

Mentoring News

November 2008

Who's Who in Monona Grove – Lynn Nelson

What is your background and experience in Monona Grove?

- Since 1986 I've been involved in the field of education in some way.
- Teaching Degree from St. Cloud State (PE, Health, Coaching)
- Worked part-time as a Special Education Assistant for Madison Schools for 6 years (Part-time was a perfect fit for me since I had two small kids!)
- Substituted for MG from '96 to '05 in MANY places in MANY different areas
- Became part of the MG Clerical Team fall of '05 (Winnequah MS for two years then to my current position here.)
- What do I do now? . . . anything Bill Breisch asks me to do. (especially order books on Amazon!)

Why do new teachers need to know who you are?

- I keep track of the New Hires and any trainings they attend. Hey - if they want to get paid for any of those hours - I'm their friend!
- I am involved with helping the MG Teacher Mentor Program. I register our teachers for any outside workshops they might attend. I monitor the grant money we are so blessed to have as well as process the stipends for our Teacher Mentors and Advisors.

What are a few words of wisdom for our new teachers?

- Since I'm a parent of two MG alumni - I would ask the teachers to keep the kids first AND please challenge them so they are ready for whatever they are heading for after HS.

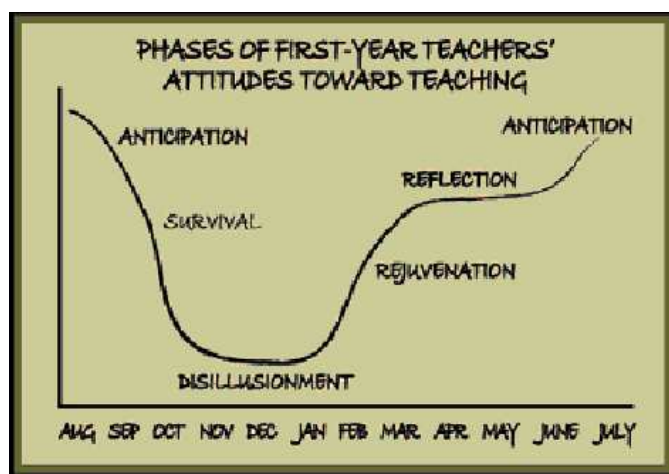


Lynn Nelson

administrative assistant
to Bill Breisch

Phases of a Teacher's Attitude

Maybe you've seen graph below showing the phases teachers tend to go through during their first few years of teaching. If you're starting to feel a little more stressed or less excited about the daily routine of teaching, you're in good company. Hang in there and contact your mentor if you'd like special support with prioritizing or handling job-related situations.



Points to Ponder

What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress and celebrate success?

Action steps to take include:

- Make sure to clarify the difference between learning goals and learning activities.
- Establish rubrics for each learning goal.
- Help students own their learning goals.
- Use a formative approach to student assessment.
- Have students chart their progress for their learning goals.
- Celebrate progress/ knowledge growth.

As you prepare for parent-teacher conferences, make sure you are able to communicate your learning goals effectively and clearly. Have evidence of student growth to share with parents to explain student grades. Encourage parents to question their students on what they want to accomplish in your class. Learning is a three-way partnership between teachers, students, and parents.

The Parent-Teacher Conference

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr291.shtml

**** November's focus ****

Wisconsin Teacher Standards

#6 – Teachers communicate well

#10 – Teachers are connected with other teachers and their community

Getting parents to attend the conference is only half the battle, however. Once they've arrived, you have to make it clear that their involvement is vital to their child's success. Experienced teachers offer the following quick tips to help get your conferences off on the right foot -- and keep them there:

- Dress professionally.
- Start every conference on time.
- Make it clear to parents that you like their child.
- Remain calm and positive.
- Listen carefully and reflectively.
- Emphasize a spirit of collaboration and cooperation.

Do's and Don'ts of Parent Teacher Conferences

1. **Do** dress professionally. Be prompt and prepared to begin.
 2. **Do** begin by expressing your appreciation for the fact that the parents came to the conference. Establish a tone of goodwill and friendly cooperation as quickly as you can.
 3. **Do** remember the child is very important to the parents. Focus on the student's aptitude, special talents, improvements, and potential.
 4. **Do** convey the attitude that the child's welfare is your primary concern.
 5. **Do** state the problem in simple, factual terms. Express your desire to work together for a successful resolution.
 6. **Do** allow upset parents to speak first. Only after they've shared all their concerns will they be able to listen to what you have to say or begin to work on a solution to the problem.
 7. **Do** be sure to state what you've done to correct the situation.
 8. **Do** listen! Give them your full attention. Show friendly and attentive non-verbal language.
 9. **Do** end the conference by recapping the points you covered. Determine what you'll do to follow-up on the conference.
1. **Don't** use educational jargon.
 2. **Don't** ask questions that are too personal.
 3. **Don't** talk about other students or compare their child to theirs.
 4. **Don't** try to outtalk parents. You may make your point, but the parents will not listen to you.
 5. **Don't** interrupt parents.
 6. **Don't** forget to document the conference and file your notes.
 7. **Don't** neglect to follow through on the decisions that you and the parents made.
 8. **Don't** divulge any confidential information you have learned.



Adapted from *The First-Year Teacher's Survival Guide*, by Julia G. Thompson