



Missions of Hope International  
**Primary Teaching Methods**

MacMillan Teaching Handbook by Dawn Quist

**Before you begin:**

The purpose of this guide is to help teachers learn, grow, and improve as educators. It serves as one way staff can actively pursue improvements in teaching and learning. This guide is to be used with the MacMillan Teaching Handbook: *Primary Teaching Methods*. (Missions of Hope library contains more than 20 copies of this book.)

There are three ways to use this guide.

1. **Head Teachers** - use as a staff development tool. Loan a book to each teacher and assign the reading and activities for each to accomplish. Discuss at regular staff meetings.
2. **Teachers** - meet with another teacher or two. As a small group, assign reading and activities. Set a regular time each week to talk about what you have learned. Hold each other accountable.
3. **On your own** - use as a tool of self-improvement. Set your own goals for reading and doing the activities. Hold yourself accountable.

Each of the nine sections is divided into smaller parts. Each part has a portion of text to read, an activity to do, and an idea or topic to think about or discuss. Determine how often your group will meet and how much you would like to accomplish in a certain length of time. Then you will be able to determine how many parts to assign. (For example, if your group will meet once a week, then an assignment of one part per week is sufficient. If your group will meet only once a month, then more parts could be assigned to be read and done by the individual in preparation for the monthly meeting. If you are reading this on your own, set a goal for yourself that will allow you to complete the readings and activities in a reasonable length of time.)

**Section 1 - Basic Principles**

- **Read:** pages 2-5

Activity: "Identify my areas of confidence" on page 3, and "Which words" activity on page 4.

Think about or discuss: What resources are available to help you learn more about your teaching subjects? (books? on-line? people? places? )

Which of the statements (on page 5) fits YOUR attitude towards your students? Which give a more positive atmosphere in the classroom?

"It is important to let your students know that the process of learning is just as important as the outcome " Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

- **Read:** pages 6, 32-33, 42-43.

Activity: Think about what planning activities you do and which people you work with (activity on page 32). When planning, what are the things you need to think about?

Make a list of tasks you **must** do: every day, at the end of each week, at the end of each term, and at the end of each year.

Think about or discuss: Is there a task on this list that you can delegate to a student or teaching assistant? Would it save you time to prepare and/or share some lessons with another teacher?

- **Read:** pages 7, 136-139,

Activity: Make a list of skills or interests of each member of your teaching team. (Remember, we are each given unique abilities from God.) If you do not know someone well enough to

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know their unique ability or interest, make it a goal to get to know that person better. Try to find time to observe other teachers in their classroom, and allow others to observe your teaching. (Remember, too, that we are a **team**, not **competitors**.)

Think about or discuss: What can you learn from each other? How will you collaborate? What needs to be done to ensure further collaboration with others?

• **Read:** pages 8-9, 14-15.

Activity: Read the “Thinking about pupil motivation” and “Thinking about teaching methods” activities (page 9). Think about how you will get this information?

Fill out the SWOT analysis (page 14), reflecting on the way you teach.

Think about or discuss: Is there a relationship between how *well your students are learning* in a subject and how *confident you are* in teaching that subject? Why or why not?

What support might you need (from other teachers, the school, or training programs) to help you sustain improvement?

• **Read:** pages 16-19.

Activity: Complete the activity “Evaluation of my teaching skills” (page 17).

Think about or discuss: How important is it that your students feel that you enjoy teaching them?

### Section 2 - Organization

• **Read:** pages 20-27

Activity: Define the word “interesting” as it relates to teaching or a classroom. Think about teachers you have enjoyed (activity, page 23).

Think about or discuss: What are some problems you face because of the number of students and/or the size of the classroom? Discuss ideas that might minimize these problems.

• **Read:** pages 28- 31

Activity: Make a list of the four most common behaviour problems that you cope with each day (page 30). Are any of these problems something you can prevent?

Think about or discuss: What is the difference between *rules* and *routines*? (Remember, it is important to teach the routines in your class at the start of each year, reviewing throughout the year.) Share ideas of interesting and creative ways of teaching routines.

### Section 3 - Planning

• **Read:** pages 36 - 39

Activity: Complete the “Making use of all your resources” (page 36) and “Introducing Topics” (page 38) activities.

Think about or discuss: A “hook” is something that grabs the student’s attention - an action or statement by the teacher to relate the experiences of the students to the objectives of the lesson. It is the teacher’s way of introducing the topic. Think about or discuss what makes a good “hook.”

### Section 4 - Working with Children

• **Read:** pages 44 - 49

Activity: Choose a lesson you will teach this week. Complete the “Question Categories” activity (page 46) as part of this lesson.

Think about or discuss: What makes a good question?

• **Read:** pages 50 - 55

Activity: Choose a topic or lesson, Make a list of the important ideas that you would like your students to learn. List ideas that would involve *active* learning.

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Think about or discuss: Differences of opinion can lead to quarrels. This is true for students as well as for adults. How can we teach (and learn) that people don't always have to agree, and, that listening is as important as talking?

• **Read:** pages 56 - 57, 92-93,

Activity: Using two sheets of newspaper, make the **tallest** shape that will stand by itself. (If working with more than one person, which group can make the tallest shape?) (Remember, it's difficult to *teach* problem solving without having *experienced* problem solving.)

Think about or discuss: What do the following have in common, and how are each different? Hands-on problem solving tasks (for example: make the tallest shape); word puzzles; math problems; real-life situations.

• **Read:** read pages 58 - 63

Activity: Think about the "Attitudes to punishment" and "What punishments do you find most effective?" (page 61). (Remember: *Discipline with Love and Logic* encourages:

- Adults will use a **language of respect** with students.
- The **use of consequences** will replace punishment as the dominant form of student discipline.
- **Expectations** for student behavior will be systematically taught for all students and clearly posted in the school.
- Teachers will develop a system to **recognize** students, over a course of a year, who follow expectations.
- Students whose conduct fails to meet expectations will receive **consequences** as appropriate.)

Think about or discuss: How are methods of punishment (from page 61) differ from the ideas learned in *Discipline with Love and Logic*?

### Section 5 - Teaching Strategies

• **Read:** pages 64 - 67

Activity: Choose a lesson that you will teach in using group-work as the method of teaching. This lesson preparation will require thought and planning. How will you group the students? What extra resources will you need? What instructions will you give the students to help them work in these groups and to complete the task?

Think about or discuss: Which topics or lesson types work well for group-work? Which do not?

• **Read:** pages 68 - 71

Activity: Begin to identify the individual needs of each of your students. (The chart on page 70 is an example of one way to record the information.) This will be a long-term project, yet it is important to get to know your students and their unique needs.

Think about or discuss: Use the "Which are the best partnerships?" activity to think about or discuss. Think in terms of what staff partnerships might be effective as a means of professional development. (Remember: teachers are students, as well, because they are life-long learners!)

• **Read:** pages 72 -77

Activity: Review your self-evaluation (from pages 14 and 17). Are you able to change your answers? Have you been thinking about your teaching?

Think about or discuss: Collaboration *among teachers* is one way to understand the advantages of working in groups. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

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### Section 6 - Methods

• **Read:** page 78 - 79; 116-119

Activity: Complete the "School Compound" activity (page 116). Also, write a goal for yourself to use a new method of teaching each term. Be specific about which teaching method you will use and how/when you will use it. Include how you will hold yourself accountable to that goal. (Will you ask your students to keep watch for when you use the new teaching method? Will you ask a staff member to inquire how you are doing with keeping to that goal?)

Think about or discuss: What would you do to improve the playground area or school compound?

• **Read:** pages 80 - 83

Activity: Complete the activity on page 80 ("Making a list of the core information in one unit of a textbook"). As you study the text, make notes on how you might develop your own material from the unit (see page 80 questions).

Think about or discuss: There are many resources available in one school compound. Can you use an item in any other way? (Remember- when resources are shared, their value doubles!)

• **Read:** pages 84 - 89

Activity: Collect local rhymes, stories and poetry. (activity on page 86). (This may make a good project for older students to take on - gather stories, poetry and lore from their family and neighborhood. A collection of these could be made into a "book" to share with others.) Are there community members who could share stories or poetry in the classroom?

Think about or discuss: A "buddy class" is way of matching the older students with younger students. (For example, Standard 1 with Standard 4.) The older students write and illustrate simple stories for the younger students. The classes gather together periodically and the students share the stories (pairing an older student with a younger student). Is having "buddy class" an option in your school?

• **Read:** pages 90 - 91; 94 - 95.

Activity: Complete the "Games" activity on page 90. Use games in your classroom to improve learning or for reinforcement. As an assignment, have your students teach the game to their family or younger friends. This will help reinforce the skill, giving your students more practice (without them noticing!).

Think about or discuss: "The use of games in the classroom uses valuable teaching time." Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

• **Read:** pages 96-97

Activity: Project work is time-consuming. It takes careful planning by the teacher to include links for learning in many subject areas (maths, science, language, etc.). It uses a large amount of classroom time as students work on their activities for the project. However, projects are a great teaching tool when used sparingly and planned properly. Look through the syllabus of curriculum subjects. Select a topic (such as animals, plants, or transport) that can be linked across several subjects. Make a project plan, similar to the plan found on page 97. Be sure to design the activities to accomplish what needs to be taught. Also, decide if this will be developed as a class, individual, group, or school project.

Think about or discuss: Is collaborating as a whole school on one project an option?

### Section 7 - Resources

• **Read:** pages 98 - 109

Activity: "What resources are available to your school?" (page 98). Also, post a list in the school office of items you would like to have (a "wish" list). Perhaps someone has access to

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something on this list and can provide it. You might have an item or know someone who has something that another teacher might need. This way we are aware of each other's needs or "wishes" and can watch for availability.

Think about or discuss: Is there a school-wide plan for sharing resources? (Often, an item is needed for a short period of time, yet stays in a classroom for longer than it is needed.)

• **Read:** pages 110- 115

Activity: Obtain a copy of the local newspaper. Make notes on how you will use the newspaper for a lesson. Be specific about what subject (maths, reading, writing), and what activities you will have the students do to best make use of the newspaper. (Ideas for this may be found on pages 114-115.)

Think about or discuss: Is there someone (other than staff at school) whom you might ask to collect articles for you? That person would need a short list of topics you are going to teach, or an idea of what material to collect. (Ideas may be found in the "What is in the local newspaper apart from local news?" on page 114.)

### Section 8 - Assessing Pupils' Work

• **Read:** pages 120 - 123

Activity: Keep a notebook at your desk. (Don't allow students to see what is written about other students.) You can organize the notebook in different ways, depending on what works best for you. One way may be to have a page set aside for each student. Throughout the day, you may observe a student's behaviour or attitude. You may notice a student's skill and/or understanding of a subject. As time allows, or perhaps at the end of the day, make quick notes about these observations on the student's page. You may find it easier to write all observations (of many student's) on one page continued on through the notebook.

Don't record everything. It is important to ask yourself: "What do I want to know about my students? What do I want to assess?" Then, be observant about one or two things.

These observation notes become a collection of information about your students and their learning. They will make good reference material to evaluate a particular student, as well as to make your teaching and the learning of your students more effective.

Think about or discuss: How do 'formal assessments' and 'observational assessments' differ?

• **Read:** pages 124- 135

Activity: Create an examination paper (using guidelines on page 126-127) in a subject area that you choose. Include objective questions, as well as subjective questions. Be careful not to make the exam too long.

Think about or discuss: What is the purpose of examinations? What is the purpose of marking?

### Section 9 - Working with Others

• **Read:** pages 138 - 145

Activity: Begin collecting information about the neighborhood (activity "Find out about your school's local area" page 142).

Think about or discuss: Do you have access to the internet? If so, how is it useful to help improve your teaching? If you do not have access to the internet, how might you gain access?

**One last assignment: A good teacher continues to learn.**

**So, continue to learn, grow, and improve!**