

BONUS WISDOM

Following is “bonus” wisdom from teachers whose stories and tips were not selected for the print version of the book.

Take a Break From Technology

Schedule time in your day when you are not tied to your computer, email, phone, or other technology. It is a necessary boundary. It can be hard to keep this up, depending on what is happening from day to day, but this practice is needed to help maintain your balance.



JILL PELLETIER, 18 YEARS

Jill Pelletier is a special education team leader coordinator for the Belchertown Public Schools. She has worked in education for eighteen years as a counselor, special educator, and school administrator. In each of these roles, she consistently sought ways to build positive, lasting relationships with students and their families. Throughout her career, Jill has also served as a mentor teacher or a lead mentor in the district, and she has helped to directly support new and experienced educators develop and implement programming designed to help mentor pairs refine their skills in order to meet with success in the classroom.

Talk to Students Privately

Never engage in a public confrontation with a student. You will not win. Better to diffuse the situation (even if it seems like you are ignoring it) and have a private chat with the student. Work on a plan of action together.



KATHLEEN GAGNE, 42 YEARS

Kathleen Gagne, a senior lecturer in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, retired after ten years at the College of Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst. She received both a master’s degree and a doctorate in education from the College of Education and was the coordinator of its highly regarded “180 Days in Springfield” teacher preparation pathway. Gagne taught sixth grade reading and language arts at Holy Cross School for nine years and was a magnet resource teacher at Chestnut Accelerated Middle School for twelve. Earlier in her career she taught first and second grade, also in the Springfield (MA) public schools.

Gagne received the Action for Children’s Television Award in 1988 for her television series, *Kids & Books*, which she produced; was named to the list of “100 Teachers Who Made a Difference” by *Instructor Magazine* in 1990; and was honored as Alumnus of the Year for Excellence in Teaching by Westfield State University in 1998. She currently teaches the Clinical Teaching Seminar in the 180 Days pathway and is on the board of Mentoring in Action.

Take a Ten-Minute Walk

One important way that helped me remain positive and sustain daily balance during the school day was to walk with a group of teachers during lunch for ten minutes. It was enough time to walk to the end of the driveway and back. The rule was “no talking about school.” Anyone who was available was invited to join, and it helped all of us refresh our energy for the rest of the day. Of course we all let the office know where we were before we left the building.



KAREN GANNON, 48 YEARS

Karen Gannon is a retired science teacher. She was department head and cochair of mentoring at her middle school in Massachusetts. Upon retiring, she worked for Teach! Southcoast, mentoring “change of career” science teachers in New Bedford and Fall River. She continues to work with Mentoring in Action and is dedicated to training teachers to become the next generation of mentors by helping districts develop their own training programs. Working with like-minded retired teachers has been a labor of love.

Reward the Class

Reward the whole class when learning activities and class functioning runs smoothly. Students love to be part of a group, and when they work together, it is important to recognize it publicly. This creates a community of learners and lets the class know that when they do function as a group it is important to you.



KAREN DERUSHA, 47 YEARS

After retiring from teaching young children in public school settings in Connecticut and Massachusetts for thirty-seven years, Karen joined Mentoring in Action with other like-minded educators who wanted to continue to contribute to their profession after retirement. She has treasured her years since then working with Mentoring in Action as curriculum developer, instructor, mentor, and mentor leader.

Take a Break

One way that I take care of my body, mind, and spirit is to intentionally ground myself. Grounding myself may mean individual meditation, reading, spending time outdoors, or even visiting friends and family. It is important to do things outside of work—DO NOT feel guilty about taking time for yourself.



SHONTELL WOODS, 16 YEARS

Shontell Woods is a Florida native who resides in Port Orange, Florida. She currently works as an instructional consultant in higher education. She began her teaching career in 2007 and has had many roles in schools including classroom teacher (for first, second, third, and fifth grades), instructional site facilitator, and literacy coach. She has also worked at the district level as a district lead coach, elementary resource teacher, and professional learning specialist. As an educator, she commits herself to helping students

and instructional leaders be the best version of themselves as they grow and develop in their educational and career journey.

Shontell enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, and traveling. While working as a teacher and literacy coach, she was awarded Teacher of the Year and received various support recognition awards. Shontell is a proud graduate of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (bachelor's degree in elementary education), NOVA Southeastern University (master's degree in reading), and Argosy University Atlanta (specialist degree in instructional leadership). She is also a published children's book author and founder of Sho N Tell Books. Her books highlight minority characters and take readers on adventures where they can make connections and relate to the experiences shared. She is a lifelong learner and continues to build and foster relationships in the community.

Over Prepare

My one big tip that has proven to be critical to me as a teacher is to be OVER prepared for every class. Taking the time to plan more activities than I might need minimizes stress and anxiety, and it also gives me something to do with students who finish early. If I don't use the extra work I planned, I have it for the next day!



HOLLY FREADMAN, 12 YEARS

Holly currently teaches English at Monument Mountain Regional High School in western Massachusetts, the same school that all three of her now grown children attended. In this position, she has taught sophomore English, journalism, film, media and drama, and nonfiction. Holly graduated from the University of Rochester with a degree in English and received a master of education from the University of Massachusetts. She is one of the senior class advisors as well as the advisor to the school newspaper,

and a second-year mentor teacher. As a member of the Ready for Rigor professional group, Holly has been part of the transformative work on the issue of equity in education.

Take Some Time to Be Quiet

Because I am an introvert, I need some time at lunch to regroup and recharge alone. I explained to my colleagues that I needed this time, so they would understand why I was separating myself from the group. Giving myself just fifteen minutes helped to shift my mindset for the rest of the day. Get to know what you need to find your energy. Some of the other teachers could plan, talk, and eat lunch together, and it energized them. For me, I just need a few minutes of quiet to refresh and renew.



TRACEY SMITH, 25 YEARS

Tracey Smith has been in the education field for over twenty-five years, serving as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. She is fiercely determined to support schools by supporting the adults in the building. She understands that it takes a whole teacher to support the whole student. She is also the author of *RIDICULOUSLY Amazing Schools*. She lives in Cumming, Georgia, with her husband and two daughters.

Welcome All Parents Into Your Classroom

Managing your classroom starts before you enter the classroom. In the summer, I call all parents to let them know who I am and to hear how they feel about school, their sons' and daughters' experiences, and anything they want me to know. I also let them know that my door is always open and that I love having parents in my class for everything. Moreover, I find out what career they have if any and see how I can tie that career into the curriculum I teach throughout the year. If they don't have a job, then I invite a parent to come do a reading lesson with the children. If the parent can't read, then I invite them to come sort some materials or make some copies for our classroom. Every parent is welcome in my classroom.

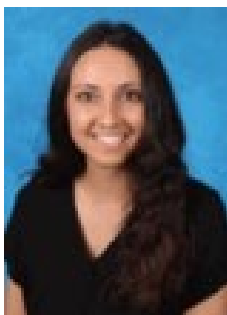


TINA ANDRADE, 20 YEARS

Boston born, and Roxbury raised, Ernestine (Tina) Andrade believes that strong communities build strong leaders. Therefore, her passion for improving the educational opportunities available for young people has been the foundation of her personal and professional life. Ms. Andrade graduated from Cambridge College with her master's degree in education. Ernestine earned a BA in political science with a minor in criminal justice at the University of Connecticut. As a teacher for sixteen years who has currently matriculated into administration, Ms. A has high standards. Her students know that mere fact regurgitation or having excellent test-preparation skills is the least of her expectations because she strives to create independent thinkers and learners at all times. Because of this reputation, she has been known to be a well-rounded, demanding, think-outside-the-box educator. Ms. A firmly believes that educators are instrumental not only in perfecting their students' learning capacity and function but also in fostering an environment in which students can effectively ascertain their strengths and develop to their fullest potential. A passionate educator can inspire students to discover wherein their own passions lie.

Rest After School If You Can

I take a nap every day after school. I don't have pets or children so I have the ability to do this when I get home. A day at school is draining, and I can't be productive in my life outside of school when I am physically and mentally exhausted. After my rest, I am ready to begin my evening.



EMILIE HICKEY, 3 YEARS

Emilie is a third-grade teacher in Cumming, Georgia. She attended college in Macon, Georgia, and spent all four years of her education in different classrooms. She has loved having a classroom of her own to form relationships with students and their families. At her current school, she is being encouraged to step into leadership roles and grow in her career.

Acknowledge That Teaching Is a Human Job

As teachers, we deal with the actual lives of people. Our role is not rote or scripted, but it is guided by a genuine desire and diligent effort not only to teach students but to care for them, to get them ready for their next step. We have an important role in their lives. Teaching is more than our administrators, our prep periods, our vacations, our colleagues, or our contracts. It is about the human beings in front of us each day.



JOHN OFFNER, 24 YEARS

John Offner has been in education for twenty-four years—both as a teacher and as a building principal. He currently works in North Chicago, Illinois, as a sixth-grade social studies teacher. After all these years, John is not exactly sure what he knows. What he is certain of is that the relationships you build with your students will have lasting impact in their lives, now and years down the road. Commit yourself to this job. Show up every day for your students. And take those extra steps necessary to reach your students. Period.

Prevent Misbehavior

I engage my students in positive ways to avoid misbehavior issues. I eat lunch with my students whenever possible, and I make it a point to sit with my most difficult students. I like to offer both individual and group incentives for good behavior, so all students feel they have a chance to be rewarded, and I never take back a reward. Praise is an important part of my classroom, and I use it as much as possible. Positive messages to the parents about what the students are doing well really works!



BRIDGET WOJCIECHOWSKI, 5 YEARS

Bridget Wojciechowski has been teaching for five years. She knew she wanted to be a teacher when her fifth-grade teacher let her teach for a day. When she's not teaching, Bridget enjoys traveling and attending concerts.

Teach Your Students to Be Self-Managed

Instead of starting the school year with a list of classroom rules, teachers should make an effort to work with students to come up with *classroom values* or *shared behaviors*. If the class—including the teacher—agrees on acceptable behaviors, all students will feel more in control of the process and be more likely to prioritize these values. Students will often begin holding each other accountable for sticking to the classroom value system as well.



BILL VINING, 26 YEARS

Bill Vining is the founder and CEO of HeartBridge Collective. Bill received his master's in education administration from the University of Arkansas in 1977. He has been working both as an educator and a consultant for over forty years. He has experience working with schools in Arkansas, building relationships with several teachers and administrators. Bill has a passion for helping students and educators, which has aided him in his work in both social-emotional curriculum and regenerative framework modeling.

Ask Your Students What They Do Outside of School

Developing an individual relationship with each student will help you manage your classroom more efficiently and also minimize disruptions. Greet students at the door when they arrive (positioning yourself so you can see both the hallway and your classroom). Find out at least one interest of each one of your students. I once overheard a conversation in the hallway between a student teacher and her mentor talking. Student Teacher: "How did you know Sally played softball?" Teacher: "I asked."



RICHARD GLASHOW, 47 YEARS

Richard spent thirty-nine years in the Springfield, Massachusetts, public schools. The lessons he learned as a classroom teacher and administrator became the lessons he shared with prospective teachers, when, upon retirement, he became an adjunct faculty member within the Massachusetts university system. He finds both joy and fulfillment helping future teachers discover the keys to engaging their students in successful learning.