

BOOM'S HINTS FOR ROOKIE TEACHERS

Ah, so you're a first year teacher...

They probably didn't tell you about these things in Ed School, so here's real life in teaching:

You're on trial this year. The kids will be testing you out to see how much they can get away with.

In 1956, The Boom was a rookie, and if someone had given him the following advice, his first year would have been a thousand times better.

If you're stuck with "low-ability" classes, which rookies usually are, you will really need this. But college prep kids try stuff too, especially the Seniors in the springtime.

Here are typical things they will try:

"May I go to the bathroom? I really gotta go, too!"
(Some even jump up and down with hand in crotch. Well, things are a bit different in California).

Your answer... "NO POTTY CALLS." (If it is really an emergency, then you'll have to let 'em go). (They're big kids now. Discipline of the bladder is necessary). And nowadays, most "emergency rest room requests" are for making cell phone calls on class time! It is rare

that there is a serious reason to go. They just want out for a walk or to visit (especially after an exam).

NO trips to the drinking fountain either, or to lockers to get "forgotten" books, etc.

Administrators don't like kids in the halls even with passes. It looks bad for the new teacher-- conned again!

Last year I had several girls trying to con me with "girl problems" to go to the rest room. One even waved a Tampon in my face to convince me. I knew full well that this was to be another cell phone break. So I came up with this idea which has all but eliminated requests for the bathroom:

EMERGENCY POTTY PASS

Name _____ Date _____
Period _____

I agree to come in at 12:00 noon for ten minutes to make up the lost class time.

I understand that Boom will not enter my last grade until I make up my time.

Signature _____

THIS REALLY WORKS! When I hand the

emergency students the above to sign, they hand it back and say, "It's not worth it".

Never go over exams in class! The rookie thinks that this would be a good learning experience. WRONG! The kids don't give a darn about going over the thing, they only want to argue about points and waste a period giving you a bad time. You will lose the class since the others don't care about the person who is currently giving you the bad time and will start private conversations.

Never try to justify anything such as, "Why do I need this dumb class, I'm not going to be a ..."

Just tell 'em to get busy or lie down on the counselor's couch and check out. Again, they're just trying to egg you on. Tell them what to do, don't try to justify it.

Never discuss an individual student's grades or exam complaints IN CLASS or BETWEEN periods! You lose the rest of the class while this is happening or your precious between-class time is lost.

Your standard command should be, "See me after school". You will find that only the most serious student will give up his OWN time to argue about anything. This will eliminate 95% of the arguments about grades or exam point squeezing attempts.

Never return papers before the LAST MINUTE of the

class period! If you return them at the beginning or during class, the kids' attention will be spent on searching for points to argue about and comparing their papers with others' to see if you were inconsistent in grading. "Why didn't you take off points on her answer?"

Hand them back as they are leaving so that they don't have time to check them out. Remember, "See me after school if you have questions or complaints."

Never tolerate anyone getting out of his seat while you are lecturing or showing a video. Some will get up and go to the pencil sharpener or to the waste basket. These interruptions are a nuisance.

Never argue with the kids. They know that adults are out-of-date, irrelevant, stupid ignoramuses, so just laugh and continue. They love to waste as much class time as they can by arguing, and you will not convince them of anything anyhow.

Never allow students to "go to their lockers" to get something they "forgot". Like the potty calls, it's just an excuse to take a walk.

If they didn't bring any of the required materials, give them an appropriate punishment but don't let them go get them. Be sure to let them know the punishments in advance. You must be consistent with everyone. Have this on your course information sheet.

Always start the class ON TIME! The kids should know that when the bell rings class starts! If you mess around or talk to individuals so that there is not a regular starting moment, the kids will be doing their own visiting and it's hard to get them started.

Assign a Daily Bonus, a worth while two or three minute review quiz to occupy them while you take roll and do the other administrative crapola. This can be on a half-sheet of paper and quickly graded. You want them ON TASK when that bell rings.

Hand out a Course Information Sheet on the first day, go over it once, and tell them that THEY are responsible for its rules and policies. {HYPERLINK "<http://boomeria.org/cheminfo.html>"} When a problem comes up concerning policies for your class, it will be in writing! Some teachers make the kids sign a copy which they keep on file.

Have a time-limit policy for make-up work where it must be done quickly, like within a day or two. Otherwise you will get stuck grading stacks of papers many centimeters tall at the end of the grading period while you are swamped with grade preparations.

Allow no make-ups for unexcused absences! Watch out for this trick, "Boom, I DID this assignment, here it is in the return basket, you forgot to grade it." Yeah, it just got stuck there good and late and, no doubt, copied from someone else's work. Rubber stamping

(with your own unique stamp) all the papers will solve this problem.

Be strict about tardies. Demand promptness.

Prepare your seating charts IN ADVANCE. When the kids walk in, TELL them where they are to sit.. Never let them choose their own seats. This gives you talking and cheating groups. (I haven't had a problem letting them choose their own lab partners, but I assign their lecture seats. Talking is not a problem in labs and they don't take tests at their lab stations).

Don't tolerate wise cracks. Funny as some are, they multiply until you lose the class.

Never get mad. For most problems, just laughing will ease the tension and will eliminate hard feelings.

"Heh, Heh, Mike, consider this detention a blessing in disguise, ha, ha, think of how much homework you'll get done..."

"Oh, Bertha, it's your second cut, heh, heh, well I understand that Saturday School is the breakfast club where you'll meet new friends...har, har."

Be firm but fair. They can't complain about that.

Science teachers really have it made because we have so many activities to "entertain" the kids. They love demos and labs. Good videos are available, too.

You should make comments during the showing to "keep it alive" and part of your teaching. Do not tolerate any sleeping during the videos.

When a kid asks, "When do we get out of here?" you respond, "WRONG! It's, "When MUST we leave?"

Your attitude is most important! Be positive and firm. Have a good time.

Laugh off as much as possible. Be nutty! A successful teacher is an entertainer, not a dull, ultra serious lecturer. Much learning takes place when all are having fun.

For your own sanity, you will need to learn FAST the true position of education in the school system. It isn't right, but what is in the past ten thousand years? Accept this and life will be much more pleasant for you!

The typical American school philosophy can be **summed up as this:**

"THERE WILL BE CLASSES IF AND ONLY IF THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO DO."

Your class room teaching will be the lowest consideration in the system. Endless interruptions and kids excused from classes.

The NEA Journal said it right,

"We cannot teach an empty desk."

And now we are being harassed into "Raising Our Scores" on the new exams. Endless meetings and workshops are directing us teachers to... "Whip, whip, get those scores higher!"

Here is a starting list of activities that are more important than the class room (and furthermore you will be required to give make up work for those who miss your classes for these events):

Athletics events-- It would never even be considered to have them not conflict with classes. Endless "Early Outs" rip kids out of your classes. Sometimes they miss even two full days of school to attend a far away event. Cheerleader conferences far away, too.

Field trips for other teachers-- For example, a Language class's visit to a theme restaurant could never be done after school, in the evening, or on a weekend. Sometimes they even miss a week or more of school to visit a foreign country.

And a week out to visit the Capital. Then there is a week out to be a camp counselor.

Rallies, Counseling appointments, Picture taking, Picture re-takes, Class meetings, Club meetings, Leadership Camp, Kid Day, Cheerleader practice, Cheerleader try-outs, College rep meetings, Military Info meetings, Camp counseling, and it goes on and

on!

And, of course, there are family vacations. The schools call these, "Independent Study" so they can collect ADA for them. Yeah, the kids are studying on a Hawaiian beach!

All these events are worthwhile. This is not the argument, it's that they are scheduled on Class Time!

Just accept it, it's the main part of education!

Even after all these years, The Boom still loves teaching and will retire when his corpse falls onto the demo table.

Not the corpse but bad ankles forced an early retirement after 56 years!

Good Luck, Have Fun!
Teaching is Great!