

Study Guide for *Your First Year*

This Study Guide is designed to help you put the ideas from *Your First Year* into practice in your own classroom. You can print this guide and work on it independently, with a mentor or other colleague, or with a group. Thank you for choosing to make a difference, and good luck with year one!

Section I: Before the Students Arrive: Structure, Structure, Structure

Chapter 1: Setting Up and Organizing Your Classroom (pp. 3-6)

1. What grade level will you be teaching, and how many students will be in your class? Sketch out a potential classroom arrangement that would allow you to be successful. For example, would you want desks to be clustered in groups or in a circle? Would you want to have a pillow area?



2. Make a list of the supplies your students will need to have every day to be successful in your class. Then write an S next to items that will be provided by the school, and an H next to items they will be expected to bring in from home. How will you be prepared when students show up with missing items?

- | | | |
|----|----|----|
| a. | e. | i. |
| b. | f. | j. |
| c. | g. | k. |
| d. | h. | l. |

Chapter 2: Developing Your Procedures (pp. 7-10)

3. Using the guidelines on pages 8 and 9, draft your classroom procedures on separate paper. Your procedures should cover everything from using supplies, to turning in homework, to using the bathroom, etc. Remember that you can change these in-flight if needed, but it's important to have them planned before day 1.

If you get stuck, see which ones might already be listed in your school handbook, or ask a mentor or colleague for advice. You could also try asking the Twitterverse with hashtag #NTchat (new teacher chat). For example, you could ask for suggestions on bathroom policies for middle schoolers.

4. Now go back to the procedures you drafted and run them by your mentor or a trusted colleague. Make revisions if needed.

Chapter 3: Developing Your Rules (pp. 11-15)

5. Draft some rules for your classroom on separate paper.

6. Now filter your rules using these reflection questions from page 14 of the book: *Do you feel comfortable consistently enforcing the rules you have chosen? Do you need to make varied rules for different classes that you teach? Did you choose rules that you think your students will also be able to take ownership of?*

Chapter 4: Classroom Management: Prepare Your Mindset (pp. 16-24)

7. Look at the list on page 18 for building relationships with students. Which three of those sound like ones you'll definitely want to or be able to try? Can you think of any others?

1.

2.

3.

Others:

8. Reflect on the house metaphor from this chapter. Why are relationships the foundation of the house? Why are high and specific expectations necessary to build the house? And finally, how can lack of consistency harm the house's structure?

Chapter 5: When Students Follow the Rules... or Don't (pp. 25-32)

9. Brainstorm a consequences system that might work for you. (Refer to the examples on pages 30-31 for help—tally system, recording points on a tablet, etc.)

Chapter 6: Lesson Planning and Instruction (pp. 33-43)

10. Does your school have a required lesson plan format? If not, think of the format that will work for you (perhaps one you were given in grad school or one you found online and modified). How can you make sure you have enough planned in a lesson to avoid downtime?

11. How can you make lessons so engaging that they naturally prevent misbehavior? Brainstorm some of your favorite methods for making learning more active for students.

Section II: The Students Are Here... Now What?

Chapter 7: Explaining and Practicing Procedures (pp. 47-52)

12. What steps do the authors give for implementing structures in your classroom? Why are practice and modeling so important?

Chapter 8: Managing Your Classroom (pp. 53-69)

13. Reflect on the teachers you had growing up. Did any of them tell you about their bad moods and act like the students themselves? How can managing yourself and staying upbeat improve the dynamic of your classroom?

14. Think about the subtle steering and proximity techniques offered in this chapter. How are they more effective than calling out the misbehavior? Try it the next time a student misbehaves in your class, and write your thoughts on how it went here:

15. Hopefully you won't encounter "what if" situations, but if you do, make sure you know your school's protocol. For example, what is your school's policy on gun violence? Write it here. It's always important to know the protocols, but we hope you won't ever need to implement them.

16. The next section is on repairing and rebuilding. Why is it important to repair when in doubt? Reflect below.

Section III: Working with Adults

Chapter 9: Working with Administrators (pp. 73-76)

17. Is your principal proactive about meeting with teachers? If not, how can you proactively take the opportunity to interact with him or her? Brainstorm some ideas here:

Chapter 10: Working with Peers (pp. 77-79)

18. Do you have a positive mentor with whom you like working? If not, what positive colleagues can you seek out for help?

Chapter 11: The Empowerers (pp. 80-84)

19. Find an empowerer in your school or even in the Twitterverse and reach out to him or her. Write how it goes here. How can you continue a relationship with this person to motivate you and help you improve?

Chapter 12: Don't Be Afraid to Repair: Students, Co-Workers, Principal (pp. 85-88)

20. Some people worry that apologizing to students will make them seem weak or give students the upper hand, but why do the authors say it is so important to apologize and not be afraid to repair?

Chapter 13: Parents: Friend Not Foe (pp. 89-94)

21. List one way you can build relationships with parents early in the year, besides back to school night. Then give it a try!

22. How can you fit positive phone calls into your busy week? Try one and reflect on how it goes here:

Section IV: Continuing to Reflect, Refine, and Grow on Your Journey

Chapter 14: Midflight Corrections (pp. 97-105)

23. As the authors say, good teachers reflect each day on how their lessons went—on where we stood, the tone of our voice, whether our instructions and explanations were clear, etc. Why is this so important? What method will you use for reflecting this year (quiet time, journaling, blogging, etc.)?

24. What is the difference between tweaking and resetting?

25. How will you know if it's time to hit the reset button?

Chapter 15: Be a Sponge (pp. 106-110)

26. How often will you be observed this year? What other opportunities will you be given to improve your practice this year? What other opportunities can you find yourself?

Chapter 16: It Always Starts with You (pp. 111-113)

27. Is there anything bothering you about your teaching situation this year that doesn't seem to be in your control? What can you do about it anyway?

Chapter 17: What's Next? (pp. 114-116)

28. As you move forward on your journey, you'll have good days and bad. Remind yourself why you chose to become a teacher and write it here. Refer back to it when you need motivation to get through a tough day.

Remember, you have chosen the most special profession. Thank you for choosing to matter and choosing to make a difference!