



The *New*

Teacher's Guide to *Success*

A personalized planning guide
for beginning teachers

Matthew Haldeman

Organization

Assessment

Behavior Management

Procedures & Routines

Time Management

Homework

and more!

Table of Contents

Introduction

Research

How to Use This Book

Chapter 1: Teaching Style

Chapter 2: Room Environment

Room Setup

Seating Arrangements

Chapter 3: Procedures and Routines

Chapter 4: Behavior Management

Rules

Consequences

Rewards

Chapter 5: Time Management

Planning and Prioritizing

Weekly Schedule

Chapter 6: Parent Communication

Chapter 7: Homework

Chapter 8: Assessment

Tests and Quizzes

Grading

Chapter 9: Organization

Supplies

Chapter 10: The First Days

Sample Schedule

More to Consider

Conclusion

References Cited

Introduction

I know what you're thinking: "Wait a minute! I'm not in school anymore. I'm done with worksheets, workbooks, tests, and quizzes. I'm the teacher now!"

Well, the truth is that being a teacher requires many times the preparation of being a student. You need to be well prepared to be successful.

I still remember my first day as a teacher. I had spent over \$200 buying supplies I was sure I would need. I had taken classes on literacy instruction and classroom management. I had read through the districtwide standards and the teacher's edition of all my textbooks. I had even memorized the names of all my students. I was sure I was prepared.

I was completely wrong.

There were literally dozens of decisions that I had not even thought about. It had not crossed my mind where I would put the pencil sharpener, how far apart I wanted the desks to be, or what I would do if a student got angry and hit someone. I spent the rest of the school year making decisions that I should have thought about before the first day had even started.

The purpose of this planning guide is to make sure you are as prepared as possible when that first day comes. No matter how well prepared you think you are, there are probably some questions in this book you have not thought about. These are the types of issues that are learned through experience. I have pulled together a list of my experiences and the decisions I have been faced with as a teacher. I have also received input from many other excellent teachers. Together, this list of decisions and experiences formed the basis for this book. It is not expected that you should have all the answers right away; these decisions require thought and consideration.

This book is exactly what it claims to be: a planning guide. It is designed so you can write out the answers to the questions right here in the book. This may seem like a lot of work, but as any successful teacher will tell you, planning is most definitely worth the time it takes. Sooner or later, you will have to make a decision about each of the questions in this book. It is far better to start thinking about these issues now than to wait until the school year has already begun.

Ask a veteran teacher for advice on classroom management and you will get an earful. Experienced teachers often have good advice for rookies, but it may not always work. I call it the "You just gotta..." syndrome. Here are some of my favorites:

"You just gotta mean business."

"You just gotta show them who's boss."

"You just gotta wait them out."

"You just gotta set up routines."

"You just gotta call their parents."

What is problematic about this type of advice is that it makes teaching sound easier than it is. And, you will need to make decisions based on what you are comfortable with and what works for you. As a new teacher, I spent far too much time searching for that one

answer that would solve everything. I treated teaching as if it were a mathematics problem that had one simple solution.

Of course, the more I taught, the more experience and confidence I gained. I soon realized how complex the job of being a teacher actually was. You need to have a variety of tools and tricks at your disposal for different situations. It takes time and patience to learn these strategies for success. It is not something you can learn to do in a weekend.

What used to bother me was that there were some teachers who never seemed to have any problems with their classes. If their methods worked for them, I wondered, why couldn't they work for me? I eventually learned that while it helps to use specific ideas you get from other teachers, it is usually not a good idea to copy them exactly. I learned to adapt these ideas to my specific classroom situation in order for them to work for my students.

What I've learned from watching other teachers and reading books on education is this: there is definitely more than one way to be successful at teaching. And thus, *The New Teacher's Guide to Success*, even though it is written for new teachers, will have almost no advice on how to teach. What I provide is a series of ideas to consider regarding the decisions you will have to make, along with the pros and cons of each choice. The rest is up to you. Taking time to thoroughly think about these situations will help you be more prepared for your first day of class and will help you increase your confidence. When your students see that you are confident, prepared, and organized, they will be more likely to respect your authority.

I am not saying that advice is overrated or that you cannot learn about teaching from reading a book or listening to someone. There are many excellent speakers and writers offering sound advice. What I *am* saying is that you cannot rely solely on what other people tell you. At some point, you will have to make your own decisions.

Just how complicated an endeavor is teaching? The quote by Donald D. Quinn on [page 9](#) may give you some idea. There are so many decisions you must make each day. This book helps you consider your approach to some of these decisions ahead of time so that you'll be ready with a plan when the time comes.

You could, of course, just read the book and think about the questions it presents. This may seem like an enticing suggestion, especially as your summer winds down and you begin to feel pressed for time. I strongly urge you not to do this. It is highly unlikely that you will remember everything in this book without taking time to write down your ideas.

When you really think about it, you could probably finish this book in a day. That is one day over the summer that will save you many hours of decision making, when you won't have the time during the school year. During the school day, you will need to make choices quickly and confidently. Taking the time to think ahead now will help give you the confidence to trust in yourself and know that you are making good choices that work for you and your students.

When you are done with this book, don't put it away. Take it to school with you and use it as a reference book. Look through it often to remind yourself of your plans, and assess them as necessary.

It is likely that you will make changes along the way, but you will have a solid foundation to give you confidence and to be prepared to make decisions when you are faced with them.

Students trust and respond to teachers who are consistent. They respond well to routines and schedules if you establish them from the beginning. If you keep this book around, it will help ensure that you are following through with all the things you set out to do. If you need to make a change in plans along the way, then you should. You will see over time that flexibility is also very important as a teacher. With this book in hand, you will have a framework to help guide your decision-making process.

Remember: You are not doing any more work than you would have otherwise—you are just doing it before the school year starts.

“If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some who didn’t want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor or lawyer or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher’s job.”

—Donald D. Quinn

Research

Across America, over 100,000 new teachers enter classrooms each fall. Many of these new teachers are not prepared to handle the challenges ahead. Of the new teachers that enter U.S. schools each year, most vary in their skills and experience. They also vary greatly in the amount of formal preparation they have had in anticipation of the serious responsibility of teaching. Why is it that so few of these teachers have received either the proper preparation or the thorough education necessary to be successful in the classroom? The following are some potential explanations for this incongruity: As a society, it often appears that we do not invest seriously in our children’s education, especially those of a lower socioeconomic status. For many, the typical view of teaching is simplistic, conceived of as the teacher transmitting information to the student. Some may not understand the careful training required for successful teaching; others believe that there is not much to teaching beyond knowing the subject matter. Some licensing systems have entry requirements that lack serious standards, and educators have only recently agreed upon the necessary knowledge teachers should have before entering the classroom, as well as how that knowledge should be acquired (Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden 2007).

As the above reasons would indicate, teacher preparation is an extremely relevant topic in the field of education today. *The Secretary’s Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality* (U.S. Department of Education 2006) asserts that teacher quality is vital for student achievement, and quality seems directly proportional to adequate teacher preparation. During the 2003–04 school year, U.S. teacher preparation programs produced record numbers of teachers. More teachers are now required to complete preparation programs

and pass standardized assessments.

What does research say about the benefits of teacher preparation? In “What Makes an Effective Teacher?,” Ullik Rouk states that teacher preparation helps develop the knowledge and skill needed in the classroom. In addition, well-prepared teachers are more likely to continue teaching, as well as produce higher student achievement. The research shows that well-prepared teachers outperform those who are not; more specifically, they are able to diagnose a variety of learning needs, develop a positive classroom environment where students can thrive, and better apply strategies that promote success (1980).

This book, *The New Teacher’s Guide to Success*, is designed to provide the tools necessary to prepare teachers for their first year in the classroom. It contains 10 chapters, each of which is designed to address a specific area of teaching that is pertinent for beginning teachers. These topics include teaching style, room environment, procedures and routines, behavior management, time management, parent communication, homework, assessment, organization, and the first days of class. *The New Teacher’s Guide to Success* is suited for incoming teachers of all backgrounds and skill levels. Some teachers come prepared in their respective content areas but are unfamiliar with the other important aspects of teaching, such as curriculum, classroom management, and policies (Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden 2007). This book asks prospective teachers to consider the facets of teaching outside their content areas so that they will be better acquainted with the business of *how* to teach, not simply *what* to teach.

In order to have a better sense of how to address the issues a first-time teacher will encounter, it helps to have a vision. A curricular vision involves teachers’ ideas about where they are going and how they are going to get there—and more importantly, how to get students there. A solid vision often connects to important values and concrete practices that will help teachers develop their teaching styles and assess their students’ learning (Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden 2007). *The New Teacher’s Guide to Success* is structured like a workbook so that beginning teachers can inquire about and reflect on their desired teaching experiences, thus creating unique visions of their own—those that will likely result in more positive classroom environments and increased student success.

How to Use This Book

Read through each chapter of the planning guide, starting at the beginning. This book is organized in a logical order to help you prepare for your first days of school. As you read each chapter, stop and think about how each strategy applies to you and your upcoming teaching situation. Each chapter asks you to reflect upon a specific aspect of your teaching and then take an active role in answering the questions for yourself. This method of inquiry will assist you in developing your teaching skills and strategies. Rather than simply taking in information, you have the opportunity to actively create your vision for teaching by answering the questions.

After you complete the book, go back and review each chapter, along with your answers to the questions. Decide whether you should change any answers now that you have had a chance to thoroughly think about the different strategies and situations.

After the school year starts, go back once again and review your answers. Use this

book as a reference guide during the year to remind yourself of the goals you set and the decisions you made about your classroom. Add notes about what is working for you, what you've had to change or modify, and what you might do differently next year.

Teaching Style

There is certainly more than one way to be a good teacher. Different teachers have different teaching styles; there is no single right way to teach. The key is finding what teaching style, or combination of styles, works for you.

In the spaces below, you will have the opportunity to answer some questions about your teaching style. You will first read a description of a specific teaching style. Then you will think about how your teaching style is like the one described.

A Teacher Can Be:

The Disciplinarian—Being a disciplinarian does not mean you raise your voice or behave harshly toward students; it simply means that you have a set of consequences for every rule you have in place. The consequences could be a phone call home, a trip to the principal’s office, or a low grade. The disciplinarian gets his or her students to listen because they know that if they don’t adhere to the rules, there will be consequences.

To what extent am I like the disciplinarian?

The Caregiver—The caregiver became a teacher for one reason: to help students. If students are having problems, they know they can turn to this teacher, and they often do so even before going to their parents. This is the teacher who arrives early to tutor his or her students and stays after school to help struggling students or just to talk. This type of teacher boosts students’ self-esteem and confidence so that students feel cared about. The caregiver’s students often want to do well because they want to please their teacher, and they are able to focus on learning because their emotional needs have been met.

To what extent am I like the caregiver?

The Fun Lover—The fun lover knows how to make every lesson, including long division, boatloads of fun. This teacher writes plays, dresses up in wigs, sings songs, and does anything possible to get his or her students excited about the prospect of learning. These students may learn almost without realizing that they are learning. Even the troublemakers have so much fun that they don’t think about creating a scene.

To what extent am I like the fun lover?

The Organizer—This teacher knows where everything is at the drop of a hat, and thus it is very difficult to pull anything over on him or her. If students walk in the door and say they don’t have their homework, he or she will provide a worksheet and tell them to have it by tomorrow. If students are not paying attention in class, he or she will mark it down on a

sheet and be sure to inform their parents that afternoon (or perhaps even during lunch). Pretty soon, most kids stop trying to fool the teacher; they know it will only lead to more work.

To what extent am I like the organizer?

The Community Creator—The students in this teacher’s class know that the room is its own community with its own rules and privileges. It is a place where they feel safe and where they can act without fear of being judged. This teacher has made it clear that everyone in the classroom is working together to be successful.

To what extent am I like the community creator?

“Many things are important for good schools: curriculum...parent involvement... a clean, safe building...but of all the things that are important...nothing is as important as the teacher and what that person knows, believes, and can do.”

—Jon Saphier and Robert Gower

Setting up your room is the first thing you will have to think about as a teacher. Think about how you will teach. Do you plan to have students work in cooperative groups? Do you need space for students to sit on the floor for read-aloud time? Will you have centers? Can you move around the room? You can change your floor plan during the year, but the tone you set with your room environment at the beginning of the year is important. The room environment will change depending on what grade level you teach; for example, a kindergarten classroom will likely be set up with more activity centers, as well as more open floor space for group work and instruction.

Room Setup

Accessibility: Your classroom is a place to store books, pencils, paper, art supplies, coats, book bags, lunches, student portfolios, your personal items, and much, much more. How easy is it for you (or one of your students) to get to any of these items? You want to make this as easy as possible.

Visibility: When the school year starts, your walls will be filled with important information that you will want your students to know. Is every student in a place where he or she can see the bulletin boards, the blackboard, and you, the teacher? The easiest way to lose a student's attention is to seat him or her someplace where he or she cannot really see.

Mobility: A good teacher is constantly moving around the room to interact with students. Likewise, your students are going to have to get out of their seats for a variety of reasons: to use the restroom, to sharpen their pencils, to exit the room for a fire drill, etc. Is it easy to move around in your classroom?

Flexibility: You will probably be doing a variety of activities in your classroom, including lectures, tests, group work, and projects. Different activities require different seating arrangements. How easy will it be for you to rearrange the classroom if you need to?

Things to Consider

Will you have a classroom library? If so, where in the room will it be? How will you organize it?

Will you have computers? Where will they be? Can they be moved elsewhere if necessary?

Does your school have any requirements about things you must have in your room? If so, what are these things and where might you place them?

Some schools have very specific requirements about room setup, including the location of centers, the number and size of bulletin boards, seating arrangements, etc.

Where is the most natural place for you to stand while you are teaching? Do you feel comfortable moving around the room?

You will, of course, be moving around a lot of the time. It still makes sense, however, to have a home base to come back to from time to time. Choose a place that is close to either a blackboard or an overhead projector and also somewhere that all your students will be able to see without craning their necks.

Is there a place where students can put their book bags and coats? Is it away from a main traffic area? Is the location one that will create a visual distraction for students seated nearby? Describe this area.

Do not underestimate the mess that bags, coats, lunches, jump ropes, and basketballs can create in a classroom. If there is no closet for these things, you may want students to take the items to their own desks, as long as they don't get in the way.

Will you have a desk? Where is it located? Are you able to move it if you want to?

Carefully consider where you would place a desk so as not to interfere with the interaction between you and your students. Don't place it where it may impede your ability to walk around the room or observe class behavior; it is important to remain in close proximity to your students at all times.

Do you have a place (a closet or a file cabinet) to store the following things: personal belongings, student files/work to show parents, student work that hasn't been graded yet, additional supplies? Is there some way you can lock this space?

Where will you place your bulletin boards?

Does your school want you to have individual bulletin boards for each subject? Keep in mind that some spaces are more prominent than others. You will have to make a decision

about which bulletin boards are the most important.

Where do you plan to post your rules, consequences, and procedures (e.g., fire alarm procedure)? Why is it important for you to post written material in these locations?

If other teachers come in during the day, will they have a space that is their own? If so, where will this be? If not, how do you plan to share your work space with them?

Having a space for mobile teachers (e.g., reading specialists) will show that you value the work they are doing in your room. It shows that you view them as collaborative partners.

Does your classroom meet all fire and safety codes?

Do you plan to set up centers in your classroom? If so, how do you intend to organize these? Where will each be located?

Centers are places that students can work independently. Some teachers work rotating centers into their daily lessons, some reserve them for students who finish early, and some do not use them at all. If you are going to use them, remember that they do require a lot of space. A writing center would need paper, pencils, a place to post a writing prompt, and space for at least two students. If you are setting up activity centers for younger students (K–2), you will need to plan for the additional materials needed at such stations.

Is there a space for students who need quiet places to work or read?

This is not intended for the student who is being disruptive. Some students simply prefer some time to themselves, especially when doing a quiet activity like reading or writing. Students often like to know that there is a place in the classroom they can go if the person sitting next to them is being disruptive. This allows them to avoid confrontation on their own.


Seating Arrangements

In the traditional classroom setting, students sat in rows. Nobody really questioned it or suggested other options. Today, walking through most schools, every type of seating arrangement imaginable can be seen. You will want to find out if your school or district has guidelines on seating arrangements. On the following pages are some diagrams with the possible advantages and limitations of each arrangement.

The other important decision you have to make is what type of teaching is going to go on in your room. You cannot very well set up your room until you know what is going to be taking place inside it. Before you look at the diagrams, review the chart on the following page to see how seating arrangements are connected to teaching styles and goals for the class.

Consider these questions: Will your students be working in groups? How big will those groups be? Will you have space in the back for centers? Will you have space for anything else (e.g., a place to hold meetings, a cozy place to read)? What will you do if additional students are added to your class? Students often learn better in groups, but groups can also lead to off-task talking. You need to decide how big you want the groups to be. Ideally, you should keep your groups relatively small; however, it can be hard to keep track of too many small groups. If necessary, try it out a few different ways to see what works best for your class.

Three Types of Teaching

	Features	Arrangement	Benefits
1. Lecture	The entire class observes the teacher.	All chairs face the front of the classroom.	Note-taking is a priority. Talking is at a minimum.
2. Discussion	The entire class participates in the same activity.	Chairs are usually in a circle or an oval.	Everyone is able to see and hear one another.
3. Group	Students work in groups of 2, 3, 4, or 5.	Chairs and tables are placed in groups.	Groups are spaced apart so as not to disturb each other.

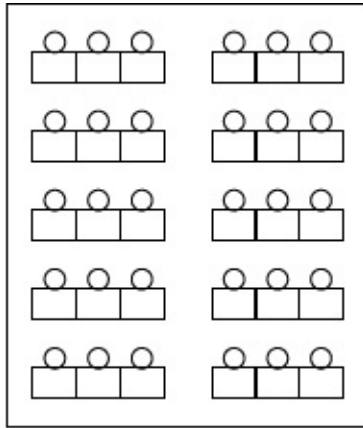
“The purpose of arranging seats is to accomplish classroom tasks.”

—Harry and Rosemary Wong

Three Types of Seating Arrangements

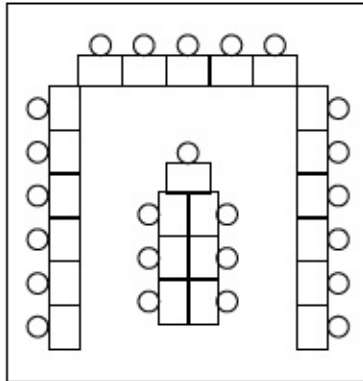
Lecture

This setup allows for a small amount of group work, but is best for a lecture-driven type of class. This setup also helps minimize talking because students are facing the front of the classroom. The walkway down the center makes it easy for the teacher to get to every student.



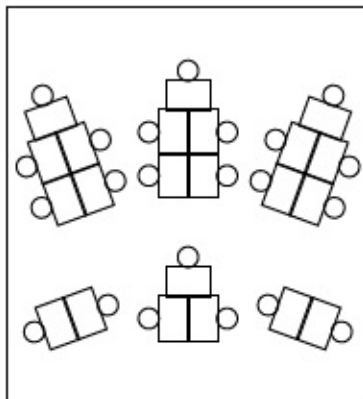
Discussion

This setup is neither group focused nor lecture focused. The advantage of this structure is that it is flexible. The teacher can work with the center group or call students up from their individual work as he or she sees fit.



Group

This setup is group focused. The number of desks per group is varied because some students work better in smaller groups. Even though the focus is on group work, none of the students has his or her back to the teacher. Note how all the desks are centered on a single point from which the teacher can speak.



What My Classroom Will Look Like

Use this space to draw what you would like your classroom to look like.





Now that your room is set up, take a moment to walk around. Ask yourself the following questions:

Can I move around the classroom with ease?	
Will all students be able to see me while I teach?	
Can every student see the bulletin boards from where he or she is sitting?	
Can every student get in and out of his or her seat easily?	
Will it be difficult to move from one activity to another?	
Is this a room my students will be comfortable in for the next nine months?	
Is this a room I will be comfortable in?	

If you can answer yes to each of these questions, then your room is ready for your students!

You've Just Finished your Free Sample

Enjoyed the preview?

Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>