You did not register for these seminars in August when you registered for Classroom Management and Curriculum and Instruction,)*

Start the year with a livelier pace

Your lessons could be a lot more exciting. If you see that students are bored, yawning, restless or tuned out, the problem could be your classroom pace.

Quickening the pace can draw even the most lackluster students into a lesson—and keep them on task longer.

To keep minds from wandering and time from dragging:

- **Plan your lessons** with lots of small steps—steps that require a lively change in topic or activity.
- **Avoid downtime.** Don't let the class just sit, wait and watch while other students write something on the board. Have desk work prepared.
- **Teach in layers,** not lumps. Overlap content from day to day, returning to topics again and again, so there are always future chances to improve mastery.
- **Change the activity** as soon as students start losing interest or energy.
- **Avoid over explaining** or belaboring a point. Explain something once. Check for overall understanding before trying other explanations. Don't let the majority of students who "get it" wait around.
- **Avoid asking, "Any questions?"** Don't let others get restless as you take time to answer one student's question. Find other ways to help. Assign learning or sharing pairs, for example. Or reteach in small groups.
- **Expect dallying students to quicken their pace**. Don't slow down to theirs.

Be prepared to adjust your tempo. Let the room flow with "comfortable aliveness" and variety. You know you're outpacing your students—or providing too much variety—if you start to notice frantic or frazzled looks.

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How do you correct students' errors?

Research suggests correcting students' errors during teaching to keep them from falling behind.

An examination of 219 studies suggests always acknowledging correct responses first.

Then for incorrect responses:

1. Diagnose the cause of the incorrect response or error.
2. Explain the correct response if you think the student has made a careless mistake.
3. Provide prompts and hints to lead the student to a correct response if you think the student lacks understanding.
4. Show the student how to correct the mistake.

The least effective approach to remediation is simply giving the student the answer. It's important to give students time to process the information, practice and self-correct. This ensures students stay actively engaged in learning.

Explain why something's not quite right. But avoid rushing in and saying, "Here's what you should have done (or said)."

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Happy New Year! We hope 2007 will be a great year for you and your students!

Teach every student in your diverse classroom

One of the biggest challenges for many teachers is managing today's increasingly diverse classroom. Experts say that one of the most important things a teacher can do is to look at diversity as an opportunity for everyone to learn and grow.

Consider these important factors as you approach diversity in your class:

- Analyze your attitudes. Be aware of any biases you might have. You can't take steps to overcome them until you know what they are.
- Evaluate your teaching style. Is there anything you might change to help all students feel welcome and safe in your classroom? Incorporate culturally diverse examples in your lessons. Use pictures of people who look like your students in your handouts and materials you post on your classroom walls.
- Look for chances to celebrate cultural differences in your classroom. Build opportunities into your lesson plans for students to share information about their backgrounds and customs.
- Familiarize yourself with the cultural standards of your students and align your expectations accordingly. Simple behaviors you might accept as the norm may not be what a student has learned at home. For example, in some cultures it is considered disrespectful to make eye contact with figures of authority. Standards for personal space vary from culture to culture, too.

- Be sure to keep cultural differences in mind as you communicate and interact with the parents of your students.

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Are you a good 'character educator'?

There's no single script for being an effective character educator. But by following these basic principles you can nurture students' "good character":

- Create a "family" atmosphere in your classroom. Model and encourage respect, empathy, fairness and caring for one another.
- Take a holistic approach. Teach core values through readings, discussion, reflecting on life experiences and by insisting students always do the "right thing."
- Connect content to the character traits you want to develop. Debate a historical practice. Discuss an ethical dilemma in a story.
- Develop self-motivation to be good and kind. Recognize good actions and thoughtfulness.
- Encourage prosocial behaviors —communicating feelings, active listening, cooperation, self-control, helping skills and awareness of how behavior affects others.
- Create opportunities for: sharing; dividing work in a cooperative learning group; reaching consensus; resolving conflicts.
- Promote a sense of competence. Make lessons meaningful. Ensure all students feel success. Give them a say in decisions and plans that affect them.
- Engage parents and community in character-building efforts.

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REMINDER

Keep your professional folder up to date! Please remember to put your second observation from your administrator in your professional file?

If your administrator did not do your second observation during December, then your second observation should be completed in January. Your principal may choose to do an announced or unannounced observation.

Documents That Should Be Included For First Year (BT1) Teachers
Mentor Log
FODA 1- Sept. 30th Observation 1
FODA 2- Jan. 15th Observation 2
FODA 3-April 15th Observation 3
Teacher (Peer) Evaluation
Summative Evaluation -April
IGP for Year 1
Transcript from Professional Development Site (minimum of 2 CEU's)

Right Start Office – 370-8098
Martha Snavely, Executive Director
Debbie Bryant, Office Support
Sue Renn, Beginning Teacher Coach
Vernita Hill, Lateral Entry Coach

Induction Support Coaches
Karen Boyd **Jane Higgins**
Karen Cannon **Beth Koziol**
Brian Herndon **Susan Phillips**