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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.

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.