

# First CLASS

A resource for new teachers in New York City

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## Dear New Teacher,

We are excited to bring you this special edition of *First Class*. This issue is dedicated to sharing the results of the Six-Week New Teacher Survey. Take a look at [the key findings](#) from what you and 1,015 other first-year DOE teachers shared with us as you embarked on the second month of school.

You'll notice that these survey results shaped the content in this month's issue of *First Class*. We always strive to share resources that are in direct response to your needs, requests, and questions. We recommend saving this issue so you can return to these resources often.

[Let us know what you think](#) of this month's issue. We would love to have your voices and opinions shape the content of future editions.

We wish you a relaxing and rejuvenating Winter Break. See you in 2018!

Sincerely,  
The *First Class* Team  
[NewTeacherSupport@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:NewTeacherSupport@schools.nyc.gov)



## New Employee Nuts and Bolts

### You requested: HR support and navigation

More than 100 of you wrote about how tricky it can be to navigate Human Resources at the DOE, including applying for [salary steps](#), [the pension](#), and enrolling in [health insurance](#). The [HR Connect Online Portal](#) is designed to be searchable, fast, and easy. Here are some best practices that can help you address your HR issues quickly throughout your career at the DOE:



- **Memorize your DOE-specific personal identifiers.** To navigate the [online systems](#) that are designed to save you time, be sure that you know your Employee Identification

Number ([EIN](#)), your file number (also referred to as your EIS number or your "reference number" on DOE paychecks), and your DOE username and password.

- **Check your DOE email regularly.** Official emails are sent to employees at their @schools.nyc.gov email addresses. We recommend you check that email account on a regular basis. For example, a "welcome email" was sent to you at that address when your hiring process was finalized. It contains useful content for addressing your [HR needs](#), including webinars, healthcare plan information, and [other items](#). Consider revisiting that email to find answers to [common questions](#).
- **Capture the answers to your questions.** There will be some systems and processes you need to access occasionally, such as updating your address if you move. It can be easy to forget how to repeat that process the next time you need to do it. When you learn how to do something useful, [write it down](#) in a safe place so that you can find it again if and when you need to.

## Classroom Culture and Management

### You requested: Behavior management resources

More than 400 survey respondents requested tools and tips to support students' positive behavior. Here are a handful of resources, both print and multimedia, that explain the "how to's" of effective behavior management.



- [Managing student behavior: Next steps](#) (WeTeachNYC.org, log in with your DOE email address and password).
- How to support positive behavior [for younger students with disabilities](#)
- Encouraging positive behavior in grades 5 and up [using a number line](#) (TeachingChannel.org).
- The [Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports](#) website offers resources specific to different types of behavior.
- A first-year teacher in the Bronx [tries new classroom management strategies](#) with input from an expert at Teachers College, Columbia University.

## Time Management and Organization

### You requested: Time-saving strategies for planning

"I love teaching and adore my students, but I'm overwhelmed by the amount of work that I have to do outside of school, especially when it comes to lesson planning," wrote one Six-Week Survey respondent. Hundreds of other new educators echoed that sentiment. This month, we bring you time-saving strategies for planning, prepping, and assessing:



- You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Adapt existing lessons from vetted sources such as [WeTeachNYC](#), [EngageNY](#), and [Share My Lesson](#) to meet your students' needs.
- Crowd source assessment questions from your students. Prior to an assessment, ask students to submit two or three ideas for questions you can use on a test or quiz. When creating the assessment, select a few student-created questions and credit the "author" by name next to the question. Be sure to keep track of who you have selected so that a representative sample of students get "published." This will save you time and your students will look forward to assessments.
- Reduce the time you spend at the copy machine. When possible, allot a few minutes of instructional time for students to create their own worksheets. It is more efficient for

each student to draw a Venn diagram on a blank piece of paper before launching into a compare-and-contrast discussion than it is for you to make multiple copies of a worksheet you created outside of class.

- Save your red ink. If you're spending a significant amount of time grading, consider involving students in the evaluation process by [designing activities that can be peer-reviewed](#).

## Content and Curriculum

### You requested: Resources for rigorous yet engaging lesson plans

Fifty nine percent of Six-Week Survey respondents requested support in designing engaging and rigorous lesson plans in their subject area. Here are some resources related to rigor and engagement.



#### *Increase the rigor of your instruction:*

- This Wiggins and McTighe article has examples of [rigorous yet engaging essential questions](#) in every content area, including the arts and foreign languages. Essential questions are great ways to frame units and individual lessons.
- Video: learn how to evaluate the rigor of the learning activities you plan for your students using [Webb's Depth of Knowledge \(DOK\) chart](#). Read a description of what each DOK level looks like in [an ELA, math, social studies, or science classroom](#).

#### *Boost student engagement:*

- Read about these ideas to [increase student engagement](#) in your classroom.
- Watch a special education teacher implement [a laser pointer and a timer](#) to increase student participation and focus. Interested in trying this in your classroom? Revisit the [October issue of First Class](#) for some free timer websites.
- Do you teach a first or second period class? Try this high school English teacher's strategy to [increase participation first thing in the morning](#).

## Mentoring and Virtual Support

### You requested: Spotlight on assessments in your mentor's classroom

Eighty-one percent of Six-Week Survey respondents say that [most frequently](#) their mentor *shares strategies, resources, and/or professional learning opportunities*. However, the most requested mentor support is *developing assessments to use before, during, and after instruction*. Your mentor's classroom is a great place to see examples of formative assessments (measures of progress) and summative assessments (measures of mastery) being used with students. Keep track of what you see and how you can use it in your own classroom [using this tool](#). In your debrief conversation, ask what information your mentor intended to collect, and what it means for future lessons.



**Teaching Tip:** Robert Stake, director of the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation at the University of Illinois has a great analogy about the difference between *formative assessments* and *summative assessments*: "When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative; when the guests taste the soup, that's summative."

## Extra, Extra!

**You requested: Best practices, more new teacher support, and opportunities geared toward students.**

- Check out a list of [19 high-leverage teaching practices](#) (source: The University of Michigan's TeachingWorks.org). Talk to your mentor about how to implement and master these strategies in your classroom.
- Edutopia's [toolkit for new teachers](#) is a treasure trove of curated articles, blogs, videos, templates, apps and other new teacher "hacks" that will save you time.
- You're invited to attend the [Chancellor's Educators Conference](#) on February 7, 2018. This year's theme will be "Challenging Learning: Deep Understanding for ALL Students." Chancellor Carmen Fariña will deliver remarks, and James Nottingham, author of *The Learning Challenge*, will deliver the keynote address. Be sure to request permission from your principal before registering. Look for a registration link at [iTeachNYC](#) in January.

**Now that you've read First Class, we'd love to hear your thoughts! Please take a minute to share your feedback with us by completing a brief [four-question survey](#).**