

TEACHING BETTER DAY BY DAY: THE SIX COMMITMENTS

Let's commit ourselves to a few statements that have deep and important roots in research and are statements that any teacher would want their students to be able to say were true of their teacher. These Six Commitments are an essential part of the design of the whole *Teaching Better Day by Day* planner. To flip that, the planner is your guide to *living* these commitments, to honoring and maintaining those commitments to our students, our colleagues, and ourselves. Use the space to the right to evaluate and reflect on where you are when it comes to understanding, making, and sustaining these commitments in the year ahead.

1. I am committed to the success and well-being of all my students and to their learning.

- I believe that all my students can learn and meet my high expectations.
- I know my students' interests, needs, strengths, and situation in and outside school.
- I consider the social, emotional, academic, and cultural factors when teaching and assessing students.
- I provide a range of ways and opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate that learning.
- I make a dedicated effort to respect, support, and challenge all my students.

2. I know my subject and how to teach it so that all my students will learn, remember, and enjoy it.

- I make an effort to keep my disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge current and comprehensive.
- I expect students to learn, engage with, and think critically about the core ideas and issues.
- I know and teach students how my subject is created, organized, and linked to other disciplines.
- I teach students the disciplinary knowledge and literacies essential to my subject.
- I use digital tools as authentic ways for students to learn and apply subject matter knowledge.

3. I am responsible for designing, teaching, and assessing the lessons and learning of all my students.

- I consider students' needs when planning for instruction and interpreting assessments.
- I design my units and lessons as learning progressions with specific intentions.
- I clarify the specific learning intentions and success criteria—and how these will be assessed.
- I know and focus on the knowledge and skills I want students to acquire, connect, and transfer.
- I provide students multiple ways to learn or demonstrate what they have learned.

REFLECTING ON THE SIX COMMITMENTS

The Six Commitments constitute the core of the *Teaching Better Day by Day* planner and our work in general. Before the year begins, take some time to reflect on what the Six Commitments really ask of us and what they mean. As you think and write about them, consider which are strengths that can be refined, and which are areas to work on developing this year.

1. I am committed to the success and well-being of all my students and to their learning.

2. I know my subject and how to teach it so that all my students will learn, remember, and enjoy it.

3. I am responsible for designing, teaching, and assessing the lessons and learning of all my students.

4. I consider equity and access when designing, teaching, and assessing my lessons and students' learning.

- I evaluate my curriculum and teaching for bias, assumptions, and other possible obstacles to learning.
- I treat students' life experience, languages, knowledge, and culture as assets for learning.
- I ensure that all my students have access to and know how to use digital and print resources to learn.
- I factor the importance of relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness into my instruction.
- I differentiate instruction and assessment as needed to help all students learn and succeed.

5. I reflect on, analyze, and refine my teaching based on feedback from multiple sources.

- I revise my instructional goals, plans, and assessments based on data and observations.
- I design my instruction based on established theories and reasoned judgment born of experience.
- I seek and accept feedback based on data and observations from colleagues, administrators, and students.
- I stay abreast of current research and incorporate new findings into my practice when appropriate.
- I value the ability to reason well, examine multiple perspectives, question "the truth," solve problems, and persevere.

6. I participate in and contribute to my learning community at school and the profession at large.

- I collaborate with my colleagues and students' families to improve our school and students' learning experience.
- I communicate with colleagues and parents as needed using the appropriate technology tools.
- I engage in ongoing professional development through conferences, workshops, and reading.
- I join, contribute to, and sometimes lead teams, committees, or professional development efforts.
- I share what I learn about teaching, learning, and students with colleagues and families.

