

Teaching ^{PRE}K-8[®]

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Two Alphabets to Smooth the Way

26 management techniques learned "on the job" by a first-year teacher

BY GINO SANGIULIANO

"What do you think about teaching now?" I was asked this question many times by my colleagues following my first year as a fourth grade teacher. Invariably, I told them that I was ready to do it all over again. The 26 children and I had had a wonderful experience with many memorable moments.

Here are 26 classroom management techniques I learned "on the job" during my first year.

Zero rewards. Bribing kids doesn't help them mature. It only trains them to act a certain way in order to receive a prize.

You are the teacher. Always trust your own judgment and do what you feel is right.

X-plain everything to the class. Let them know why you miss a day. Chances are, it's not that exciting, but it satisfies their curiosity.

Wake up the learner in every student. To do this, you must make your motivation and enthusiasm contagious.

Value your class's opinions, and don't fake it. Give them the opportunity to make decisions that truly matter to them.

Understand each child. Find out the children's likes and dislikes, hobbies, family situation.

Teach, don't train. When faced with a difficult task, don't be concerned with the final outcome, but with the process.

Stand by your students. As a teacher, you are their advocate. Let them know you are on their side and never betray their trust.

Respect! If you show respect for the children, they in turn will respect you. This may mean giving up a little control, but it's worth it.

Question yourself at the end of the day. Self-evaluation makes for learning. Find out why some things work and other things don't.

Promote all the good things that happen both in and out of class. Children love to hear praise.

Open your mind and your heart. Teachers need to accept the many differences in children and kids need to know they're wanted.

Negotiate. When problems arise, talk to the children. If a system of give-and-take is established, your relationship will grow.

Model both academics and social behavior. Kids learn more by watching you than anything else.

Live, love, learn. Enjoy the time you have with the class, for they'll always remember you.

Keeep students interested. If you feel you are losing them, it usually means they're bored.

Jokes. Develop a sense of humor—in yourself and in the children. It's amazing the power you can get out of a good laugh.

Initiate action. Don't wait for oth-

ers to take the lead in projects. If you find something that appeals to your class, go for it.

Help! Give it to students. Get it from your peers.

Go the distance. Work hard every day of the school year. The extra time you put in will show and the kids will respond.

Finish what is started. Most children need a sense of closure to events. It may mean having to rush to get it done, but they'll remember it.

Expect the unexpected. Never rely on a schedule or on a plan book. You'll probably be amazed at some of the interruptions that will occur.

Delivery is where it's at! No matter how boring a topic may be, if you're excited about it, chances are the children will be, too.

Create a family environment. For some children, a classroom is the closest thing they have to one.

Bring out the child in you! Have fun. Join in the games, sit on the rug, eat lunch and talk with the kids. You'll get to know them better and you'll gain their trust.

Analyze situations. It's important to hear both sides of the story and try to find out what motivated each child to react a certain way. ▼

Gino Sangiuliano "moved up" with his class; he now teaches fifth graders at Robinson Elementary School, Mansfield, MA.