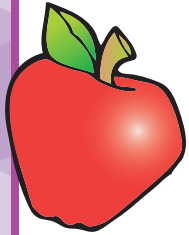


Tips For the Teacher

In Honor of Our Teachers, 2012

Time-Saving Ideas



- Let students take turns filing any items that it is okay for them to see. They will learn ABC order, and you can do something else. Teach one or two students and let them teach another and so on.
- Get in the habit of making double plans. If you have an art lesson every Friday, make next Friday's plan and then, while you are thinking about art, flip ahead in your plan book and do another plan for the following Friday.
- Use the services that are offered by library resource people. They will do research and get you information that you need.
- Pay attention to and evaluate all the standards addressed in a unit to show mastery of the skills embedded in the project. This way, you are not trying to teach a separate unit for each standard or skill.
- Encourage your school to start a program allowing older students to become aides in the office and in classrooms. Students will gain leadership and organizational skills, and you will get extra help changing displays and tidying the room. If you use your student room helpers efficiently, you won't ever have to put another paper in a mailbox or water another plant.
- Teach students to do tasks that help with transitions, like moving desks and getting out supplies. For days with a set routine, you can take it a step farther and assign leaders to the different transitions (circle to art, desk work to stations, etc.). Students will be held accountable and take pride in their tasks, making transitions quicker and giving you more time to work with individual kids.

Money-Saving Ideas

- Start a wish list on your class website or classroom wall and let parents know it is there. Break requests into affordable chunks and be specific about how each set of items will help your class. For more expensive projects, go to a website such as DonorsChoose.org to collect donations online.
- Swap and share with other teachers rather than buying duplicate supplies.
- Invest in fade-proof paper to back your bulletin boards. It will last all year. Another idea is to use fabric from a sale bin at the fabric store instead of paper.
- Send home a class newsletter or post blogs on the class website. Use this as an opportunity to ask parents to save things for art and science projects. You can also ask parents to send in old books for the class library or other items they are getting rid of such as lamps and containers.
- Look for children's books at garage sales and swap meets and add them to your classroom library. Often, public libraries sell older books for less than a dollar each.
- Stir up some salt and flour modeling dough. You can keep it for quite awhile in airtight containers for reuse, or you can bake the results of the students' projects for use as permanent ornaments, paperweights, etc.



Tips For the Teacher

Organization Ideas



- Have students bring in shoeboxes and decorate them with their names. Then cut slits and use them as student mailboxes. Put in missed assignments, notes to parents, and anything else that needs to go home. At the end of the day, have each student check his or her mailbox and take the papers home.
- Laminate label cards for your whiteboard (Agenda, Homework, Standards, Dates to Remember, Star Students). Use a different color for each card or add symbols for easy recognition, then attach magnets to the backs. This will allow greater flexibility for use of space, and you can even use the magnets to attach relevant charts and lists to the board.
- When you begin a new unit, have students bring in realia (real-life objects related to the theme or topic). This will jazz up the classroom and help to activate prior knowledge. Some students will probably even want to stay late to help you decorate.
- Create cumulative bulletin boards. These can span a unit or the entire year. Students can summarize learning on paper apples and attach them to a construction paper tree or fill up an outline of a thermometer section by section with the standards mastered written on different-colored pieces of paper. This idea means less time changing the wall displays for you and a wonderful opportunity for pride—and review—for your students.
- Make a reward board. This can be especially useful if your students are having trouble mastering some appropriate behaviors. Focusing on positive behavior every day helps students develop healthy, empowered attitudes, and a physical reminder in the classroom makes it easy.
- Put your students in charge of the class Word Wall—with ample guidance, of course. You can have students take turns creating definitions, sentences, and visuals for new words, or you can have all students do this and vote on which should go up as the class example. Periodically have a fast finisher reorganize the Word Wall words into categories based on number of syllables, part of speech, subject area, or anything else you can think of.
- Try timing transitions between lessons. Is there a part of the day when the transition is slower or when students just seem more antsy? Think of a new way to streamline a transition, assign student helper jobs, or organize materials differently and see if it helps. You might even allow a student to be in charge of the timer as a special reward when doing this.
- Create a comprehensive Substitute Binder with emergency information, seating charts, lists of helpful students, game ideas, and great lessons. Putting in extra lessons and making sure they are self-explanatory and engaging will help substitutes maintain order in the classroom so you don't have extra work when coming back from an unexpected absence. It will also mean that if you get sick, you won't need to stay late to plan substitute lessons.

