Right Start Newsletter

Secondary Edition February, 2007

GCS New Teacher Orientation

What:

- GCS New Teacher Orientation is required for new teachers with less than 6 months of teaching experience who did not attend orientation in August or September

When: 4:30-6:30 PM
Wednesday, Feb. 28th, 2007

Where:
Media Center
Western Guilford High
409 Friendway Road
Greensboro, NC 27410

Please RSVP by GCS Courier to:
Debby Bryant, Induction and Success
Please bring your copy of **Orientation to Evaluation** (green booklet on the inside cover of your GCS Right Start Notebook)

- -

I plan to attend the GCS New Teacher Orientation
Name: _____

School: _____

Teaching Assignment: _____

Lateral Entry Classroom Management Course

If you are a lateral entry teacher who has not completed a classroom management session, you are required to register on the link below and attend these sessions. Other teachers who feel they need additional classroom management support may attend.

What:
GCS Classroom Management for lateral entry teachers who have not attended a classroom management session

When: Saturday, Feb. 3, 2007
8:00-12:00 and
Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007
8:00-2:30

Where: Southwest Middle School
4368 Barrow Road
High Point, NC 27265

To register, click on the link below

GCS-Right Start - Classroom Management

Foster resilience, boost student achievement

Why do some at-risk students succeed in spite of poverty, poor home situations and other difficult life situations? Researchers have identified resilience as one trait that makes a difference.

A resilient student is one who knows how to cope in a difficult situation—a student who can adapt and who persists in spite of difficulties along the way. Here are some things you can do to help an at-risk student become more resilient:

- Be a mentor or help the student make a connection to another caring individual in the school community. Since their home lives are often chaotic, at-risk students develop resilience through the presence and, in some cases, the positive intervention of a caring adult.
- Help the student make friends who foster positive attitudes. Pair an at-risk student with a student who is achieving. Create pairs that mix racial/ethnic groups.
- Focus on the student's strengths. Comment favorably when the student demonstrates a sense of humor, sensitivity or problem-solving skills.
- Raise your expectations. Just because a student comes from a poor home environment, doesn't mean that the student cannot achieve academically.

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Source: Linda F. Winfield, "NCREL Monograph: Developing Resilience in Urban Youth," North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrshp/le0win.htm.

.Is homework always worth students' time?

Teens are busier than ever these days, so homework time should clearly contribute to learning. Do your assignments measure up? Take this homework assessment:

__1. I have a homework policy that states my expectations for students and parents.

__2. I have given students and parents printed copies of my homework policy.

__3. I tell students the specific purpose of each assignment:

• To prepare for a class discussion or presentation.
• To check for understanding.
• To provide opportunities to practice a skill.

__4. I tell students how homework will be evaluated.

__5. I return assignments in a timely manner.

__6. I can demonstrate the contribution of each assignment to student learning.

__7. I evaluate homework assignments to see if they contributed to learning.

Work with others in your department to make sure grading of homework is consistent and fair. Work that qualifies for an A in one class should receive the same grade from another teacher.

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Source: Kathy Checkley, "When Homework Works," Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, www.ascd.org/affiliates/articles/cl200309_checkley.html.

Research is clear: Teach students to listen

Does it sometimes feel that your students are sitting in class with their iPod® ear buds in their ears? Do you tell them things only to have them ask the same question five minutes later?

Most teachers have never focused on teaching students the skill of listening. But research shows several reasons why listening is important:

- It's central to all learning. As far back as the 1920s, researchers found that high school students spent nearly half their day listening. More recently, studies have shown that figure going up.
- Listening involves several skills. Students must listen for details. They have to identify the main point. They need to recognize when a speaker offers an opinion instead of a fact. And they must do all these things without being able to press the "rewind" button.
- Listening is related to thinking. It's not enough for students to hear what you say. Listening also involves reasoning and thinking on a very high order.
- Listening can be taught. Hundreds of studies demonstrate that students can be taught the skills they need to improve their listening skills.

So what should you do? A first step is to begin building listening activities into your daily and weekly planning. Several small activities are preferable. Research shows a weekly 15-minute listening activity is better than a two-day listening unit.

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Source: Thomas G. Devine, *Listening Skills Schoolwide*, ISBN: 0-814-12956-0 (ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, now the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, www.eric.ed.gov, 1-800-759-4723).

Resources

Teachers with struggling readers want to help these students be successful. In *The Struggling Reader: Interventions That Work*, J. David Cooper et al. have compiled a series of successful interventions to help students bolster their reading skills. From assessment to research-based interventions to reassessment, this book offers a comprehensive look at ways teachers can help students with reading difficulties. (ISBN: 0-439-61659-X, Scholastic, 1-800-268-3860, www.scholastic.com).

Whether you're looking for information to use in an upcoming lesson or a lesson

plan you can adapt for your students, Bernie Poole's EdIndex of Web Resources for Teachers and Students (www.pitt.edu/~edindex) is a great place to start. You can find general education information (for example, the first day of school), reference works and curriculum-specific resources.

Looking for a few extra dollars? Get help from GrantsAlert.com (www.grantsalert.com). The site posts the most recent grants, the type of funder, due dates and more. You'll find information about eligibility, the amounts to be awarded and the number of recipients. Need tips for writing your grant application? You'll find them plus a sample application letter.

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REMINDER

Keep your professional folder up to date! If you do not have a copy of the mentor log for first semester, please ask your mentor for a copy.

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)

We appreciate you and thank you for the work you do each day with your students.☺

Right Start Office – 370-8098
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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**
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