



# White Board

Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

## Back to School Preparation Ways for Teachers to Mentally Prepare for the End of Summer Vacation

*There is much to do when preparing for the new school year. Amidst the activities also take time to reconnect with some fundamentals of teaching.*

WHETHER SUMMER was spent taking classes, teaching summer school, traveling or relaxing at home, teachers' thoughts return to the classroom before the back to school sales return to the local mall. This time of reflection is valuable preparation for the new school year. Collecting new ideas, organizing material and reconnecting with teaching philosophies are three ways to prepare mentally for the first day of school.

### COLLECT NEW LESSON IDEAS

New and seasoned teachers alike are familiar with the idea of over preparing a lesson. Always having an extra activity, extension to a lesson or something different for times when plans go faster than expected is a basic staple to teaching. Summer vacation is a good time to search for and collect some new ideas for lessons.

A convenient way to start is with the World Wide Web. Perhaps there is a lesson that frequently ends earlier than expected or one that could use a new project or open ended research. Take an hour or two and web surf for lesson plans, assignments or project ideas. Or visit one of the many sites that provide collections of lessons, projects and units.

### ORGANIZE CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Once school starts it can be difficult to get organized. Starting early helps establish a routine that is easier to follow throughout the semester or school year. Some ideas to get an early start on organization include:

- Create daily folders for lesson plans, handouts or other materials. Laminate the folders so they withstand daily use

easier.

- Organize and label the file cabinet.
- Go through older lessons or collections of previous assignments and determine if they are valuable to keep or should be recycled.
- Use binders or file folders to neatly keep any collections of old assignments or ideas for lesson extensions.

### CREATE A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Take some time to become reacquainted with the philosophies that are considered pivotal in education. Read a brief summary about an educational philosopher or a book about the history of an educational system. Consider how these ideals do or do not affect today's classroom experience.

Reflect on a personal philosophy of teaching. Contemplate its relevance compared to experiences and knowledge since it was written. Review the philosophies or experiences that helped create the original version. Decide whether to revise it or create a new one.

Taking some time before the new school year begins to reflect, collect and organize is a worthwhile endeavor. It provides an opportunity for contemplation that may not be available during the school year. It also allows unhurried time for organizing and researching. Furthermore, when a teacher starts the new school year prepared, organized and connected to his or her philosophies that teacher is more able to be relaxed and less anxious during the stress of the first day of school.

*Tammy Andrew; Back to School; Teacher Tips / Training; Suite101.com; July 30, 2008; [ <http://tammy-andrew.suite101.com/back-to-school-preparation-for-teachers-a62362> ]; May 7, 2012*

## Top 10 To Do's for Teachers During Summer Vacation

Use the Summer  
to Prepare for Next Year

1. Get Away From It All
2. Try Something New
3. Do Something Just for Yourself
4. Reflect on Last Year's Teaching Experiences
5. Be Informed About Your Profession
6. Maintain Your Expertise
7. Choose a Few Lessons to Improve
8. Assess Your Classroom Procedures
9. Inspire Yourself
10. Take a Colleague to Lunch

**More details:** [http://712educators.about.com/od/teacherresources/tp/summer\\_activities.htm](http://712educators.about.com/od/teacherresources/tp/summer_activities.htm)

Summer 1 Term Ends - June 20  
Exams - June 21  
All Grades Due - June 25  
Summer 2 Term Begins - June 25

### WHITE BOARD

2011-12 Publication Dates  
First Monday of the Month

September 5	March 5
October 3	April 2
November 7	May 7
December 5	June 4
January 3	July 2
February 6	August 6

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# Disposition Development: A Neglected Voice for the Pursuit of Excellence among College Students

By Candice Dowd Barnes, EdD and Janet Filer, PhD

HAVE YOU EVER wondered what motivates students to come to class without reading and studying the assigned chapter? You are not alone. Faculty members across the nation are becoming increasingly challenged by students' lack of dispositions that enhance learning. Every discipline has learning standards and achievement expectations that help drive students' success. However, such expectations do not equal success. It is the motivation to pursue excellence, a work ethic that reflects the determination to solve problems, the attention to the smallest details, and the desire to be the very best that distinguishes students who make a difference in their given professions.

Unfortunately, many students miss class, come in late, fail to read and study assignments, text message during lectures, and do not value the body of knowledge shared in class. Such behaviors are influenced by dispositions detrimental to not only their learning, but also to their profession. Faculty members must pay significant attention to those student behaviors critical to the pursuit of excellence and those behaviors that sabotage learning.

## DISPOSITION AWARENESS

Many faculty members assume students enter the college classroom with the disposition to be successful. The reality is many students enter the classroom lacking the dispositions to be successful or make the necessary improvements to positively impact their learning outcomes. Although it's easy to identify such problems, it is harder to address them. Faculty must find ways to influence students' thoughts that impact their behaviors and achievement of the body of knowledge and skills sets prescribed by the discipline.

Students' awareness of disposition development is the first step. They must learn that dispositions involve habits of thinking which influence their actions and behaviors. Explicit instruction about specific dispositions becomes a critical part of such awareness. Students need to know how dispositions, such as initiative, diligence, integrity, responsibility, and determination,

influence their actions and behaviors in the classroom and how those actions and behaviors impact their level of achievement and pursuit of excellence.

## DEVELOPING AND VALUING DISPOSITIONS

Movement of students from an awareness level to a level where their thoughts become actions requires development. Faculty members must organize not only instruction that addresses the body of knowledge and skill sets, but also the dispositions that help the students' pay attention, work hard, take risks, and go beyond the expectations. This explicit instruction should naturally integrate with the existing course content and support students' valuing the dispositions, just as they value their content knowledge. More importantly, faculty must help students reflect on their commitment to transform disposition deficits into disposition strengths. This valuing of dispositions is a necessary part of disposition development. As such, disposition development should become an integral part of the faculty members' roles and responsibilities; a part that includes explicit discussions and assignments that represent the awareness, development, and valuing of dispositions.

## ASSESSMENT OF DISPOSITION

Formal and informal ways to measure student performance is a commonly accepted practice. We use tests, quizzes, projects and papers to measure the level or depth of knowledge. However, measuring dispositions is uniquely challenging because it is influenced greatly by the social and cultural context in which one lives. In fact, the difficulty in assessing dispositions is what keeps many faculty members from engaging in dialogue about disposition development or assessment.

One solution to consider is a multi-tiered system to include students' self-assessment and a formal assessment administered by faculty. This allows for students and faculty to reflect on the dispositions that are strengths and dispositions that impair students' learning and pursuits beyond the classroom. Assessment is an important part of the process. Some would argue the most important factor to consider.

In summary, students' attention to

dispositional development will enhance learning. Such learning should translate into more knowledgeable and skillful practitioners. Those students who internalize or value their dispositional development will more likely reach an optimal level of development. The students will also become more cognizant of the impact the dispositional development has on their pursuit of excellence post-graduation. Subsequently, it becomes critical that faculty take an active role in promoting disposition development and that the voices expressed about professional development no longer be neglected.

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*Candace Dowd Barnes and Janet Filer; Disposition Development: A Neglected Voice for the Pursuit of Excellence Among College Students; Faculty Focus, May 7, 2012; [ [http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/disposition-development-a-neglected-voice-for-the-pursuit-of-excellence-among-college-students/?utm\\_source=cheetah&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=2012.05.07%20-%20Faculty%20Focus%20Update](http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/disposition-development-a-neglected-voice-for-the-pursuit-of-excellence-among-college-students/?utm_source=cheetah&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2012.05.07%20-%20Faculty%20Focus%20Update) ]; May 7, 2012*

## CAMPUS VIEW

