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*Strategies
to Problem-Solve
the Hard Parts
of Teaching*

the
new
teacher
handbook

BERIT GORDON

School-Year Study Guide

Contents

[What This Guide Offers](#)

[Meeting Structure Overview](#)

[Meeting 1 Finding Your Footing](#)

[Meeting 2 Time and Energy Management](#)

[Meeting 3 Management That Actually Works](#)

[Meeting 4 When Behaviors Challenge You](#)

[Meeting 5 Building Connections](#)

[Meeting 6 Mid-Year Survival Strategies](#)

[Meeting 7 Building Student Independence](#)

[Meeting 8 Teaching All Levels](#)

[Meeting 9 Planning Smarter, Not Harder](#)

[Meeting 10 Getting Students Talking and Working Together](#)

[Meeting 11 Assessment Strategies That Work](#)

[Meeting 12 Reflection and Next Year Planning](#)

[Alternative Schedules](#)

The New Teacher Handbook Support Club

Your Guide to a First-Year Survival Kit for New Hires

What This Guide Offers

For Group Leaders (coaches, administrators, mentors): You're about to turn *The New Teacher Handbook* from "just another teaching book" into a trusted resource and survival kit. This guide helps you support new teachers through their critical first months with minimal prep time and maximum impact.

In these meetings, you'll help teachers find exactly what they need when real classroom challenges hit. The session plans include engaging activities and quick exercises that turn teaching theory into practical classroom solutions.

This school-year book club will create those "I'm not alone!" moments new teachers desperately need. Share your own teaching disaster stories (the funnier, the better), bring snacks, and make it safe to admit when things aren't going well. These meetings give new teachers confidence to tackle challenges as they arise, practical strategies ready to implement, and the comfort of knowing where to turn when facing those inevitable first-year struggles.

Your new teachers will walk away with

- ready solutions for teaching challenges that actually work with real kids.
- a personal “teacher toolbox” of strategies they can implement immediately.
- specific words and actions for those “What do I do when . . . ?” moments.
- a support network of fellow teachers who understand what they’re going through.

Meeting Structure Overview

The meeting structure suggestions follow the natural rhythm of the school year with front-loaded support when new teachers need it most. At the end of this guide, I’ve included suggestions for how you might adapt to your group’s start time, availability, and needs.

First Month: Two meetings (approximately every other week) for building survival foundations (Chapter 1)

Second Month: Two meetings (approximately every other week) for focusing on management and relationships (Chapters 2–4)

Months 3–9: One meeting per month for practicing the goals in Chapters 5–10, plus revisiting old ones as needed

Don’t worry if you miss a meeting—skip that month’s focus and move to the next, or revisit a previous meeting’s agenda that needed more time. You’ll be the best judge of what your teaching community needs, and when. These frameworks are all flexible suggestions.

Meeting Length: Each meeting runs about forty-five minutes to respect teachers’ time and energy. You can omit activities if you have less time or let discussions go more in depth if you have more.

Teacher Prep Between Meetings: There’s no teacher preparation required between sessions. New teachers will come to these meetings more eagerly when there’s no homework to add to their crowded to-do lists.

Meeting 1: Finding Your Footing

Focus: *Getting oriented and building community*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send calendar invites with “No prep needed!” prominently displayed.
- Send follow-up reminder.
- Include snack poll if desired (snacks make everything better).

Materials Needed

- Copies of *The New Teacher Handbook* (one for each participant to keep)
- Blank paper
- Index cards
- Snacks

Your 5-Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 1.2: “How do I end a teaching day feeling like I accomplished something?”
- Prepare to share one small win from your own recent experience.
- Review Strategy 4.2: “How can the first three minutes welcome students in and build community?” for opening activity ideas.

Meeting Flow

Opening Ritual: Good News Round (5 minutes)

Start with one of the opening activity suggestions from Strategy 4.2, such as “Share the good news,” or a different one of your choice. Model by sharing something good from your week (a non-rushed conversation with a new teacher, seeing a kid smile in the hallway, almost clearing your inbox). Have teachers share theirs. Getting through a tough day, remembering a student’s name, or enjoying a hot cup of coffee all count.

Set the Tone for an Open, Supportive Book Club (5 minutes)

Read together the opening of the book's introduction where I share my regrettable teaching moments. Share one of your own, and make it count. (No fair simply saying you once ran out of time or forgot to submit your attendance.) Normalize struggles and remind participants that feeling overwhelmed is part of the process, not a sign of failure.

Handbook Tour (10 minutes)

Give copies of the handbook to all participants. Have them write their name on the inside cover.

Walk them through the book's key components:

- Show how the table of contents follows a strategic progression, starting with teacher well-being, moving to classroom management, then building relationships, planning, and assessment. The early chapters create foundations for the later ones.
- Flip through Chapter 1 and highlight how it addresses specific teaching challenges with practical steps and strategies. Point out that each strategy title is a real question asked by new teachers.
- Go to the sample strategy in the introduction (pages 4–5) to understand all the parts of each strategy. Then examine a chapter strategy together. Point out:
 - + Strategy question title that reflects real teacher concerns
 - + “At a glance” section for when you’re short on time (like TLDR)
 - + “Digging deeper” explanation for when you have more time
 - + “It’s working if” indicators to track progress and celebrate growth

Honest Expectations Activity (10 minutes)

1. Have new teachers complete these sentences on index cards:
 - a. “My biggest teaching challenge (or worry) is _____”
 - b. “I hope I never have to handle _____”
 - c. “I feel out of my comfort zone when _____”
2. Mix up the cards and redistribute them.
3. Read the card you received aloud.
4. “Let’s find where this handbook addresses one of those issues on your card.” Have them flip through the book and see if they can find a strategy that would help answer that challenge. Share out.

Closing Options (5 minutes)

- Share one small teaching win from today or this week.
- Remind them: Every experienced teacher started exactly where they are now. Feeling overwhelmed is part of the learning process, not a sign you're failing.
- Preview next meeting: "We'll tackle time management and those never-ending to-do lists."
- Bookmark one strategy you want to remember for a tough moment.

Meeting 2: Time and Energy Management

Focus: Working smarter, not harder, and prioritizing your well-being

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.

Materials Needed

- Calendar templates or blank weekly schedules
- Sticky notes

Your 10–15 Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 1.1: "How do I manage the workload if I never feel done?" and Strategy 1.3: "How much time should I budget to stay on top of things?" and cue up the related videos (Video 1-1 *Get It Quick* Taming Your Teaching Workload and Video 1-2 *Get It Quick* Time Mastery: Your Daily Teaching Survival Guide).
- Prepare your own realistic schedule example (not your ideal one, your actual messy one).

Meeting Flow

Opening: Two-Word Check-In (5 minutes)

Using another opener from Strategy 4.2, have each person share two words describing how they're feeling right now. You can start with two words of your own, maybe even contradictory feelings (exhausted/hopeful, overwhelmed/caffeinated). New teachers can feel eager and panicked at the same time! Students may feel those complicated feelings, too.

Understanding the Checklists (10 minutes)

Turn to the "Growth at a Glance" checklists in the introduction (pages 10–17). Review how the checklists can help teachers use the book flexibly—they're designed to support different entryways, so the work helps each new teacher find and use what they need.

- These checklists correspond to each chapter in the book and show teaching skills that build on each other. For example, checklists start with taking care of yourself (Chapter 1), then classroom management (Chapters 2 and 3), then relationships (Chapters 4 and 5), because it's hard to develop connections with students when you're exhausted from redirecting and reminding, or to give feedback before students can work on their own. Each chapter builds on skills from previous ones.
- New teachers don't have to go in order, but if they are struggling, starting with earlier checklists and chapters will set them up for the most success.

Consider these steps when using the checklists:

- Check off what you do consistently, not just on a great day.
- Find the first checklist with several blank boxes. That's a good place to start.
- Dip into that corresponding chapter and put a sticky note on a few strategies that will help.
- Later, when you see that you can now check off some of those boxes, celebrate! Marking growth matters.
- Decide if you want to stay in that goal or move to a new one.

Time Reality Check (15 minutes)

Watch Video 1-2 for Strategy 1.3 together. Discuss the ten-hour guideline and why it can help. Share out your schedule example and how you try to budget time to do your job well and take care of yourself so it works for you. Have teachers briefly map out a realistic weekly schedule that includes:

- Actual arrival/departure times (not aspirational ones)
- Boundaries that work for you, your energy, and other commitments
- Ten hours a week outside contract hours so you feel ready, prepared, and able to focus on students when they arrive

Have teachers share out what still feels like it's getting not enough or too much time. We know this is a never-ending challenge for almost every teacher, and new teachers need our support in acknowledging it!

Time Management (10 minutes)

Watch Video 1-1 for Strategy 1.1: "How do I manage the workload if I never feel done?" Discuss which of these tips resonate with teachers and encourage them to share out other time and task management moves that work for them.

Closing Options (5 minutes)

- Share one boundary you're committing to this week (as small as "I'll eat lunch without looking at work tomorrow") or one time management move you're going to try.
- Arrange a body-doubling work session with a colleague, committing to simply sharing a space and time to get work done. You'll likely focus more with your accountability partner at your side.
- Share something from your "Growth at a Glance" checklist that you can already check off (celebrate what's working!).
- Preview next meeting: "We'll focus on classroom management strategies, and it's never too late to revisit this."

Meeting 3: Management That Actually Works

***Focus:** Prevention over punishment and fixing what's not working*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.

Materials Needed

- Index cards
- Chart paper

Your 10-Minute Prep:

- Skim the Chapter 2 introduction to review key concepts about setting the tone (and it's not too late for your new teachers to revisit this!), preventive management moves versus reactive ones, and the value of predictable routines and procedures.
- Review Strategy 2.2: "I've heard it's important to get routines and procedures in place. What does that mean?", 2.7: "How do I get students settled and ready to learn (or follow any routine?", and 2.11: "How can I get students to follow routines without reminders?"
- Cue up the videos for Strategies 2.7 and 2.11 (Video 2-3 *Demo Ready, Set, Focus: Starting Class Strong* and Video 2-6 *Demo Practice Makes Progress: Creating Automatic Routines [No Reminders Needed!]*).

Meeting Flow

Opening: Management Reality (5 minutes)

Start by admitting to or describing a management disaster from your own teaching days. Then ask, "What are some management challenges you are facing

right now?" Write responses on chart paper. Acknowledge that these weeks are when the honeymoon period often ends and reality sets in.

If you think the group might be reluctant to share these kinds of struggles, have them write on an anonymous digital form or survey, then share the results.

Prevention Mindset Shift (10 minutes)

Review the key concepts from Chapter 2's introduction and look at Strategy 2.2: "I've heard it's important to get routines and procedures in place. What does that mean?" and 2.7: "How do I get students settled and ready to learn (or to follow any routine)?" Discuss the difference between reactive and preventive management. Ask, "What's one procedure you wish you'd taught more clearly from day one?" (We all have that list!)

Procedure Tune-Up Workshop (20 minutes)

Show the Strategy 2.7 video (Video 2-3 *Demo Ready, Set, Focus*), and have pairs choose one struggling classroom procedure, which might include:

- Anything they're frequently reminding students to do or not to do
- Attention signals that have gotten sloppy
- Transition routines that take forever
- Material distribution chaos
- Lots of "Can you help me?" interruptions

Create a "reteach" plan:

- Exact words to use when reintroducing it
- How to practice it with students (yes, even older kids need practice)
- How to reinforce it consistently

Video Resource Reflection (5 minutes)

Watch the Strategy 2.11 video (Video 2-6 *Demo Practice Makes Progress: Creating Automatic Routines (No Reminders Needed!)*). Discuss: "What did you notice? What will you try tomorrow?"

Closing Options (5 minutes)

- Choose one procedure you'll reteach this week and share which one with a partner for accountability.
- Share one management strategy you're excited to try (even if you're nervous about it).

- Remind participants that management struggles are normal and worth addressing. Taking time to fix routines now means more energy for teaching later.
- Preview next meeting: “We’ll look at ways to handle challenging student behaviors while staying calm.”

Meeting 4: When Behaviors Challenge You

Focus: *Staying calm and responding versus reacting*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.

Your 10-Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 3.1: “How can I regulate my emotions when student behaviors test me?”
- Review Strategy 3.2: “What are quick strategies for a student who is off task or refuses to do the work?”
- Cue up the video for Strategy 3.1 (Video 3-1 *Get it Quick* Keeping Your Cool When Students Push Back).
- Prepare your own “reset button” example from Strategy 3.1. (We all need one!)

Meeting Flow

Opening (5 minutes)

Share out a behavior or action from a student that you found challenging as a new teacher. Set the tone that it’s OK to be vulnerable! “What’s a behavior that’s been pushing your buttons lately?” Have teachers share specific examples. As

teachers are sharing the behaviors, list them out because they will choose from these later on.

If teachers are reluctant to share these aloud, have them write them in a digital form.

Managing Your Emotions First (15 minutes)

Acknowledge that dealing with the behaviors listed is exactly when Strategy 3.1 becomes essential. When students are testing us, we need to regulate our own emotions before we can effectively respond to theirs. Watch Video 3-1, and have teachers talk about ways to regulate emotions before trying to manage students.

Ask new teachers to come up with personal ten-second reset buttons (deep breath, count to five, look out a window, have a mantra that doesn't make you cringe, etc.) so they have a quick move in their back pocket when behaviors test them.

Response Strategies Workshop (15 minutes)

Strategy Menu (5 minutes)

Have the group look at three ways to respond to tough behaviors, depending on what's happening. Be able to refer to the list you generated from the opening activity.

- **For Off-Task/Refusal Behaviors (Strategy 3.2):** Try short, calm responses that don't turn into power struggles, use silent interventions, and if possible, notice the positive. (You can also refer teachers back to using the Take a Minute card from Strategy 2.8.)
- **For Angry/Defiant Students (Strategy 3.7):** Defuse big emotions by listening to and naming what the student is feeling. You don't have to "cave," or give them what they want, but you need to first help them regulate by acknowledging what's happening from their perspective. Later, when they are regulated, you can go over what you need them to do differently.
- **For Disrespectful Behavior (Strategy 3.9):** Review "How do I shut down the behavior, not the student?" Practice addressing what students did, not who they are, and learn quick ways to move past disrespectful behaviors without turning them into power struggles.

Scenario Matching (5 minutes)

- Partner up.
- Each pair picks one challenging behavior from the opening discussion.
- Choose which strategy fits your situation best and read that strategy together.

Strategy Practice (5 minutes)

- Practice saying the actual words from your chosen strategy.
- Think about staying calm and making sure you are regulated first, picking your battles, helping dysregulated students be calm too before expecting compliance, and matching your response to the behavior.

Quick Share-Out: Ask pairs to share which strategy they tried and one thing they want to remember about using it.

What to Say Practice (5 minutes)

Look for specific language from Chapter 3 that you can use this week. Use the “What to Say” resources in Strategies 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7, and pick phrases that feel right for the situations you’re dealing with.

Closing Options (5 minutes)

- Practice your ten-second reset button right now and commit to using it this week.
- Write your chosen phrases on a sticky note for your desk where you’ll see them when you need them most.
- Share which “What to Say” phrase you’re most ready to try.
- Preview next meeting: “We’ll focus on building community and connections.”

Meeting 5: Building Connections

Focus: Relationships and connections

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.

Your 5-Minute Prep

- Review Strategies 4.4: “How do I build trust, especially with resistant and challenging students?”, 4.10: “How do I make sure no one falls through the cracks?”, and 5.1: “How do I connect with families and gain their trust and support?”
- Cue up the video for Strategy 4.10 (Video 4-6 *Get It Quick* The Three Things Check: See Every Student Clearly).

Meeting Flow

Opening: Relationship Reflection (5 minutes)

“Think of a student connection you’ve made so far this year. What made that work?” Share examples and celebrate the relationships that are already forming.

Connection-Building Strategies (20 minutes)

- Watch Video 4-6 *Get It Quick* The Three Things Check: See Every Student Clearly from Strategy 4.10.
- + Have teachers try the strategy with their class list and identify 2–3 students who they need stronger connections with. Then skim through Chapter 4 and find concrete strategies to try. Steer teachers specifically toward Strategies 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 for quick tips and suggestions.

- Look at Strategy 4.4: “How do I build trust, especially with resistant and challenging students?” together.
- + Ask teachers to think of one student who would benefit and choose a “What to Say” phrase that they’ll try the next day. Share out.

Family Communication (10–15 minutes)

Review Strategy 5.1. Have teachers draft one positive communication they’ll send home this week. Remind them of the power of establishing trust with caregivers and letting them know you see their child, especially the good things about them. It is never too late to notice and share these details!

Closing (5 minutes)

- Choose one specific student you’ll make an extra effort to connect with this week and say their name to a partner for accountability.
- Share one relationship breakthrough you’ve had this year, big or small. Maybe a shy student finally spoke up or a caregiver responded positively to your call.
- Jot down one concrete relationship strategy from today’s meeting that you want to remember and try.
- Preview next meeting: “We’ll tackle the mid-year exhaustion and winter blues.”

Meeting 6: Mid-Year Survival Strategies

Focus: Keeping momentum when our energy might be low

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.

Your 15-Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 1.4: “How do I stay motivated when things have me down?” and Strategy 1.10: “How do I get myself off the sofa and to work when I’m desperate for a day off?”
- Create a digital survey for new teachers (a Google Form or other online poll system), pulling from the student examples in Strategy 4.7: “How do I know if students feel OK in my class?” Adapt the questions for new teachers, such as, “What part of teaching do you enjoy most?” “What has felt easy or hard to do?” “What helps you as a new teacher most?” “What gets in the way of feeling successful as a new teacher?” Make sure to include the question “Is there anything else I should know?” and have a way to display results. Set it so responses are anonymous.

Meeting Flow

Opening: Energy Check (5 minutes)

“This time of year is hard for everyone. How are you doing?” Create safe space for honest sharing about fatigue, family expectations, and seasonal challenges. Winter teaching is its own special kind of exhausting!

Motivation Strategies (15 minutes)

Read Strategy 1.4 together. Practice the “rate your day and plan accordingly” technique from the “At a glance” section. Have teachers identify small actions

they can take to make tomorrow feel more manageable. Also look at Strategy 1.10: “How do I get myself off my sofa and to work when I’m desperate for a day off?” Gently remind them it’s partly their moral obligation to students and colleagues to be there unless they’re ill, but even more importantly, showing up consistently makes their job easier (truly!). Routines stay in place and students trust in their consistent presence.

Ask teachers to share out what helps them show up and get through hard days.

Feedback and Check-In (20 minutes)

Share the poll/survey you created and let teachers know their responses are anonymous, and that you’ll display their answers at the end to help them see where others are at and to feel some solidarity. Give them time to respond and then share out the responses and discuss. Or, if the group does not feel ready to share vulnerable responses yet, simply have them fill out the survey and share a holistic summary at the next meeting.

Before the next meeting, consider what you can do to acknowledge their responses and ideally, make one small change or decision to show how well you listened to their concerns and feelings.

If there’s time, talk about how this kind of survey might work with their students.

Closing Options (5 minutes)

- Share one small survival strategy you’ll commit to trying this week (could be as simple as “I’ll leave school by four p.m. on Friday”).
- Share one thing you’re grateful for about your teaching experience so far (“My students make me laugh”).
- Preview next meeting: “We’ll look at ways to boost students’ comfort level to try things on their own, so they learn more and you don’t have to work as hard!”
- Have them jot down one tip from today’s meeting on an index card to keep in their desk drawer for a rough day ahead.

Meeting 7: Building Student Independence

***Focus:** Boosting students' comfort to try things on their own and build stamina*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.
- If you did the survey/poll in the last meeting and did not discuss responses as a group, be ready to summarize what you learned and any change or response you've made as a result. Regardless, make sure they know you read them closely and listened!

Materials Needed

- Chart paper
- Sticky notes

Your 10-Minute Prep

- Review Chapter 6's introduction about shifting from dependence to independence.
- Review Strategy 6.1: "What if, after I explain things clearly, there are still lots of questions?"
- Review Strategy 6.2: "How do I help students solve problems on their own?"

Meeting Flow

Opening: Workload Reality (5 minutes)

"What would happen if students needed you less? How would that change your day?" Talk about this goal of student independence and how it impacts teachers first.

The Independence Mindset (10 minutes)

Read Chapter 6's introduction together. Discuss the value of student independence for both students and teacher. Go over the checklist and have teachers fill it out and discuss.

What Gets in the Way of Student Independence and What Can We Try? (25 minutes)

Encourage teachers to think of times when they have been reluctant to try something or felt uncomfortable with what was asked of them in a class. Better yet, start with an example of your own! Maybe you were stumbling over what felt like Broadway-level choreography in an exercise class and crept toward the back or out of the room entirely, or you traveled to a foreign country and relied on restaurants with picture-heavy menus as opposed to trying to pronounce words in a new language.

Then generate a list together of what might get in the way for our students when they aren't trying or doing things on their own. Consider lack of confidence, motivation, ability, or attention/stamina.

Have teachers work with a partner, assign them one of the "get in the way" obstacles, and give them time to find answers in Chapter 6. They can flip through the strategies, see what moves would help students struggling with that issue, and then share out to the group.

Closing (5 minutes)

- Commit to trying one independence strategy this week and share which one with a partner.
- Share one area where you've been "rescuing" students too much. (We all do it!)
- Remind them: Teaching independence takes time, but it's the best gift you can give your students and yourself.
- Preview next meeting: "We'll focus on how to reach more students when they have different strengths and struggles."
- Choose one "needy" behavior you'll address this week and write down your plan.

Meeting 8: Teaching All Levels

Focus: *Differentiation that feels doable*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.
- Ask them to bring or be able to access their planning materials (online curricula or other) for an upcoming lesson.

Materials Needed

- Chart paper
- Sticky notes

Your 10–20 Minute Prep

- Review Chapter 7's introduction about meeting different needs.
- Review Strategy 7.2: "What do I teach when they're all at different levels?" and cue up Video 7-2 *Get It Quick* Planning Lessons That Work for Everyone.
- Review Strategy 7.3: "How do I teach a concept so every student gets it?" and cue up Video 7-3 *Demo Teaching So Everyone Gets It*.
- Review Strategy 7.4: "How do I keep my instruction to ten minutes and protect time to meet with groups?" and cue up Video 7-4 *Demo The Ten-Minute Teaching Sweet Spot*.
- If you have more time, prepare a model for the activity related to Strategy 7.2. Use sample curriculum materials to plan a lesson with one clear learning goal and the steps to get there.

Meeting Flow

Opening: Differentiation Reality Check (5 minutes)

“What’s your biggest challenge with different ability levels in your classroom?”

Share that this is one of the hardest parts of teaching and even veterans struggle with it! Do the checklist together.

Clarify One Learning Goal for All (10–15 minutes)

Watch Video 7-2 for Strategy 7.2 together. Have teachers try the steps to create the one-sentence, student-friendly learning goal for an upcoming lesson. If you created one, share your model first. Make sure teachers (and your example) use the sentence starter “Today I’m teaching you how to _____ by _____.”

Have teachers share in small groups or to the group. How did that feel?

Supporting Every Learner (15–20 minutes)

Show Video 7-3 for Strategy 7.3 about ways to teach a concept so everyone gets it.

Let teachers know they’ll create their own set of steps and then trade with a partner. Have teachers take the same concept they just outlined in their one-sentence learning goal above, and plan out how they will model those steps, letting students in on their thinking as they go. If they have time, outline the steps that would go on a visual set of instructions, such as an anchor chart.

Ask them to look at a partner’s planned model. They should imagine they are a student who often struggles with this material. Then would they be able to answer the question, “What are you learning today?” after that lesson? What about, “How will you do that?”

Short and Sweet Instruction (5–10 minutes)

Keeping our talk short and aligned with our students’ attention spans is always harder than we think! Show the video for Strategy 7.4 (Video 7-4 *Demo The Ten-Minute Teaching Sweet Spot*) and give teachers some time to discuss. How does this teacher keep instruction short and sweet? What will you try?

Closing (5 minutes)

- Share one strategy you’ll try this week.
- Share one success you’ve had with meeting different student needs. (Even small ones count!)
- Plan to bravely time yourself during your whole-class instruction. Aim for ten minutes and notice what prevents that. Then go back to Strategy 7.4.

Meeting 9: Planning Smarter, Not Harder

Focus: Efficient planning systems and time management strategies

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.
- Ask teachers to bring their current planning materials (digital or physical) and one recent set of student work (or at least a few examples).

Your 10-Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 8.1: “What’s most important to remember when planning?” and cue up Video 8-1 *Get It Quick* Using Student Work to Plan Better Lessons.
- Review Strategy 8.5: “How can I make lesson planning easier and less time-consuming?” and cue up Video 8-4 *Get It Quick* Streamlined Planning That Gets Results.
- Write the opener scenario sentences, each on a different piece of paper.

Meeting Flow

Opening (5–10 minutes)

Pass out 4–5 common planning mishap scenarios, each written on a different paper, to pairs or small groups of teachers. For example:

- “It’s ten p.m., you have twenty tabs open, and you still have no lesson planned for tomorrow.”
- “You’re making copies at 7:55 a.m., the copier jams, and kids arrive at eight.”
- “You spent ages planning a perfect lesson, and it flops.”
- “You planned a twenty-minute activity but kids finished in eight minutes.”

- Have teachers jot one quick solution on each chart and rotate papers 2–3 times. Just one line of your best advice. Share out. Have a laugh and get people talking!

Student Work Drives Planning (15 minutes)

Show Video 8-1 *Get It Quick* Using Student Work to Plan Better Lessons from Strategy 8.1.

- Have teachers take out their student work.
- Walk through the Strategy 8.1 process:
 1. Look at the work: What do most students know? What do they need to know?
 2. Choose what to teach next based on this evidence, not what's next in the curriculum.
- Share out, "What surprised you about what your student work revealed?"

Current Planning Systems (5 minutes)

Have teachers quickly share their current planning method with a partner. Is it working? What's frustrating about it? Listen in so you can recap.

Making Planning Predictable (15 minutes)

Show the video for Strategy 8.5 (Video 8-4 *Get It Quick* Streamlined Planning That Gets Results).

Have teachers choose one subject/class period and create their "predictable chunks" with sentence starters:

- Chunk 1 (5–10 minutes): _____
- Chunk 2 (10–15 minutes): _____
- Chunk 3 (10–15 minutes): _____
- Chunk 4 (5 minutes): _____

Share with a partner: "How could this template save you planning time and boost predictable routines for students?"

Closing Options (5 minutes)

- Choose one strategy from today you'll implement this week and tell a partner for accountability.
- Share how much time you currently spend planning per week versus how much you want to spend. What's one change that could get you closer to your goal?
- Share one planning win you've had this year, even if it was small (like remembering to make copies ahead of time!).

Meeting 10: Getting Students Talking and Working Together

Focus: Building collaboration and discussion skills

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.

Your 10-Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 9.1: “What moves get everyone confidently answering questions?” and cue up Video 9-1 *Demo Get Everyone Confidently Answering Questions*.
- Review Strategy 9.3: “How can I prevent off-topic answers and talk monopolizers?” and cue up Video 9-3 *Demo Stop the Off-Topic Talk Monopolizers*.

Meeting Flow

Opening: Human Scavenger Hunt (5 minutes)

Offer this challenge: “You have three minutes to find someone in the room who shares each of these with you”:

- Same favorite season
- Same number of pets (including zero)
- Same breakfast preference (sweet vs. savory)
- Same weekend priority (rest vs. adventure)

“You can only talk to each person for thirty seconds max, then move on. When time’s up, sit down with the last person you talked to. They’re your partner for today.”

Having structured but social talk that builds connections is engaging and doable.

Getting All Students to Talk (10 minutes)

Show the video for Strategy 9.1 (Video 9-1 *Demo Get Everyone Confidently Answering Questions*).

Get into groups of four to practice the techniques (combine two partnerships from the opener):

- One person asks, “What’s one teaching moment this year that surprised you?”
- Wait five full seconds (count silently), then repeat the question and call on someone by name (not the person with their hand up if anyone raises it).
- That person can answer or say “pass,” no pressure! If they pass, call on someone else then go back to them.
- Rotate so everyone gets to be the questioner.

Back with your original partner, discuss: How did the wait time feel as the person being asked? As the teacher? How would you feel as a student if you know you can pass, listen to others, and then have the teacher go back to you?

Taming the Talk Monopolizers (15 minutes)

The Problem Share (2 minutes)

- Quick partner share: “Think of a time when one person dominated a conversation (could be an adult or student). How did it feel for everyone else?”

Watch Video Together (3 minutes)

- Show the video for Strategy 9.3 (Video 9-3 *Demo Stop the Off-Topic Talk Monopolizers*).

Practice the Pair-Share-Recap Method (10 minutes)

- “What’s your biggest challenge with student discussions right now?”
- Write your answer on a sticky note.
- Share with your partner. Partner A talks for one minute, Partner B listens. Then switch.
- I’ll recap what I heard without calling on anyone.

Reflection: “How did it feel to know you’d get your turn to talk but wouldn’t be called on to share with the whole group? How could this save time or encourage a different class participation dynamic?”

Closing (5-10 minutes)

Have everyone jot down one takeaway or question from today, then have them trade papers and share out someone else’s response.

Next meeting: “We’ll look at a few grading and feedback strategies that protect your time and sanity.”

● Meeting 11: Assessment Strategies That Work

***Focus:** Efficient feedback without burnout*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder.
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks.
- Ask teachers to bring one recent student assignment they need to grade.

Your 10-Minute Prep

- Review Strategy 10.3: “How can I spend less time marking or grading classwork and homework?” and cue up Video 10-2 *Get It Quick* Less Grading and More Impact by Streamlining Classwork and Homework Review.
- Review Strategy 10.4: “How can I spend less time providing feedback on end-of-unit assignments?” and cue up Video 10-3 *Get It Quick* Simplified End-of-Unit Grading.

Meeting Flow

Opening (5 minutes)

We're going to do a quick "worst and best" share about grading and assessment in partners:

- (2–3 minutes): Partner up and share your biggest grading nightmare this year, such as the time you stayed up way too late, felt overwhelmed by the stack, or realized you spent hours on feedback no one read.
- (2–3 minutes): Now share your assessment success story, such as a time when you got great info about student learning quickly, or when students were genuinely excited about showing what they knew.

The strategies in this chapter are there to help you turn more of those nightmares into success stories with strategies that actually save you time while helping students learn better. Today we'll look at a few of them.

Grading Smarter, Not Harder (15 minutes)

Show Video 10-2 *Get It Quick* Less Grading and More Impact by Streamlining Classwork and Homework Review from Strategy 10.3.

Pull out the assignment you brought to grade:

- Step 1: Look at the assignment. What would you normally grade or mark on this?
- Step 2: Use Strategy 10.3 ideas to consider a new approach:
 - + Could you grade just one key question instead of all of them?
 - + Could students self-assess part of it?
 - + Could you give holistic feedback to the whole class instead of individual comments?
- Step 3: Share your "before and after" approach with your group.

Feedback That Actually Gets Used (15 minutes)

Show Video 10-3 *Get It Quick* Simplified End-of-Unit Grading from Strategy 10.4.

As a whole group, brainstorm common feedback you give on student work. Write them on chart paper and number them.

Take that same assignment from earlier. Instead of writing full comments, just write the numbers that apply on one or two students' work. How did that go?

Closing (5 minutes)

Complete this sentence: "This week I will try to stop _____ and start _____ to make assessment work better for me and my students."

Preview next meeting. "We'll celebrate your growth this year and look ahead to an even better year two!"

Meeting 12: Reflection and Next Year Planning

***Focus:** Celebrating growth and looking ahead*

Before You Meet

Logistics

- Send meeting reminder
- Remind teachers to bring their handbooks

Materials Needed

- Original Chapter 1 checklists from earlier meeting
- Snacks

Your 20-Minute Prep

- Prepare specific examples of growth you've seen in each teacher.
- Review the Chapter 1 checklist to compare with their starting point.

Meeting Flow

Opening (10 minutes)

Have teachers look at their original Chapter 1 checklist. Compare it to where they are now. Go around and have each person share one of the following:

- One thing they can now check off that they couldn't before
- One student relationship that surprised them this year
- One moment when they felt like they had an "I taught today" day (or moment!)

Growth Celebration (15 minutes)

As group leader, share specific growth you've witnessed in each teacher. Encourage teachers to acknowledge their own resilience and learning.

Summer and Looking Ahead (10 minutes)

- Permission to rest this summer (you've earned it!)
- Which strategies they want to implement from the start next year
- How to set up their classroom differently
- Goals for year two that feel exciting, not overwhelming

Closing (10 minutes)

- Acknowledge that they've joined the ranks of experienced teachers (surviving year one is *huge!*).
- Remind them they now have wisdom to share with next year's new teachers.

Give each teacher a chance to write themselves a note to take away to read at the start of year two, celebrating what they've accomplished and reminding themselves they can handle whatever comes next.

Alternative Schedules

Monthly Meetings Only (nine meetings)

- **Month 1:** Handbook introduction and time management (Chapter 1)
- **Month 2:** Classroom management and behavior basics (Chapters 2–3)
- **Month 3:** Building relationships and family communication (Chapters 4–5)
- **Month 4:** Mid-year survival strategies (Chapter 1 revisit)
- **Month 5:** Student independence (Chapter 6)
- **Month 6:** Teaching different levels (Chapter 7)
- **Month 7:** Student collaboration (Chapter 9)
- **Month 8:** Assessment and feedback (Chapter 10)
- **Month 9:** Reflection and next year planning

Quarterly Support (four meetings)

- **Month 1:** Survival foundations (Chapters 1–2)
- **Month 3:** Management and connections (Chapters 3–4)
- **Month 6:** Relationships (Chapter 6)
- **Month 9:** Student independence (Chapter 6)

Minimal Support (two meetings)

- **Early Support:** How to use the book and essential strategies for well-being and time management. Introduce management chapters (2–4).
- **Mid-Year Check:** Relationship building and independence strategies

If You Can't Meet: Check-In Approach

- **Opening Email:** “Welcome to our informal school-year book club! No meetings, no pressure, just some gentle support as you navigate your first year. Take ten minutes this week to flip to the “Growth at a Glance” checklist (Chapter 1 goals). How are you doing with taking care of yourself? Any goal jump out as worth focusing on? Hit reply and let me know.”

- **Weekly Text Template:** “How’s [specific strategy] working for you? Any wins or struggles to share?” Or, offer a summary of two more strategies that might help challenges you’ve seen or can predict for new teachers at this time of year.
- **Monthly Email:** Focus on one chapter per month with 2–3 specific strategies to try, always emphasizing that they should use what feels manageable.



This school-year book club builds confident, resourceful teachers who know exactly where to turn when challenges hit. The handbook becomes their emergency manual, and this group becomes their support system. You’re giving them what every new teacher deserves, which is practical help and the knowledge that they’re not alone in this journey.