

First CLASS

A resource for new teachers in New York City

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Dear New Teacher,

We are excited to bring you this special edition of *First Class*. A majority of this issue is dedicated to sharing the results of the **Six-Week New Teacher Survey** that nearly 1,000 of you completed. [Take a look](#) at what you and your colleagues shared with us as you embarked on the second month of school. You'll notice that your feedback shaped all of the content in this month's issue of *First Class*. We always strive to share resources that are in direct response to your feedback, requests, and questions.

In that spirit, please take a few minutes to explore this month's issue and [let us know what you think](#). We are eager to have your voices and opinions shape the content of future editions.

We wish you a relaxing and rejuvenating Winter Break. See you in 2016!

Sincerely,

The *First Class* Team
NewTeacherSupport@schools.nyc.gov



Classroom Culture and Management

You Requested: Behavior Management Resources

How do I support my students' positive behavior?

On the Six-Week Survey, one new teacher told us that "**Most new teachers know *what* behavior management is but *how* it is performed with students is unclear**" (K-8 teacher, Manhattan). More than 600 additional respondents had similar requests for positive behavior tools and tips. Here are a handful of great behavior management resources that will explain the "how to" of effective behavior management.



- DOE resources on [how to support positive behavior for students with disabilities](#)

- The [Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports \(PBIS\)](#) site offers resources specific to different types of behavior
 - For example: learn how to [create a Behavior Intervention Plan \(BIP\)](#) for your students. Here is a [template](#) to do so.
- Here are three books on classroom management recommended by DOE experts:
 - [Conscious Classroom Management](#) by Rick Smith
 - [Positive Discipline in the Classroom](#) by Jane Nelson and Lynn Lott
 - [Reluctant Disciplinarian](#) by (former NYC teacher) Gary Rubinstein

Teaching Tip: It's never too late to make adjustments to how you manage your classroom!

Mentoring and Virtual Support

You Requested: Increased Access to Mentors

What is virtual mentoring?



We heard from so many of you about the types of support you receive from your assigned mentor. According to your responses, the **top two ways mentors support new teachers** are: 1) guiding mentees to appropriate resources for their students and 2) being available for other (non-instructional) issues mentees bring up.

Did you know that you can also access **virtual mentoring support*** from an experienced DOE mentor [via email](#)? Reach out anytime for instructional support, management tips, or other questions you may have.

*Please note: Virtual mentoring is not entered into the Mentor Tracking System (MTS).

Time Management and Organization

You Requested: How to Plan Effectively *and* Efficiently

How can I speed up the planning process without compromising the quality of my plans?



Across all grade levels and content areas, survey respondents reported that one of the most stressful aspects of teaching is finding time to **create rigorous yet engaging lesson plans**. Check out the resources and ideas below; each is designed to support teachers to plan effectively, yet efficiently.

- **Find a perfect essential question in seconds.** [This Wiggins and McTighe article](#) has examples of essential questions in every content area, including the arts and foreign languages. Essential questions are great ways to frame units and individual lessons.
- **Check your plans for rigor in a flash.** Analyze student tasks using Hess' [Reading and Writing Cognitive Rigor Matrix](#) to ensure that students are engaging in literacy activities at varying levels of complexity throughout a unit and/or lesson.
 - Additional rigor resources:
 - [Learn how the DOE defines "rigor"](#)
 - [Math and Science Cognitive Rigor Matrix](#)
- **Approach lesson planning with a time-saving strategy.** Instead of planning for just the upcoming week, spend one weekend planning for the week ahead *and* the week after that. Afterwards, you'll always be ahead on your plans. You'll have more time to prepare materials, revise your lessons, and reflect on your instructional strategies in advance. Plus, you'll always know what's ahead for your students.

Content and Curriculum

You Requested: How to Deliver Instruction That Is Accessible to All Learners

How do I optimize instruction for my English Language Learners?



Eight out of 10 new teachers indicated that **giving diverse learners multiple access points into lesson content** was their top instructional priority. English Language Learners (ELLs) are a sub-population of diverse learners that are present in nearly every NYC classroom and speak over 180 languages at home. As a teacher of ELLs, you may find yourself "GPS'ing" instruction (telling students-step-by-step-how to solve a particular problem, essentially acting like a GPS device that gives instructions for getting from point A to point B) instead of finding opportunities for students to problem solve on their own. Wondering what more effective and culturally appropriate ELLs instruction looks like in action?

- **All teachers:** this [list of resources](#) from the DOE's Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS) is a helpful starting point for all of your ELL instructional needs.
- **Math teachers:** Here are [eight strategies for ELLs math instruction](#) that are more rigorous than GPS'ing and [an upcoming opportunity for seventh-twelfth grade teachers](#) to learn more about best practices in math instruction for ELLs.
- **English Language Arts teachers:** DELLSS recommends using [this U.S. Department of Education comprehensive guide](#) as a reference for best practices for literacy instruction.

HR Nuts and Bolts

You Requested: More Clarification Around HR Policies and Procedures



Where can I find answers to my questions about filing taxes?

Many new teachers had **questions about the DOE's human resources (HR) policies and procedures**. As we approach the end of 2015, some of those questions are related to preparing for the upcoming tax season. To support new teachers with the tax filing process, HR Connect compiled [this great tax filing FAQ sheet](#). Do you find it helpful? Let us know by taking the [First Class Reader Survey](#).

Words of Wisdom from an Experienced Teacher

You Requested: How To Support Students' Personal Development and Growth

How do I teach my students "soft skills" such as self-regulation, better work habits, and persistence?



Marissa Bailey is an experienced school counselor at Soundview Academy for Culture and Scholarship, a Bronx middle school. She leads social-emotional learning efforts at her school and in small professional learning groups across the DOE. Marissa knows that **there are some skills that traditional textbooks and lessons**

simply don't teach kids. Below are some key resources for new teachers to support their students' academic *and* personal development. She writes:

The DOE identified these [five academic and personal behaviors](#) as qualities that support students' resiliency and college/career readiness. How does your school help students develop these skills? Many schools address these behaviors through advisory, restorative justice, peer mediation, student-led conferences, or other holistic programs. You can also address academic and personal behaviors in your classroom:

- Check out this [growth mindset lesson](#) that introduces students to the idea that their intelligence isn't fixed and that through effort their minds can grow.
- Explore more information and tools [here](#) (scroll down to see the breadth of resources available).

Teaching Tip: Wondering how teaching academic and personal behaviors fits into the DOE's vision for excellent instruction? Take a look at this "[crosswalk](#)" and notice how frequently they reinforce each other.

Topics of Interest to New Teachers

Microgrant For Students

- Help your students use their talents to benefit their communities this holiday season and beyond. Students 18 and under can [apply for a microgrant](#) from the Karma for Cara Foundation to fund a service project of their own design. Read more about past microgrant recipients [here](#).

Meet Other New Teachers

- **Almost 60% of survey respondents expressed interest in participating in a New Teacher Affinity Group.** If you haven't already done so, click [here](#) to learn about this great opportunity to meet other new teachers and sign up for more information.

Now that you've read this edition of *First Class*, we'd love to hear your thoughts!

Please take a minute to [share your feedback with us](#) by completing a brief four-question survey.