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Publisher Introduction

I am very happy to share this updated edition of Adam Waxler's **52 Teaching Tips**.

My name is Marjan Glavac. I am Adam Waxler's new publisher. Before I became a publisher, I taught for twenty-nine years in elementary and middle schools before my retirement.

I have known Adam for almost a decade. All his eBooks, special reports and websites are amazing teacher resources.

This eBook is a handy addition to any teacher's toolkit!

All the best,
Marjan Glavac

Publisher
www.TheBusyEducator.com

About the Author

Adam Waxler recently retired from full-time teaching as a middle school social studies teacher, adjunct education professor, and teacher mentor.

Adam landed his first teaching job at Springs Middle School in East Hampton, New York. At Springs, Adam was basically given free reign to run the middle school social studies department as he wished. He worked quickly to revamp their outdated program, moving away from the textbook, teacher driven social studies curriculum to a more student-centered constructivist curriculum.

Adam's biggest break in teaching came through the professional development courses offered by Jean Anastasio and Dave Perry at [APL Associates](#). He credits these workshops for literally changing his career.

By combining the teaching strategies taught in these workshops with his own constructivist methodology, Adam was able to increase standardized test scores, get 100% classroom participation, and eliminate classroom management problems.

Of course, when Springs started their teacher mentor program, Adam jumped at the chance to help new teachers learn to become *Master Teachers*.

After a few of years of mentoring, Adam decided to create a number of ebooks on teaching strategies. ***52 Teaching Tips*** and ***eTeach: A Teacher Resource for Learning the Strategies of Master Teachers***, are an integral part of his new teacher training.

Adam also owns and operates several other teaching related web sites, including:

- [The Teaching Tips Machine Newsletter](#) ~ A **FREE** weekly newsletter that provides simple teaching tips you can easily apply to any classroom situation.
- [The Proactive Classroom Management eCourse](#) ~ A **FREE** ecourse on how to eliminate classroom management problems before they start.
- [52 Teaching Tips](#) ~ An ebook that provides an arsenal of effective teaching strategies at your fingertips.
- [Your Basic Guide To Acing ANY Teacher Interview!](#) ~ A step-by-step guide on how to get an interview an outright ace it! This ebook will give anyone searching for a teaching job an unfair advantage over the competition.
- [eTeach: A Teacher Resource for Learning the Strategies of Master Teachers](#) ~ *Introducing the best practices of effective teaching. Finally an ebook that addresses classroom management style and academic achievement. Whether you need first grade classroom management tips or effective teaching strategies for large lectures...*

Dear Fellow Teacher,

As a teacher mentor and author of several teaching ebooks, most teachers I know are looking for...

...**simple teaching tips** and **simple teaching strategies** that are easy to apply to any classroom situation.

If you are one of those teachers then I truly believe **52 Teaching Tips** is just for you!

With **52 Teaching Tips** you'll learn simple teaching tips that you can easily apply to your very next class and see an immediate:

- increase in class participation
- increase in academic achievement
- increase in standardized test scores
- and a definite decrease in classroom management problems.

Best of all, these classroom management issues will decrease **naturally**. Remember, classroom management is not about creating an elaborate system of rewards and punishments. Classroom management is about keeping your students actively involved in every one of your lessons.

I encourage you to print out each tip, post them in your classroom, and discuss them with other teachers, but most importantly, I encourage you to start using them right away.

So what are you waiting for?

Best Wishes,

Adam Waxler and Marjan Glavac

<http://www.TheBusyEducator.com>

<http://www.52TeachingTips.com>

<http://www.TeachingTeacher.com>

<http://www.TeacherInterviewTips.com>

Teaching Tip #1

Want to get 100% participation from your next class?

It's easy...

Instead of asking a question and waiting for the usual hands to rise, have all your students write the answer to the question.

Simply say, "I have a question that I'd like you all to write answer to..."

Now, instead of having the same few students respond, you've gotten all your students to respond. And, those who usually respond first will actually have developed better answers.

Give it try...

Notes



Teaching Tip #2

Here's another way to get 100% participation from your very next class...

After students write an answer to a question(s), give the students a couple of minutes to share their answers with a partner.

The "pair & share" allows students to teach and learn from each other and also allows the students to reinforce their learning without the anxiety of responding in front of the entire class.

Notes



Teaching Tip #3

Want to keep students on task and reduce classroom management problems?

Here's how...

Any time you put your students on a particular task, make sure to attach a specific time limit to that task.

There is a big difference between "*Take a few minutes to share your answers*" and "*Take 3 minutes to share your answers to questions one through five*"

Remember...always be specific:

Definite task...Definite time limit...Definitely stick to it...

Notes



Teaching Tip #4

Here's how to get more students to follow directions...

Whether you are giving directions for a reading assignment, a worksheet, an activity, or a lab...always ***check-for-understanding***.

Simply ask one or two students to repeat your directions back to you.

For example, immediately after stating something like this...*"take 3 minutes to share your answers to questions one through five with the person next to you...."*

Say something like this...*"How much time do you have, Joey?"*

And, *"What am I asking you to do, Sarah?"*

If you call on students randomly to repeat the directions back to you, you will see more and more students paying attention.

Notes



Teaching Tip #5

O.K..... Great... you are now building up a nice collection of teaching strategies. But, if you are like most people, you often find yourself falling back into your old habits and forgetting to use the teaching strategies during your lessons.

Well, here is a great teaching tip on how to remind *yourself* to use these teaching tips...

It's simple... each week make sure to post a new teaching tip somewhere on the back wall of your classroom. The back wall is the wall you look at the most. Therefore, it is a great place to post things that you need to work on as a teacher.

I always have 3-5 strategies posted somewhere on my back wall as a nice reminder.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #6

Want to increase student participation **and** increase student comprehension?

It's easy...

Every time you ask a question to your class make sure to provide "wait-time" for your students to respond. Instead of calling on the same first few students who always raise their hand first, give all the students a few more seconds to respond (try 3-5 seconds).

Not only will you see more hands go up as you wait, but those who had their hand up first will have had a chance to develop stronger answers.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #7

Here's another "wait-time" tip...

Try giving yourself "wait-time" when students ask you a question. Give yourself time to process the information. Watch how much more effective your responses and follow-up questions become.

Notes



Teaching Tip #8

Feel like you've tried everything, but you still seem to have students who disrupt the class?

Want to learn how to stop this?

No problem...A simple "re-training", or a "clinic" as we call it, should do the trick. Well, maybe not the first time, but keep it up and you will see those behavior problems disappear.

It's simple, all you have to do is "re-teach" the appropriate behavior during the students valued time.

Instead of getting angry, simply say, "Johnny I would like to see you at recess for a "hand raising clinic".

Then at recess simply show Johnny the appropriate, expected behavior, and then have him model it back to you. This shouldn't take any more time then necessary. If Johnny is calling out the next day, then simply repeat the process. Believe me, this won't last long...in fact, it will most likely take only one try.

Notes



Teaching Tip #9

Want to decrease classroom management issues and provide a great opportunity for review?

Well then...start every lesson with a "Do Now" activity or a "Bell-ringer"

Simply have a short assignment that is written in the same location everyday that the students are to do as soon as they enter the classroom.

Not only does this provide an important daily review of material, but it also reduces classroom management issues by giving the students something specific to focus on when they enter the room.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #10

Don't be afraid to call on your students at random. Doing so will make sure they pay attention. However, also make sure to let all your students know that they can always use the "pass option".

I tell my students that if they don't want to respond to one of my questions, for any reason, they simply have to say "pass" and I will call on someone else without giving it a second thought.

While many teachers are afraid to try this because they think all their student's will simply "pass" all the time, the reality is they hardly ever do.

The "pass option" gives the students an "out" when they need it, but more importantly it sets up a great deal of respect between the teacher and the student.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #11

Want to know one of the major causes of classroom management problems?

One word... "*Confusion*"

That's right, one of the major causes of students "acting up" comes from them not understanding what to do next. Yes, of course this may very well be due to the fact that the student wasn't listening to you when you were explaining the directions, but did you do everything you could to make absolutely sure every student knew exactly what to do next?

The key is to "model" everything!

"Modeling" is not the same as "explaining".

With modeling you walk the students through an actual example.

If students are to be filling in a graphic organizer or a worksheet, why not have a copy made for an overhead projector and do the first one or two problems together as a class with you modeling *exactly* what you want the students to do?

Notes 

Teaching Tip #12

In the last teaching tip I explained that one of the biggest causes of classroom management problems is "student confusion"...when students are "confused" about what to do next.

And, in the last tip I wrote of the importance to "model" everything...

But reducing student confusion starts from the very beginning of the lesson.

Here's a great tip: Make sure to have your "agenda" for the day up on the board or written out on chart paper, and make sure to go through it to start your class/lesson each day.

Simply start your class each day saying..."ok this is what we are going to do today..." and then point to your agenda written on the board and go through the various activities.

Your class should never be a surprise to your students.

Notes



Teaching Tip #13

Along with making your day's *agenda* clear to your students you absolutely **MUST** make the *objective* of the lesson clear to your students.

When students enter my classroom they will see the lesson's objectives clearly written on the board and I will make sure to clearly explain those objectives to the students.

In fact, right after I tell the students what we will be doing that day... I make sure to tell them that, "*by the end of class today you will be able to...*"

Your *objective* is the most important part of the lesson...it is what the students will be able to do once the lesson is over...**no** reason why you should keep it a secret from your students.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #14

There is a name for **those** students...yeah, you know, **those** students...the ones who are always getting in trouble, getting detention, or serving suspensions. I have heard these students referred to as the "Usual Suspects", or the "All-Stars", or even the FFA's (Future Felons of America).

Whatever their name, we all know the students we are talking about here.

The best approach to handling these students is a "team" approach.

Yes, of course, the tips you are learning in this publication will help you tremendously with these students, but just think how much more effective it would be if all your colleagues were using the same strategies.

If you are having success with these tips then why not discuss them with your colleagues. Watch how much more effective these strategies become when all your colleagues are all on the same page.

*To recommend the **52 Teaching Tips** to your colleagues, simply send them to this website: <http://www.52TeachingTips.com>*

Notes



Teaching Tip #15

The biggest enemy in teaching is ***time***.

There just is not enough time to teach the material you need to teach.

Therefore, as teachers, we must increase the amount of instructional time wherever possible. First of all, you must "start on time" and "end on time". Remember, you are not starting your class on time out of disrespect for the late student, but rather out of respect for the students who are on time.

More importantly though, the two best learning times within any given class are at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. Therefore, you don't want to lose that time at beginning for the one or two students who are late, and you don't want to lose that time at the end by telling students things as they are walking out of the class or moving onto to a different subject.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #16

Effective time management is essential to being an effective teacher...

Don't be afraid to use timing devices when you put your students "on-the-clock". For example, after you tell your students that they have 3 minutes to complete a particular task, then set an egg-timer, buzzer, or stop-watch to let you and your students know exactly when that time is up.

This will help keep both you and your students on task. Give it a try and see how much smoother your classes run.

Notes



Teaching Tip #17

Want your procrastinators to stop procrastinating?

Think it is impossible? Think again...

The trick to stopping student procrastination is in how you "monitor" your classroom. After students are given a particular task, teachers have a tendency to go directly to the "less-abled" students first to help them get started. This is natural...it is in our nature as teachers to want to help these students. However, it is also wrong.

Your first stop should not be to your "less-abled" students, but instead, your first stop should be to your procrastinators. These are the students who say, "I don't get it" as an excuse for ***not doing it***.

The trick is to go directly to these students first...get them started (even if it is just to get them started on the first question)...then go to your less-abled students.

Once your procrastinators are working you can spend ***more*** time with your less-abled students.

Notes



Teaching Tip #18

Want to make the best use of these teaching tips?

Then make sure to combine the various tips.

For example, in the last tip I discussed how to "monitor" the classroom to eliminate student procrastination. Well instead of just approaching your procrastinators first and getting them started on a particular task, make sure to attach a specific time limit...Put the procrastinator "on-the-clock".

When I approach a procrastinating student I tell him exactly what I want him to do and then make it clear that he only has 30 seconds to do it...remember, you are just trying to get the procrastinator started...that's usually all the procrastinator needs.

However, I also make sure to tell the student I will be back in 30 seconds to see what they have done...*and* I make **absolutely** sure to do just that.

Notes



Teaching Tip #19

Here's a teaching tip that may be a tough one for many to swallow, but believe me it is extremely effective!

Give your students a break!

That's right, an actual "break" at some point during the lesson. This doesn't have to be long, just a short two-minute break in which students can get up, stretch, walk around the room, and quietly talk to friends.

Many teachers will say that they simply can not afford to give up 2 minutes of class because they are already so pressed for time. My response to that is, *"I am willing to give up 2 minutes of a 45 minute class in order to get the other 43 minutes back."*

Also, it establishes a great deal of respect.

Notes



Teaching Tip #20

I often have teachers ask me about my seating arrangement, assigning seats etc.

My seating arrangement is designed to fit the particular lesson that will be taught that day. If students are going to be working in groups of four then the desks will be arranged in groups of four before the students enter the classroom. If the lesson calls for students to be in pairs then so will the desks...and so on.

This saves a great deal of time and actually reduces classroom management issues.

Bottom line: *Don't let classroom management dictate your seating arrangement. Let your lesson plan dictate your seating instead.*

Notes 

Teaching Tip #21

Make sure your lessons have a beginning, middle, and an END. Make sure to have some type of closure activity at the end of each lesson.

Closure can be any short and simple activity that reinforces the lesson's objective(s).

Remember, at the *beginning* of your lesson you should have made clear to your students the objective of that lesson. Well, at the *end* of the lesson you need to make sure those objectives were met.

For example, in a lesson on the "causes of World War II", I may simply have the students create 1 test question and 1 test answer for each of the causes learned from that day's lesson. If there is time I even have the students exchange their questions with each other.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #22

Here is a list of a handful of closure activities that have worked great for me:

1. Have students keep a learning log. At the end of class have them write something that they learned (or found interesting) from class that day.
2. When running short on time simply have students “pair and share” the answer to a couple of questions based on the lesson's objective.
3. If you have extra time (yeah right...) have the students draw a picture that somehow shows that the lesson's objectives were met.
4. Write a letter. As a social studies teacher this is one of my favorites. I often have students write a short letter to the person we were studying.
5. Write a journal entry.

Notes



Teaching Tip #23

Want to your students to pay attention?

Simply break up your lesson into mini-lessons.

For example, let's take a typical 45 minute period. My opening and closing will take roughly 15 minutes combined, so I basically have 30 minutes of time to actually teach new material...

Well, your student's don't have a thirty minute attention span, so break that lesson into three 10-minute *mini*-lessons. In fact, if you have three objectives for that lesson, you could spend ten minutes on each.

This is even more important for longer class periods. I taught in a block schedule for several years and it was imperative that I broke the lesson up into several activities.

Notes



Teaching Tip #24

While breaking your class into mini-lessons is important, if you really want to increase student comprehension then pay attention to the **order** of your mini-lessons.

During my first year of teaching I made the mistake of saving movies, labs, and activities for the end of the lesson. A much better approach is to show movie clips and do labs/activities at the *beginning* of the lesson *prior* to reading and learning about the subject.

This will increase student motivation to learn. And, since all comprehension is built upon "prior knowledge", if you save reading for the end of the lesson you will be increasing student comprehension.

Notes



Teaching Tip #25

Want to see more students complete their homework?

Simple...have students start the homework in class.

No, don't have them do the entire assignment, but make sure to save the last few minutes of each class for the students get their homework **started**.

This will accomplish two things:

1. It will clear up any questions students' have about what the assignment is or how to complete the assignment.
2. It will eliminate the "I didn't know we had homework" response. 😊

Notes



Teaching Tip #26

Students' low self-esteem is a challenge that every teacher must deal with...

However, you can increase your students' self-esteem by ***catching your students being right!***

While students are "pairing & sharing" information, you simply walk around the room and "interview" the students. Next step is to simply call on the students who you know have the right answer.

Do this a few times and you will see those students' self-esteem increase dramatically!

Notes



Teaching Tip #27

Think middle school and high school kids are too old for *story time*?

Think again!

Don't be afraid to use picture books with older kids!

I have had a tremendous amount of success using picture books to introduce topics as sensitive as the **Holocaust** and **Japanese Internment**, and the **Vietnam War**.

Notes



Teaching Tip #28

Each day make sure to write your "do now" or "bell-ringer" question(s) on an index card. After a few weeks you'll have enough index cards that you can start using them as class sets.

Once you have a class set, you can hand each student a different "do now" question.

After students answer their own unique question they can pair up with a partner and ask each other their question.

The following week you simply shuffle the cards and each student gets a new one.

This is a great way to review old material.

Remember, if you don't review it...they will forget it!

Notes



Teaching Tip #29

Are you tired of your students coming into class without a pen or pencil?

Well, I'll be perfectly honest here...I am not one of those teachers that get upset when my students come in without something to write with. I used to be, but not anymore. My solution was simply to go to *Sam's Club* and buy 100 pencils for a few bucks and if a student doesn't have one I simply give him one.

I know that many teachers disagree with me on this one, but of all the battles that are fought in a given day, that is one I just simply gave up on. Somewhere during my first two years of teaching I just decided to pick and choose my battles and figured that wasn't one worth fighting.

If you disagree with me that's ok...In fact, that is part of what makes teaching such a great profession...

In the next tip I'll tell you what one of my all-time favorite teachers (who also disagrees with me on this topic) uses to get her students to actually come to class prepared with a pen or pencil...

So if you don't agree with my suggestion, maybe you'll like the next tip better 😊

Notes



Teaching Tip #30

Ok, here is a simple tip for getting students to come in with something to write with...

Have a box of pencils out that students can take from. However, when a student takes a pencil they must come back during recess (or whenever their "valued" time is) and sharpen three more pencils.

This works as a great deterrent. Even though it only takes a couple of minutes to sharpen three pencils, those couple of minutes of "recess" are not minutes that students want to give up.

If nothing else, you always have sharpened pencils 😊

Notes



Teaching Tip #31

One of the keys to having success as a teacher is being able to motivate students to **want** to learn.

Video clips are great way to achieve this goal.

However, instead of saving a video for the end of a lesson, use video at the beginning of a lesson. A short video clip (2-10 minutes) will spark students' interest and will motivate students to **want** to learn more.

Want access to video clips on almost any subject you can imagine?

That's easy...simply go here: <http://www.unitedstreaming.com>

Notes



Teaching Tip #32

The key to improving reading comprehension is to tap into and build upon students' "prior knowledge" about a topic before reading.

That's right, reading is based on what you already bring to the table when you open a text, what you already know about a particular topic, your **prior knowledge**.

Therefore, in order to increase reading comprehension you must first increase a student's **prior knowledge** on a subject BEFORE reading about the subject.

That is why I am big advocate for doing labs, activities, and showing video clips at the beginning of the lesson. Not only will you increase reading comprehension, but you will also increase student motivation to learn. Believe it or not, you will actually have students reading because they **want** to read.

Without a doubt, the best teaching tool for using video clips in the classroom is [United Streaming](#). I use [United Streaming](#) at least twice a week in my classroom to increase student motivation and to increase reading comprehension.

Simply type in the topic you are going to read about in their search engine and you'll get many video clips you can download and use in your class. The best part is, you can download clips that are anywhere from 1 minute long to 50 minutes long.

[United Streaming](#) is simply one of my favorite teaching tools! Give it a try and you'll see why. 😊

Notes



Teaching Tip #33

As a teacher I know how frustrating it can be to try and get students to focus when going over a test. Once you hand the students their test back all the student cares about is the grade. Unfortunately, students are more concerned with **what** they got on the test than **why** they got the grade they did.

Well here is a quick tip for teachers to get students to pay attention when going over test questions: During the test, have students write their answers on a separate sheet of paper or a scantron. Then, after you grade the scantron, only hand back the test questions (don't let them know their grade...yet). Go over each question and watch how much more the students pay attention. This way they are focusing on the questions trying to figure out if they got the answer right or not.

Once you have gone over the entire test, then you can hand back their answer sheet with their grade on it.

Notes



Teaching Tip #34

Remember, [effective classroom management](#) involves everything you do as a teacher. From the second students walk into your classroom to the second students leave your classroom AND everything in-between.

How a teacher transitions from one activity to another activity within the lesson involves simple, yet very important, classroom management strategies and this plays a huge role in student behavior.

Just like everything else a teacher does during a lesson, during transitions a teacher must be **specific** with instructions.

Instead a saying to your students, *“Next we are going to watch a short video clip and you are going to take notes so take out a piece of paper...”*

Say this instead, *“Next we are going to watch a short video clip. You have 30 seconds to take out a piece of paper without talking.”*

See the difference? The first set of instructions leads to all the students talking at once with no time limit to complete the simple task and eventually forces the teacher to bring order back to the classroom. While the second set of classroom instructions makes the transition from one activity to another smooth and the teacher doesn't miss a beat.

Bottom Line: non-effective classroom management vs. [effective classroom management](#).

Notes



Teaching Tip #35

Some of the biggest classroom management problems can come from the simplest classroom incidents.

Writing notes (no, not class notes, but notes to friends) can easily disrupt any class lesson. Many of these notes are written during video clips or other classroom activities and while they may seem harmless, the fact is the students are not learning all they can from the lesson.

Well, here is a simple classroom management tip...

Tell students to put EVERYTHING away...take EVERYTHING off their desk (except the student worksheet, handout etc. you might have the students working on)...*prior* to watching the video clip or moving into the next student activity.

In this way the teacher has been proactive by removing possible distractions to the lesson before the lesson even starts.

Notes



Teaching Tip #36

As I have stated before, classroom management starts from the second students walk into the classroom.

This is one of the reasons why the “Do Now” (Bellringer Activity) is so important. It gives students something to do as soon as they enter the classroom.

However, the “Do Now” comes with its own set of classroom management issues. Some students don’t get started right away, some have difficulty keeping them organized etc.

Well here is a simple tip that will help with the “Do Now” and therefore help with classroom management...

Have students keep a “Do Now” journal. Make sure each student has one of those marble journal notebooks (composition books) that is used solely for “Do Now’s”. This way you can keep the journals in the classroom, collect them for grades whenever you want, and have students take them home when they need to study for tests.

Remember, the “Do Now” is supposed to help eliminate classroom management issues, not create classroom management issues.

Notes



Teaching Tip #37

Are you a predictable teacher?

Well...if you want to have an effective classroom management plan, you must be predictable.

Students like to come into a classroom and know what is expected of them...in other words, students like routine.

A teacher should always start the class in the same manner. And, a teacher should have a consistent classroom management plan. The worst thing a teacher can do is come into school strict one day and totally relaxed the next...the students simply will not know how to act in that teacher's class and classroom management issues will naturally arise.

As I've stated before, classroom management issues often arise when students are confused or don't know what is expected of them. By being a predictable teacher and having a daily routine, the teacher will limit the number classroom management issues.

Notes



Teaching Tip #38

Today, more and more teachers realize that teaching *reading* is not the sole responsibility of the language arts teacher. However, many teachers struggle to come up with ways to improve reading comprehension in the classroom.

The key to improving reading comprehension is to tap into the students “prior knowledge” about the reading topic ***before*** actually reading about the topic. There are many ways teachers can go about tapping into a students prior knowledge (KWL charts, prediction strategies, critical thinking questions, anticipation sets etc.), but one that is rarely used **before** reading assignments is the *Venn Diagram*.

Yes, of course, most teachers have used Venn diagrams in their classrooms, but they are usually used ***after*** reading to compare and contrast something that the students just read.

However, Venn diagrams can also be a great tool to tap into what the students already know about a topic. For example, when teaching the U.S. Civil War I have students create a Venn diagram on the similarities and differences between the North and the South **before** reading about the topic. Once students finish the reading they can go back and check their Venn diagram, make corrections, and add new information.

Give it try...you can do it with most any topic.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #39

As a social studies teacher I am always looking for new teaching tips to improve reading comprehension in the classroom.

So here is another simple reading comprehension tip...

As I have said before, improving reading comprehension in the classroom is determined by what the teacher does BEFORE the reading.

Well here is something that any teacher can do to increase reading comprehension for any grade level or any content area.

1. Find a piece of reading you plan to use with the class.
2. Before students read, write down 3-7 statements on the board based on the reading. However, make sure that a few of the statements are *false*.
4. Have students *predict* whether or not the statements are true or false BEFORE they read.
5. After the reading, have the students go back and check whether or not their predictions were correct.

What will this reading comprehension strategy do?

Not only will this strategy help students tap into what they already know about a topic, but it will also give students a purpose for reading. The students will know what to focus on when they read *and* they will read to determine if their predictions were correct.

Notes



Teaching Tip #40

Most teachers today know how well a KWL chart works to help students improve their reading comprehension. However, KWL charts are not just for improving **reading** comprehension... KWL charts are great for improving **comprehension** period.

The reason why KWL charts work so well is that they are based on the fundamental principles of *how* students learn. By tapping into and building upon students “prior knowledge” KWL charts lead to a definite improvement in reading comprehension.

Well here is a great teaching tip...

Don't just use KWL charts for reading ...use them for video clips as well. Video is a great learning tool that teachers have long used and is increasing in popularity as technology (such as United Streaming) makes it easier for teachers to access video clips on nearly any subject imaginable.

However, just showing the video clip and hoping students understand the content is not enough. Instead, teachers should use KWL charts to help student learn with video the same way teachers use KWL charts to learn with reading. By having students think about what they already *know* about a topic and what they *want* to know before viewing the video, the students will greatly improve their comprehension of the topic.

Notes



Teaching Tip #41

Here is another advantage to using KWL charts with video...

Not only will a KWL chart improve comprehension about the topic covered in the video, but it gives the teacher an opportunity to break up “boring” documentaries.

How? Simple...

If your video clip is longer than 10 minutes, stop the video and have students write in their “L” column for 1 minute. Then have students “pair & share” and add to their “L” columns with a partner for another 2-3 minutes. Once students have filled in their “L” column the teacher can then start the video again and repeat the process.

This provides the students and teacher an opportunity to discuss and reinforce key information and also breaks up the video to take into account the attention span of the students.

Notes



Teaching Tip #42

Teachers need to be careful about getting lost in the standardized test mayhem.

Don't lose site of what is *really* important...

Think about what you want your students to remember in 5-10 years? Remember, teaching is not just about getting students to perform well on standardized tests! Teaching is about lifelong learning. Therefore, teachers should always be getting their students to think about the “big picture”.

How? Simple...

Teachers must make the overall unit objectives and daily lesson objectives very clear! In fact, both should be posted in the classroom everyday.

Again, think about what you want your students to remember in 5-10 years...

Notes



Teaching Tip #43

Wants students to retain more information from what they have read?

Set a purpose for reading (and listening). Setting a purpose for reading/listening impacts what students will remember and positively effects comprehension.

Try giving students different “roles” and then have them write down important points from the reading based on those roles.

It's fun to see the different bits of information the students pick up on based on their role.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #44

Here is an example of purpose setting in content area reading...

1. Pick a reading passage for your content (it can be from the textbook, a novel, a primary source etc.)
2. Place students in groups of 4 or 5 and assign each student a different role depending on the content. For example, a reading passage on the Civil War can include roles such as a Union soldier, Confederate soldier, a mother, father, daughter, slave, plantation owner, politician etc.
3. Make sure students do not tell each other their role.
4. Read the passage aloud to your students or have them read silently to themselves.
5. During the reading have students write a list of important points based on their role.
6. Finally, have students share their lists and try to guess each other's role.

Watch and see how much more the students retain from the reading.

Notes



Teaching Tip #45

I have to admit, I did not think this one would work, but now I use it all the time to help students comprehend what they read.

It's called: *Read & Re-tell*

Simply have students in small groups rotate reading paragraphs, but after each paragraph have the student who just read "re-tell" what the paragraph means in his or her own words.

Now the student is not just reading, but must pay attention and comprehend what he is reading as well.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #46

Did you like the *read and re-tell*?

Well here is another tip...I call it: *read and re-tell with a twist*

Instead of having the reader "re-tell" the paragraph in his or her own words, have the person sitting next to the reader (on the right) re-tell the paragraph. This way one person is reading and one person is re-telling. This makes sure that the person not reading is actually listening.

This works great when students are working in pairs!

Notes 

Teaching Tip #47

Want students to improve their study habits?

Of course you do, but as we all know this can be difficult.

Here is a simply tip:

Have the students keep track of their own study habits. At the end of every test have a few questions such as:

1. How long did you study?
2. How often did you study?
3. What times of day did you study?

These are just examples, I am sure you could come up with 3-5 questions that you think students should focus on about their own study habits.

Of course, these questions won't actually be worth any points on the test, but it will make students stop and think for a few minutes about their own study habits and what they need to do to improve.

Notes 

Teaching Tip #48

I often have other teachers ask me how I get my class to walk down the hallway so quietly, or how I get my class to quiet down so quickly after a group discussion, or how I get students to transition from one activity to the next without any chaos...

The answer is actually quite simple...

I make sure to TEACH EVERYTHING!

Yes, a teacher's job is not just to teach the content, but also to teach expected behaviors. If you want your students to "do it" you must "teach it". Whether it is how to walk down the hallway or how to quickly bring the class back to order, I make sure to spend some time teaching the students exactly what I expect.

This may seem like it is taking up valuable time at first, but it will end up saving you time (and patience) in the long run.

Notes



Teaching Tip #49

In an earlier tip I mentioned the importance giving students a specific time limit for completing various tasks...I called it "putting students *on-the-clock*".

I also discussed how using a timing device, such as an egg-timer, works as a great tool to let both the student and teacher know exactly when time is up.

Well, another added advantage about using an egg-timer (or any timer for that matter) is that the timer also signals the students to bring the class to attention.

If you follow the advice from the last teaching tip you know how important it is to TEACH EVERYTHING. Well, if you teach students that when the timer goes off they are to stop what they are doing and focus their attention on the teacher for the next set of directions...you will be amazed at the results.

Notes



Teaching Tip #50

Here is a teaching tip that is a twist on an earlier tip: I call it the *reverse "pair & share"*.

The *pair & share* is a popular teaching technique that allows students to share their answers with a partner after the student has worked alone. The *pair & share* allows students to teach and learn from each other and allows the students to reinforce their learning without the anxiety of responding in front of the entire class. There are also other benefits that I have discussed in this publication, but right now I want to talk about using this strategy in *reverse*.

Instead of having students work alone and then pairing and sharing...have students work together and then split them up to work alone.

This works great for critical thinking questions that don't necessarily have a right or wrong answer.

For example, on a recent lesson on women's rights I had my students analyze the primary source document *Declaration of Sentiments* from 1848. For each excerpt I chose to read from the document I had students work in pairs and look through a fact sheet about women's issues *today*. Each pair was to discuss how much progress they believe women have made since 1848.

After a few minutes of discussion time I then had the students split up to write their final response on their own.

This way students could hear different perspectives on the issue before writing their own final answer.

Notes



Teaching Tip #51

If you want to increase your students' motivation to learn you must make connections between what you are teaching and the students' own interests.

The lesson I discussed in the last tip about the Seneca Falls Convention (1848) that involved using the primary source *Declaration of Sentiments* to teach about women's rights is perfect example...

Having students analyze the primary source from 1848 alone would have been difficult, boring, and frustrating. However, by having the students compare women's issue discussed in the 1848 document to present-day women's issues gave students the opportunity to connect the topic to something that was relevant in their own lives.

Not only that...by having the students then assess the progress women have made since 1848, I was also addressing higher order thinking skills.

Notes



Teaching Tip #52

I love doing projects with my students. Projects are great way to increase student motivation AND improve comprehension.

Unfortunately, many teachers don't do projects because they fear the grading may be too subjective and too problematic. However, if you use a **rubric** for your project you can avoid both of these problems.

Simply pick 4-6 aspects of the project you want to assess and give them each a point total.

For example, during my unit on *Colonial Life* (U.S. History), I had students create brochures on one of the original thirteen American colonies. Their brochure was graded using a simple rubric:

- **25 points** - written information on each of the five topics (founder, people in the colony, climate and geography, economy, and politics/government)
- **25 points** - pictures/symbols that match each of the five written topics
- **20 points** - additional ideas (advertisements, coupons, maps, captions/slogans etc.)
- **10 points** - color
- **10 points** - neatness
- **10 points** - participation

Total: 100 points

This rubric took only a couple of minutes to create, made the assessment much less subjective, and made the assignment extremely easy to grade.

Notes



Closing Remarks

I truly hope you found this report useful and put it to good use.

Remember, classroom management is not about creating elaborate systems of rewards and punishments. Classroom management is about keeping your students actively involved in every one of your lessons.

By using the teaching tips discussed in this ebook, you will not only see an increase in class participation and academic achievement, but you will see a **natural** decrease in classroom management issues.

- If you find these tips to be useful then make sure to take a look at my other free and paid teaching resources: [The Teaching Tips Machine Newsletter](#) ~ A **FREE** weekly newsletter that provides simple teaching tips you can easily apply to any classroom situation.
- [The Proactive Classroom Management eCourse](#) ~ A **FREE** ecourse on how to eliminate classroom management problems *before* they start.
- [52 Teaching Tips](#) ~ An ebook that provides an arsenal of effective teaching strategies at your fingertips.
- [Your Basic Guide To Acing ANY Teacher Interview!](#) ~ A step-by-step guide on how to get an interview an outright ace it! This ebook will give anyone searching for a teaching job an unfair advantage over the competition.
- [eTeach: A Teacher Resource for Learning the Strategies of Master Teachers](#) ~ *Introducing the best practices of effective teaching. Finally an ebook that addresses classroom management style and academic achievement. Whether you need first grade classroom management tips or effective teaching strategies for large lectures...*

Best Wishes,

Adam Waxler and Marjan Glavac