

THE TEACHER TIMES

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FOR THE CLASSROOM

Hit the Ground Running

Part One: Hit the Ground Running -- Making the Most of Those First Days of School

We all know it takes some time to get back into the rhythm of the school year. Here are some ideas to help you and your students get the most out of those first days of school.

Interest Inventories: A written questionnaire is a great way to get to know your students. Ask for basic biographical information as well as hobbies, sports, book and movie preferences. Throw in the following thought-provoking questions to gain an even deeper understanding: "What would constitute a perfect day for you?", "Would you like to be famous? In what way?" and "If you could eat dinner with any person in current events today, who would it be and why?"

Class Rules: Don't forget to establish your classroom rules early in the year and phrase them in a positive way. Keep the number of rules between four and seven and display your rules in the classroom where everyone can



see them. Try writing the rules and consequences with students to help them claim a greater ownership of responsibility for their behavior in the classroom.

Ice Breakers: Use the first day of school to nurture a communal feel in your classroom. Have everyone shake hands with everyone else and introduce each other by first and last names. Then pair up students, have them interview each other, and then introduce one another to the class. Finally play the "Group and Re-group" game. Have four or five categories established and have the class group themselves according to the categories. For example, have them group themselves according to birthday month then disband those groups and have them group themselves by shoe size. Students should try to learn the names of their group members before disbanding.

Mini-lessons: Take advantage of the eagerness of students on the first day. For instance, in math and science, you could hold a "Mini Measurement Olympics". Instruct students to throw cotton ball shot puts and straw javelins and estimate the distances the cotton balls and straws traveled. Students then take the actual measurements. The winning team is the team who estimates most accurately. For language arts or history, find out what students know by asking them to create a front page newspaper article that uses the five W's (who, what, when, where, and why) to report their favorite event in history. Remind them to include a catchy headline and drawn "photograph."

The first day of school can set the tone for the rest of the year. Take advantage of this time to get to know one another, learn procedures, and have fun.

Put a little "spring" in your day!



Are you a heavy writer or does your hand ache after hours of grading papers? If so, BIC has developed an innovative new ball and gel pen line, Reaction™, which incorporates an all new spring system that helps to control unwanted motion and dissipate tension. D-Flexion™ Technology is the system of springs which act as a "shock absorber" in the tip of the pen to make your writing experience the most comfortable and cushioned it can be.



PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

We here at BIC like to think of this new pen innovation in simple terms: two parts shock absorber, one part pillow, and one part hand ergonomics.

Along with this unique benefit, the Reaction™ ball/gel pens have a full-length grip and metallized features, to add style and sophistication to your everyday writing experience. Reaction™ ball pens come in medium 1.0mm point, while the gel pens are available with a medium 0.7mm point. Both the Reaction™ ball pen and gel pen are refillable, and come in black, blue, and red inks.

We'd love to hear how you feel about this new innovation from BIC, so please send us your feedback at TeachOurKids@bicworld.com!


FEATURE STORY

Hit the Ground Running

Part Two – The Rainbow Connection: Communicate and Engage Students with Colors

Ever wonder why most highlighters are yellow? The answer is simple; yellow is the color humans see the fastest. Knowledge of how colors communicate can help engage your students and improve classroom communication. Use the following facts to help you use color to communicate to your students when grading papers, writing instructions on the board, or conducting classroom activities.

Purple is a popular new choice for grading papers, replacing the harsher red that teachers have used in the past. "The idea that red induces stress, especially in younger children, has been around for years," said Lawrence Jones, a psychology teacher and former graphic-design instructor at The Art Institute of California San Diego. "Teachers, realizing the immense problems they face with kids in education, find avoiding red helps them avoid one more negative in a child's life." So, next time you're marking up a test, try purple as a less abrasive option.

Just because **Red** is losing traction for grading, doesn't mean you can't use its strengths to your advantage. Red is a stimulating color and can cause a rise in heart rate and blood pressure. Use red when you want to get students to stop, pay attention, and take action on information.

Blue is a cool, calming color that has been shown to improve productivity. It communicates intelligence, wisdom, and unity. Use blue to communicate to students the core facts and information in a lesson.

Green is the easiest color for the eye to see and can help improve vision. It communicates newness, springtime, nature, and balance. Writing the instructions for your opening activity in green will help capture and focus your students' attention.


Orange is a cleansing color that is mentally stimulating and sociable. It communicates meanings of good health, energy, and warmth. Use orange question cards to stimulate thoughtful whole class discussions.


Pink is a warm, calming color that in some studies has been shown to dampen physical activity. It communicates romance, playfulness, and tenderness. Use pink to calm students down after a heated classroom debate.

Feature Story Source: Burmark, Lynell. Visual Literacy: Learn to See, See to Learn. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2002.


Teacher's White Board



Q: Can you share one of your ideas using  Permanent Markers for a fun back-to-school craft?


A: We have many craft ideas on our  website, at www.bicmarkit.com. These ideas are updated weekly, so you can try them all! For a fun back-to-school project, try the "Decorative Lunch Box" craft below.

Materials

-  Permanent Markers
- BIC® pencil
- Unfinished metal lunch box (available at craft stores)
- Acrylic paint in a hot pink color
- Paint brush
- Tacky glue that dries clear
- Silver glitter glue
- Rhinestones

- Flower stencil (or draw designs free-hand)

Instructions

1. Paint the sides and the back of the lunch box using the pink acrylic paint and let dry.
2. Using a BIC® pencil, draw a circle in the center of the front of the lunch box. Draw a flower in the center of the circle and write around the flower a "name" and the word "lunch" ex: "Sandy's Lunch."
3. Continue to draw flowers around the circle to cover the entire front of the lunch box.
4. Once design is completed, decorate with  Permanent Markers.
5. Add decorative touches to your lunch box by gluing rhinestones and using glitter glue.
6. Let your creation dry, then add a lunch and go!

The Teacher's White Board section is the area of the BIC Teacher Times dedicated just to you and your opinions. This is your chance to tell us what you think about BIC® products, ask BIC questions, or share some advice with other teachers. All submissions become the property of BIC and we may publish your entry. Remember to include your name, the grade you teach, school and state.