

Schools need our support as we work to strengthen and energize our education system. Inviting adults in as assistants fills a need and it's free! Use this award-winning how-to book to maximize the results of their involvement in every classroom.

The topics in this unique hands-on book will help you initiate or revitalize classroom helpers. Share the ideas presented in this book which are sequenced in the order an assistant would use them whether working with the entire class, a small group or one-to-one. Zoom in on specific topics knowing each chapter may also stand alone. Read on, dig in, become part of the solution.

Chapter 1: Prepare to Assist

Clear guidelines strengthen understanding in whatever we undertake. Classroom assistants achieve better results when they plan ahead. How should a meeting place look? What materials must be prepared/organized? Does the voice level in a group really matter? Start right. Strengthen your interactions by anticipating student needs as well as your own.

Chapter 2: Set Expectations

Maximize any group or one-to-one meeting by knowing where you're heading. Goals need signposts along the way so we know we're on the correct path.

Scan the question-answer format in this chapter. How do you select your primary goals? Where do you seat students for their best learning? What responsibilities belong to the students? What responsibilities belong to the group leader? Refine your expectations.

Chapter 3: Communicate Effectively

How can we share information if no one is listening? We can't. Effective communication is more than speaking, talking, and listening; it's also our attitude and how we effectively manage student interactions.

Delve into this chapter's discussion on the importance of starting a group with control and purpose. Select ideas from a variety of ways to praise student accomplishments. Read about nine signals and other techniques that encourage active student listening and participation. Control your group through win-win communications.

Chapter 4: Expand Questioning Strategies

Asking and answering questions are important student skills. Variety keeps the process interesting. Get creative. Incorporate a variety of strategies: think-pair-share, random answering, 'wait time', follow-up questions, brainstorming, and Bloom's classification. Broaden your skills to keep activities interesting and on target.

Chapter 5: Deal with Misbehavior

The most challenging task for many assistants is dealing with students who are off-task. We need a plan. Learn why students misbehave. Consider how to help them rejoin a group when they move off-task. Utilize the fifteen factors shared in this chapter to effectively increase control of small groups while keeping the students responsible for their actions.

Chapter 6: Expand Thinking Skills

How do you think? Do you use a variety of techniques? It's essential for classroom assistants to engage student thinking. We strengthen student interactions by using: observation, communication, com-

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parison, organization, inference, and application skills. Concrete examples provide a variety of ways to engage student thinking.

Chapter 7: Monitor Student Progress

Once student work begins, the assistant’s job gets into full swing. It’s important to check on student progress throughout the entire time you are with them. Watch for needed adjustments. Customize activities to meet varied group needs; break down student tasks into smaller tasks when students are struggling or add enhancements for early finishers. Our goal is individual success and good use of their time.

Chapter 8: Clarify Details

Clear guidelines + focused procedures = student success. Learn ways to engage students through clear goals and expectations, a positive attitude, and the use of ‘wait time’. Keep student discussions orderly and accept a variety of on-task responses. Emphasize the need for a quiet work time as well as quality of thought and quality of presentation of work. Make every minute count.

Chapter 9: Wrap-Up

Now you’re finished; or are you? The end of the activity also requires planning and organization. Don’t get left with an unfinished task or with the clean-up! Incorporate the practical chapter tips on clean up, ending an activity, getting closure, and dismissing students with control. Read ways to evaluate student performance before you walk away.

Chapter 10: Mostly for Teachers

What’s in this book for a teacher? How will assistants impact a classroom? Planning for classroom assistants is a teacher role most of the time. Many questions must be addressed. How and when will assistants be used? How will the classroom be organized to accommodate the added adults using the space? What topics are important during training sessions? Will the classroom schedule need tweaking? What other support do assistants need?

Chapter 11: Mostly for Classroom Assistants

Classroom assistants have many questions to be addressed. How do I begin? Are there classroom do’s and don’ts? What’s the school dress code, use of my electronic devices in the classroom, confidentiality issues? Assistants must understand that the teachers are their mentors and that school and classroom guidelines must be followed.

Chapter 12: Mostly for Parents

Parents who work in their child’s classroom have unique roles. While in the class room it’s important to leave their parent hat at the door. At home their duties include establishing homework routines, home responsibilities, and a ‘school place’. Their involvement reinforces the importance of education and models their love of learning.

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