

Effective Classroom Teachers and What They Do

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*A Comprehensive Program of
Professional Growth
for
Classroom Teachers*

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What They Do

Successful teachers are aware that the learning process is a very complex matter and that effective teaching involves a synthesis of several essential components. No teacher can be truly effective without on-going professional growth and development and it is the professional duty of all educators to constantly examine and evaluate their knowledge and skills and their commitment to student learning. This professional growth instrument represents several years of research and professional interaction with successful classroom teachers. It has been designed to assist teachers in achieving maximum effectiveness in their own classrooms.

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Rationale

This instrument is intended to be a vehicle of professional growth for classroom teachers at both the elementary and the secondary school levels. Its purpose is not to evaluate or appraise teacher performance although teachers themselves may wish to use it as part of their self-evaluation process. Rather, the instrument is designed to assist teachers in identifying undeveloped areas of responsibility in accordance with recognized standards of practice in the teaching profession. Once identified, these areas can then be used to develop a game plan for self-improvement and professional growth. An effective growth plan is based on a comparison between the expectations of a classroom teacher and the areas of responsibility which are actually being adequately addressed. Professional growth is the process by which undeveloped or neglected areas are addressed, developed and improved.

Successful teachers are aware that the learning process is a very complex matter and that effective teaching involves a synthesis of several essential components. There is an expectation that teachers have a certain commitment to their students and that they show a genuine interest in ongoing student learning. Their professional knowledge includes personal knowledge of their students and specific student needs as well as knowledge of the curriculum, subject matter and relevant legislation. Teachers must know how to plan effectively and they must know how to apply their professional knowledge in the classroom to develop and refine teaching practice and method. They are expected to show community leadership and to demonstrate a commitment to personal learning, professional growth and self-improvement. This professional growth instrument classifies a classroom teacher's duties and responsibilities in five broad areas:

- 1. Commitment to Students and Student Learning**
- 2. Professional Knowledge and Planning**
- 3. Teaching Practice and Method**
- 4. Leadership and Community**
- 5. Ongoing Professional Learning**

Each of the five areas is intended to be a fundamental component of the classroom teacher's professional growth plan and the instrument should be used as a means of identifying specific growth areas within the basic components. Typically, 50% to 75% of total expectations are being addressed in varying degrees of proficiency while about 25% will require specific attention to bring them on board. The five sub-indicators and twenty criteria under each component provide the detail required to develop specific growth plans. The scoring procedure outlined on page 5 should be used to develop the Task-Orientation Rating and an Objectives Action Plan.

Scoring and Evaluation Procedure

Use the procedure below to develop the Task-Orientation Scale on page 16 of this booklet. Your Task-Orientation Rating and your Objectives Action Plan will derive from this scale.

1. Under each of the five components of your Growth Plan there are five sub-indicators. Under each of these sub-indicators are four criteria representing teacher expectations.
2. Score each of the four criteria according to the scale given, from None/Never to All/Always. Write this score in the appropriate box in the column to the right.
3. Reminders and comments can be written on the line below each indicator with a view to finding opportunities for professional growth.
4. Write the total score for each indicator in the circle provided.
5. Repeat this process for each of the five components in your Growth Plan.
6. Total the five indicator scores for each component. Write this score at the top of the page in the shaded circle provided.
7. Transfer your scores to the Task-Orientation Scale on page 16. Scores for each indicator can be shaded into the five graphs using a bar graph format.
8. Write your scores for each of the five components in the five circles provided and the total of these scores in the circle indicated. Your Task-Orientation Rating on a scale of 1 to 10 is obtained by dividing your Total Score by 20. This rating is correct to two decimal places.
9. Your Task-Orientation Rating does not represent your quality or ability as a classroom teacher. For example, a teacher who scores 8.75 is not necessarily more capable than one who scores 5.25. This score is intended to rate the areas you are currently addressing against the areas that still need to be developed. 5.00 to 7.50 is considered to be the normal range.
10. Blank squares on your bar graphs represent areas for professional growth. Choose the least developed area on each of the five graphs and write the names of these areas in the appropriate place on page 17 along with brief notes as to how you will address them over the coming year. These now become your personal, professional objectives.
11. Objectives that have been identified on page 17 can now be planned in detail using the Action Plan forms on pages 18 to 22.
12. This growth instrument may also be used in conference with your principal as a basis of discussion and a collaborative approach to setting personal and professional goals.

1. Commitment to Students and Student Learning

All classroom teachers must ensure that students are educationally well served under their guidance and direction. This is a serious duty and obligation under the law. Effective teachers take positive steps to know and understand what students need and to be aware of individual differences that might affect their learning and development. They are also responsible for the safety and security of students under their care and it is essential that they establish a good rapport with them and develop appropriate classroom routines. Professional educators fully understand that education involves far more than academic matters. The influence of a capable and effective teacher is instrumental in assisting students to develop life skills, a desire for excellence, a love of learning, personal integrity and self esteem. Under their direction students will develop responsible attitudes towards citizenship, cultural differences and the common values of our society.

A kind but firm approach and a caring attitude towards your students will allow you to establish proper order and control. This is essential to an appropriate learning environment and for the safety and security of your students. Take time to apprise yourself of individual differences and be willing to make changes and modifications for individual students when a need for this is indicated. The physical condition of your classroom is important as well. Damage to desks and equipment needs to be dealt with, materials and supplies should be stored safely and the safety and comfort of students should be your main consideration in deciding on an appropriate classroom arrangement. Students should be encouraged to take some responsibility for the general appearance and cleanliness of the room.

Your commitment to students is demonstrated by your interest in them as individuals. They will need opportunities to express personal aspirations and they will need guidance on where their talents and abilities can lead. As a classroom teacher you have a unique opportunity to assist them in developing life skills and the values of our culture. An appreciation of excellence, respect for the environment, aesthetic and moral sensitivity, responsibility for one's own progress and personal integrity are essential educational goals. Research has consistently shown that student progress and achievement are greatly influenced by their feelings of self esteem. All students need to experience a measure of success and they need to be reassured that mistakes are merely new opportunities for learning.

Good citizenship has always been regarded as one of the most valuable goals of education. You will want to encourage your students to discuss their rights and responsibilities as proud citizens. This will lead them to understand and appreciate cultural differences and to respect the values and beliefs of others. Peer relationships are important to them and can be powerful influences on their values and attitudes. As their teacher, you will be able to guide them and advise them about their responsibilities in peer relationships and the importance of being a good example to others.

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