Progress Learning

Guide for New Teachers

This e-book is a thorough compilation of information to support new teachers in their journey into the classroom. Complete with research-based material, advice from veteran teachers, and tips for getting the most out of Progress Learning, this ebook provides a tangible, high-quality resource to aid new teachers.

Introduction

Teaching can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be incredibly challenging, especially for new educators. We all remember how stressed we were our first year in the classroom, and we want to take some of that stress off of your plate.

Written by veteran teachers and edtech experts at Progress Learning, this ebook provides an in-depth guide into the key areas we have found are most supportive to new educators. We'll cover all the main sectors that will best help you, including everything from goal setting to managing the classroom to personalized learning.

You'll also hear from our own Progress Learning staff, former teachers, and trusted teacher ambassadors for a few words of encouragement as you dive into your first year of teaching.

Best of luck! t

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Advice from Veteran Teachers

Progress Learning Ambassadors and veteran teachers share their best advice for new teachers.

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Seek guidance and ask questions."

Alisha Meroney

Math and Science Teacher

"

Make your learning fun by getting to know your students, so that you are capable of building relationships that will help shape your classroom into a learning adventure."

Ayasia Hampton

Science - Forensics, Biology, AP Biology, Physical Science, Environmental Science

"

Take it one step at a time. Don't compare yourself to the 'veteran' teachers. You will get there in time as long as you work hard, and stick with it."

Eric Yancey

Math Teacher

"

Use tools to help augment your teaching, so you don't have to create everything from scratch."

Amber Crafton

Intervention K-5

"

Be sure you are using ALL available resources to reach your students. It's okay if things don't turn out the way you planned the first time."

Christi Raczynski

Math and Reading

"

Build strong relationships with your students. If they know you care, they will work hard."

Jason Suber

Math and Science

"

Get in contact with a mentor teacher who has used Progress Learning, and ask for information about Progress Learning. The program will help you meet your student's individual education needs, collect data, and give you access to endless resources in your classroom."

Lisa Baley

5th Grade RLA

Student Empowerment Through Goal Setting and Accountability

Student empowerment in the classroom is the ability for an instructor to enable a student to learn, teach, and lead others through gaining a sense of power, or encouraging students to take ownership in achieving their goals.

Teachers can practice implementing student empowerment by setting up individual meetings with students where they show them their instructional data and explain what it means and how to target their needs with specific practice. They can then show students how to set measurable and attainable goals in order to give them ownership over their own learning and achieve academic on-grade-level mastery.

Empowering students is a critical piece in the role of the teacher. The way we think about the role of the teacher has changed over time, moving from what was once believed to be the holder of information, filling the minds of students, to what is now more of a guide or facilitator of a student's individual learning experience.

Especially in this digital age in which students have access to information at their fingertips, it is important to rethink the idea of how teachers and students interact. Teaching from a textbook and having students regurgitate information is no longer the standard. Instead, we need to consider the fact that students are bombarded with information and empower them to learn to disseminate information, think critically, and take charge of their own learning.

Once students feel a sense of ownership and autonomy over their educational experience and understand how to set and achieve their own learning goals, they are more likely to succeed and reach mastery. This is because they are able to find motivation in working towards a goal and making progress on that goal. The understanding that they are working towards something and the feeling of accomplishment they receive keeps them motivated and engaged in the learning process.

How to Set SMART Goals for Yourself and Students

One of the most important aspects of goal setting is making sure that students are guided to set measurable and attainable goals. Setting a goal without also setting up a system for progress monitoring and accountability is not enough to be successful.

SMART Goals are a commonly used method for setting goals that prepares students for success.

It is a great idea to set SMART Goals with students as well as to set some for yourself for the school year. What are some things you can accomplish in your first year of teaching that will help you to feel successful? Try setting your own goals with your students to model the process for them.

| S | Specific | Define the goal in detail and find your purpose for the goal. |

| M | Measurable | How will success be measured? Set concrete criteria for measuring progress. |

| A | Attainable | Can you accomplish the goal? It should be challenging yet realistic. |

| R | Relevant | Is the goal constructive? It needs to be results-focused and productive. |

| T | Time-based | Your goal should have a set deadline and regular checkpoints. |

Classroom Management

How do you approach classroom management? Do you have a discipline style? Will you defer all discipline and send kids to the principal's office every time there is an issue?

Classroom management can be a tricky subject to broach, especially when trying to establish yourself as a new teacher. Here are some helpful tips for managing your classroom in an effective way.

- Build relationships with your students and maintain them. This will make things go smoother when disruptions arise
- Create an optimal environment for learning — assigned seats that rotate regularly can be a good thing
- Give specific praise. Acknowledge positive behavior and ignore minor disruptions when possible
- Set clear expectations and be consistent!
- Actively monitor. Walk around the room and give gentle reminders. Proximity can do a lot!

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Trey Loker
Elementary Academic Content Manager

5th Grade,
18 Years,
Harrisonburg City Public Schools, VA

What's your best advice for a first year teacher?

"Show how much you care about each student. Let them know they are wanted in your classroom."

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Mackenzie Maddox
Training Manager

5th Grade Math and Science, and 6th-8th Grade Math
4 Years
Texas and Arizona

What's your best advice for a first year teacher?

"Building healthy and trustworthy relationships with your students is the key to class management and gaining respect from your students."

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Elizabeth Buchanan
Account Executive

1st and 3rd grade Teacher,
11 Years,
Fulton and Gwinnett County Schools, GA

What's your best advice for a first year teacher?

"Getting to know your students and showing them that you care will decrease the amount of time you spend on disciplinary issues in your classroom."

Personalized Learning

Personalized, or individualized, learning is a term that is often used in the world of education. But what does it mean? Essentially, personalized learning customizes instruction to meet each student's unique needs and preferences.

As educators, we want our students to be able to access the information they need to succeed and participate in learning experiences that are meaningful to them. This is why, rather than attempting to provide differentiation for a few students' unique learning needs, we need to shift our perspective to offering instruction that is inclusive of all learning needs.

So, how is it possible to create these types of learning experiences for our students while making sure that they master their state standards? It's necessary to look at the Why, What, and How of learning. When we think about Why students learn, we have to look at engagement: Are they interested? Can they sustain the effort and persistence required to complete their tasks? Do they have tools for self-regulation?

When we consider What students are learning, we have to look at representation. Since we know that perception and comprehension vary greatly among learners, we need to ensure that we represent the information they need to know in various ways. There is no one way to represent the information that will meet the needs of all students, which is why it is key that options are available. The ability to customize displays, audio, and visual representations of information, as well as clarify language and symbols are critical components of adequately representing information for all students.

When discussing the How of learning, we need to ask ourselves: How are students able to demonstrate what they have learned? Do we provide them with multiple means of action and expression? Do they have access to tools and assistive technologies? Are there different ways for them to demonstrate what they have learned as opposed to simply answering multiple choice questions? Do they receive adequate, personalized feedback? Can they monitor their own progress?

This may seem like a lot to consider when designing quality instruction. How do we personalize instruction, while still ensuring that all required standards are covered throughout the school year? The good news is that quality, educational technology platforms like Progress Learning can significantly help with this. Teachers can continue to focus on creating safe, effective, and welcoming learning environments while employing the help of technology to cover standards and provide optimal accessibility for all students and their unique needs.

Instructional Design/Planning

Instructional Design is defined by Instructional Design Central as "the process by which learning products and experiences are designed, developed, and delivered." Essentially, instructional design is behind creating any educational experiences or instructional materials.
The basis for instructional design is determining the needs of the learners or users, designing the instruction, developing and implementing it, and evaluating the effectiveness of the instruction.

While some are of the opinion that you need an instructional designer title in order to design instruction effectively, it can also be argued that teachers are, in fact, instructional designers themselves.

While teachers may not have been introduced to the instructional design models in their credentialing programs, more and more information on instructional design strategies has become a part of their training and professional development. When you look at the main components of instructional design, it is easy to see that teachers have been doing this all along.

Teachers analyze the needs of their students, design and develop instruction, deliver the instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction with every lesson they teach.

Especially during the pandemic, as teachers were forced into remote learning, they were put into the role of instructional designer like never before. Teachers understand pedagogy and practice the steps of instructional design on a daily basis, making them excellent instructional designers.

To design effective instructional materials, lessons, and units, first start with your analysis of your learners.
Looking at your students — their unique needs, learner profiles, and environment — will help determine the key needs of your instruction.

Providing an Equitable Education

As educators, it is critical that our students are learning in a safe, effective, and equitable environment. Our classrooms have a wide variety of learner profiles and meeting the needs of each and every student is our top priority. From ESL/ELL students to students with learning disabilities, IEPs and 504s, we must work to ensure accessibility for all students to engage them in appropriate learning experiences that meet their individual and unique needs.

In creating an equitable classroom for all students, it's important to acknowledge the historical marginalization of student groups as well as any unconscious biases that may emerge when designing safe and inclusive classrooms, materials, and learning experiences.

This is where it becomes increasingly important for teachers to build relationships with students and get to know their individual needs and learner profiles. It is also imperative that assumptions are not made about what students know or might relate to and instead, assess background knowledge and cultural norms. Making accommodations for students is a lot easier if you understand what their unique needs are. Relationships with parents and caregivers are also of key importance.

To recap:

Get to know your students, build relationships, and discover their interests, backgrounds, and unique learning needs

Keep note! Track your observations and the progress students are making

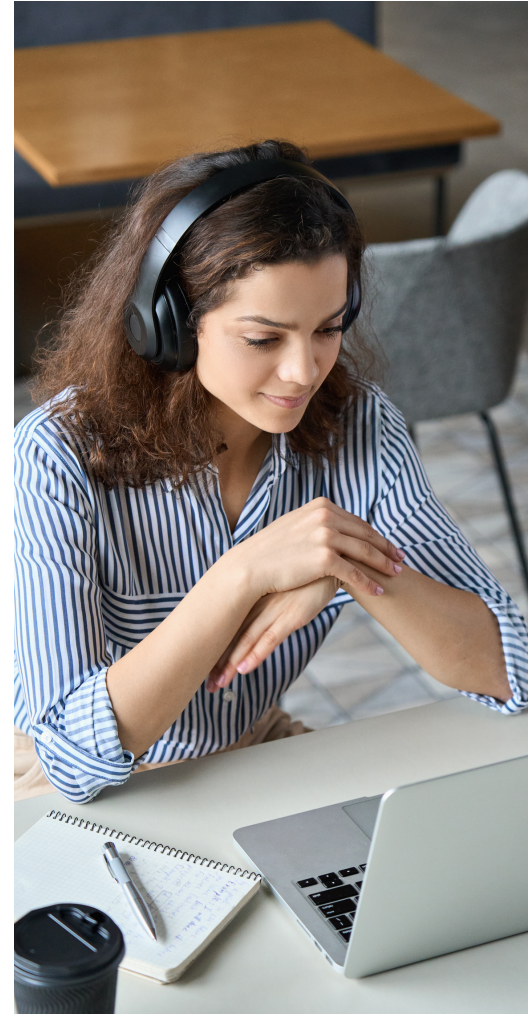Perform formal and informal evaluation via quality assessments

Consistently assess your accommodations for students to ensure they are working for them

Professional Development

Above all, remember your own love of learning and desire to grow. Remember why you became a teacher and what your motivation is. You are helping to shape young minds and have a great deal of impact on your students' lives. Check in with your own goals as an individual and an educator. Take advantage of your opportunities for professional development and stay up to date with all the latest news in the world of education.

At Progress Learning, we make professional development easy. We support you with live and on-demand training and webinars on a weekly and monthly basis. Our experienced and enthusiastic trainers will answer any and all questions you have so that you can feel empowered to use Progress Learning in your classroom. Teacher training sessions include:

Getting Started for Elementary Teachers (K-5)
Getting Started for Secondary Teachers (6-12)
Getting Started with Liftoff Adaptive Intervention (2-8)
Train the Trainer
Ask An Expert
Special Topic: Remediation Strategies
Special Topic: Green Dot Challenge/Galaxy Star Challenge
Special Topic: School Data Dig
Special Topic: Author Your Own Questions

In addition, we are constantly updating our News & Blog page with the latest teacher tips, including how to make sense of your data, lesson planning guides, tutoring resources, and more! We cover all the latest news in education and standardized assessments and offer resources and support for all trending education topics.

Join our email list, and we'll also send you weekly tips & tricks every Tuesday so that you can take advantage of all of the features and capabilities available on our platform.

We want you to succeed, and we make every effort to ensure that happens. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to our support staff at any time at support@progresslearning.com.

Assessments and Reporting

Collecting quality assessment data and providing reports will be a big part of your job in tracking student progress. As a teacher, you have trained on different types of assessments and when they are appropriate to use.

Let's break down the main types of assessments:

Diagnostic
Occurs before instruction to assess student's pre-knowledge and starting level

Interim
Given across an entire school or district to compare results of groups of students

Benchmark
Measures the academic progress of large groups of students

Summative
Measures success at the end of a checkpoint — lesson, unit, or project

As a teacher, you will encounter all of these types of assessments and use the data to help you put together your reports on student progress.

Pro tips:

1 Record your informal observations of students to use as part of your formative assessment data

2 Use edtech tools with assessment builders to help you build quality assessments

3 Go beyond multiple choice. Be creative with your question types

4 Assessments don't always have to be a test. Allow students to design a project, presentation, or model as their summative assessment — just make sure you have clear expectations and guidelines for them and make room for them to show you what they know in creative ways

Quality Resources:
How Progress Learning Can Help

Teaching is no simple task. We understand that you have one of the most important jobs as an educator guiding the next generation and it is our top priority to support you every way we can.

In addition to creating a safe and equitable learning environment, planning personalized instruction, managing your classroom, and of course, continuing your own learning and development, you must also ensure students get quality, standards-based instruction at every grade level.

We help by supplementing your classroom with high-quality content and resources that are aligned to each individual state's unique standards for all subjects and grades. Through our diagnostics and reports, as well as our assessment and assignment builder featuring an extensive item bank and a variety of question types, we empower you to create quality instruction and assessments and easily access the data needed for reporting.

On top of that, our built-in accessibility features and accommodations make it simple for you to personalize instruction and create equitable assignments, study, and practice for each of your student's unique needs. Finally, our up-to-date, researched news and blogs, webinars, and training are here to support you in your own professional learning journey.

From all of us at Progress Learning, we want to thank you for embarking on this journey as an educator and remind you that we've got your back. You've got this!