Right Start Newsletter

Elementary Edition December, 2007

GCS New Teacher Orientation for Teachers with Less than 6 Months Teaching Experience

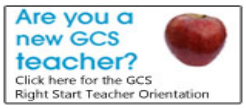
Who: **For Teachers with Less Than 6 Months Teaching Experience Who Have Not Attended a New Teacher Orientation**

Note:

Attendance is <u>mandatory</u> if you did not attend August 15, 16, and 17 or September 22 and October 6.

What: GCS New Teacher Orientation
When: February 27, 2008
4:30-6:30 PM
Where: Western Guilford High Media Center

- **Step 1: Create a GCS professional development account by going to www.gcsnc.com and Click on**



- **Step 2: Click on the link below to register:**
  GCS-Right Start New Teacher Orientation 2007-08-No Credit

Use four P's to make transitions smoother

Moving students from one activity to another can be the time when your schedule comes apart. But there are ways to help your students make transitions that are smooth and organized so you can make the most of every teaching minute. Here are some steps that will help. Try these four P's:

1. Plan—Plan the steps involved. Do students need to put away materials? Do they need to take anything out from their desks? Break these tasks down into simple, small steps.
2. Prepare—Prepare your students before a transition occurs. Write your schedule on the board. Then give students a warning: "We have five more minutes before it's time to go to lunch." Give an extra, quiet warning to students who find transitions especially challenging (for example, students with attention difficulties).
3. Practice—Let students "rehearse" their transitions. "Let's see how quickly we can put our math books away and get

out our science notebooks." Develop signals to get students' attention. For example, turning out the light could mean, "Freeze and listen."

4. Praise—Give specific praise each time students make a smooth transition. "Yesterday, it took you two minutes to line up. Today, you cut 30 seconds off that time."

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Raise expectations to challenge all students

Some teachers think the main benefit of differentiated instruction is the ability to help low-performing students. But high achievers can also benefit from raised expectations. Here are three ways to challenge more students to higher levels:

1. Provide support. It's not enough to give students a challenging task and say, "Good luck." You need to give students the tools they need to be successful. Some students may need several opportunities to learn higher-level content. That might mean making an audio recording of the material so some students could listen to it while reading.
2. Ask open-ended questions. Instead of always asking a question that requires a single, simple answer, try posing some questions that ask students to think. Instead of asking, "Who is the President?" you could ask, "What do you think would make a person a good President?"
3. Use grading rubrics. Students will usually rise to your level of expectation. If you show them clearly what you expect, you are much more likely to get it. You might try one teacher's grading scale—Outstanding, Great and Not There Yet. Students who receive this last grade will have a chance to try again to meet a high standard.

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Chat-Check-Change helps students share ideas

Your whole-class discussions may be more lively if students have a chance to try out their ideas first. Chat-Check-Change is a fun way to get them up, moving and thinking about a subject. Here's how to put it to work:

1. Have students form two concentric circles, facing each other.
2. Ask a question. Then give the signal for students facing each other to talk about the issue or question. Give them 90 seconds to chat and check in with ideas.

3. Say, “Change.” Have the students in the inside circle walk clockwise while the outer circle moves around counter-clockwise.
4. Give another signal for students to stop and face their new partners. Ask the same question and have students chat and check ideas with a new classmate.
5. Repeat once more. Then have students take their seats to share what they discussed.

Use Chat-Check-Change to introduce a topic or for a quick review. Students will enjoy the chance to share their thoughts. Even shy students may take part in a class discussion after this warm-up.

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Think about encouragement, not praise

You may think that “praise” and “encouragement” are synonyms. But there is a subtle, yet very important, difference.

Praise is a judgment that comes from the outside. As a result, praise usually results in winners and losers. It can create a competitive climate. But perhaps the biggest problem with praise is that the students who need it most are often the least likely to receive it.

Encouragement, on the other hand, is given for effort or improvement and focuses on a student’s assets and strengths. It can also help motivate a student who is struggling.

You might praise a child by saying “Your picture is pretty.” But you would encourage a child by saying, “You really used your imagination and such interesting colors in that picture.”

Praise teaches children to depend on the opinions of others, while encouragement focuses on their efforts and on their specific actions.

Here are some ways you can use encouragement to motivate all your students:

- Focus on effort: “You worked a long time on this project.”
- Focus on specific strengths of a project: “You used interesting details in this story.”
- Express confidence: “I know you can figure this out.”

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REMINDER

Please remember to keep your GCS Professional Folder updated. Please be sure to keep all the documentation from this year. The documents that should be in your BT1 folder are listed below. Your second administrative observation should be completed by January 15th. Your administrator may choose to do an unannounced second observation. The only observation that should have been announced was your first one.

As a BT1, you should have 3 administrative observations, 1 peer observation, a summative evaluation, an IGP, and your mentor log. North Carolina requires that you demonstrate continuous professional growth each BT year. The easiest way to document this growth is to earn a minimum of 2 CEUs between July, 2007 and June, 2008 and have it documented on the GCS Professional Development site.

You should keep documentation for each BT year.

Documents That Should Be Included For First Year (BT1) Teachers
Mentor Log
FODA 1- Sept. 30th – Oct. 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
Documentation of Continuous Professional Growth (Example: Transcript from GCS Professional Development Site (minimum of 2 CEU's)

Happy Holidays from the Right Start Staff

May you have warmth in your igloo-
Light in your candle and peace in your heart.

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