

The Primary Success Notebook



From Primary Success Publications

Issue #13

July 2010

Pre-Apologies!

This issue of the Notebook is primarily (pun intended) philosophical. July is the month where we are not pressured to plan and do, a time when we can think about our goals.

The short articles are mine, and the philosophy here-in is obviously mine, too. You may agree or not, of course! Next month will have much more about the beginning of the school year and have many usable ideas and tips to make the year run smoothly. This is my one chance to get up on the soapbox!

Jean

pri-mary:

First or highest in degree, quality, or importance; principal.

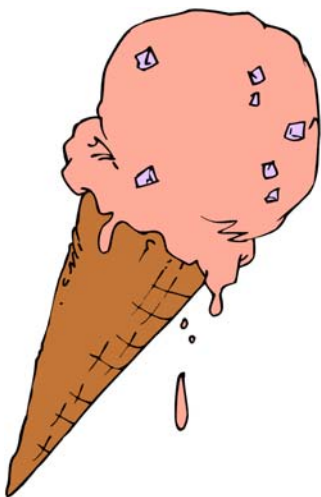
First in time, order, or sequence.

Fundamental, basic, or elemental.



Inside

Apple Theme	7
Bulletin Boards	2/3
Class Management	8
Getting Ready	10
Math	5
Odds and Ends	11
Parents	9
Philosophy	4
Phonics	6



About Primary Success Publications....

We are a Canadian company, based in B.C. on beautiful Vancouver Island. We have been producing resources for primary teachers since 1995. Teachers appreciate the practical easy-to-teach programs in sight reading, phonics, spelling, writing, math, science and social studies. A high percentage of our orders come from teachers or schools who are using some of our other items, and we get many new customers because teachers share their pleasure with their colleagues.

If you enjoy 'The Notebook', pass it on to your friends. They can join the e-mail list from the website and receive all the freebies, too!

Go to the website for great free booklets and ideas! Then click on 'The Notebook' link and the 'Freebies' link on the home page.

Teaching Reading Successfully

How should we teach beginning reading? This question has concerned educators for hundreds of years. The written language of the early Greeks was simple and largely phonetic, so they were taught to read by first learning the letter sounds. Until the Middle Ages, written European languages were largely involved in copying texts. With the Reformation and the invention of the printing press, reading became available to the average person. In England, children were taught to read the Bible using letter sounds. The English language has roots in French, Latin, Greek and many other cultures; this adds many challenges to the teaching of reading. A letter or group of letters can have a number of different sounds. By the 19th century there was a push for 'whole word' reading to make the reading process easier for small children. Here began the 'Reading Wars'.



In the early 20th Century the beginning of the 'top down' methods could be seen. Children were expected to learn to read through play and exposure to books. Then, after the 1920's, the schools were teaching the 'look and say' method with the 'Dick and Jane' readers and other similar texts. By mid-century, it was found that close to 25% of the population was functionally illiterate. Now the reading wars began in earnest!

While most schools were still teaching the whole word methods, a number of serious phonics programs were developed. There was the I.T.A (Initial Teaching Alphabet), in which each phonetic component was a symbol and the resulting written words were barely recognizable. DISTAR and Orton-Gillingham gave intense systematic phonics instruction. In North America, teachers generally taught whatever reading system was available in the texts provided by their schools or districts. These were usually whole word texts with a smattering of phonics, but occasionally gave way to systematic phonetic texts with small amounts of whole word teaching.

In the late 1980's, 'Whole Language' became the fashion. More than a reading method - it became a philosophy. It was child-centered rather than directed by the teacher; motivation instead of instruction. Most schools in North America embraced it completely. Phonics and sequential sight word basal readers were destroyed, and new teachers didn't have the skills to teach these methods even if they felt the need. 'Whole Language' was a form of sight reading, but without direct sequence or repetition. Children began by pretending to read and then memorizing pages of simple repetitive text, and it was assumed that they would 'emerge' to be readers. Suddenly, an increased number of children with reading problems appeared, and the expensive Reading Recovery program with specially trained teachers was brought in to close the gap. Teachers began adding more phonics instruction into whole language, but the letter sounds were usually taught incidentally in context rather than systematically and explicitly.

Over the last decade teachers have been improving the instruction, but many are still using the literature methods and making up their lessons as they go along. This is the stage at which we find ourselves across North America. Many teachers are confused by the conflicting methods and pushed constantly by the winds of change. Who is right? What should we be teaching and how should it be taught?

The Answer

The answer has been there all along! Every method that has been used to teach reading is correct! Every method is correct but not exclusive. Children are different and children learn in many different ways. If only one specific method is taught, there will always be some children who are unsuccessful in learning. Some children will learn to read easily no matter what method is used, but many children have a distinct learning style and will only learn well if taught that method. This is an obvious conclusion, isn't it? Phonics is the correct way to teach reading, and so is teaching a sight reading vocabulary and so is literature-based instruction.

If you ask primary teachers who teach through literature about their reading programs, they will say that they **do** teach phonics and sight words! All teachers will agree that these are important. But the lower children will not learn either phonics or sight reading skills well (or at all) unless they are taught specifically and sequentially. That is the key! For these children to learn well the phonics and sight words must be taught with a 'building block' approach. A single piece of new knowledge must be added to skills that have previously been mastered. When that piece of knowledge or skill has been mastered, only then is a new skill added.

A successful reading program that is effective for **every** child in the class will have these three strands:

Systematic Explicit Phonics - the bottom-up approach

Many children need to be **taught** a systematic sequential phonics program. Phonics provides the skills needed to decode unfamiliar words and to spell. The letter sounds and the blending of sounds is a necessary part of the reading process, as is the separation of sounds in spelling. Children with visual learning disabilities or visual processing problems especially need this method taught in order to learn to read. Beginning phonetic books should be used as decoding practice, not as 'literature'.



Explicit Sight Word Teaching - the direct approach

The direct approach is the specific teaching and repetition of sight words in a sequential program. This is especially necessary in the early part of the learning process. Many children require up to 50 repetitions of a word in order to remember it; this is especially necessary for children with auditory problems who find phonics difficult or impossible to learn. Every child needs to memorize the words, because in order to read with fluency, children need to have an instantaneous recall of all the words. Many of the words in our language cannot be decoded phonetically and these words must be memorized.

Literature - the top-down approach

This method has many benefits necessary to the reading process. Children need to appreciate good literature and be exposed to well written trade books. They should be encouraged to read these books independently and discuss them. This method places greater emphasis on comprehension. Children need to read independently every day to practice the skills they have been taught and to listen to good literature being read to them each day. Guided reading lessons teach good reading habits.

Children learn to read in different ways. Many children are able to learn no matter what method is taught, but there are also many children who can only learn through their strongest learning modality. Some children are visual learners, some are auditory and some kinesthetic learners. The sight word and literature strands are the most useful for the visual learners. Auditory learners do best when taught a strong phonics program. Too often, however, we forget the kinesthetic learners, and there are more children who learn this way than is realized. A good reading program should include body movements, forming words by printing and other kinesthetic exercises throughout the three strands.

In Grade One and early Grade Two the three strands need to be taught separately, but they will begin to overlap and converge as the children begin to read well. The phonics and sight word strands will greatly improve the reading in the literature strand. As each child is learning to read, the teacher can watch to see whether he or she is a visual learner who achieves the reading skills best through sight reading, an auditory learner who achieves the skills best through phonics, or a kinesthetic learner who requires physical action to learn to read. Your students with learning disabilities will especially benefit when you can teach toward their strongest modality. You will find some students who can only learn with one method, and it is interesting and rewarding to see these children bloom when you teach to their strengths.

It isn't easy! Teaching reading IS brain surgery.....

Teaching from K to 3

Teaching **Kindergarten** is exhausting! When you first get these wee ones, they are still pre-schoolers. They will need to be taught everything, from how to sit in a circle to how to use the washrooms. Some will have an attention span of only a couple of minutes, and those who have watched a lot of fast moving TV will be bored and fidgety if there isn't movement or action. Five year olds are generally good, helpful, and conforming. They need a lot of attention, affection, and praise. Hugs are needed. They may not want to try things that are new. They are very energetic. They may show opposite extremes of behaviour and may become less well-behaved as the school year progresses. They are still learning socially, and may need direction in sharing, politeness and behaviour in social situations. Many will find 'play' not nearly as interesting as 'work' and learning. They are eager learners!

Kindergarten teachers have a lot of patience and love! The Kindergarten curriculum is changing, and now there is more that the children are expected to know by the end of the year. This means less play and more teacher-directed activities. It is physically draining and Kindergarten teachers should be applauded!

Grade One teachers are often dedicated to this special grade! There is a huge reward when you see the progress the children make. They are like little sponges just soaking up everything you put out there for them to learn. They are enjoyable to teach and very funny. They like silly jokes and silly stories. They come to you as Kindergarten children, and it is up to you to transform them into readers and writers. At the beginning of the year you must assume that they know nothing (where were the kindergarten teachers last year?), and any skill you may discover they have is a bonus. You will spend the first month teaching them how to cut, how to use glue bottles, how NOT to sharpen a pencil, and how to tear a page out of the math book - this may take more than an hour with movement by movement instructions. Grade Ones still need hugs, help to find missing books and assistance to do up zippers. Tattling is second nature. Everything is new and exciting and their enthusiasm is contagious.

It is hard work. Grade One teachers learn to put all routines and lessons into simple steps, and repeat everything over and over. Attention spans are still short and lessons must change direction every ten or fifteen minutes or you lose them. Silence rarely happens - a six year old is murmuring even when quiet, and twenty six-year-old students produce a hum that is difficult to extinguish. You will never have time in class to think about what you are going to do next, and inexperienced Grade One teachers find this difficult.

After saying all that, Grade One is the most rewarding grade. What they know at the end of the year - you have taught them! You need lots of patience, a good sense of humour, a big bag of tricks for getting and keeping their attention and lots of energy. And.... you will be drained at the end of the day.

Grade Two teachers will receive children who are still Grade Ones. Some will only be reading very simple material. You must be able to teach beginning readers beside the good readers in your class. Many will not know the basics, so much of Grade Two is spent teaching Grade One skills again. Grade Two children are chatty, helpful, fun, whiny, tattletales, teacher worshipers, non-readers, chapter book readers, non-writers, story book writers.... You'll get a bit of everything! Grade Two is a transitional year and a wonderful age. They are somewhat independent but mostly still very innocent. They are cooperative and eager to please. They are old enough to understand jokes. You will take these little Grade One people who come to you at the beginning of the year and turn them into Grade Threes! By the end of the year they are much more mature and capable. Grade Two is fun to teach!

Grade Three children are changing. They can work on their own, and the teachers can have time each day to think ahead while the students are working. Grade Threes are sometimes young children. They will still listen raptly to a picture book and do crafts with pleasure. But now you can see changes - sometimes boys and girls will hold hands and you must make a rule that there cannot be violence in their written stories. There may be bullies in your group, and this may cause hurt and upset in the class. Grade Threes love to write long stories and read the simple chapter books. They will work independently and love to learn difficult math procedures. Most Grade Three children are very sweet. They are still primary kids, but by the end of the year you will see the independence and maturity grow. You will love this grade!

Learning to Write

For many children, writing is the most difficult task in the early grades. This is because writing involves many skills, and some children will have a problem with one or more of these skills. Writing is a complicated form of communication, and communication cannot occur until the completed writing task can be read and understood by others. Before being a writer, students must understand our language and be able to put speech into separate words and also put separate words into a complete sentence. They must choose a topic and decide on the first sentence. They must keep these words in mind and in order as they go through the next steps. Students must have some knowledge of spelling and be able to spell the common words or know where to find them. They must have a knowledge of phonics to help them spell words with which they are unfamiliar. Then they must be able to print these letters and words legibly, and this is a formidable task for some children. After the words have been printed, the student must be able to read the words, so reading is also a prerequisite.

Many students do not feel comfortable writing because one or more of these prerequisites is difficult for them. This will improve as their skills improve. By the end of Grade One almost all children should have the necessary background skills and should be writing freely.

A Question!



Why do we have our children write fictional stories? This is a skill they will probably never use. Can you write a good story? If you teach fiction, do it because the students enjoy it - do it for a treat. Don't treat it as a goal because most students won't do well at it in primary - even in later school years. Our students need to be able to write a good paragraph on one subject, using correct sentence structure, good spelling and interesting words. If you do have your children write fictional stories, teach them a framework with a beginning, middle and end, even when they write for fun. Most young students have difficulty with a plot, and don't know how to end!

Successful Writing Lessons - Grade 1

This resource has more than 100 short lessons to begin your writing sessions. They are easy to teach, practical and require little teacher preparation. They begin with simple skills and gradually increase in difficulty. These mini-lessons will greatly improve your students' writing. There are lots of reproducible sheets and a reproducible dictionary with common words and spaces for you or the child to print extra words.

Successful Writing Lessons - Grade Two

There are more than 100 short lessons to begin your writing sessions. These teach the necessary writing skills in a skill progression with lots of interesting strategies. These mini-lessons will greatly improve your students' writing. There are lots of reproducible sheets and a reproducible dictionary with common words and spaces for you or the child to print extra words.

See samples of both of these books on the website.



Good Schools and Poor Schools

Why are some schools considered excellent and some poor in provincial testing results or in the opinion of the parents? There are a number of factors that help determine the scholastic levels of the students and the testing results, and these have little to do with the socio-economic levels of the school area. If you visit a highly rated school, you will usually find these in place.

1. The teachers and the principal of the school are not dedicated to only one philosophy. They are willing and eager to try new programs and ideas in order to help the children learn.

2. The teachers use sequential programs to teach reading and math, beginning in Grade One or even Kindergarten, and progressing through the grades. This could be a step-by-step phonics or sequential sight word basal program, or several specific programs. Any sequential program with specific teaching will produce better readers overall and higher math marks than programs that are not sequential or that do not teach specific skills in progression. Literature based lessons often produce higher top readers, but significantly lower readers at the other end of the scale. Direct phonics programs are said to be 'research-based' and will produce higher student marks, but schools that teach any sequential program will have higher reading marks than schools that teach non-specific non-sequential literature-based programs - and higher scores mean that the children are reading at a higher level, with a greater reading vocabulary and better comprehension. And isn't teaching every child to the best of his/her ability what it is all about? Process should never be more important than results. Math scores will be lower if students are using programs where they 'discover' the concepts rather than having lessons that have specific teaching, hands-on work, lots of review, drill and independent practice - and lower math scores mean less understanding of the concepts.

3. The teachers understand how the lower and LD children learn, and use specific sequential strategies to teach them in the classroom rather than sending them to a Learning Assistance teacher except for reading practice and review of the skills taught in the classroom. The teachers do not expect others to teach their children, as skills taught elsewhere are not followed up through the school day and are therefore not as valuable. The programs/grouping they use give these students everything they need to succeed.

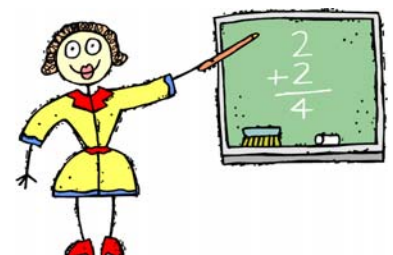
4. The staff works as a team to improve the reading and math levels of the students. There is frequent sharing of ideas and strategies to improve understanding and proficiency.

5. There is a high degree of accountability with the teachers. No teacher blames another teacher, the parents or the child himself for low skills - the teacher who has that child is completely responsible.

6. The teachers understand that their own observations and classroom assessments are valuable, but they are made without comparisons to other classes. A teacher may feel that her class is doing very well, but that could be an inaccurate assumption when compared with other similar classrooms. Regular standardized testing shows the accuracy of the teacher's observations and assessments and should be used for that purpose, and excuses for low marks should not be accepted. Low averages on standardized tests mean the teacher is not doing as well as he/she should and the students should be working at a higher level.

7. A teacher's proficiency is rated by the reading, writing and math knowledge of every child in the classroom including the challenged children, not just by the achievements of the students who are at the top of the class or her ability to defend her present philosophy. It's easy to teach bright kids but it takes skill, knowledge and dedication to teach the challenged ones.

8. If you visit a highly rated school, you will find an atmosphere of enthusiasm and pleasure. Teachers and students are happier and this permeates the building. Success is the best self-esteem builder! Staff rooms are happy places where teachers can unwind and be friends and colleagues - to share successes, not grievances, laughs instead of anger or stress.



Continued

9. The school has high standards of discipline. The students know the boundaries and respect them. The classrooms are neat and organized and the children work and move about quietly.

10. The principal understands early reading and how children learn. He/She will put the best teachers into the early grades to give the children the best possible start. Students who are not doing well in reading and math by the end of grade two will usually continue to be far behind their peers, so it is very important that they have good teaching.

Of course schools are more than the test results in the core subjects, but it is wrong to try to justify or excuse poor results. With high expectations in reading, writing and mathematics will come other highly desirable qualities. There are many things a school and the teachers can do to make changes that can improve your school. It takes dedication and perhaps a philosophical change but it is worth it, especially for the students who will be learning so well. After all, good marks mean students are at a higher level of reading, writing and mathematics. Isn't having every student working to his or her potential our goal? And.... successful children and teachers will be happier, too - and happier people will achieve more - so success continues to grow!

How do you know if you're a primary teacher?

You move your dinner partner's glass away from the edge of the table.

You ask if anyone needs to go to the bathroom as you enter a theater with a group of friends.

You hand a tissue to anyone who sneezes.

You ask guests if they have remembered their scarves and mittens as they leave your home.

You say 'I like the way you did that' to the mechanic who repairs your car.

You ask 'Are you sure you did your best?' to the mechanic who fails to repair your car.

You sing the 'Alphabet Song' to yourself as you look up a number in the phone book.

Do you say everything twice? I mean, do you repeat everything?

You want to slap the next person who says, 'Must be nice to work from 9 to 3 and have your summers free!'

You believe chocolate is a food group.

You can tell it's a full moon without ever looking outside.

You believe 'shallow gene pool' should have its own box on the report card.

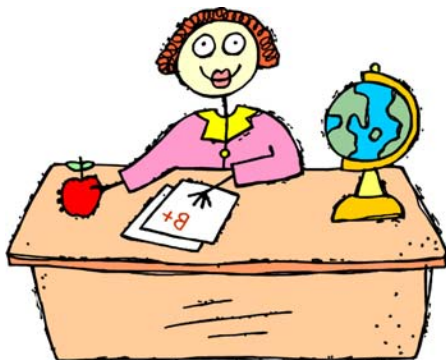
You believe that unspeakable evil will befall you if anyone says, 'Boy, the kids sure are mellow today.'

You have no time for a life from September to June.

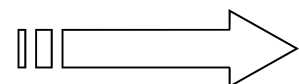
You laugh uncontrollably when people refer to the staff room as the 'lounge'.

You can't have children because there's no name you could give a child that wouldn't bring on high blood pressure the moment you heard it uttered.

Meeting a child's parents instantly answers the question, 'Why is this kid like this?'



The following page may be photocopied and sent home for your parents to complete. Put the completed sheets in the students' files.



Getting To Know You!



Student's Full Name: _____ Nickname: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Address _____

Phone Number _____ Alternate Phone Number(s) _____

The following information will be kept private, and is only to help me to understand your child better.

Does your child speak more than one language? Which ones? _____

Does your child have any medical conditions or allergies that I should be made aware of? _____

What are some of your child's favourite things to do? Does he/she have any hobbies? _____

What are your child's special interests? _____

Does your child enjoy being read to? What are some of your child's favourite books? _____

Write a few adjectives that come to mind that describe your child (include strengths and weaknesses).

What are your child's talents? _____

What time does your child go to sleep at night? Is he/she frequently tired by afternoon?

Does your child have any siblings? If yes, what are their names, ages, and grades if they go to school?

What else would you like me to know about your child? Do you have any concerns? (Use the back of the page.)

Thank you! I appreciate your confidence. _____

Before School Begins

Setting up the physical classroom:

1. Think where the teacher's desk will go (if you have one). Most teachers prefer it at the back or side of the classroom, with clear room to approach it. Many teachers have bookshelves for curriculum guides, etc., near the desk, and a computer for your use either on the desk or nearby. If you have a computer, consider electrical outlets, cords, etc. Organize things on the top of the desk so it will stay tidy.

2. How will your children be seated? Desks or tables can be placed in groups of 2, 4 or more, or placed individually. Once you have found a seating arrangement that works well, you can place small bits of tape on the carpet or floor under the table legs. This way the students can easily put the tables or desks back in this ideal position accurately. If you have a lino floor, you can make small spots with white-out or other washable marker to show the leg positions.

3. If you have tables in the classroom, make sure they have a distinct purpose. Tables that don't have a specific purpose collect papers and books and impede traffic.

4. All Kindergarten and Grade One classrooms, and most Grade Two and Three rooms have a meeting area. You will likely use this for morning calendar activities. You will either use this same area for group lessons or have another area with a chalkboard (or white board) access and a chart paper stand.

5. Plan your library area. Will you be able to display the covers of a number of books to lure students into reading them? Is there a place to sit and read? Are your bookcases adequate and attractive?

6. Consider the traffic - where will the students walk to get to the meeting area? Where will they line up to leave the classroom? Is the path clear to the coat area? How will they walk to get to the class library?

Decorating your room:

1. You will want a word wall. This must be seen clearly from every desk. If the distance from the desks is great, the words must be made larger. Do not laminate the words as there can be glare, and print the words with black print on light coloured paper.

2. As you decorate your home so that you live in a pleasant space, decorate your classroom pleasantly. You will spend more time there than in your living room, so make sure it is attractive! Do not under-decorate or over-decorate. The decorations should be relevant to the students. Put charts, pictures, alphabet, numbers, etc. up in an orderly way. Plants and/or fresh flowers add a pleasant touch. Never have a cluttered classroom!

Organizing your teaching 'stuff':

1. Put all books and teachers' materials that you will not be using frequently out of sight.

2. Many teachers fill plastic tubs with the things needed for each month. The ones that are not being used can be kept at your home or in another part of the school if you do not have out of sight storage.

3. Be tidy! Keep the top of your desk free so it can be used for doing your work.

4. If you are susceptible to piles of paper that need to be filed, put a plastic tub under your desk or other inconspicuous place and put the filing into it. Do the filing at least once a month.

Know your rules and routines:

Make a list of all the rules and routines you will need in your classroom. You will need to know how you are going to handle children moving around the classroom, drinks, restroom visits, passing/collecting papers, lining up, fire drills, computer use, etc. You must have routines and rules for handling supplies, sharpening pencils, using rulers and glue, turning in finished work and many more. Especially in Kindergarten and Grade One these must be taught thoroughly, modeled and practiced. In Grade Two and Three these expectations must be clear and thoroughly understood. Don't make any rule/routine you are not prepared to enforce or re-teach each and every time it is broken.

Classroom Management

Transitions

"I always use music for my transitions. I find that by the second week of school the children know exactly what to do when the song comes on. Makes it a piece of cake for subs, too. I choose specific songs for each transition and begin using them on day one and continue for the entire year. After a while when my kids see me go over and start to turn on the music, they begin to clean up even before the music starts. If I want their attention during a work time, I just say "STOP, LOOK and LISTEN". I also find that when I use a regular voice, without raising it, they respond more. Just start your management routine on day one and don't change it. Children need the routine of knowing exactly what is expected."

Nobody Loves Me.....

"At the beginning of the year, I make a basket with a sign. The sign is a sad puppy with the words, "Nobody loves me". Papers without names are placed in the basket. The students have until Friday to check the basket and adopt their paper. Papers that are unclaimed are put in the trash can in front of the students. This visual has a big effect. After a few weeks, students have fewer papers in the 'nobody loves me' basket. With older students I have started the year with this procedure but took the basket away. They had to put their names on the paper or it would go into the trash."

Papers

"I like to keep a big magnetic clip on the blackboard next to my desk and I keep all extra papers in that clip. At the end of the week, I pitch the papers that are no longer in use. Anything from worksheets from memos to the office go in the clip."

"I send a folder home every night. Each child has a mailbox where all corrected work, notes, calendars, notes from office, party invitations, anything goes during the day. Then I load the folders at night and send them home. Inside each folder I have glued a monthly calendar that lists library days, field trips, etc. Every morning the children unload their folder and put their homework in my mailbox."

"The way I get my kids to walk quietly in the halls is like the mystery walker idea except I don't pick the students before we go. I have a can with popsicle sticks with each child's name on one. When we get to the classroom, I pick two or three sticks. If those kids didn't talk, they get a treat. I also do this when we have silent reading. I have never been able to get Grade Ones to silent read before, but now that I choose a couple of names each time, everyone reads silently!"



The Clean Desk Fairy

"My kids frequently get visited from the Clean Desk Fairy. A former student (who also happens to be a teacher's kid so is around after hours) comes in and selects one desk each day that receives a small certificate and a reward of some kind. As the kids get better at personal responsibility, we don't have the fairy visit every day, but still every once in a while, she appears. The kids LOVE it."

The First Day in Grade Two

Some interesting things to do on the first day:

- Welcome the students then and give them a little talk about what to expect in your class. Go over the schedule with them, discussing lunch, specials, recess, etc., and put the information on a chart or on a weekly timetable that they can refer to.

- Show them where you will have class meetings and calendar groups, then role-play how they should go there. In the group spot, discuss rules for behaviour during meetings (taking turns, hands off others, listen when others are talking, etc.) As the children tell you the rules, write them on a chart.

- Begin your calendar and opening exercises. Today is 'Day 1' on the 'Days in School' chart.

- Practice some of your routines - model your expectations.

- Read a special story, a favourite.

- Play a name game or other circle game to learn all the names: Give each child a name tag or the name on a cord around the neck. Play, for example, 'Who stole (or took) the cookie from the cookie jar?' Go through this until the children are comfortable with the sequence and words - then put it to rhythm by slapping the knees with alternate hands.

- The children are always eager to see the classroom books, so do two DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) times.

- Write in the journals at the end of the day. Today they can tell all about the first day of school and what they enjoyed. It will be a nice remembrance later on, when they go back to read what they wrote.

- Do a class Time Capsule. You could use a Pringles can that has been decorated for the capsule. Each child gets a paper and has to write out their answers to a few questions about their favourite colour, book, food, etc. They copy a sentence or poem in their neatest printing and draw a picture of themselves on the first day of school, and then they trace and colour their handprint on the back. When everyone is done, collect the papers, roll them up, stuff them in the can, and put it away in a place that is out of reach, but in their view. On the last day of school take the tube down and pass back the papers. The children like to see if any of their favourites have changed, and they can put their hand on top of the 'old' print to see if they've grown during the year.

- Set aside a place where you can collect items during the year for the end-of-year bulletin board. The last week or so of the school year, put a header - Remembering the Year - on top and hang up all sorts of things that remind you of the year together. Items include: sample of projects you've done, brochures from field trips taken, a fancy napkin from a class party or birthday, an empty butterfly garden box, a book jacket from a favourite read-aloud, thank-you notes, photos, etc. It is a nice way to look back at the end of the year! Try to do one each month and each special day.

- Go around the classroom and read all the charts and poems, etc. Then give the children some time to 'read the room' themselves. Have magic wands, pointers, glasses, binoculars, flashlights, magnifying glasses, etc. to focus in and help them read the words.

- Play 'Name Bingo'. Each student gets a blank bingo board. They walk around the classroom and have other people sign theirs until it is full - and then play bingo (with M&Ms as markers).

Who Stole the Cookie?

Leader: Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?

Group: Amanda stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Amanda: Who me?

Group: Yes, you.

Amanda (point to self, shake head): Couldn't be.

Group: Then who?

Amanda: Thomas stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Thomas: Who me? Etc.

The Successful Sight Reading Program

This series is widely used in the classroom, especially for the children who are slower to learn to read. These books give them the needed repetition and give you many strategies to help them learn. These books are also popular with Special Education teachers, as they are easy to teach and contain everything needed for success. For more information, go to the Primary Success website.

Successful Sight Reading - Part One / Part Two / Part Three / Part Four

This program is very popular and is being used with great success, both in the classroom and in Learning Assistance rooms with students who have difficulties with early reading. The Successful Sight Reading books have daily lesson plans, with lots of teaching strategies and practice sheets. It has everything you need to teach beginning reading successfully! Part One teaches the first 100 sight words so that your Grade One students soon become readers, and Part Two teaches the next 150 words. Part Three and Four continue the sequential program. It is well organized, simple to follow and the program has proven results.

Little Books to Accompany Successful Sight Reading - Part One / Part Two / Part Three

These binders each have more than 50 little books for you to photocopy for your students. These little books match the lessons in Successful Sight Reading - Part 1, 2 and 3. These will give your children the extra reading practice that they need, and the little books are fun, too!

"My children's reading has greatly improved with the Successful Sight Reading program! Thanks for this wonderful resource!" R.M.

"I am impressed with how quickly the students were able to read using the reading programs!" K.B.

"My children's reading has greatly improved with the Successful Sight Reading program! Thanks for this wonderful resource!" R.M.

"I am impressed with how quickly the students were able to read using the reading programs!" K.B.



Successful Phonics - Part 1 / Part 2

These books will give you everything you need to teach phonics successfully. Part 1 is a complete phonics program for Grade One and Part 2 is for Grade Two/Three. There are specific daily lesson plans, strategies for teaching the sounds and blending, reproducible reading sheets, flashcards, and reproducible booklets so the children can practice their skills in actual reading material. Successful Phonics is easy to teach, and is explained in simple lessons.

Go to the website for samples and book prices.

Favourite Websites

This is great! Tour classrooms by photos.

<http://teachers.net/gazette/photos.html>

If you teach early primary, this website has loads of useful things. It has been written by Cherry Carl, who is a retired teacher, now an instructor at the University of California. Every link down the left side of the page contains bushels of information. Have fun!

<http://carlscorner.us.com/>

This is fun! Try it with your colleagues....

<http://www.sciencegeek.net/lingo.html>

Primary Success Publications

4971 Fillinger Cres.

Nanaimo, BC V9V 1J1

E-mail:

primarysuccess@shaw.ca

Website:

<http://www.primarysuccess.ca>



Phone:

1-800-758-0889

Fax:

1-250-758-2661