

The practice of inviting parents, classroom assistants and volunteers into a classroom is not new. Many books suggest teachers invite parents and community members into their classrooms. Most stop short of providing specific tasks they might take on and the 'how to' for managing a small group of students.

In the late 1990s, a person found ideas for parents in classrooms limited to three common tasks: listen to kids read, check papers or provide cookies or cupcakes for class parties. Most gave little thought to using parents or volunteers as group or classroom assistants.

The majority of competitors in this market are not stand-alone books. A volunteer and/or teacher will find online information such as *45 Tasks for Parent Volunteers in the Classroom* by Michelle Fabio. They will need to locate the how-to-do explanations elsewhere.

The New York city Learning Leaders program created a guide in 2010. *A Volunteer's Resource Guide for Early Grades: Elementary Instructional Support*, written by Digna Sanchez, is a New York City Public School publication (\$29.99). It provides information shared in their training sessions and covers expectations, obstacles, working relationships, ways to work with children and home help. No reviews are available.

Educating America's two books explore the how-to for volunteers in classrooms. Together these award-winning books provide multiple strategies that create effective assistance by laying out what to do, when to do it, and how to keep students engaged. They stress the positive outcomes teachers receive from including adult volunteers, a seldom-mentioned fact in other books or online guidelines.

The *Educating America* books use a unique format. The step-by-step information prepares assistants from the moment they enter the school until they leave the campus. Teachers, schools, or districts using the book, *Educating America: 101 Strategies for Adult Assistants in K-8 Classrooms*, will be able to set up comprehensive, successful training sessions. They are guided to discuss ways to prepare for groups, set expectations, communicate with students, ask pertinent questions, and deal with misbehavior. The books also explore the value of higher level thinking skills, monitoring students progress, and even the best way to cleanup at the end of the activity.

The practical, easy-to-use ideas and the informal formats help assistants ease into helping students. The book shares numerous real life examples to clarify key points of information.

Educating America Desktop Flipbook is a unique guide that rests on the table beside a teacher or group leader. It takes the major points from the book and outlines them as sequenced reminders. One side provides guidelines for adult leaders; the other shows encouraging reminders for students. There is no comparable publication for the flipbook.

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