



Teacher Tutorial #11

from

Marcia:

How to Use Bellwork Successfully in the Classroom



How to Use Bellwork Successfully in the Classroom

In my early years of teaching, there was no set start for my teaching days or class periods. No one really did anything that set the tone for the day. Kids just came in and milled around, some getting ready, most not. Then we had to make an BIG effort to get their attention, to get the day started.

Then one year, a principal got this "great idea" to require bellwork out of all his teachers. What a pain! We had no idea what he was talking about, but

he roamed the halls each morning, peering in our classroom doors to check, so we had to get it figured out and we did! And like it... Eventually...

After a long acquaintance with Bellwork, **here's what I know to be true about BELLWORK, meaning, this worked for me!**

(1) **I learned to plan a week at a time, based on what I was teaching that week.** I invented a form that could be turned into a one page transparency for the week. (I know, most of you

don't use transparencies anymore! This was a while ago. Today, you would project the page onto your SmartBoard.)

(2) **I learned to use the current lessons as my Go To for what to write Bells about.**

A Bell can be a review question from the day before or a set up question for the new lesson.

(3) **I learned to require Bellwork, make it part of the weekly grade, and collect the written answers on Friday.** If I didn't, students would NOT



Marcia's Science Teaching Ideas was founded by Marcia Krech, a retired Earth Science Teacher from Missouri, who believes passionately in passing on what she knows about good science teaching. I encourage teachers to use the active learning model including team games and foldables which puts the student to work and assigns the teacher the role of facilitator.

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put any effort into their answers, would not keep them organized, and would lose them left and right.

(4) **I learned to use a Bellwork Form for the recording of Bellwork answers.** If I just let them use notebook paper... again, it was much easier to lose the pages and not take Bellwork seriously.

(5) **I learned to tell my students that Bellwork Questions were a clue as to what was on the Friday's Quiz.** I made a point of covering the main objectives of the week AND being sure at least one Bell Question was on the Friday Quiz!

(6) **I learned to mix it up a bit each week.** I used diagrams to label, math problems to do, vocab words to compare and contrast, a simple worksheet to start, even puzzles to solve. I didn't want them to get used to what Bellwork meant when they walked in the door.

(7) **I learned to require that every student was working on the Bellwork WHEN THE BELL RANG.** If you don't have school-wide bells, I would suggest ringing a hand bell at the beginning of class.

(8) **I learned to reward the behavior I wanted--such as doing the Bell when the bell rang--by walking around with a stamp and stamping the day's bell. (very rarely!)** I would make sure who was NOT working at the bell, so they didn't get a stamp by getting to it--after the fact. The stamp was worth an extra point for the Bellwork that week.

(9) **I learned to collect Bellwork each Friday.** I told my students this was an EASY 10 points, two per Bell, and since we always gave the right answer as we discussed the day's Bell, everyone could get an A+ on Bellwork every week!

(10) **I learned not to spend much time on Bellwork.** Never dwelling on the Bell too long worked great. Just enough to focus their attention on my classroom and my objectives of the day and not enough time to bore them and turn minds off.

(11) **I learned to trust the process after the initial training period.** I could take roll, fill out passes, collect field trip money, you name it. Always something to do besides **teach** at the beginning of each period, right! But this way, most students would have quieted down and be busy with SCIENCE while I got business done.

(12) **I learned to RETRAIN if necessary as students can get lazy and will test to see if you mean this to happen every day.** Retraining involved walking them through the beginning of the day:

- (a) Walk in the door.
- (b) Pick up papers on the pickup table.
- (c) Walk to assigned seat.
- (d) Open notebook.
- (e) Copy homework.
- (f) Date the day's Objectives on the Objective Page.
- (g) DO THE BELLWORK!
- (h) Have homework out and ready to line up for points.
- (i) Only quiet talking about the class, not hallway talk!

RETRAINING IS THE KEY!

Goodies for the Teacher:



Marcia's Bellwork Form



[Click here for a peak!](#)

Week One Example Bellwork

(Could be projected on SmartBoard.)



[Click here for a peak!](#)

Week Two Example Bellwork

(Could be projected on SmartBoard.)



[Click here for a peak!](#)

Week Three Example Bellwork

(Could be projected on SmartBoard.)



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Week Four Example Bellwork

(Could be projected on SmartBoard.)



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