

the unauthorized **TEACHER'S** **SURVIVAL GUIDE**

second edition

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NEW AND EXPERIENCED EDUCATORS!

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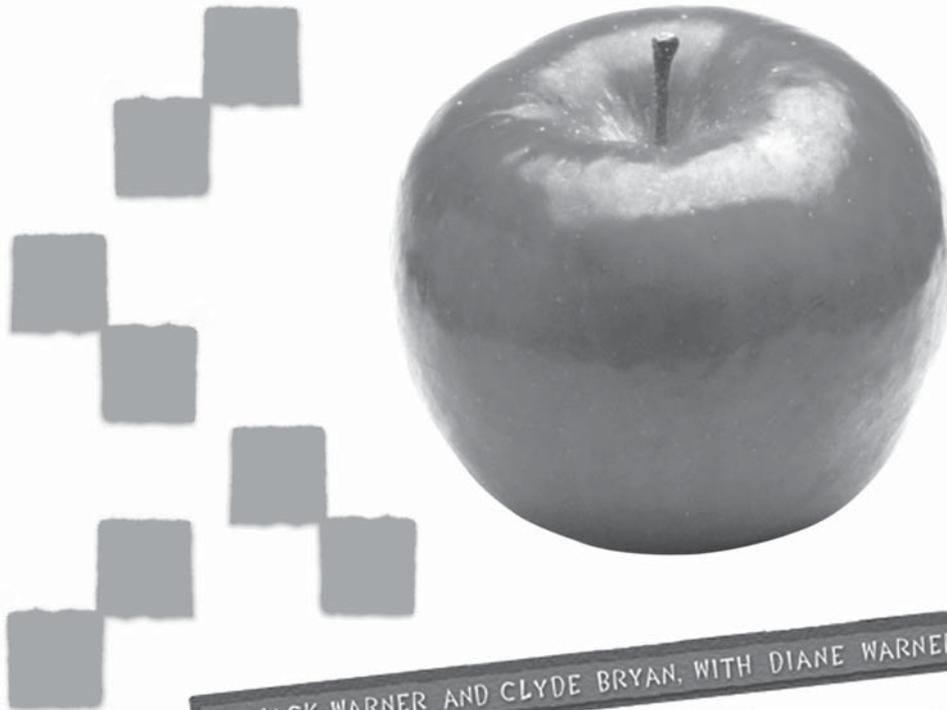
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- BUILD RAPPORT WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS.
- BALANCE TEACHING WITH YOUR PERSONAL LIFE.
- LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS.
- MASTER THE BASICS FOR A SUCCESSFUL YEAR!

BY JACK HARRELL AND CLYDE BRYAN, WITH DIANE MAJNER

Park Avenue

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BY JACK WARNER AND CLYDE BRYAN, WITH DIANE WARNER

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Acquisitions and Development Editor: Lori Cates

Cover Designer: Katy Bodenmiller

Interior Designer: Aleata Howard

Page Layout Technician: Carolyn J. Newland

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Dedication

With love to our children, grandchildren,
and all those yet to come.

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About This Book

The mission of this book is to save you years of trial-and-error so that you'll not only "survive," but "thrive," in your teaching career.

Whether you're a first-year teacher or an experienced old-timer, we offer practical, user-friendly advice to help prevent teacher burnout. You'll learn how to fit in with the staff at your school, establish rapport with your students and their parents, handle discipline problems, and manage the stress of teaching.

You'll also learn inside secrets of managing your time, juggling a teacher's many hats, and coping with extracurricular duties. Other nitty-gritty issues are covered as well, including how to prepare for a substitute and create a positive classroom environment.

We think teaching is the noblest profession of all and we want you to thrive in your career as a teacher.

Contents

About This Book	v
Introduction	xiii
Part I: Preparing Yourself for Teaching	1
Chapter 1: Fitting In with the Staff	3
Five Ways to Jump-Start Your Year	3
<i>Become Familiar with the Community</i>	3
<i>Read Up on Policy</i>	4
<i>Read Up on Your Students</i>	4
<i>Become Familiar with the School</i>	4
<i>Become Familiar with the “Buzz Words”</i>	5
Your New Coworkers	5
<i>The Teaching Staff</i>	5
<i>The Principal</i>	9
<i>The Vice Principal</i>	9
<i>The School Secretary</i>	10
<i>The Custodian</i>	11
<i>The Cafeteria Staff</i>	13
<i>The Teaching Aides</i>	14
<i>The Resource Teacher</i>	15
<i>The Librarian or Media Specialist</i>	16
<i>The Teaching Specialists</i>	17
<i>Professional Help</i>	17
<i>The School Nurse</i>	17
<i>The School Bus Driver</i>	18
<i>The School Board</i>	19
Conclusion	19



Chapter 2: Rapport with Your Students	21
The Mechanics	21
<i>Learning Names</i>	22
<i>Seating</i>	22
<i>Daily Schedule</i>	22
<i>Class Rules</i>	23
<i>Your Dress</i>	24
<i>Your Voice</i>	24
<i>Body Language</i>	25
<i>Mannerisms</i>	25
<i>Humor</i>	26
The Caring	28
<i>Don't Prejudge Any Student</i>	28
<i>Avoid Sexism</i>	29
<i>Respect Your Students' Religious Backgrounds</i>	30
<i>Respect Your Children's Ethnic and Cultural Backgrounds</i>	30
<i>Awards, Rewards, and Praise</i>	31
<i>Make Your Students Feel Like Part of a Family</i>	33
<i>Demonstrate Self-Esteem</i>	35
Conclusion	35
Chapter 3: Rapport with the Parents	37
Opportunities to Meet Parents	37
<i>Back-to-School Night or Open House</i>	37
<i>Parent-Teacher Conferences</i>	41
<i>Kindergarten Orientations</i>	46
Report Cards	48
Problem Parents	49
Parent Volunteer Groups	51
Conclusion	52





Chapter 4: Preparing for Those Extracurriculars	53
Field Trips	53
<i>Planning the Field Trip</i>	53
<i>Recruiting Volunteers</i>	54
<i>Sending Permission Slips</i>	54
<i>Notifying the School Staff</i>	55
<i>Supervising the Field Trip</i>	56
Fund-Raising	59
Classroom Guests and Outside Speakers	61
School Dances	62
Team Sports Events	64
Clubs and Organizations	66
Conclusion	66
Chapter 5: The Teacher's Many Hats	67
Surrogate Parent	67
Friend	69
Social Worker	70
Provider	71
Psychologist	72
Nurse	74
Emergency Worker	76
Conclusion	77
Part II: Preparing Your Classroom	79
Chapter 6: The Classroom Environment	81
The General Room Environment	81
<i>Traffic Flow</i>	81
<i>Desk Arrangements</i>	82
<i>Sound Control</i>	84
<i>Plants</i>	84
<i>Incandescent Lighting</i>	84
<i>Room Temperature</i>	85





<i>Smells</i>	85
Walls and Bulletin Boards	85
Interest Centers	87
<i>The Reading Center</i>	88
<i>The Reference Center</i>	90
<i>The Audiovisual Center</i>	90
<i>The Science Center</i>	91
<i>The Writing Center</i>	92
<i>The Math Center</i>	92
<i>The Pet Center</i>	93
<i>The Computer Center</i>	94
<i>The Game Center</i>	94
Conclusion	95
Chapter 7: Teachers' Supplies	97
What You Will Need	97
<i>For Your Desk</i>	97
<i>For Your Filing Cabinet</i>	98
<i>For Your Supply Cabinet</i>	98
<i>Decorating/Teaching Supplies</i>	99
Supply Sources	99
Conclusion	102
Chapter 8: How to Prepare for a Substitute	103
Emergency Lesson Plans for Your Substitute	103
General Information for Your Substitute	105
A Few Helpful Hints	106
Conclusion	108
Part III: The Big Three: Stress, Discipline, and Time Management	109
Chapter 9: Managing Your Stress	111
Lighten Up!	113
Relaxation Techniques	114





Get Exercise Every Day	116
Eat Well	117
Keep a Positive Attitude and a Sense of Humor	118
Know When to Seek Professional Help	119
<i>Your Body</i>	119
<i>Your Behavior</i>	120
<i>Your Emotions</i>	120
<i>Your Thoughts</i>	120
Conclusion	120
Chapter 10: Discipline and Classroom Control	121
Positive Reinforcements and Negative Consequences	121
<i>Classroom Rules</i>	122
<i>Positive Reinforcement</i>	122
<i>Phone Calls and Notes to Parents</i>	125
<i>Negative Consequences</i>	126
Severe Discipline Problems	129
<i>Vulgar Language</i>	130
<i>Sexual Misbehavior</i>	130
<i>Stealing</i>	131
<i>Drugs and Alcohol</i>	133
<i>Weapons</i>	134
<i>Gangs</i>	134
<i>Violence</i>	135
“Keep Schools Safe” Violence Prevention	136
Conclusion	140
Chapter 11: Time Management	141
Learn to Prioritize	141
<i>Ask Your Teaching Aide to Help Grade Papers and Tests</i>	143
<i>Correct Every Third Paper</i>	143





<i>Do Brief Assessments of Written Essay Compositions</i>	143
<i>Use the "Circle Your Best 10 Lines" Method of Grading</i> ..	143
<i>Use Volunteers to Help Grade</i>	144
<i>Use Alternative Methods of Authentic Assessment</i>	144
<i>Make Quality Lesson Plans in Less Time</i>	144
<i>Don't Let Bulletin Boards Consume Your Extra Time</i>	145
Learn to Organize	146
<i>Your Desk</i>	146
<i>Filing Cabinet</i>	146
<i>Storage Cabinets</i>	147
<i>Your Calendar</i>	148
Learn to Set Goals	148
Conclusion	149
Part IV: Words of Encouragement	151
Chapter 12: Ask the Old Pros	153
Teaching Issues	153
Discipline Issues	159
Issues with Parents	161
Administrative and Coworker Issues	165
Personal Issues	168
Chapter 13: "I Think I Can...I Think I Can..."	173
Glossary: All Those Buzz Words!	175
Appendix: Helpful Web Sites for Teachers	189
Organizations	189
Resources	190
Support Groups	194
Violence Prevention	195
Bibliography	197
Index	200

Introduction

Here you are, a teacher with a diploma in one hand and a teaching contract in the other, filled with idealistic expectations. After a few days on the job, however, the smile fades, the rosy glow turns to ashen gray, and your gut tightens as you encounter the “real world” of education. Whether you are a new teacher or an experienced one facing a new assignment, your job can seem overwhelming at first.

“They never told me it would be like this,” cries the neophyte.

“This new situation is so different from my last,” comments the old-timer facing a different school district and new grade level.

Your student-teaching experience may have gone well, with help from your master teacher. The small class seemed controllable with its bright, cooperative students. But your student teaching didn’t prepare you for your real-life class of 34 students, many with learning and behavioral problems. “Why do these kids seem so big?” you whisper to yourself.

A diploma and teaching certificate entitle you to be called “teacher,” but it takes many years of experience to actually become a teacher. Teaching is an honorable and rewarding profession, and it should be fun. For many of us, however, the job isn’t much fun at first because of the overwhelming responsibilities. Teaching is a job that never seems to get “done.” The custodians finish their daily routine and wave as they drive out of the parking lot; their duties are done until tomorrow. Ah, but the teacher’s day is much different.

Here is a typical scenario for the kind of day you may be having: At the end of the teaching day, when you’re physically and mentally exhausted and your desk is a mass of papers, you still need to attend a staff meeting. Finally, you pick up your



daughter at child care, stop by the grocery store to buy Pampers and milk, help prepare dinner, and clean up the kitchen. Then you bathe the baby and get her off to bed. By this time, it's 8 o'clock, the "perfect" time of day to grade papers and write in details for tomorrow's lesson plans.

You struggle to pull your brain together long enough to finish these plans, being distracted, meanwhile, by a movie on television in the next room. Your "significant other" stares at the TV all alone, again.

The day's crises flash through your mind: "I should have known Timothy would throw up. I should have sent him to the nurse's office right after lunch. I should have had a project ready for Jennifer and Jason—they always seem to finish the reading lesson too soon. I should have noticed that Jimmy and Mario were playing way too rough during recess and that someone would get hurt...." So many "should have's."

Then there are all your questions:

- "How will I ever fit in with the staff?"
- "What do they expect from me?"
- "How do I handle 'problem' parents?"
- "What should I be doing about the field trip next week?"
- "How do I prepare for the parent conferences?"
- "How much time do teachers usually spend in preparation? Why does it seem to take me so long?"
- "What happened to my home life? Will I ever be able to relax and enjoy my family in the evening?"
- "Do I dare ask my aide to watch the class if I need to handle a student's behavior?"
- "How can I cope?"
- "How do I stay organized?"



- “What should I do if I think one of my students has head lice? Can I get it, too? What if I bring it home to the family?”
- “How do I order videos for science? Is there a special form to fill out?”
- “What if I get sick? Who do I call? How will I prepare lesson plans in time for a ‘sub’?”
- “How do I lighten up and keep a little humor in the day?”

If these questions sound familiar, we’re here to help. Although it usually takes years of experience, mostly trial-and-error, to finally feel in control, we want to share our 50-plus years of experience with you so that you can feel confident from the start.

Many teachers never do reach this level of confidence and self-esteem because they give up too soon. This is known as “teacher burnout.” The overload of responsibilities, so common in our country, becomes overwhelming. The teacher is required to wear many hats: Substitute Parent, Social Worker, Reading Specialist, Nurse, Playground Supervisor, Family Counselor, Disciplinarian, and more. In many other countries, the teacher is required to wear only one hat: Teacher. In this country, however, your hat rack is full. In the chapters that follow, we will help you juggle your hats and find humor in it as well.

We want you to be proud of your profession even though the rewards of teaching may not be immediately apparent. The fact is, however, that you can have a positive impact on the lives of the students entrusted to you each year, the proof of which may not show up until they are grown adults.

Guy Dowd, recent national Teacher of the Year, offers pertinent perspectives on the teaching profession. He asks the question “Which teacher impressed you the most when you



were in school? The one who taught you the most facts? Or the one who made you feel good about yourself, who had your best interest at heart?”

Mr. Dowd feels that as a teacher you are one of the greatest sources of influence on a child's life. He feels the teacher's role is a sacred one and that we should truly care for each student, building his or her self-esteem.

If we all care as much for our students as Guy Dowd does, we will realize that we who have chosen the teaching profession are in a marathon, not a sprint. The influence you have on a student's life will mold him as an adult. What an opportunity we have as teachers in our society! What a rewarding profession we have chosen!

Remember that the impressions you make in your students' lives, much like a computer virus, may lay dormant for many years, surfacing in their adulthood. Don't ever feel guilty at the end of a teaching day, thinking you have failed. If you made a difference in one child's life that day, you were a success!

Our goal in this book is to help you feel comfortable and confident as a teacher. Whether you are embarking on your very first year of teaching or you're an experienced teacher who is still struggling with the complexities of the teaching life, we want to encourage you. We want you to learn to pace yourself for the long haul, realizing that each teaching day is a success in itself.

Your college professors have prepared you for your teaching career by giving you a solid background in theory, methods, and applications, and you got a taste of the real world in your student-teaching experience. This book picks up where your college training left off by offering practical ways to deal with the countless nonacademic aspects of the teaching profession.



There is an old saying that “A wise man benefits from experience, but a wiser man benefits from the experiences of others.” Our goal is to help “tutor the teacher” by answering your questions, relieving your doubts, and replacing your frustrations with confidence.

Keep your sense of humor and remember: Teaching is a marathon and *not* a sprint!





Part I

Preparing Yourself for Teaching

Chapter 1: Fitting In with the Staff

Chapter 2: Rapport with Your Students

Chapter 3: Rapport with the Parents

Chapter 4: Preparing for Those Extracurriculars

Chapter 5: The Teacher's Many Hats

