

Miss M's Guide for New Teachers



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Congratulations! You've landed your first teaching job and the first day of school is just around the corner. Are you ready? Of course not. I was once a new teacher and am pleased to share with you some things to consider when you go into your new classroom.

1 The Multi-age Classroom

You may be a teacher of a multi-age classroom – where the students are of **different age levels**. This may sound intimidating, but there are actually a lot of benefits from it. Your school may have **pedagogically chosen** to form multi-age classrooms to reflect the **diversity** of surrounding neighborhoods. Have no fear!

Benefits include:

- Promotes an accepting and empathetic environment
- Older students can serve as mentors (and teacher helpers!)
- Diversity is recognized and celebrated
- Child-centered learning, which goes hand in hand with the new BC Curriculum

How can I handle a multi-age classroom?

You need to think of yourself as a **facilitator** and to not focus on just getting through the curriculum, but on each student's needs. Incorporate **variety** and **experiential learning** in your classroom. Make use of small groups for activities and don't be afraid of putting the older students with the younger students – think of the **Zone of Proximal Development!**

BC New Curriculum Guide

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>

It is imperative that you are familiar with the new curriculum. This is the foundation of your students' education and your direction as an educator.

2 Differentiation

It is also important to remember that your students will each have a variety of talents, abilities, and learning styles (audio, visual, kinetic.) Here are some things to keep in mind:

Four Types of Differentiation

1. **Content** - *what* the students need to learn and *how* they will get the information
2. **Process** - activities to *engage* the students to make meaning/master skills
3. **Product** - culminating projects to *rehearse, apply and extend* what they've learned
4. **Environment** – the climate of the classroom

How do I plan for differentiation?

- Get to know your students! This is probably the most important step in September. This gives you an idea of how to plan and instruct your lessons and to build relationships with your students.
- Vary your approaches when introducing a lesson: read a book or bring in an object for example.
- Keep in mind the **First Peoples Principles of Learning** – how learning is a group endeavor, not just “stand and deliver.”

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3 The Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Classrooms need to be inclusive of those with learning disabilities. Among your students you may have those with an Individualized Education Plan. You, the teacher, are a part of the **school-based IEP team** and hold certain responsibilities to ensure the student reaches their goals and is part of an inclusive classroom. The **purpose of the IEP** document is for accountability, to help monitor growth, and to guide implementation of learning support. When it comes to planning, **collaboration** is key with the other members of the IEP team. **SMART goals** should be the focus of the planning process: **Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Action-Oriented, Realistic and Relevant, Time-Limited.**

What is my role in the student's IEP?

- Make sure your lessons are adapted to fit the needs of that student
- Assess their achievement of the specific goals set in their IEP
- Share their progress with the other members of the IEP team.

4 Collaboration

Be prepared to have **many relationships** with the staff at your school. You may have more than one adult in your classroom either at certain times in the day, or all day. These include **Education Assistants, school librarians, other enrolling teachers, even your administrator.** As educators, we need to **model co-operation and collaboration** among our students; this is part of the **communication core competency** in the new BC Curriculum. Collaboration can take many forms in the school – either planning events or classroom lesson instruction.

Don't forget the Librarian!

This person is the key to helping your students access further information. Let them into your classroom, or perhaps join together for a lesson. Make the most of your school library and resources to enhance your students' learning experience.

5 Self-Regulated Learning

It is important for students to be the **pilot** of their own learning and to be **aware of their emotions** inside and outside of the classroom.

This ties into the **personalized learning focus** of the new BC Curriculum. SRL is when students have their own beliefs about their learning and their mental abilities are transformed into academic performance skills. Give your students **checklists** to make sure they are on task and to give a sense of routine.

Goal-setting also helps students be their own pilot of their learning.

Classroom Management and Self-Regulated Learning

Give Me Five!



1. Eyes are watching
2. Ears are listening
3. Hands are still
4. Legs are crossed
5. Mouths are closed