

Staying Ahead of the Induction Game

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‘Everyone has the potential to move on from their learning place’

(Masters, 2012)

It’s a privilege in any career when you have the undivided attention of an entire room of people, ready to accept what you say as true. People who are enthusiastic to learn about the world they live in and strive for excellence. In this room, your learning community, are buds ready to blossom, and you are one of their nourishment sources. It is humbling to recognise that as one of the nurturers and shapers of the bud’s future your knowledge and desires make a difference to a child’s life. A teacher influences what makes all other professions possible – your influence can potentially change the world! It is an unequivocal privilege to enter your professional career in the new millennium, where as graduates you are creating intergenerational learning between school and community. However, the truth is, you too are a new bud, and it can be a challenge to know where to begin. We have compiled a list of strategies below to support you make the transition to your new position.

10 BASIC TIPS Before You Dive In

1. Speak to Your Mentor

Establishing and sustaining a strong personal relationship with your mentor based on mutual trust from the very beginning is highly beneficial. Their positive influence and advice will help you understand how the school operates. You will learn new skills and strategies from their experiences, which will help you connect with the school, and feel confident in the community. It is important that you ask them what expectations they have of you in Term 1, and how you would like to be further extended in Term 2 and for the rest of the school year. Remember, your mentor should be the person you can learn from the most, so use them!

2. Becoming Familiar With Your School

A school is much more than bricks and mortar, or getting 100% on a symmetry assessment. Schools are constantly changing therefore mapping your school context is an important first step. A solid understanding of where your classroom is within the school, surrounding classrooms, resources rooms (Literacy and Maths etc) and where assessment resources (CARS, PM Benchmark Reading Assessment, NAPLAN, Guided Reading etc) are kept should be sourced early. Check out the school website if you haven’t already and attempt to grasp the school’s culture and direction.

3. Classroom Set Up

Heading into school a couple of days before school begins will allow you time to organise student resources that have either been ordered previously or are in storage. This includes writing materials, exercise books, crafts, tubs and tables and chairs for every student. Label tubs and bag hooks so that as soon as students enter the classroom, they feel a sense of belonging. Design a few class displays to brighten the classroom in preparation for creating these with your students; Inquiry Board, Class Agreement and Motto, Word Wall, Good News Board, Date Planner etc. Also,

display anaphylactic information sheets and the emergency management plan at the entrance of the class. It is crucial that you organise your work station/desk too! Have your work program slipped into a display folder, and prepare to do this weekly. In addition, create binders that are labelled Literacy, Numeracy and Inquiry to slip any resources into immediately.

4. Induction

Most schools have a formal induction process. This is your first time to immerse in the role of being a teacher at your school. The chances are your induction will occur before the official commencement day of the school year, giving you a sneak peak into your new school life. You'll probably find you are bombarded with paperwork, procedures, protocols and policies. However don't panic, this is a resource 'bible' to access as necessary and will all make sense later! An induction is however, a great opportunity for you to ask questions - don't worry if they seem too basic, chances are, we've all asked them before.

5. School Information Folder

Amidst this information overload, it's easy to feel swamped. To avoid this, we recommend setting up a personal *School Information Folder* that is clearly labelled (if it isn't already supplied) with appropriate sections (we suggest; Staff Induction Handbook, Assessment and Reporting Guide, Professional Development and Transition Data). If you can set this up early it will save you a lot of grief in the long run. The idea is that you can quickly and easily refer back to any information you have received without any effort. It's also great to have when other staff start talking about something you know you've heard of but have no idea what it is - simply go back to your folder.

6. Professional Development (PD)

Take opportunities to attend professional development sessions relevant to the happenings in your school or specific needs in your classroom. The benefits of this are two-fold. You are demonstrating an interest in continual learning and it also provides a broader scope of your profession. We suggest speaking with staff about any recommended PD or relevant information they have gathered from recent PD. It is important not to overload yourself.

7. Familiarising Yourself With Various Planning

The school should have a documented curriculum for you to follow and might include set pro formas to use. Planning day will soon be upon you, and to understand various teaching styles, try to access planners and/or planning pro formas from different teaching levels. This will support you when generating your own term and weekly units/planners. You will be presented with new tasks you are unfamiliar with, such as developing the Term One Unit of Inquiry. Touch base with your mentor before planning day for an overview of expectations. You may find it useful talking with other Graduates, Leading Teachers or Principals to thoroughly understand the core of a good planner.

8. Parent Communication

Parents are partners in our students learning and can be as much a part of the classroom as our students at times. It's important to have a positive first encounter to build relationships with all parents; this will encourage professional communication which inevitably sets the tone for the rest of the year. You want to build effective relationships with all parents to ensure continuity between home and school. It's

understandable to feel as though parents are judging you on your ability. Remind yourself, it's your classroom and you're the professional. Show confidence and a strong presence when interacting with parents, and work collaboratively by practising effective listening and agreed actions. Regular communication is appreciated, whether it be a quick phone call to touch base, an email update or newsletter item. Parents can be an asset or a thorn; keep them on side, whilst establishing yourself as the professional.

9. VIT Registration

The most important factor in VIT Registration is to ensure that you are provisionally registered as a graduate teacher before you begin employment. All documents need to be completed independently. Ask the school if you need any assistance. Once you've started though, you need to complete the full registration requirements. Make sure you're familiar with these requirements early on to save time later. Collect evidence along the way. Discuss this with your mentor, and confirm that you are working towards common goals and an agreed timeline. Have a plan set to complete the majority of your registration documentation during Term Three, to avoid congestion during report writing times.

10. Get To Know Your Students

Above all else, get to know your students and develop effective relationships! Take time to build positive relationships with each individual student. As the first week of term is an exciting and busy time, you need to prioritise and build their sense of belonging from the first moment they walk into the classroom. If they are comfortable, they are going to want to learn! Be ready to greet each student prior to the school bell and ask about their weekend, evening or an out of school activity. Regularly check in to ascertain how they are feeling with learning, friends, etc. Ask for feedback regarding your teaching and learning program regularly; is the learning fun, challenging and does it provide choice and creativity opportunities?

Some activities you may like to try are:

- Icebreakers
- Survey of interests and hobbies
- Outdoor Games/Sports
- Play a getting to know you game- eg. Name and distinguishing feature, personality bingo
- Team challenges
- Group sorting task of priority of events- eg. Writing, Art, PE, reading, Computer task, homework, Maths,
- Group art works- collage, tracing of hand prints, comics,

The teaching profession is full of variety, excitement, challenge and surprise and requires flexibility on all levels. Each day brings a new learning experience and will continue to do so throughout your career. It's a profession where you have substantial choice, control of your own direction, leadership opportunities and most importantly, the potential to influence young minds. We hope you enjoy your journey as you grow alongside those in your class. Teaching lives the philosophy that it promotes in that the learning continues. Savour your adventure, nurture your buds and enjoy blooming together.

'Teachers shape a school'

(Hattie, 2009)