

THE TEACHER TIMES

VOL 5 NO. 1

MARCH 2009

FOR THE CLASSROOM

Thinking Thrifty: Teaching on a Shoestring Budget

In difficult times, schools' and teachers' budgets are often stretched to the limit. Here are some simple ideas to keep classes fun and inspiring without a huge expense.

Part One

School Swap Meet:

Encourage your colleagues to share their hoarded supplies by hosting a swap meet. At the next staff meeting or after school, ask teachers to bring supplies that are still usable, but unwanted. You may find that perfect art print, a stack of graph paper, or a class set of journals – all for free! You can also buy supplies in bulk and divide the expenses between other teachers.

Wish Lists

Maintain a list of things that you wish to have for your classroom. An ongoing list will help you keep track of items as you shop throughout the year. Consider sending out a monthly newsletter to parents, outlining the needs of the classroom—you may find that they are able and willing to supply these items.

Altered Books

Thrift stores and yard sales always have an ample supply of unwanted children's books that can be purchased for as little as 10 cents each*. The sturdy board books made for toddlers work the best.

Use contact paper to cover the pictures and words to create a blank book for your students.

Option A: Students cover just the words and use the remaining pictures to create a new story.

Option B: Students cover both the words and pictures. Then ask them to use the book to write and illustrate their own original story.

Costumes

Keep an eye out for clothing that you can use in classroom lessons. Friends and family of the school will often gladly

donate these items for free. That cheesy ball gown or hideous tuxedo can help you conduct your next classroom quiz game in style. Also, keep your eyes peeled for hats and ties. Purchase an old suitcase to store your costumes. The suitcase will also make a great classroom prop!

Working Together

Reproducible worksheets can be turned into group activities to save paper and school funds. Have students work in small groups to complete the activities as teams. With fewer students filling out worksheets, there will be less grading for you! Plus, group work can improve students' social skills.



*Teacher Times articles are written by Junius and Tracy Wright. Articles are based on their experiences as teachers for a combined 20 years and should not be held as fact unless otherwise cited. About Junius and Tracy Wright: Junius Wright is a Language Arts teacher at the Academic Magnet High School in Charleston, SC. Tracy Wright holds a Masters of Arts in Teaching Biology and has taught at schools in Africa and Charleston, SC.

FOR THE CLASSROOM

Part Two

The Classroom Field Trip

Sometimes an off campus field trip is not the best option due to expense or logistics. There are many experts in your community who will visit your students for free. Contact local museums, universities, zoos and businesses to see what they have to offer. They may have a program geared specifically to your grade and subject matter.

Online field trips are another great option. Many museums offer virtual tours and even have support materials available to teachers. Here are three great museum sites to get you started.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Museum for Kids:

(<http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/justforfun.asp>) Sketch Degas' Dancers, survey landscapes with Van Gogh, analyze Cézanne's astonishing apples, or view Harlem street life through the imagination of the visual artist Romare Bearden.

Smithsonian Kids: (<http://www.si.edu/Kids/>)

Build a virtual sod house on the open prairie, study and predict the movements of an animated Triceratops skeleton, or learn how to read satellite photos.

The Museum of Modern Art:

(<http://www.moma.org/destination/>) Explore MOMA's collection with an alien creature, listen to a painting, or create an online collage. Also, be sure to

check out the BIC Cristal pen in the museum's permanent collection at moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=82141

Use your public library

The public library is an excellent resource in hard times. Here are three library resources that many of us overlook.

- Inter-library loan: A service whereby a user of one library can borrow books or receive photocopies of documents that are owned by another library.
- Big (expensive) coffee table books: These oversized books with vivid images are ideal for the classroom. Check out a couple related to your next unit and display them in sacred areas around the classroom for students to look at.
- Art, music, movies, and more! You might be surprised at what you can check out of your local library. Some libraries offer framed artwork reproductions that can be checked out for extended periods. Many libraries have even begun to offer audio books, e-books, videos, and music that can be checked out and downloaded by their patrons. Contact a librarian to find out which services are available at your local public library.

Article on library downloads:

features.csmonitor.com/innovation/2008/09/05/how-to-download-free-books-music-and-movies-from-local-libraries/

Online resources

Check out biceveryday.com for great activities that can be printed for free and require only basic school supplies. Also, check out our latest and greatest offers on BIC® products!

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

BIC® Round Stic® – America's choice for home, school and office

Whether we face a difficult economic environment or a prosperous one, we at BIC understand that teachers must always cope with tight budgets. In fact, for more than 50 years, BIC has strived to provide our consumers with the best value for their money. A classic example of this is one of our best-selling ballpoint pens – the BIC Round Stic.

With a long-lasting ink supply, the pen will write for more than 7,200 feet* (20 times the length of a football field!), providing the dependability and smooth writing you would expect in a ballpoint pen. In addition, for 2009 BIC has improved the look of the Round Stic® with a colorful frosted cap and translucent barrel for visible ink supply. The flexible and lightweight BIC Round Stic® is an



excellent choice for all of your writing needs at a great price. Available in black, blue and red inks, the BIC® Round Stic® comes in dozen boxes and 10 packs.

To learn more about BIC® pens, pencils, markers, highlighters or correction products, be sure to check out the Featured Innovations area at <http://www.biceveryday.com/teachers/>. If you have any additional questions about our products, contact us at TeachOurKids@bicworld.com.

*BIC internal lab tests

Send your comments and feedback to: teachourkids@bicworld.com

©2009 BIC USA Inc., Shelton, CT 06484