

Literacy Tips



Tips for middle school educators on various topics such as grammar, writing, reading, spelling, vocabulary, cooperative learning and more.

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Tip #58: A Trio of Classroom Management Ideas

This is the first tip of the 2004 -2005 school year. The numbering system reflects a continuation of tips from the past two years. These tips were reproduced in hard copy for all LA/reading teachers this year. Look for the publication with a lavender cover, which also includes a table of contents to help you search for topics of interest.

Tips are being sent out to every LA/reading teacher this year. Also on my list are sp. ed. teacher consultants who can share them with their teachers. In addition, I am sending them to the department chairs of science, math, and social studies. Content area department chairs can decide whether to forward them on to their teachers. In some cases, tips may be more directly related to the LA/reading teachers.

Modeling

One of the best strategies that we can use within a lesson is modeling. Today this is often referred to as a *think aloud*. Perhaps you know it as guided practice. In any case, showing students what we expect from them raises the quality of work and helps students master new skills. I found that I demonstrated the writing process more frequently when I had access to transparencies of notebook paper. I needed the writing lines to feel confident with my penmanship! Attached are two choices for you, [wide-ruled](#) and [college-ruled](#). Next time you assign a

piece of writing, ask for an open-ended answer, or require an activity with multi-step directions, pull out a transparency with writing lines and allow your students to observe your thinking process.

Desk Arrangements

Many of us struggle to find the best method for arranging classroom furniture. We know that desk arrangements have a direct impact on student dynamics. Many factors influence us like the room size, the shape of the furniture, the types of students in a particular period, the best views of the whiteboard, etc. Rick Wormeli is the author of a book called *Day One & Beyond* (Stenhouse Publishers, 2003). (Most professional books I refer to can be checked out from the Literacy Lending Library. Just let me know of your interest, and I will make the arrangements.) Wormeli provides [ten possible diagrams of arrangements to consider](#). Perhaps there are some on here that will be new to you.

Useful Online Tools

Finally, I wanted to let you know of a web site that offers some useful tools such as generating rubrics for assessment. Many of the menu items are free to use; however, you can purchase a subscription and get more advanced options. I want to thank Tina Michels (Romig) and Dawn Gould (Wendler) for letting me know about this resource. Tina



and Dawn are both Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) language arts teachers.

<http://teach-nology.com>

(Look at the menu on the right-hand side of *Top Teacher Tools*. Click on Rubric Makers. Also look at the left-hand column and click on *Ideas That Worked*. In the list of subjects, you will find a link to more seating arrangement ideas.)







Figure 4.1 Basic Seating Arrangements

