Right Start Newsletter

Secondary Edition January, 2008

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

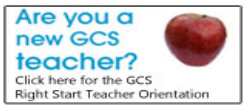
Who: **For Teachers with Less Than 6 Months Teaching Experience Who Have Not Attended a New Teacher Orientation**

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

Develop ways to manage transitions

Whether students are moving from one activity to another or from one class to another, this is the time when things are most likely to fall apart in your classroom. Here are some tips on managing transitions:

- Develop a "two-minute warning." It works in football and it can work for students, as well. Develop a signal that tells students it's nearly time to change activities. Be sure to practice the signal and the appropriate response.
- Be prepared. Make sure you have everything ready for students before class starts. If you're rushing in from the copy machine or digging through your file drawer, your students will get involved with other activities.
- Develop sponges and fillers. Have a set of short activities that can fill every available minute with learning. Prepare "bell work" so students will start working the minute class begins.

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Source: Paula Rutherford, *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?* ISBN: 0-966-33361-6 (Just ASK Publications, 1-800-940-5434, http://askeducation.com).

Don’t leave students on the lower rungs

Are gifted students having all the fun? They get to go beyond learning skills and memorizing facts and actually apply them. Why not allow all students to have similar learning experiences?

Some experts question the value of relegating lower-achieving students to the lower rungs of the “ladder of learning.”

Current research indicates that students don’t always learn by mastering skills piece by piece. Think of a toddler learning to speak. He doesn’t need to learn the rules of grammar first. And your students don’t have to master every skill and memorize lists of facts to be engaged in exciting learning experiences.

Confining lower-level students to drilling and memorizing can actually reduce motivation. So skip the basics? No. But keeping your students on the lower rungs of the ladder can keep them from experiencing the thrill that applying learning in a more complex way can provide.

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Source: Carol Ann Tomlinson and Jay McTighe, *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design*, ISBN: 978-1-4166-0284-2 (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1-800-933-2723, www.ascd.org/books).

Use matrix to help with questions

At times, you may feel like a game show host in your class. You ask question after question. Some-times students answer correctly; sometimes they just stare at you.

An interactive matrix puts the responsibility for questions and answers on your students. Developed by reading specialist, Kathy Bumgardner, it’s a grid that crosses seven basic question words (who, what, which, when, where, why, how) with six verbs (is, did, can, would, will, might).

You can find an example at www.teacher-institute.com/bt/resources/matrix.pdf.

The matrix helps students move from simple questions of fact (Who is the nation’s first President?) to higher level questions (How might you cope in a country faced with famine?).

Here’s one way to use the grid:

1. Make copies of the grid onto brightly-colored paper. Cut the squares apart. Put complete sets into plastic bags.
2. Divide students into groups, with a bag of question squares for each group.
3. Have students draw squares and create questions for the rest of the group to answer.
4. Collect the questions and answers and you will have a

student-prepared review for an upcoming test!

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Source: Barbara R. Blackburn, *Classroom Instruction from A to Z*, ISBN: 1-5966-7038-X (Eye on Education, 1-888-299-5350, www.eyeoneducation.com).

Remedy headaches & fatigue—drink water!

Are you dragging yourself through the afternoon? Having trouble focusing on your fifth period class? It could be that you haven't had enough to drink—water that is!

Consider these statistics:

- Many Americans today are chronically dehydrated.
- Lack of water is the #1 cause of daytime fatigue.
- Drinking water can ease back and joint pain.
- A 2% drop in body water can impede memory and the ability to focus.

Water aids learning and thinking by carrying oxygen to the brain. Drinking water can reduce problems with digestion, headaches and fatigue. And those who drink more water often have a better sense of general well-being.

So drink up. And encourage your students to have a drink, too. If they're bored or distracted, they may be dehydrated. Take an afternoon water break. You'll get an energy boost and be ready to tackle your next lesson.

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Source: Dr. James J. Lehman, "Dehydration Headaches," About.com, http://nutrition.about.com/od/hydrationwater/a/Water_headaches.htm; "Interesting Facts About Not Drinking Water," Enviroalternatives, www.enviroalternatives.com/waterdrinking.html.

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 New Year from the Right Start Staff!

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