

WEEK 3

Dear NEA Members,

Greetings! There are many new ideas out there to help teachers and ESP members. 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

Teaching Techniques

Name Anagrams

"At the beginning of the year I have my eighth grade science students write an anagram of their name. This helps me get to know them and they seem to enjoy working on this idea of who they are."

Content

Smack It!

"Here's a fun way to review vocabulary. Write a variety of vocabulary words all over the board. Divide the class into two teams and choose one representative from each team to come up to the board. Give them a fly swatter with which they are to 'smack' the correct vocabulary word upon the teacher's prompting. Whoever smacks first wins a point for their team. Prompts may be English translations, complete the sentence, opposites, synonyms or any other creative question the teacher can make up. This game gets the kids moving! In the event the 'smackers' don't know the answer, the other students (who have been paying close attention) have an opportunity to answer it for the point!"

Getting Organized

Organizing Students' Belongings

"After spending much of the school year nagging a couple of unorganized students to move the piles of 'stuff' from under their desks to their lockers or to the inside of their desks, I came up with a better and more positive solution. I found a plastic crate in which each of them can keep their pile. They feel special because they receive special treatment and the rest of the class no longer has to trip over their materials."

Managing Your Classroom

Get Creative with Lining Up

"Ways to line up that do not include gender are short ways to illustrate that being different is fine. For example, students can line up according to shades of hair from dark to light. I point out that differences exist even among those who think they are alike. Are differences good or bad or just different? Why do we like some things? Name similarities. Or students line up according to birthdays and talk about seasons and bring out the value in seasons and weather. Or students line up according to when they were born and use a map to figure out who was born the closest to the school and who was the farthest away. Are they all from the same city or lots of different places? Does being from someplace different make you special? Is everyone special in some way?"

Relationships

Parent Night

"I help parents connect with their child's school experience by having Parent Night about two or three weeks after school starts. The parents come to the room and sit at their child's desk. We go through the daily schedule and pull out the books so they can see what we're studying. This is also a great opportunity to discuss my discipline policy. I don't discuss individual students at this time but set up appointments for conferences at a later date. This activity has proven to be very successful."

Using Technology

Parent Email

"I asked parents for their email address in my Beginning of School letter. I entered the addresses as a group, sent a test mail and received several responses. Through email, I can invite parents to school meetings, answer their questions about progress reports and send assignments to sick students. Email makes me more accessible than the telephone and I make it a point to reply promptly. Parents really appreciate this method of communication."

NEA Member Benefit Article of the Week:

Reset Your Internal Clock

5 tips to get back into your early morning routine.

Date published: Tuesday, July 21, 2009

By Amy Paturel

After a summer of late nights and outdoor activities, getting back into an early morning routine can be tricky, especially since most teachers are already sleep deprived. Research shows that 43 percent of teachers get 6 hours or less of sleep each night, far less than the 7 to 9 hours recommended for healthy functioning. Add in the barrage of responsibilities that back-to-school time brings, and it's easy to see why 64 percent of teachers claim they are drowsy during the school day.

"People who struggle to change their wake-up routine at back-to-school time have often associated everything pleasurable—vacation, sleeping, summer, no work—with sleeping late, so waking up early can appear to be a punishment," says Caroline Adams Miller, MAPP, professional coach and author of "Creating Your Best Life: The Ultimate Life List Guide." But if you pair enjoyable early morning activities with a little planning and preparation, shifting your body's internal clock can be relatively painless.

Here, 5 tips for easing back into your back-to-school schedule.

1. Change your waking and sleeping times 2 weeks before school starts. Move your bedtime up, set your alarm clock and try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day (even on weekends). You might even try changing your waking time in small increments, say moving it up 15 minutes each day. "Rewarding yourself for a desirable behavior is one of the most time-tested ways of changing behavior," says Miller. "Make your mornings a 'win' with a fun activity or leisurely breakfast in the 2 weeks prior to school's start." Then you'll want to get out of bed.

2. Establish a soothing bedtime routine—and stick to it. Instead of trying to put together your lesson plans or solve family dilemmas right before bedtime, turn to soothing activities like taking a warm bath, meditating or reading. “Spending just 2 to 3 minutes engaging in deep breathing is enough to signal your body that it’s time to relax and go to sleep,” says Adrienne Ahern, Ph.D., author of “Back in Charge.” And keep work, computers, television and other distractions out of the bedroom because they signal the brain that its time to awaken, not sleep. Still having trouble falling asleep? “Focus on images not thoughts,” suggests Ahern. “So instead of thinking about what you have to do the next day, picture yourself confidently walking into an organized classroom filled with attentive children ready to learn.”

3. Get organized. “Organization is the key to success,” says Miller. “Even Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach for America, says that being organized is critical to how much she gets done, so she organizes each day the night before with a check list of things to do.” The more methodical you are about scheduling, the less time you’ll waste—particularly when it comes to planning your day. Pack lunches and plan dinner menus on weekends. Use a day planner or calendar to keep school activities organized and top of mind.

4. Watch what—and when—you eat. Tea, soda, chocolate—they all contain caffeine, which stays in your body for three to five hours. In fact, it’s best not to eat anything two to three hours before your regular bedtime. Eat a heavy meal too close to bedtime, and you may suffer from heartburn, which will interfere with sleep. The same rule applies to liquids. You don’t want to disrupt your slumber for a simple bathroom trip. “Have dinner at 5 or 6 p.m., so you have a few hours to get organized after dinner and digest your meal,” suggests Ahern.

5. Get moving. Study after study shows that people who are more physically active get better sleep. Plus, when you’re tired, a brisk walk can help you feel more energized, claims Ahern. Just don’t work out right before bed. Exercise causes your body temperature to rise and it takes about 6 hours for it to drop again. And since a cooler body temperature is associated with sleep onset, it’s best to exercise before 3 p.m.

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