

Dear New Teacher,

First Class Sections

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New teachers were in the spotlight during Spring Recess! The [Manhattan Field Support Center](#) hosted a New Teacher Symposium on April 27 at the Spruce Street School. Over 50 first-year teachers gathered to celebrate, connect, and reflect on their year in a DOE classroom. NYC Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña stopped by to say hello and share memorable stories from her own first year. Here are a couple of snapshots from the event:



Yvette Heyliger, drama teacher at P.S. 188 and P.S. 140, with Chancellor Fariña



Manhattan teachers reflect on their pre-service preparation experiences prior to starting in the classroom

These almost-second-year-teachers, or ASYTs (pronounced "assets") were extremely thoughtful about the specific resources, tools, and opportunities that contributed to their success during their first year thus far. In this issue of *First Class*, you'll find strategies and tips for all ASYTs to continue their success and growth through the end of this year, during year two, and beyond.

Please take a few moments to explore the resources in this issue and [let us know what you think](#) in this short (only four questions!) reader survey. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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

Classroom Culture and Management

The 2 x 10 Strategy

Is it too late in the year for me to form positive relationships with my students who pose challenges in the classroom?



It is *never* too late to change your teaching practice! Positive teacher-student relationships draw students into the process of learning and promote their desire to succeed. Try this two-minute-a-day strategy to see if you can transform your relationships with students who pose challenges before the end of the school year: spend two minutes a day for 10 days in a row having a personal conversation with a student. Talk about whatever topic interests him or her: music, sports, cars, family life, Legos, and so on, but steer away from topics like discipline and academics. Education researcher [Raymond Wlodkowski](#) found this simple strategy to have [extraordinary results](#) for both the student and his or her classmates. Why does it work? These two-minute conversations are a catalyst for trust-building, and mutual trust leads to more productive and effective relationships in the classroom.

Time Management and Organization

The (10 + 2) x 5 Strategy

How can I avoid procrastination?



Like in the previous section, we have a mathematical solution to a problem faced by many educators. Here is a way to move a project or entire To Do list forward in just an hour. All you need is your To Do list and a timer.

- 10: Work non-stop for exactly 10 minutes with single-minded focus on moving toward completion on a single task.
- 2: After 10 minutes of dedicated work, take a two-minute break to do whatever you want. When the two minutes are up, it's back to work on the task you were just doing *or* the next task on your list.
- 5: Repeat this process five times for a total of 60 minutes. This completes the formula: (10 minutes working time + 2 minutes break time) x 5 times = one hour.

To maximize your success with this strategy, keep the following recommendations in mind:

- You do not need to finish your task or your project in 10 minutes; you just need to move it forward.
- If you finish a satisfying amount of work in fewer than 10 minutes, stop and go right to your two-minute break before starting another 10-minute dash.
- Do not skip your breaks.

What to expect: you'll blaze through an hour and will find yourself looking forward to both the breaking *and* working parts of the cycle.

Source: [Merlin Mann](#), creator of [43Folders.com](#). Link available [here](#).

Content and Curriculum

Breaking down what it means to do a "close read"

How can I teach my students to annotate texts in a way that supports their comprehension?



Annotations can deepen comprehension during and after a close read of a text. It is also a skill that is addressed across multiple grade levels in the [NYC Writing Scope and Sequence](#). Here are some resources to teach students to be active thinkers and writers while they read:

- There are two key reasons why readers annotate texts:
 1. Readers annotate to understand and learn from the text *while reading*. [This article](#) from the National Council of Teachers of English's *English Journal* (2007) gives educators helpful strategies for how to teach students to annotate effectively. Here is a related [student-facing guide](#) about what and when to annotate while reading.
 2. Readers annotate to help them use the text *after reading it*. Annotations serve as a trail of "literary breadcrumbs" in a text. Successful readers revisit their annotation to remember what a text was about and what they were thinking while they were reading.
- Following a close reading assignment, students often encounter writing tasks that ask them to "analyze," "evaluate," "interpret," or demonstrate other related types of understanding. Here is a [student-friendly overview](#) of those essential academic vocabulary words and a more detailed [teacher edition](#) to help break down the meaning of each verb.

Words of Wisdom from an Experienced Teacher

Celebrating tools that work

What tools do experienced educators swear by?

The Gates Foundation recently featured DOE Teacher, Starr Sackstein, celebrating a tool she loves to use with her high school students. Starr, an English teacher, works at World Journalism Preparatory School in Queens. [Watch the video](#) to see how Starr uses [Voxer](#) to give voice feedback on student work, support collaboration during student-directed group projects, and connect with other educators across the world.



Mentoring and Virtual Support

Reflecting on the year with your mentor

What should my mentor and I focus on as the end of the year approaches?



According to education researcher [Ellen Moir's article \(1990\)](#), May is when new teachers enter the "[reflection phase](#)" of the year. To facilitate the important process of pausing to reflect, the DOE's Office of Leadership recommends that mentors assist first-year teachers in gathering artifacts that demonstrate their professional growth over the course of the year and examining them together. Some examples of quality artifacts might include:

- Your lesson and unit plans from both the beginning of the year and the end of the year
- Notes from formal or informal observations from both the beginning and the end of the year

- Records of parent-teacher conversations (such as phone calls, emails, and letters home)
- Video clips of classroom instruction referencing a specific point in time or throughout the year
- Student assessment data throughout the year

Some questions you and your mentor can explore together are:

- Where in this artifact(s) do we see specific examples of my growth in planning, assessing, and thinking about how students best learned?
- What do we feel most contributed to my growth?
- Where do we see opportunities to grow next year? What do I want to work on next?

This process is certain to spark a rich conversation between you and your mentor about what you accomplished this year and where you would like to focus your efforts in your second year.

HR Nuts and Bolts

Apply to be a summer school teacher

What types of job opportunities are available over the summer for DOE teachers?



Interested in working this summer? Consider a position with the DOE's [Summer School Instructional Program](#). You can view posted positions [here](#), then [register to apply](#) by May 27. Want more information about the application process? Browse the [application guide](#) or speak with a mentor, colleague, or school leader about summer opportunities.

For other summer positions within the DOE, check the [Per Session Vacancy Circular](#) and [Professional Development Opportunities](#) pages for frequent postings and updates.

Topics of Interest to New Teachers

New Teacher Survey

You may recall taking a Six-Week New Teacher Survey in the fall; data from the survey was shared in the [December issue](#) of *First Class*. As the school year draws to a close, the DOE is interested in hearing from new teachers again. Data from this end-of-year survey will be used to evaluate and strengthen the quality of mentoring, professional development opportunities, school-based supports, and other important components that contribute to early career educators' success. Keep your eyes on your inbox for an invitation to participate in the survey and share your thoughts on your first year in the classroom. Survey links will be sent to all new DOE teachers, and we look forward to sharing findings in our June issue of *First Class*.

New on the DOE Website: New Teacher Support

The redesigned [Teacher Page](#) on the DOE website now features a [New Teacher Support channel](#). Check out the resources specifically for new teachers, including a page dedicated to [First Class](#). The [Professional Learning](#) page is another great hub of opportunities for all DOE teachers.

WeTeachNYC

As we mentioned in our last issue, [WeTeachNYC](#) is a new 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. Log in using your schools.nyc.gov email address and password.

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.