

TEACHING Rules!

52 ways to achieve teaching success

by JENNY LAND MACKENZIE

illustrated by STEVE HICKNER

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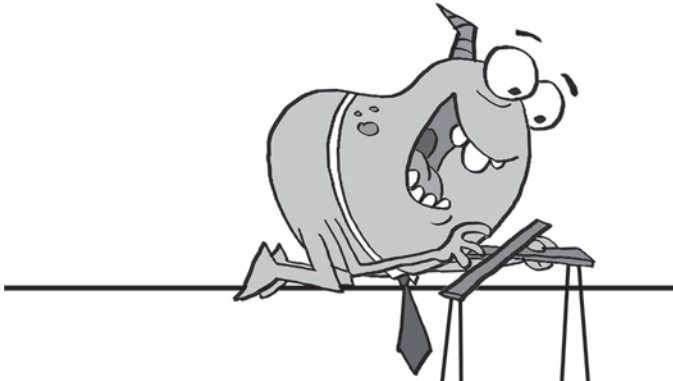
BRIGANTINE MEDIA

The Rules

- 1 Teach your *students*. X
- 2 Take the temperature. X
- 3 Assign homework first! X
- 4 Respect your students. X
- 5 Develop a routine. X
- 6 Model the love of learning. X
- 7 Think across disciplines. X
- 8 Change up the leadership. X
- 9 Plug into the power of Day One. X
- 10 Keep the questions coming. X
- 11 Rule the clock. X
- 12 Promote process over product. X
- 13 Hold the conference before the assignment. X
- 14 Root, root, root for the home team! X
- 15 Admit mistakes. X
- 16 The exit ticket. X
- 17 Envision your classroom community. X
- 18 Let the kids build the rubrics. X
- 19 Ask for help. X
- 20 Take time for you! X
- 21 Bring your interests to school. X
- 22 Take field trips. X
- 23 Ditch the plan. X
- 24 Enjoy what you teach. X
- 25 Ditch the textbooks. X
- 26 Display class work. X

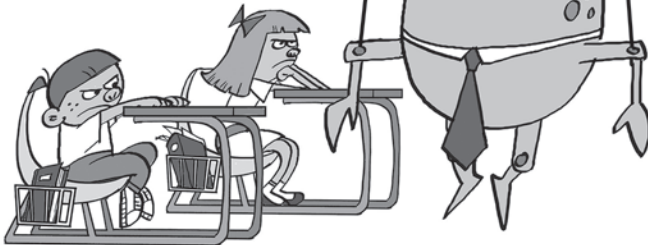
The Rules

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 27 | Keep parents in the loop. | X |
| 28 | Learn each student's story. | X |
| 29 | Celebrate successes outside of the classroom. | X |
| 30 | Make the most of Parents' Night. | X |
| 31 | Share your students' passions. | X |
| 32 | Make an anti-procrastination pact. | X |
| 33 | Communicate regularly with the Learning Services department. | X |
| 34 | Bite off a little at a time. | X |
| 35 | Build the due dates around your schedule. | X |
| 36 | Make it a contest! | X |
| 37 | Review comments in person. | X |
| 38 | Give students a choice of assessment. | X |
| 39 | Set limits for grading. | X |
| 40 | Let the kids teach. | X |
| 41 | Keep it moving! | X |
| 42 | Make time for peer review. | X |
| 43 | Change it up to keep it fresh. | X |
| 44 | Set the ground rules for speaking out. | X |
| 45 | Turn students into self-teachers. | X |
| 46 | Invite in the administration. | X |
| 47 | Keep them on their toes. | X |
| 48 | Give rewards. | X |
| 49 | Visual-ize! | X |
| 50 | Ask for student input. | X |
| 51 | Be a student. | X |
| 52 | Keep it positive. | X |



Teach your *students*.

GOOD TEACHERS ARE interested in the new students who come to their classroom every year. What makes these new students tick? What lesson plan keeps Josh involved for the whole sixty-minute class? Which test prep ideas help Ella succeed?



Only about 25 percent of your teaching time is spent on the specific subject matter. The rest is devoted to working with your students, helping them connect with the material. *You* may be teaching it for the two hundredth time, but it's completely new to everyone else in the room.

Successful teachers know that their primary job is to teach. If you want to learn more about your subject, sign up for a graduate program or switch to a research-based profession.

Being a teacher means knowing how to help students learn.

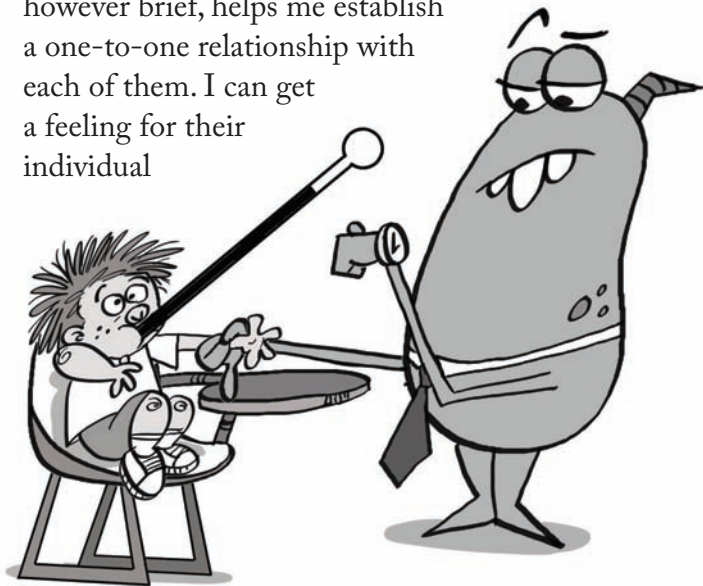
RULE 2

Take the temperature.

TAKE A BRIEF moment with each student at the start of a class.

I typically do this while checking homework. I walk around the room, look at the homework, and make sure I make a comment to each student. I answer questions I read in their journals and talk about the cartoons they draw, the graphs they make, and their choices of quotations.

The time with the students, however brief, helps me establish a one-to-one relationship with each of them. I can get a feeling for their individual

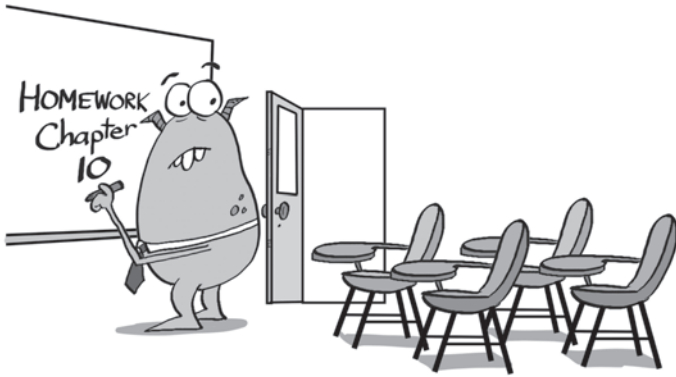


moods. A student might also mention to me, in that semi-private moment, if something is going on in his life that might affect his attention that day. If a student hasn't finished the assigned homework, I learn in that conversation if the student didn't understand my directions, if the assignment was too long or too difficult, or if the student has had an extraordinarily busy schedule.

With a clear picture of the mood and accomplishments of the class as a whole, I can tweak the homework or spontaneously adapt the activity planned for class that day. What's the use of moving on to the next concept if half the students in the room were lost on last night's homework?

A temperature check need not take more than five minutes. I let the students have that brief window of time to quietly chat with a neighbor. These five minutes don't disrupt the class. When the temperature check is done, and chatting with their neighbors worked its way out of their systems, students are ready to give their full concentration.

RULE 3



Assign homework first!

HOW OFTEN DID your parents tell you to do your homework first? Good advice. And I decided to apply it to my classroom.

In my first years of teaching, I had trouble with timing. I'd start to assign the homework at the end of the class and the bell would ring. Conscientious students would turn up at the end of the day to make sure they knew what to work on; others would come into class the next day and say, "I didn't hear what the homework was."

One day I had a brainstorm. Why not give the homework assignment at the beginning of class, rather than squeezing it in at the end?

The results were magical. The students were fresh and ready for direction. I put the assignment on the board, and I took time to go over it right then and there. They paid attention, they asked questions, they wrote it down. This system worked—even though the homework was based on a lesson they hadn't received yet! The homework assignment sparked the students' curiosity about what we were about to learn. They wanted to understand the new concept because they would need it to do their homework.

When you leave the homework assignment up on the board throughout the class, students can look at it during class and think about how they'll use the information when they're on their own later. Plus, when you assign the homework first, you can teach until the bell rings!

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