

First Day of School Scripts

The scripts of these successful teachers, Melissa, Sacha, and John, are in the **Going Beyond** folder for Chapter 13 at EffectiveTeaching.com.

Football coaches prepare their first 10 to 20 plays. Theater directors have a list of cues. Airplane pilots have flight plans. Wedding coordinators have a time schedule. Melissa Boone began her first year of teaching with a script. She was ready with the plan in hand. The students became ready. Today, she is a successful teacher-leader.

Melissa is like a coach who designs the first 25 plays of a game. A teacher would not “wing it” in a classroom any more than a coach would “wing it” on a football field or a pilot would wing it on a flight from New Orleans to San Francisco! The successful and effective teacher goes in with a plan and modifies that plan if conditions change.

Here are the first days of school scripts for three teachers.

Melissa Boone Elementary School Teacher

Melissa began teaching in Oklahoma in 1999 and is currently teaching near Dallas. She began her first day of her first year as a new teacher with a game plan. Here are her notes for the first day of school.

First Day of School Melissa Boone’s Art Class

Greet each student at the door

- Hand each child a classroom rules sheet (goes in notebook)
- Direct them toward their assigned seat (alphabetical)
- Tell child to read and follow the instructions written on the board
- Have instructions written on the board for them to start on (bellwork)
- Finish greeting the last student to arrive in class

Welcome students to class and introduce myself

- My name
- Talk about family (husband, kids)
- Education
- Where I’m from and where I live
- Tell them why I wanted to teach

Arriving and leaving class

- Teach procedure for arriving in class
- Teach procedure for dismissal from class

Explain rules and daily procedures

- Refer to the rules that are posted at front
- Explain discipline plan and refer to poster
- Go over procedures and refer to poster
- Talk about “We missed you” chart

First Day of School Scripts (continued)

Number assignments

- Each person will have a number that represents them
- The number will be on all of their art papers and on their art folder
- This will help all of us to keep our papers straight
- When writing your number on something, put your grade level before your number (1st–5, 2nd–8, and so on)

Respecting the classroom and the art supplies

- Refer to classroom rules and procedures
- Teach students to be responsible for art supplies and room; teach procedures

Teachers' things and students' things

- Some things are only for me
- Other things are for you to use as you need it

Explain thematic lessons and such

- Will be going along with what regular teacher is teaching

Art centers

- Everyone will get a chance to go to all the centers
- Art centers board will have names (numbers) that tell us who does what that day

Portfolios

- Each child will be taking a portfolio home
- Papers will be stored (filed) in a container until end of semester (or year?)

Notebooks

- For students to record their grades and keep track of them
- To store vocabulary words for future use
- To write a weekly journal entry about what they liked most about the week's lesson

At the end of her first year as a teacher, Melissa Boone writes:

“My first day of school was a success. Each of my students had a place to sit and an art number, which they would use for the duration of the year. The overhead projector was ready with seatwork on the board and they worked quietly until I was ready to introduce myself. I let them know what I expected and that each of them would be successful.

“Classroom management and having a procedure for everything is a key factor in success, but I have also found that having a place for everything and keeping everything in its place is very important. The longer it takes to find a paper or get out work for students who have been absent, the more distracted other students become.

“I feel that studying ***The First Days of School*** and using the suggested strategies is a key factor in the overwhelming joy I feel when thinking about my first year.”

Sacha Mike Middle School Teacher

Sacha teaches in Washington and began teaching mid-year in 2001. Her assistant principal told her she did not think Sacha would make it beyond her first week as a new teacher. That was the administrator's expectation for teacher and student success!

When Sacha began her teaching career, this was her first day of school script.

First Day of School Sacha Mike's Core Class

Before class prep

- Put name cards and student information sheets on each desk.
- Turn on overhead projector and place seating chart and first assignment on it.
- Go outside and remind the students who arrive early to stand in a single-file line so they can be properly greeted and welcomed to class.

Greet each student at the door

- Give each student a card with his or her seating assignment on it; tell them they will also find their names on a card at their seats.
- Tell students that the directions for their first assignment are on the overhead; they may begin as soon as they are in their seats.
- Finish greeting last students to come to class.

Welcome students to the new 7th grade core class

- Congratulate them all for being chosen for the new core class.
- Tell them I will be their teacher for all four core subjects.
- Explain when their PE/Small Group and Elective periods will be.
- Tell them I am looking forward to an excellent school year in which I know they will all succeed.

Introduce myself

- Say and spell my name.
- Tell them a little about my husband and daughter.
- Share where I am from and where I live.
- Give my education and experience.
- Tell them why I love teaching and why I think seventh-graders make the best students.

Entering and leaving the classroom; end-of-day dismissal

- Teach entry procedure and role play.
- Teach midday moving procedure and role play.
- Teach end of day dismissal and leaving class procedure.

Rules and procedures

- Give each student a copy of rules to be placed and kept in the front of their binder.
- Discuss rules and consequences.
- Give each student a copy of the procedures to be placed and kept in the first section of their binder.
- Discuss procedures and teach some of the most commonly used procedures.

First Day of School Scripts (continued)

Talk about Daily Assignment Log Book.

- Let students know that paper heading procedures have not changed.

Core lesson assignments and expectations

- Tell students what units will be covered in each subject.
- Explain that DOLs, POWs, SSOWs, and SSR are department wide and will continue.
- Explain daily warm-ups.

Notebooks

- Help students to set up their notebooks; make sure they all have their agendas.
- Keep rules and procedures and daily agendas in Section 1.
- Set up the rest of the notebook based on period schedules.
- Keep for future use and in chronological order all papers handed back.
- Explain Daily Closure Journals.

Language Arts

- Tell students that DOLs, POWs, and SSR will still be done.
- Explain the above if there are new students.
- Talk about how vocabulary should be done.
- Discuss what a good paragraph looks like and the use of punctuation.
- Talk about what we will be doing during this unit.

Social Studies

- Tell students that SSOWs will still be done.
- Explain this for any new students.
- Talk about current events.
- Discuss unit.

Math

- Explain Minute Math.
- Talk about the new book and what students will be learning.
- Explain quizzes and tests.
- Explain interdisciplinary math projects.

Science

- Talk about hands on approach.
- Tell students about assignment expectations.
- Explain how to behave during experiments.
- Discuss unit students are going to begin.
- Talk about long term projects.

Sacha Mike exceeded the assistant principal's expectation that she would not last a week and finished her first year of teaching.

She left that school at the end of her first year—can you guess why? Today she is teaching in another school district in Washington. Her colleagues all say she's an "awesome" teacher. These are some of her accomplishments:

First Day of School Scripts (continued)

Teaches English 10, Honors 10, and AP Literature and Composition
Her classroom is designated a no-bullying, safe space within the school
Tenth grade class co-adviser
Person on demand (POD) for technology concerns in the school
One of two technology peer coaches
Part of the discipline committee
Part of senior project advisory committee
Helps students build portfolios as an alternative assessment to the state exam
Helps seniors with alternative assessment to show proficiency for graduation

[Click here](#) to see **Sacha's script as a PowerPoint presentation.**

John Schmidt High School Teacher

John teaches in Illinois and began his first year receiving expert advice from his school district's three-year new teacher induction program. John became so successful that the district's induction program coordinators used him as one of their demonstration teachers in his second year. That's how fast he succeeded!

This is his first day of school script:

Script for the First Day of School John Schmidt

Before Class

- Have a clearly marked sign on the door and on the front chalkboard that indicates the name of the class, the teacher, the hour, and the room number.
- Place a copy of the *Student Information Survey* on every student desk to be completed as bellwork.
- Set up individual trays for every handout the students will need to pick up. Place a sign near the trays that reads, "Please Take One."
- Set up a copy of the textbook, a sample binder, and a sample notebook on the chalkboard sill.
- Use the overhead projector to display the seating chart.

Greet at the Door

- Welcome each student with a handshake and hello.
- Look directly at each student—not the busy hallway or the growing line of people at the door—when they introduce themselves.
- Make sure every student is in the right place at the right time.
- Tell each student the following:
 - 1) They can find their seat by referencing the seating chart on the projection screen.
 - 2) They should grab the three handouts on the table at the front of the room.
 - 3) They have a bellwork activity waiting for them at their desks.

Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome everyone to the first day of school and ask the students to take a few more minutes to finish the bellwork.
- Take attendance by referencing the seating chart.
- Welcome everyone again and introduce myself.

First Day of School Scripts (continued)

- Provide a few tidbits of appropriate personal information (educational background, family, etc.).
- Explain my personal educational philosophy.
- Stress that I am very excited to be back at school and that I look forward to a successful year ahead.

Syllabus Explanation (Handout 1)

- Ask the students to reference the *Course Syllabus* handout.
- Explain the basic course information.
- Provide instructor contact information.
- Discuss the course objectives.
- Identify the required class materials and reference the items set up on the chalkboard sill as a visual reminder of what each student will need.
- Explain the grading scale.
- Discuss specific academic requirements.

Class Policies Explanation (Handout 2)

- Ask the students to reference the *Class Policies* handout.
- Discuss my overall discipline philosophy.
- Stress that a student chooses to break a rule.
- Explain the short list of simple class rules and ask the students to explain why they are in place.
- Stress that the class rules will be consistently enforced.
- Explain the detention policy.
- Explain the tardy and late arrival policy.
- Discuss the importance of academic honesty.
- Discuss the attendance requirements.
- Explain the late-work policy.
- Explain the make-up test policy.
- Ask each student to sign the back of the *Student Information Survey* in the space that indicates they understand and agree to all of the class policies.

Class Procedures (Handout 3)

- Ask the students to reference the *Class Procedures* handout.
- Explain the purpose of class procedures by using an appropriate analogy.
- Promise the students an organized and efficient classroom.
- Explain the importance of following procedures.
- Explain the difference between procedures and rules.
- Explain and rehearse the following procedures: 1) entering the room, 2) bellwork, 3) picking up materials, 4) coming to attention, 5) arriving late, 6) leaving the classroom.
- Explain that other procedures will be explained and rehearsed as they become necessary (obtaining absent work, taking make-up tests, using the bathroom, getting a detention, getting extra handouts, handing in homework).

Dismissing the Class

- With a few minutes remaining, reiterate my excitement for the upcoming year.
- Tell the students that it was nice to meet all of them.
- Rehearse the procedure for leaving the classroom and require the students to wait for teacher dismissal before leaving the classroom.
- Collect student information sheets as the students leave the class.

Your Future Depends on How You Start

It is a well-known fact that 17 percent of new teachers will leave teaching within their first year, and 50 percent will leave within their first five years. Yet, how to be successful and effective is a well-known fact too—it's in "Unit A, The Teacher."

It's all about how you start, and how you prepare your classroom. There are so many new teachers who enter teaching with axioms like, "I want the kids to like me" or, "Learning should be fun" or, "If I build the lesson plans to be exciting, they will come—and they will hang on my every word!"

To these platitudes, we ask, What happens if

1. there is a substitute teacher?
2. the student is absent or tardy?
3. the student is ELL, ADHD, or special education?
4. the classroom is multigrade?
5. a student's pencil breaks?
6. you want the class to come to attention?
7. the students enter the classroom and wander around?
8. there is a fire (hurricane, cyclone, earthquake) drill?
9. the students have no idea how to take notes?
10. the students have no concept of how to work in groups?

Melissa Boone, Sacha Mike, and John Schmidt represent only a few of the many examples of teachers who succeeded on their first days of school and are now considered *effective teachers*. They have been teaching for many years now and are considered teacher-leaders.

Very simply, if you don't have good management, you will—to a greater or lesser degree—have chaos. You can't teach students to be responsible and self-disciplined in the midst of chaos. It's as simple as that.

We know each of you has the capacity, talent, and commitment to become a successful, effective teacher. It all starts with a plan!