

Meeting the Class for the First Time

Preparing to become a teacher is a big undertaking. Its easy to get caught up in getting through college with a degree in teaching, passing your teachers certification exam, finding the kind of teaching position you want and getting through the interview that there is one more level of challenge that awaits you that you may not have put some thought into. That is the moment you walk into a classroom and face that sea of little faces looking up at you fearfully and you realize, perhaps with some terror that you really are a teacher and these students expect you to do the job.

Every teacher has a priority for what will happen in that first encounter with the class of students. For some teachers, its important to establish your authority and to let the kids know you are boss and they will be called up on top live up to your expectations. For another, the first goal in that first hour is to just get organized. But its a great idea to think through exactly how you are going to handle that first meeting so you establish a relationship with these kids that will result in a very productive and yet happy and peaceful class time experience each day.

As you look at those eyes staring at you, what do you suppose they are thinking? Well, it isn't really that much of a mystery. They are very curious about their new teacher and the things they want to know about you are not things they will ask you out loud including...

- . Is this new teacher mean or nice?
- . Will she make us work harder than our last teacher?
- . Is the new teacher funny or too serious?
- . Will she make us move our chairs
- . Is this new teacher boring?

That last question is probably the one that weighs on the minds of most students the most. To a young mind the one crime that should be punishable by death is for you to be boring. They are also wondering what will be the first thing you will say to them to get the relationship started. They are very curious about you as a person and if you will make learning fun or, again that terrible word, boring.

It is a great idea if you take the time to think out in advance exactly what you want to accomplish in this initial meeting with your new class. One suggestion that has some real value is to seek to find a way to move from strangers to friends fairly quickly and to communicate to the students that you want to work with them as a team. If you and your students become one unit with the shared

goal of learning what they have to learn to get good grades to take home to mom and dad and to do so without being boring, you will have created an educational setting that will be rich with learning potential.

One way to get that relationship off and running in great shape is to do something unexpected when you address them initially. Tell a joke, introduce yourself with a funny illustration from your childhood or in some other way surprise your new class in a fun and lighthearted way. This communicates to them that you are going to be a fun teacher and that they need to come to class paying attention because they never know what to expect. With that kind of rapport, you will have established a relationship that will only continue to open up and grow more trusting and more productive. And it all started because you refused to be that one thing that students hate. You refused to be boring.

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