

# Field Teaching Tips

TCE 432A Spring 2026

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## Before You Go

### Know Your Context

- **Meet your cooperating teacher BEFORE your first lesson.** Ask about:
  - Class routines (How do they start class? Where do students sit?)
  - Classroom management strategies already in place
  - Available materials and technology
  - Students with special needs or accommodations
  - What content have they covered? What's coming next?

### Prepare Your Materials

- **Print backup copies.** Technology fails. Have paper versions ready.
- **Test technology the day before.** Don't find out Phyphox doesn't work on your phone 5 minutes before class.
- **Bring extra supplies.** Pencils, markers, tape—students will need them.
- **Have a “Plan B.”** What if the projector dies? What if the activity takes half as long as you planned?

### Plan for Timing

- **Everything takes longer than you think.** Passing out materials, getting students into groups, transitions—budget time for these.
  - **Know your “must-do” vs. “nice-to-do.”** If time runs short, what can you skip?
  - **Have extension activities ready.** Fast finishers need something meaningful to do.
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## During Class

### Starting Strong

- **Introduce yourself briefly.** “Hi, I'm [Name], and I'm learning to be a science/math teacher. I'll be teaching you for the next few weeks.”
- **Use your cooperating teacher's routines.** Don't reinvent the wheel—students respond to consistency.
- **Start with something engaging.** A hook, a puzzle, a surprising fact—grab their attention in the first 2 minutes.

## Managing the Room

- **Circulate constantly.** Don't stand at the front. Move around, listen to conversations, ask questions.
- **Use proximity for behavior management.** Stand near a chatty group—often that's enough.
- **Ask your cooperating teacher for help.** If a student isn't responding to you, your CT can step in. That's what they're there for.
- **Speak to the behavior, not the student.** "I need everyone's eyes up here" is better than "Jason, stop talking."

## Facilitating Discussion

- **Wait time is your friend.** Ask a question, then COUNT TO 5 in your head. It feels awkward. Do it anyway.
- **Rephrase and revoice.** "So you're saying that..." helps clarify student thinking and shows you're listening.
- **Ask follow-ups.** "Why do you think that?" "Can you say more?" "Does anyone agree or disagree?"
- **Don't answer your own questions.** If silence lingers, ask students to turn-and-talk first.

## Keeping It Inquiry-Based

- **Resist the urge to tell.** When a student asks "Is this right?" ask them "What do you think? Why?"
  - **Let students struggle (productively).** Confusion is part of learning. Don't rescue them too quickly.
  - **Make student thinking visible.** Whiteboards, posters, document cameras—show what students are doing.
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## Collecting Data

### Formative Assessment (During the Lesson)

- **Listen to conversations.** What are students saying to each other? What misconceptions emerge?
- **Take photos of student work.** Whiteboards, notebooks, posters—capture the evidence. (Blur faces or crop them out.)
- **Jot quick notes.** Keep a notepad handy. Write down interesting moments, surprising responses, things that didn't work.

### Summative Assessment (End of Lesson)

- **Exit tickets are your best friend.** 1-2 quick questions on an index card or half-sheet. Collect them as students leave.

- **Gather artifacts.** If students made something (graphs, diagrams, lab reports), photograph or collect copies.
- **Ask students to self-assess.** “On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you with today’s concept?”

### Organize as You Go

- **Label everything immediately.** “Period 3, Group 2, Feb 25.” Future you will thank present you.
  - **Create a folder system.** Physical or digital—keep each lesson’s data together.
  - **Back up digital files.** Google Drive, Dropbox, email yourself—don’t lose your photos.
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## After Class

### Debrief with Your Cooperating Teacher

- **Ask for feedback.** “What went well? What could I improve?”
- **Be specific.** “Did my instructions make sense?” “Were students on task during group work?”
- **Take notes.** You’ll forget their insights by the time you write up your lesson.

### Reflect Honestly

- **What surprised you?** What did students understand easily? What confused them?
- **What would you change?** Be specific. “Better instructions” is vague. “Write the task on the board, not just say it aloud” is actionable.
- **Celebrate small wins.** Did one student have an “aha” moment? Did a shy student speak up? Notice the good stuff.

### Document While It’s Fresh

- **Write up your lesson within 24 hours.** Details fade fast.
  - **Use the 432/532 template.** Planning, Implementation, Assessment, Reflection—fill it in while you remember.
  - **Include evidence.** Photos, exit tickets, your notes—attach them to your documentation.
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## **When Things Don't Go as Planned**

### **Common Challenges & What to Do**

**"Students finished the activity in 10 minutes. I planned for 30."** - Have extension questions ready: "What if we changed X? Can you create a new example?" - Move to the next phase early. Flexibility is good! - Ask students to explain their thinking to a partner.

**"Students are confused and I don't know how to explain it differently."** - Ask a student who gets it to explain. Peer teaching is powerful. - Use a concrete example or analogy. - Pause and have students write down their confusion. Then address the patterns you see.

**"The technology crashed / materials didn't arrive / fire drill happened."** - Implement Plan B. (You have one, right?) - Adapt on the fly. Can you do a simplified version with what you have? - It's okay to say, "This isn't working—let's try something else."

**"A student was disruptive and I didn't handle it well."** - Talk to your cooperating teacher afterward. Ask for strategies. - Reflect: What triggered the behavior? What could you do differently? - Remember: Classroom management is a SKILL. You're learning it, just like your students are learning math/science.

**"I messed up."** - Welcome to teaching! Every teacher has bad lessons. - **Document it honestly.** That's what A05 is for—real teaching, not perfect teaching. - Focus on what you learned, not on beating yourself up.

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### **Remember**

**You are learning.** No one expects perfection.

**Students are resilient.** One rough lesson won't ruin them.

**Your cooperating teacher is your ally.** Use them!

**Collect evidence as you go.** Future you needs that data for A05.

**Reflection is where growth happens.** Be honest, be specific, be kind to yourself.

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**Questions? Problems? Reach out to Dr. Edwards immediately.**

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**You've got this!**