



See if you're teaching in panic mode and how to get out of it!

Don't Teach in Panic Mode

Whatever happens, do not be that teacher who teaches with no organization. Panic prevails when there are no objectives, just a hodgepodge of arbitrary activities. In panic, these teachers stumble through their days, asking, "What can I do today? How can I keep my students busy? What chapter can I have them read? How can I keep them quiet and in their seats? How can I buy some time so I can get caught up? What can I do that will be fun? What can I find on the computer that will do what I have not taken the time to find out how to do?"

This is not instruction:

- ♦ Show a movie that has nothing to do with what the class is studying
- ♦ Assign a chapter and direct students to answer the questions found at the end—and then do nothing with those answers
- ♦ Bring in crayons and tell students to color in the pictures on the worksheet
- ♦ Declare a "Reading Day"
- ♦ Give students a list of vocabulary words to look up in the dictionary (or on their computers)
- ♦ Give students a study period

None of these activities have any coherence to what the students were doing the day before or what the students will do the next day. Worse yet, ineffective teachers think students are satisfactorily engaged and doing something worthwhile.

You are not necessarily to blame. You probably have come from a university program that never taught you how to organize a classroom or how to have an organized instruction plan. This was followed by a non-existent school district induction and professional development program that never taught you the skill set of the three characteristics of effective teaching—classroom management, lesson mastery, and positive expectations. The result is you are stuck in the Survival stage and teach in a panic mode.

- ♦ Teaching in panic mode does not promote learning.
- ♦ Teaching in panic mode actually scares students. They do not know where the teacher is going and they don't know how to proceed.

Teaching in panic mode paralyzes the teacher. You think you have no real control. When you know you are just filling time, hoping for the best, you feel inadequate. You think you are a failure.

Get out of the panic mode with a plan—a plan to organize your classroom and a plan to deliver instruction to students using the strategies that will bring success to you and your students.