Right Start Newsletter

Elementary Edition December, 2007

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

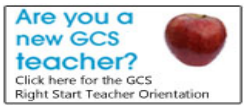
Who: **For Teachers with Less Than 6 Months Teaching Experience Who Have Not Attended a New Teacher Orientation**

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

Grab attention with powerful presentations

PowerPoint® allows you to prepare class presentations in advance, have control over the pace of the class and engage your students. It's a great tool.

As you prepare your next Power Point® presentation, ask yourself:

- Is the font large enough to read? A chart or table that was originally a print document may need a larger font so every student is able to read it.
- Did I use the bells and whistles? PowerPoint® includes lots of fun options. For example, try the special transition effect that has the screen fade to black between slides. Add crazy graphics. Use different fonts.
- Have I used too much text? Include just a few key points on each slide. Fill in the details as you speak.
- Did I use bullets? PowerPoint® allows you to add bullets one by one by having them "fly in." Using a variety of "fly in" options makes the presentation more engaging.

- Should I post this presentation on my website? You'll keep students who are absent informed and provide a great study aid when it's time for review.

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Don't argue the issues—debate them!

By the time they reach middle school, students are able to understand that many issues have two sides. But far too often, they have no models for discussing an issue. On TV, they see political discussions degenerate into yelling contests. Teaching them how to debate can help students consider different viewpoints.

Think about an issue that could legitimately have two differing answers. "The use of atomic weapons at the end of World War II was justified" will make a good debate topic. "Who won World War II?" will not.

Here's how to get started:

1. Divide students into roughly equal sides (or let them choose).
2. Guide students to responsible websites to research facts and figures that support their positions.
3. Teach students how to plan their arguments. A little brainstorming will make it easier to lay out a logical sequence of arguments.
4. Give each side a chance to present constructive speeches, laying out their positions.
5. Make sure students listen carefully. How can they refute the arguments of the other side?
6. Let students give rebuttal speeches, carefully and respectfully challenging the arguments of the other side.
7. Have the rest of the class take notes. They will see where students talked at, not with, each other.

For suggestions and debate guidelines, check the Middle School Public Debate Program at www.middleschooldebate.com.

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Implement five strategies to prevent cheating

The previous articles in this series have discussed ways to detect cheating. But most educators would agree that the best course is to prevent cheating in the first place. Here are five tips:

1. Use tests in a positive way. The best tests give students a chance to show what they have learned. They also show teachers what they may need to reteach. As

often as possible, tell students in advance what you plan to cover on the test. Also give them a chance to practice with any unfamiliar types of questions.

2. Surprise your students. Let's face it—students often think teachers are clueless. So if you are assigning a term paper, show students an example that you downloaded from the Internet. Just knowing that you are aware of these websites may discourage some students from using them.
3. Be serious and attentive during testing. Most teachers wouldn't dream of leaving the room during a test. But if you sit at your desk grading papers, you are mentally absent. Circulate through the room. You will also gather helpful information about what seems to be causing problems for students.
4. Give many different grades for a research project. If you've watched (and graded) a student's work, from choosing a topic through to the final draft, you will know if the work is original.
5. Be clear about your values. Tell students that you believe cheating is not just against school rules—it's wrong. Losing your good opinion can often be a strong deterrent.

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Source: Gregory J. Cizek, *Detecting and Preventing Classroom Cheating*, ISBN: 0-761-94655-1 (Corwin Press, 1-800-233-9936, www.corwinpress.com).

Review facts with 'I have/Who has?

There's a big test in two days and you're trying to help students review. But you get the same comment in every class: "This is boring."

Here's a fun way to help students review. This technique works well with virtually any subject:

1. Compile a list of questions and answers that cover facts and information the students need to learn.
2. Create a series of flashcards to give each student. Each card has an answer to one question at the top. At the bottom is another question.
3. Start by asking one of the questions yourself. For example, if you're studying the French Revolution, you could ask, "Who has the name of the execution machine that beheaded people?" The student with the correct answer calls out, "I have the guillotine.'"
4. Have that student ask the question on the bottom of the card. "Who has the person who said, 'Let them eat cake?'"
5. Continue the activity until someone asks the first question you asked.

Students can also brainstorm to create review questions. Reprinted with permission from the December 2007 issue of *Better Teaching*® (Secondary Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2007 The Teacher Institute®,

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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