

N.Spire

Motivating, Inspiring & Educating Today's New Teachers

Inspiration. Discipline. Perseverance.

Registered Provider with the NJ Department of Education Provider Registry



Portfolio of Seminar Topics

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Topics for Programs and Seminars:

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4. Teaching Strategies Acquisition
5. Back to School Night/Parent Conferences
6. General Tips for a Successful First Year Teaching
7. Strategies for Balancing Your Instructional Week

About N.Spire

N.Spire conducts short seminars for new teachers and teachers-in-training on the skills needed to have a successful first year.

Our programs help teachers start strong!

About Chris Bickel

Christopher Bickel is the owner and president of N.Spire Training. Chris has been teaching and training for over 12 years. He is currently in his eighth year teaching and has earned a Master's in Administration & Supervision from Montclair State University with a training concentration. He has a vast knowledge in adult-centered pedagogy from training multinational corporations in Singapore, Malaysia, China, & Thailand.

Chris lives in Essex County, New Jersey with his wife, Kristin, and daughter, Ava.

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Course Objectives

N.Spire's programs help the new teacher become successful in the critical first year of teaching. Our programs are designed to help you:

- ❖ Design your ideal classroom.
- ❖ Create your own classroom management plan.
- ❖ Acquire new teaching strategies to add to your teaching tool bag.
- ❖ Prepare your own overheads for back to school night.
- ❖ Plan out a week of lessons using a common sense approach to balancing your week.
- ❖ Identify your personal mission, utilize a visualization technique to possess a resourceful state of mind, and create a collage of goals to help you achieve your dreams.

Program 1: Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ Designing Your Life
- ❖ Personal Mission Beginnings
- ❖ Characteristics of Empowering Mission Statements
- ❖ Mission Statement Guidelines
- ❖ Treasure Mapping Exercise
- ❖ Persevering: Creating a Resourceful State of Mind

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance: Designing Your Life

List some influential people in your life.

From this list of influential people, select one individual who has strongly influenced your life.

What meaningful experiences have you shared?

What viewpoints or characteristics does this person possess that have influenced you?

By following and modeling this influential person's example, what can you do in your various roles to make a difference in the lives of others?

What do you really value?

Take a moment to daydream. Visualize yourself as a person with unlimited opportunities, time, health, and economic freedom. What would you do with your life?

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance: Personal Mission Beginnings

A Starting-Point Checklist

The most important principles I have recognized in my life.

Characteristics I admire and value.

My greatest moments of happiness and fulfillment.

Activities of most worth in my personal life.

Activities of most worth in my professional life.

Things I do best that have positive effects and are of most worth to others.

Without excuses, what I should really do.

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance:
Personal Mission Beginnings (cont'd)

Mission Statements

Effective mission statements should include the following elements:

Who I would like to be.

What I would like to do.

How my personal values will assist me.

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance: Characteristics of Empowering Mission Statements

After completing your personal mission statement, compare it against the checklist below.

- It represents the deepest and best within you. It is the essence of who and what you are. It represents your deep, inner self.
- It is the fulfillment of your own unique gifts. It is the expression of your unique capacity to contribute.
- It transcends your principles and contributions to a position higher than yourself.
- It addresses and integrates all four fundamental human needs and capacities. It includes the fulfillment of all dimensions: physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual.
- It is based on principles that produce quality-of-life results. Both the ends and the means are based on true-north principles.
- It deals with both vision and principle-based values. It is not enough to have values without vision - you want to be good, but you want to be good for something. On the other hand, vision without values can create imbalance. An empowering mission statement deals with both character and competence - what you want to be and what you want to do in your life.
- It deals with all significant roles in your life. It represents a lifetime balance of personal, family, work, community - whatever roles you feel are yours to fill.
- It is written to inspire you, not to impress anyone else. It communicates to you and inspires you on the most essential level.

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Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance: Mission Statement Guidelines

Consider the following when developing or reviewing your personal mission statement:

- Have I been comprehensive?
- Is it really me?
- Is it practical?
- Is it idealistic?
- Does it utilize my collective wisdom?
- Does it provide guidance and help me?
- Does it provide me with security and comfort?
- Does it inspire me?
- Does it express my vision and values?
- Is it principle-centered?

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance: Treasure Mapping

Adapted from "Take Time for Your Life" by Cheryl Richardson

Objective:

Create a collage of pictures that you select and cut out from various magazines that represent future goals that you have set for yourself. The pictures should represent professional, personal, physical, academic, and spiritual goals. You decide what areas you want to focus on for this collage.

Next to every picture, write in a goal that indicates the following:

- A. What the goal is?
- B. When will you achieve it?
- C. How will you achieve it?

Keep this collage next to your bed or in your kitchen or wherever you know you will see it daily. The pictures will help you visualize your goals and the details next to each goal will help you keep honest and on track.

This technique really works if greater discipline and goal attainment is your desire! You can do it!

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance:

Persevering: "Creating a Resourceful State of Mind"

Step 1: Close your eyes. Think back to a time when you were successful.

Step 2: Intensify that memory. What did you hear? What did you feel? Who was there with you? It is imperative that you remember this moment of success with your own eyes. YOU CAN'T BE A SPECTATOR WATCHING YOURSELF. Remember, it is *your* successful memory.

Step 3: Having recaptured your moment of success, think of one word that sums up this peak experience. This is your "cue" word.

Step 4: Sit up straight. Pull your shoulders back and take a deep breath. This is very important because at moments of peak performance we automatically breathe deeply.

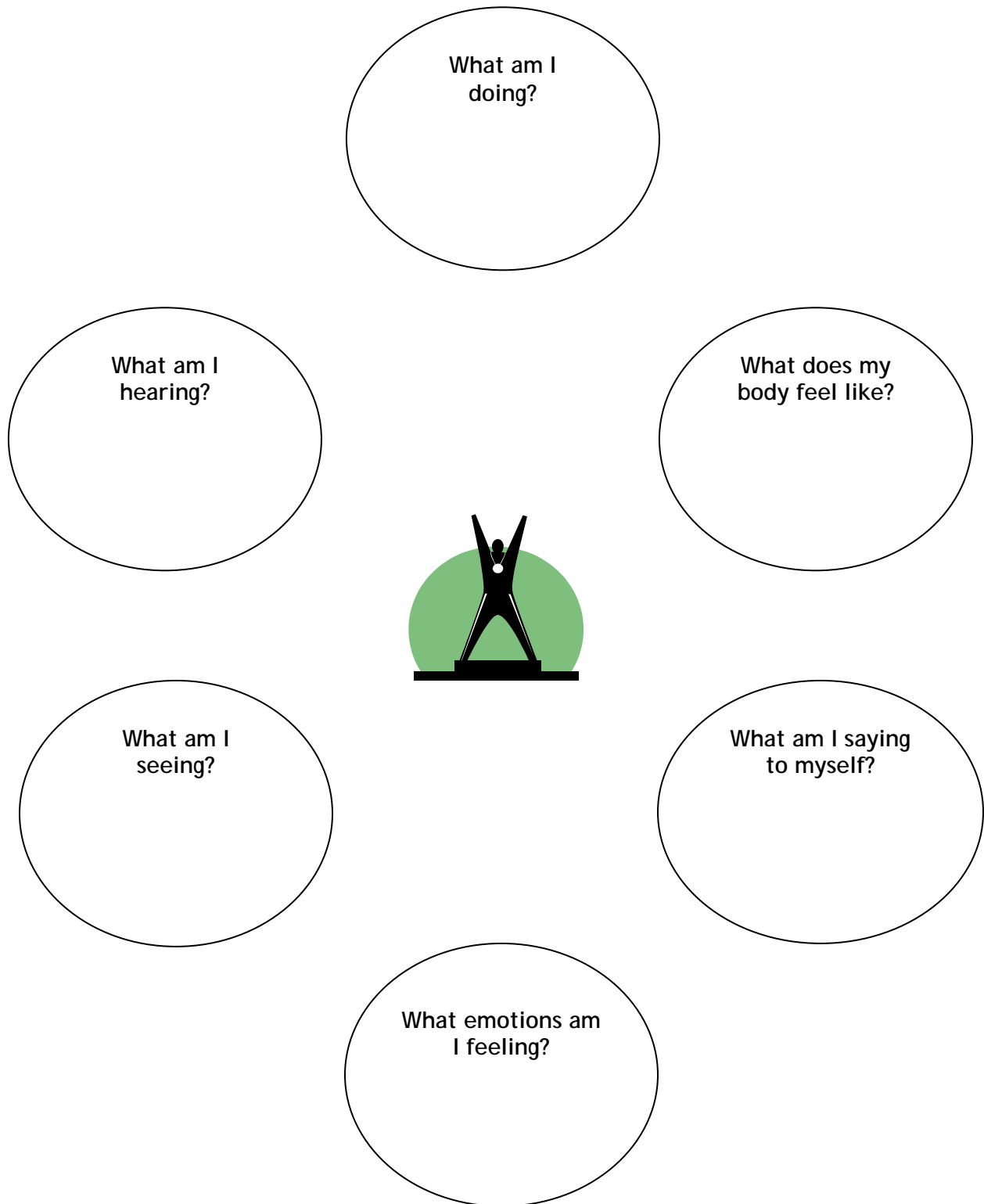
Step 5: Clench your fist.

Step 6: Intensify your memory. Really live in the moment of that experience. Think of your "cue" word.

Step 7: Unclench your fist and open your eyes.

For the next few days, repeat this sequence over and over again to create a firm connection between you and your cue word, the original experience, and your present state of mind. Believe it or not you have used this process before, without realizing it. It is the same process that happens when you associate a special song to a particular evening or a perfume with a special someone.

Inspiration, Self-Discipline, Perseverance



Program 2: The Importance of the Physical Classroom

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ Brainstorm Page
- ❖ Quick Tips
- ❖ Your Classroom Map



The Physical Classroom: Brainstorm Page



The Physical Classroom: Quick Tips



1. Keep it clean.
2. Keep it colorful.
3. Keep it cool.
4. Keep it organized.
5. Keep it inspirational. Post up inspiring messages for students.
6. Keep your pencil sharpener away from your desk.
7. Keep one trash can at your door and one near your desk. If possible, buy your own bags to put inside of them.
8. Never keep your desk at the center of the room. I feel it sets a friendlier tone by letting the students know you are not a traditional, "I'm the teacher and you are the student!" professional. Nowadays, the student is seen as a proactive learner with the teacher functioning as a guide. Try the desk move; it can't hurt.
9. If you are near an active intersection in your school, cover up your window on your door. It lessens distractions in class.
10. After the first two weeks of school, try setting up your room in a way other than rows. I have mine in a pair formation where each student has a partner. I have also taught in a double horseshoe. Do some research and see what works best for you.

The Physical Classroom: Your Classroom Map

Consider the following in planning out your classroom:

1. Where will your desk be located?
2. Where will the pencil sharpener be located?
3. Will you keep students' desks in rows, pairs, or quads?
4. Where will your garbage can(s) be located?
5. Where will you post inspirational banners?
6. Where will you post your class rules and consequences?



Draw your classroom map below.

Program 3: Classroom Management Skills Development

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ Classroom Management Planning
- ❖ Quick Tips
- ❖ Sample Rules & Consequences Chart



Classroom Management Skills Development: Classroom Management Planning



Utilizing the topics below, create a classroom management plan that is comfortable for you and your style of teaching. Remember that all disciplined classes should have rules followed by a set of graduated consequences. The rules and consequences should be **CLEAR, CONCISE, and EASILY VIEWED**.

Topics to Consider for Classroom Management Plan

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| A. Bathroom Privileges | D. Getting out of seat |
| B. Late to Class | E. Gum chewing |
| C. Talking out of turn/raising your hand | F. Absences/make-up work |

Your Class Rules: Try to have no more than 6 written rules.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Consequences for Breaking Your Rules

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Created by N.Spire, 2002

Classroom Management Skills Development

Quick Tips



1. Teach your classroom management plan to the students. When finished, quiz them on it so it can never be said that they do not know the rules and consequences.
2. Be consistent in your discipline. Kids notice even the smallest amount of favoritism toward another student and they will call you on it.
3. For severe discipline problems, always call the parent/guardian with the student there and allow them to tell their elders why they are being detained after school. This strategy works miracles because it not only informs the parents but also makes the student tell the truth about their misbehavior with YOU there to correct any lies.
4. Be extremely organized. Students notice when a teacher is disorganized or not prepared. They will take advantage of down time to misbehave or just talk.
5. Make positive phone calls home. A good classroom management plan must encourage and enforce discipline while praising the students who are “good” all the time. Try to make 3-5 positive phone calls home per week. Remember, parents are your allies!

Classroom Management Skills: Sample Rules & Consequences Chart



Mr. Bickel's Class Rules

1. You can use the bathroom the first five or last five minutes of class.
2. Raise your hand to speak or get out of your seat.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
4. No gum chewing.
5. All work missed during absences must be made up.

Consequences Chart

1. Warning
2. One-minute detention
3. Behavioral journal entry & detention
4. Phone call home and detention
5. Severe Clause - Student gets removed from classroom

Program 4: Teaching Strategies Acquisition

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ Favorite Teaching Strategies
- ❖ Quick Tip Teaching Strategies



Mr. Bickel's Favorite Teaching Strategies

"Diverse, Dynamic, Demanding"



1. Think / Pair / Share:
2. One-Minute Debates:
3. Jingles:
4. Graffiti Board:
5. Panel Discussions:
6. One-Minute Speeches:
7. Movies:
8. Closure Strategy 1:
9. Closure Strategy 2:
10. Closure Strategy 3:

Quick Tip Teaching Strategies:

1. **Think / Pair / Share:** This is my favorite cooperative learning strategy. Regardless of what they are studying, allow the students to answer questions by themselves, pair up with another student and check over their answers, and finally share their answers with the rest of class. This allows the students much-needed time to work independently and time to engage a classmate in discussion. It works great, so please try it! Additionally there are other forms of this strategy such as think/pair/write, think/pair/compare, etc. If interested in learning more about these pair models, look up Spencer Kagan in the bookstore. He has great ideas.
2. **One-Minute Debates:** This strategy allows the students to test their thinking and speaking skills. Great organization is essential in making this work. The night before the lesson pick the topic you want debated and make out note-cards for the entire class. Half the class will be for the issue and the other half will be against it. Randomly, pass them out to your class and indicate they will have ten minutes to prepare a one-minute speech in favor of or against the topic they were given. After each short debate, let the class decide whom they think won.
3. **Jingles:** One of my best lessons last year is when I allowed the students to make up protest jingles against a specific British tax on the American Colonies. They were crazy about the assignment and loved performing them in class. Make sure you grade them on it, as they will remember to take it seriously when they perform.
4. **Graffiti Board:** This assignment lends itself nicely to the language arts and social sciences. Last year, I had my students create a graffiti board depicting the various classes of people in pre-Civil War southern society. They had to write "quotes" from the different classes of people that lived during this time period. It is a difficult assignment because it forces the students to put themselves in the shoes of people they are just learning about. When done properly, it brings the subject alive.
5. **Panel Discussions:** Let's say the students are assigned to research and write a paper about a famous mathematician. Instead of just turning in a paper, have them portray

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those individuals in front of class. Allow the entire class to make up generic questions for each “historic” individual. On one day, have half the classes portray their mathematicians and the following day, have the other half play theirs. This is a great way for students to live the life of this person. I have had some kids pull off the panel discussion in clothes of the time period with authentic accents. This is a lot of fun!

6. **One-Minute Speeches:** Let’s say you are studying wind belts in Science class. For homework, let the students write a one-minute speech about any topic related to wind belts. Maybe some will choose to speak about the doldrums, wind and ballooning, or wind and exploration. Nevertheless, they prepare a speech and present the next day it front of their peers. By the end of last year, my students became so comfortable with public speaking! It’s hard to imagine this being a number one fear after seeing my students speak publicly week after week. I make them keep eye contact with their audience while showing them techniques for using their hands and voice intonation.
7. **Movies:** Well, I had to mention this one. If you ever show a movie for your subject always give the students an advanced organizer for them to fill out as the movie progresses. They will pay attention more readily knowing that you will collect and grade their question and answer sheet. I have also had students make lists of quotes or facts from movies that we watch in class. Make watching movies worthwhile, not just a time-filler.
8. **Closure Strategy 1:** All great lessons must come to an end. Upon closing a daily lesson, always review what you covered with the students. There are many ways to do this to keep it interesting. Closure Strategy 1 is called “Class Minutes”. Each day pick a different student to go home that evening and type up a summary of what happened in class that given day. The following day, the student in charge of the minutes would stand up and read what happened in class the previous day. When finished, you could then carry on a verbal question and answer with the class.
9. **Closure Strategy 2:** This strategy involves the whole class. Ask a review question to the entire class. Then pick one student who has to answer your question. Next, that

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student creates a question from that day's lesson and asks another student to answer their question. This process repeats itself until all the students have gone or until the lesson has been thoroughly reviewed. One warning. Depending on the age range, students will find it challenging to create their own questions from their notes. I teach 7th and 8th and still find that I have to teach them how to create questions from their notes before I used this strategy.

- 10. Closure Strategy 3:** You will need an empty desk at the front of the room with one marker on the desk. Invite two students at a time to come up to the desk to answer a review question from the day's lesson. They must be facing each other with their hands behind their backs and can not reach for the marker until the entire question has been asked. The teacher reads the review question and the first to "take" the marker and answer the question correctly wins. The "loser" will sit down and the next student comes to the front of the class to challenge the previous winner. This short review game is fun, quick, and competitive.

Program 5: Back-to-School Night/Parent Conferences

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ Back-to-School Night Brainstorm Exercise
- ❖ Back-to-School Night Quick Tips
- ❖ Parent-Teacher Conference Brainstorm Exercise
- ❖ Parent-Teacher Conference Quick Tips



Back-to-School Night: Brainstorm Page



Back-to-School Night: Quick Tips



1. Prepare a back to school night overhead which includes your class rules and consequences, curriculum goals for the year, homework policy, grading procedure, and leave a few minutes for general Q&A.
2. Greet parents on the way in. Don't assume that a parent has the same last name as the student in your class. I've made this mistake before and it's embarrassing.
3. Dress professionally!
4. Send around a sign-in sheet for each class and ask parents to provide you with their home and work phones and whether or not they would be willing to volunteer to help you throughout the year.
5. Put some inspiring quotes on business card size paper. Before parents leave your room, give each of them a quote. They will remember this kind gesture for years to come.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Brainstorm Page



Parent-Teacher Conferences: Quick Tips



1. Never meet with a parent alone.
2. Always have the student's grade averaged for the parent to see.
3. Bring samples of recent student work.
4. Always mention positive qualities that the student exhibits as well as areas of improvement.
5. Don't dwell on problems too long. Turn your attention to the solutions with the parent/guardian and find ways collaboratively to correct the problem(s).
6. Have the student at the conference for at least half of the allotted time.
7. Make sure there is some follow-up to the meeting. If there is no follow-up, there will be no results.
8. When possible, arrange a parent-teacher conference that is completely positive. Be proactive and reach out to them.
9. If a conference ever gets out of hand with an irate parent, have a ready-made statement with you. The statement may read, "Mr. X. This conference has ended. My team and I feel that your tone of voice and condescending words are creating a hostile meeting. We would be glad to meet with you again at a later date with the principal present and when you have calmed down."
10. Recap the meeting when you are finished. Mention what was talked about and what solutions you have agreed to implement together.

Program 6: General Tips for a Successful First Year Teaching

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ General Tips for Classroom Teachers

General Tips for Classroom Teachers



1. Collect student homework in color-coded plastic folders.
2. Buy a clipboard to keep your class lists, building information, parent phone numbers and other relevant information close at hand.
3. If your building does not provide a mentor, go find one yourself at your school. My success as a teacher is directly linked to my mentor's influence and guidance in my life.
4. Visit your students in other subjects like Spanish or Gym throughout the day. They like to know you care and will respond more positively to you in class.
5. Cliché, yes. Stay out of the teacher lounge.
6. After each day at school, go home and reflect on what worked and did not work during your teaching for that day. The ultimate power of a good teacher is reflection. During your fifteen minutes of reflection, think of how you can become better and how the students can learn more. The best part of teaching is that even after your worst day, you get to wake up tomorrow and try again. Reflect...
7. Get involved in building socials and other events that will help you become closer to other teaching professionals.
8. Start a book club at your school. Agree to read one book a month about education and discuss it over dinner at someone's house. It will increase collaboration in your department and your school while keeping you abreast of new educational ideas and trends.
9. As I said before, there are lots of problems in education. You will hear bad educators complain about their helplessness, and their negativity will confound you. Be a

solution finder. Never dwell on the problems, they can all be solved. It's harder, yes, but worthy in the long run both personally and professionally.

10. Kids will respond much more positively to you in the classroom if they feel you know things about their lives. I will, from time to time, flip through MTV, The Real World, and professional wrestling. I will sprinkle some tidbits of pop culture into my lesson throughout the day and the students can't believe it! I have found that by taking the time to know *their* world, they like to be in mine a little bit more.
11. Drive through the district in which you will be teaching. Familiarize yourself with movie theatres, street names, parks, etc. Know the town and don't be shy about letting the students know that you know.
12. If I were to write a motivational quote it would be in one book, on one page, on one line. The quote would read, "It's All Up To You." Remember that as you succeed in education and beyond.

Program 7: Strategies for Balancing Your Instructional Week

Tools and Exercises used in this program include:

- ❖ Balancing Your Instructional Week
- ❖ Sample Lesson Plan Sheet

Balancing Your Instructional Week

Student-Centered: Activities that revolve around the student reading a book or utilizing material learned to create a project, write an essay or solve a problem.

Teacher-Centered: Activities that center on the teacher instructing the students. This is usually in a lecture format.

Your objective is to create five lessons in your subject matter that alternate between teacher-centered and student-centered activities. Generally, students do not like to be lectured to all week long. Likewise, teaching five periods a day of pure lecture is extremely difficult, both mentally and physically. Students do best when your lessons are dynamic, diverse, and demanding. Keep in mind the following points as you prepare your sample week of lessons.

- A. Be mindful of when you give homework. If possible, have homework due on days you have planned a student-centered activity which will give you more time to collect, grade and follow up with students who did not turn in the assignment.
- B. Teacher-centered activities are best in the beginning of the week when students are fresh.
- C. Student-centered activities are great because it takes the pressure off the teacher for the day. However, don't treat this activity like it is a day off for the students. Hold them accountable for whatever they write, copy, problem solve, read or create. Moreover, create a rubric for the activity they are completing. When finished, have them use the rubric as a way to grade their assignment.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Title:

Objectives:

Start-up (Anticipatory Set):

Activities: (Include here exactly what the students will be doing and what you will be doing as their teacher)

Closure:

Audio-Visual Materials: