

## WEEK 15

Dear NEA Members,

Greetings! There are many new ideas out there to help teachers. NEA has created a web-site called "Works-4-Me" which are tried and true teaching hints suggested by NEA members. Each week you will receive an e-mail with six helpful (and short) hints to help you in your teaching. They will fall under the following categories:

Teaching Techniques  
Content  
Getting Organized  
Managing Your Classroom  
Relationships  
Using Technology

In addition, you will get information about your NEA Member Benefits that are available to you through your membership in the Association. Click on the link or visit [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com).

### **Teaching Techniques**

#### **Bowling Sheets**

"As I'm taking attendance, I give a very short quiz reviewing old material or on last night's homework. When our local bowling alley went to automatic scorekeepers I got the idea of using their old overhead scoring sheets for this quiz. I randomly draw 10 of the students' quizzes each day. If eight out of the 10 quizzes are all correct, I then draw out two more to see if they 'pick up the spare.' I then keep score for them on one overhead bowling sheet and they compete against my other classes. The winning class gets a little something extra just for them. I have found that more students review yesterday's work right before class and have fewer tardy students. Students really enjoy it and it works well with all levels. My wife uses it with her eighth grade students."

### **Content**

#### **Mystery Map**

"To teach communication skills, I split my classroom in half and create a mystery map. The students in each group choose a place in the school to write directions to for the other group to follow. Each student in the group creates a direction and together we write it on a piece of butcher paper. Throughout the experience, I encourage the students to visualize their directions by closing their eyes. After the directions are complete, the groups exchange them. Each student is responsible for reading a direction and repeating it to the group while the others listen and work together to discover the

mystery destination. Afterward, the groups return to the classroom and we discuss how well we followed the directions and where each group ended up. This is a really fun way to work on listening skills."

## **Getting Organized**

### **Homework Jail/Reward Day**

"Occasionally, my team will have a Homework Jail/Reward Day. Those who have no missing work are treated to a movie and those with missing work are doomed to another classroom for a study hall to catch up. Most Homework Jail participants are miffed and do their best to catch up. Once in awhile we even allow those criminals to join the movie in progress once they are current with all of their work."

## **Managing Your Classroom**

### **Weekly Behavior Report**

"To keep parents informed of their child's progress and behavior, I send a Weekly Behavior Report home each Monday. The report has a box for each day in which I document both positive and negative behaviors and any grades the student has earned that week. I also note any special assignments. The parents must sign the report and send it back to school. The weekly report not only informs the parents, it's also good documentation for me."

## **Relationships**

### **I Learned Letters**

"I help parents connect with their child's school experience by having the students write a letter to their parents each week on the back of my classroom newsletter. In the beginning of the year, the students write a rough draft of three 'I learned' sentences. They must write specific comments about what they learned that week. The class brainstorms ideas and I write a list on the board to help them with their spelling. I edit their drafts and then they copy their sentences on the parent newsletter. As the year progresses, the students write what they learned in the form of a friendly letter using all the steps of the writing process. The rough draft is written on Friday mornings and they publish on Monday as morning work."

## **Using Technology**

### **Call for Help**

"In my computer classes I have two plastic cups on each computer -- one red and the other blue. The two cups sit upside down, one inside the other. When the blue cup is on top it means 'Everything is Cool.' When students have questions they quietly reach up and put the red cup on top of the blue cup. That means they need my help. They can continue to work and figure out the problem. The students do not need to keep their

hand in the air or call my name. It works like a charm. When I start the year, I am very strict about not answering questions from students who don't use the cup. In about a week they are all used to using the cups and like it. It is also a conversation piece at conference time when the parents ask 'What are the cups for?'"

## NEA Member Benefit of the Week:

To make sure you receive all the benefits you are entitled to as an NEA member, please add [NEA\\_Member\\_Benefits@NEAMemberBenefits.com](mailto:NEA_Member_Benefits@NEAMemberBenefits.com) to your address book. Thank you.

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