# First CLASS

A resource for new teachers in New York City

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NYC Department of Education

EQUITY & EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

## Dear New Teacher,

Welcome to *First Class*, a digital publication designed for teachers new to the New York City Department of Education (DOE). This monthly newsletter spotlights tools, resources, videos, and guides around hot topics such as classroom culture, lesson design, and parent engagement. In each issue, we hope you find something relevant and, most importantly, immediately useful. We are committed to helping you not just survive but thrive during your first year.

The green box to the left contains hyperlinks to each section of *First Class*. Every month, we answer common questions and provide you with tools in each of these areas. You can count on *First Class* for a rich variety of resources and opportunities to support new teachers across all content areas and grade levels.

The *First Class* website features additional resources for readers. Bookmark the webpage and return to it throughout the school year for the latest tips for new teachers.

After you have explored the resources below, let us know what you think in this brief (just four questions!) reader survey. We are eager to have your voices and opinions shape the content of future editions.

Sincerely,

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

# Classroom Culture and Management

*Reader tip: this section highlights resources that will help you create a supportive classroom environment.*

### Seamless starts, effortless ends

***How do I establish routines that help my class start and end smoothly?***

Starting and ending class are two points in a lesson that can be chaotic in the life of a new teacher. Rick Smith, author of *Conscious Classroom Management* (2004), has a few easy-to-implement ideas for how to make these transitions as efficient and smooth as possible.

For more examples of how to build a positive classroom culture in the fall, and throughout the year, visit TeachingChannel.com's page of suggestions for new teachers.

# Time Management and Organization

*Reader tip: this section highlights resources to help you effectively manage and organize your time.*

## Reimagining your "to do" list

***How can I restructure my "to do" list to better manage my time?***

Here is a strategy to help you visualize all your tasks and help you focus on the most urgent items right away.

**1.** Write out each task you need to accomplish on a separate sticky note. Tasks can include work and non-work related responsibilities.
**2.** Using a large piece of paper draw four quadrants and label them according to the model below:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Important and Time-Sensitive** (Directly impacts student achievement and professional success) | **Important and Not Time-Sensitive** (Ongoing personal and professional commitments) |
| **Not Important and Time-Sensitive** (Non-student related professional obligations, personal deadlines) | **Not Important and Not Time-Sensitive** (Professional and personal "wish list") |

**3.** Distribute your sticky notes in the appropriate quadrants.
**4.** Complete tasks in the green quadrant first. Then, analyze the tasks in the yellow quadrants to determine what you should prioritize next given limited time and energy. Finally, address the tasks in the red quadrant once you have the bandwidth to do so.

Tips:

- While time-sensitive tasks are often deadline-driven, the importance of tasks is subject to variation based on your own priorities.
- Looking for an example? Click here for a picture of a teacher's reimagined "to do" list.

# Content and Curriculum

*Reader tip: this section features useful resources for different grade levels and content areas.*

## Featured resource of the month

***WeTeachNYC: DOE's resource library***

WeTeachNYC is an online space where DOE educators can search a large database for instructional resources across content areas, explore online learning

opportunities, and connect with other NYC educators. You can find grade- and subject-specific lesson resources, instructional guides, videos of best practices, unit-planning templates, and more. Log in using your schools.nyc.gov email address and password. Click here for more information on using WeTeachNYC (log in not required).

# Words of Wisdom from an Experienced Teacher

*Reader tip: this section spotlights experienced DOE teachers who are eager to share their teaching tips with you.*

## It's only a matter of time

***How do I keep my students on task during independent or group work?***

Emily Koch is an experienced middle school teacher at West Side Collaborative in Manhattan. Watch how she uses a timer to keep her students accountable to finishing tasks in this one-minute video.

You can easily implement timers in grades pre-K-12 classrooms. Use them to set parameters around work time, transitions, presentations, and other common classroom events. Want to try using a timer in your classroom? You can use a hand-held timer like Emily's or try projecting one of these free timer websites on your wall or Smartboard so students can manage their time more effectively:

- Online-Stopwatch.com offers a variety of timer options
- Classtools.net lets you select a custom timer or use a soundtrack
- My.Online-eggtimer.com runs three timers at once

# Mentoring and Virtual Support

*Reader tip: this section offers tools to help you foster a strong working relationship with your school-based mentor.*

## Forming a productive relationship with your mentor

***What does a successful mentor-new teacher relationship look like?***

A school-based mentor is one of the best supports available to new teachers. To help your relationship with your mentor reach its full productive potential and receive support tailored to your specific needs, try these two strategies:

1. Review this helpful description of mentor-new teacher roles (created by the DOE's Office of Leadership).
2. Take a few minutes to complete a quick new teacher self-evaluation and share the results with your mentor at your next meeting. It will give your mentor valuable insight into your goals for this year.

# New Employee Nuts and Bolts

*Reader tip: this section addresses frequently asked new employee questions.*

## New employee questions

***Where can I get my human resources (HR) questions answered?***

Here are four sources of information for your HR questions:

1. HR Connect, the DOE's Human Resources office, created a brochure for new hires that aims to address the most frequently asked questions in one place. Still have unanswered questions? Give them a call at (718)-935-4000.
2. The Checklist for New Hires can help you track all actions you need to take as a new DOE employee.
3. The HR Walk-In Center, located at 65 Court Street in Brooklyn, offers an array of services for DOE employees such as: fingerprinting, employee IDs, New York State Education certification inquiries, and salary step and differential inquiries.
4. Find more helpful information by browsing the UFT's list of common new teacher questions and answers.

# Extra, Extra!

*Reader tip: this section highlights bonus resources and information for readers featured on the* First Class *website.*

**This month on the *First Class* website:**

- Materials and presentations from New Teacher Week 2016
- A blog post about what experienced teachers know now that they wish they'd known when they started
- An excellent database of teacher resources from *The New York Times*

Visit the *First Class* website

**Now that you've read *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.**

**Take survey**