



Educator's Edge

Tips for New Teachers

Volume 2

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Anecdotal Records: Why and How?

According to the American Association of School Administrators (1992, p.21), an anecdotal record is “a written record kept in a positive tone of a child’s progress based on milestones particular to that child’s social, emotional, physical, aesthetic, and cognitive development.” Such records can be very helpful for a teacher to describe a student’s progress during parent-teacher conferences and when referring a child to a School Assistance Team (whether for gifted, behavioral, or other academic issues). They can also be useful in determining interventions to implement with a student and assessing the effectiveness of interventions.

child says and does. This would be time-consuming and tedious. Make sure to write the anecdote soon after you observe the occurrence so you can recall details accurately.

3. Develop a system for organizing your records. Some teachers use a binder or notebook with a separate section for each student. Others create individual computer files and store them in an “Anecdotal Records” folder. Back up electronic records on a CD or separate storage drive.

4. Make certain that anecdotal records are kept private. Store them where students or visitors will not have access to them. Keep students’ records separate from each other.

5. Write notes in objective, unambiguous, and measurable terms. This is especially true when documenting social or academic *problems*. Anecdotes should describe *only* the **who, what, where, and when** of a situation. One way to achieve this is to use verbs instead of adjectives to describe student behavior. Consider these contrasting anecdotal record samples:

Anecdotal Record Sample A (not recommended)

October 4, 2007. Susie was inappropriate in class. Today in math her behavior was uncooperative and rude, which upset others.

Anecdotal Record Sample B (recommended)

October 4, 2007. Two times during the math game Susie grabbed a classmate’s

“Call on your Mentor Teacher with questions, feelings, and issues you need to address. And, rest assured that most teachers do survive this phase of disillusionment...”



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Key Ideas to Keep in Mind with Anecdotal Records:

1. Utilize anecdotal records to track a student’s problems *and* achievements. Start meetings with parents or other school staff by sharing positive observations. Recording positives helps you maintain a balanced view of the student and enables you to praise and reinforce desirable behaviors. Anecdotal records should paint a picture of the student’s development over time. They should address specific areas of concern or achievement, for example, if a student consistently takes twice as long as peers to work math problems or completes advanced level problems in less time than peers take to work less complex ones.

2. Choose “snapshots” that illustrate typical characteristics of the child’s learning or behavior. Anecdotes should be brief. It is not necessary to document everything a

(Anecdotal Records cont'd.)

paper and scribbled on it. When I instructed her to return the paper and work on her own problem, she did not follow directions. Instead, she stood up and said, "This is boring. She took my pencil yesterday." When Susie's classmate said, "Leave me alone," Susie stuck out her tongue.

Sample A shows an *ineffective* way to document student behavior, while Sample B shows an *effective* use of anecdotal records. The wording of Sample A is vague, as the adjectives "inappropriate," "uncooperative" and "upset" are undefined. The teacher has negatively interpreted the student's actions without even describing them. The anecdote does not fully or only answer the questions, "who did or said what, when, and

where?" There are no specific examples cited, therefore this anecdote could be perceived as subjective to a teacher's personal feelings toward the student. Neither the behavior expectations nor the student's failure to meet them are given in measurable terms.

Sample B is preferable because the teacher uses verbs to describe explicitly and exclusively what the student *did* and *said*, with no personal interpretation of the actions. This sample answers only the who, what, when, and where of the situation. Objectively-written, specific anecdotes of student behavior can be a powerful and convincing way to demonstrate behavior patterns, but they must be measurable and should include examples of positive incidents as well as negative ones.

Feeling Disillusioned with Teaching? Don't Give Up!

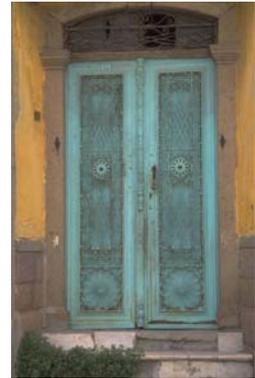


The first year of teaching is usually very challenging. If you are feeling the crunch of stress caused by your new professional roles and responsibilities, you're not alone. The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project has noted developmental phases typical of a teacher's first year in the profession. New teachers often start with a sense of anticipation, then quickly enter survival mode, followed by disillusionment, then rejuvenation, and finally, reflection. After six to eight weeks of nonstop work, beginning teachers experience disillusionment. Many factors can contribute to this sense of disenchantment: the extensive time commitment, a feeling that things are not going as well as planned, being overwhelmed with classroom management or implementing new curricula, being confronted with many new demands, low morale, and increased physical illnesses, among others. Communicating with parents and colleagues can be awkward and difficult for new teachers. They are sometimes unprepared to handle questions or criticism as plans for the year are still unclear in their own minds.

The good news: This is a normal phase of beginning teacher development. The better news: You are not alone! Your Mentor Teacher can provide much-needed encouragement, and more importantly, practical advice for how to get through the tough times you are encountering. Call on your Mentor Teacher with questions, feelings, and issues you need to address. And, rest assured that most teachers do survive this phase of disillusionment, especially if they are able to focus on how well they are doing in the face of realities. With a optimistic attitude and a little extra help, you'll be surprised at how soon you feel rejuvenated and better equipped to tackle challenges.

Adapted from "Phases of First-Year Teaching," by Ellen Moir, New Teacher Center @ University of California, Santa Cruz

Inside Story Headline



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 100-150 words.

The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed internally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new employees or top customers or vendors.

“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 75-125 words.

Selecting pictures or graphics is an important part of adding content to your newsletter.

Think about your article and ask yourself if the picture supports or enhances the message you're trying to convey. Avoid selecting images that appear to be out of context.

Microsoft Publisher includes thousands of clip art images from which you can choose and import into your newsletter. There are also several tools you can use to draw shapes and symbols.

Once you have chosen an image, place it close to the article. Be sure to place the caption of the image near the image.



Caption describing picture or graphic.

**THE MENTOR
PROGRAM: A
PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN APS/ATF/
UNM**

Primary Business Address
Your Address Line 2
Your Address Line 3
Your Address Line 4

Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555

E-mail: someone@example.com

We're on the Web!
example.microsoft.com



Your business tag line here.

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served. It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

Back Page Story Headline

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third

Caption describing picture or graphic.



Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.