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Elections Teaching Tip

By Freda J. Glatt, M.A.

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An election brings many opportunities to relate curriculum to real life. Whether it is a local or national election, here are some ideas to try before and after Election Day.

1. Discuss how the commercials for each candidate have been written to persuade. Analyze the graphics, text, and tone of the voiceover. Try rewriting a commercial so that it does NOT persuade.
2. Discuss how television affects the debates. Try having two students debate a question with an audience and then listen to two other students debate an issue on an audio tape. Was there a discernible difference? Which was more effective?
3. Discuss campaigning. What do you think the candidates are learning about our country and its citizens? What do you think is the effect on their families? Try having an election in your own class, starting with a caucus, and go through the entire process.
4. Practice main idea, supporting details, and outlining by researching one issue for both candidates. Make a Venn diagram to see if there are any similarities in views.
5. Reinforce map skills by knowing the key for red and blue states and the location of states. Which area of the country had the most votes for a particular candidate?
6. Younger children can count the number of states in each color while older children can add the number of electoral votes represented by the different states in each color. They can add the votes in particular regions and compare them with greater-than and less-than symbols. If children can regroup, have them determine the difference between the popular votes and electoral votes for each candidate. Let them make a graph of states' votes.
7. Have children alphabetize names of states that voted for a particular candidate. Sequence the process of an election. Predict what will happen if one or the other candidate wins.

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8. Critically think about how to bring people together after a close election. How would your students do it?

I hope these ideas are useful and have inspired your own creative thinking.

And remember...Reading is FUNdamental!!

Freda J. Glatt retired from teaching after a 34-year career in early childhood and elementary education. Her focus, now, is to reach out and help others reinforce reading comprehension and

develop a love for reading. Visit her site at <http://www.sandralreading.com>. Reading is FUNdamental!

Make the Most of Your Mentoring Relationships

By Judith Lindenberger

Mentoring is one of the best ways to learn, to get feedback, and to take your career to the next level. Here are ten tips for making the most of your mentoring relationships.

Tip #1

Self-assess. Ask yourself, "What skills do I need to get where I want to go?"

Tip #2

Identify your learning goals. Put them in writing.

Tip #3

Decide together how the mentoring relationship will work – frequency and type of contact.

Tip #4

Commit the time. Don't give up if the chemistry doesn't feel right at the first meeting. Meet a minimum of once per month. Touch base regularly – by e-mail, phone, in person.

Tip #5

Take time to build trust and communication. Get to know each other on a personal level. Discuss your backgrounds, interests, career histories, and perspectives of your organizations.

Tip #6

Keep confidences. Nothing kills trust in a mentoring relationship faster than a breach of confidence.

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Tip #7

Be sensitive to cultural and gender differences. Do a little homework. And listen.

Tip #8

Understand and plan for the phases of a mentoring relationship. Build in time for evaluation and closure.

Tip #9

This is about learning, whether you're a protégé or a mentor. Keep a journal.

Tip #10

You don't need a single mentor who you keep throughout your career. What you need is a mind-set that allows you to learn from those around you, no matter who they are. To get ahead, create your own multitalented "board of advisors."

Judith Lindenberger MBA has a distinguished career in human resources consulting and is recognized for her innovation and excellence. The Lindenberger Group, LLC provides results-oriented human resources consulting, organization development, customized training workshops and personal career training to help individuals and organizations improve their productivity and performance. The Lindenberger Group is a two-time recipient of The Athena Award for Excellence in Mentoring. Contact them at 609.730.1049 or

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