10 Common Mistakes: Perspectives from Newer Teachers and a Principal

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Let’s talk about YOU!

1. Go to kahoot.it
2. Type in the PIN shown on screen
3. Type in your nickname
Objectives

1. Understand common mistakes new teachers make
2. Learn strategies to proactively avoid these pitfalls
3. Think critically about your practice
4. Understand the importance of building relationships
#10: Not Knowing About Your School

Key Personnel
- Secretary
- Custodians
- Association Leadership

Community
- Demographics
- Parent Involvement
- Transportation to School
#10: Not Knowing About Your School

Available Programs & Resources

- PD Opportunities
- Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- English Learner Support
- Special Education Support
Remedy:

● Ask questions.
● Introduce yourself.
● Get a list of personnel.
● Take a tour of your community. See where your students live.
#9: Not Knowing Your School Culture

- “Behind-the-scenes” context
- Influences how people think and act
- Types
  - Bureaucratic
  - Collegial
  - Toxic
Remedy:

- Listen carefully.
- Closely examine the "big picture".
- Be aware of choosing sides.
- Find aspects of the school culture that align with your own goals and values.
- Find "wiggle room" and use it.
- Find out how decisions are made — and get involved.
#8: Not Being Professional

- Absenteeism
- Tardiness
- Dress Code
- Phone Usage
- Inappropriate Language
- Forgetting Meetings/Commitments
  - Staff
  - Parents
  - Students
Remedy:

- Read the personnel handbook and know what it says!
- Be on time and ready to work!
- Dress for school, not the bar!
- Put your phone away when you are working with students and staff!
- Use language you would want students to use.
- Use a calendar to keep track of meetings/commitments.

Remember, someone is watching you at all times!
#7: Lack of Structure & Consistency

Classroom Management
● Single biggest downfall of most new teachers!
● Starts on Day 1!
● Students will test, recognize a weakness, and take over before you can say “Day 2”.

Discipline Plan
● School’s plan
● Classroom Plan
Remedy:

- Establish procedures and expectations & teach them.
- Be consistent.
- Don’t play favorites.
- Follow through on consequences.
- Share discipline plan with administrator, students, and parents ahead of time.
- Treat your students as you would want to be treated!
Pencil Sharpening

1. Make sure you have sharp pencils in your table bin every day in the morning.

2. If you do not have a sharp pencil put it in the dull pencil bin and grab a sharp one from the fresh pencil bin.
What common procedures do you need to establish?
#6: Fearing Your Principal
Remedy:

- Get to know them and let them get to know you
- Give a “heads up”
- Use their experience - students, parents, families
- Value their guidance
- Partner and collaborator
- Your success is their success!
#5: Playing It Safe

- Close-mindedness
  - Not sharing ideas
  - Not being open to others’ ideas/suggestions
- Lack of flexibility
- Not asking for help when you need it
- Pretending everything’s fine when it’s really not
Remedy:

- Ask for help when you are unsure
- Don’t be afraid to admit you are wrong
- Be open to new ideas and suggestions (This benefits you and your students!)
- Remember, everyone has bad days (including students, parents, co-workers, administrators)
- We expect our students to take risks; we need to as well!
#4: Not Having a Plan

- Lessons
- Behavior
- Communication
- Emergencies
- What is Plan B, C, D, etc?
Remedy:

- Think and plan ahead
  - What will early finishers do?
  - What will you do with struggling students?
  - Have emergency substitute plans and copies of all necessary materials for at least four days
- Folder with student/parent contact information for emergencies
- Determine ways to best communicate with parents and do it!
#3: Forgetting Students Come First!

- Lots of distractions and “administrivia”
  - Evaluations/Growth Plans
  - Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)
  - Lesson plans
  - Testing
  - Parents
  - Budgets
  - Curriculum materials
Remedy:

- Advocate for your students
  - Share your observations, not your opinions
  - Back up your observations with data
- Prioritize what needs to be done
- Remember, it’s not all about you! Your students are the reason you are a teacher!
#2: Forgetting Parents Are Partners

- Your student is the parents’ prized treasure!
- You don’t want to be the bearer of bad news
  - Fear parents’ reactions
  - Don’t want to disappoint the parent
  - Don’t want parent to blame you
  - Don’t want parent to question your competence
Remedy:

- Be proactive! Parents can be your best advocate!
  - Communicate frequently
  - Use “I” statements
  - Discuss what works at home to build a bridge between home and school
- Set and respect boundaries
  - Do not give out cell phone number unless admin. approved
  - No Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. friends
- Remember, you all have the same goal in mind...to help the student be successful!
#1: Setting Unrealistic Expectations

- For your students
  - Fine balance between high expectations and realistic expectations

- For yourself
  - Unbalanced work and personal life
  - Comparing yourself to others
  - Saying “yes” to everything
Remedy:

- **Students**
  - Know your students!
  - Realize learning takes time
  - Normal is relative (not every student grew up the way you did)

- **You**
  - Take time for yourself!
  - Seek out a mentor
  - Remember, you can’t take your students home with you! You can only give them 100% during the day!
Questions?
Thank you for attending!

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