
Introduction

My first job was that of a “resource teacher.” I was flattered but uncomfortable with the title. Despite my formal education, I felt that I had few resources upon which to draw to address day-to-day challenges. With enthusiasm and a relatively empty bag in hand, I began teaching.

In subsequent positions with varied titles and responsibilities, I gained experience but became more aware of the need to expand my bag of tricks. I wanted to have more strategies and tips on organization and a clearer vision of programs. Thankfully, I taught many years alongside skillful educators with encouragement from wise administrators. The students kept me on my toes and inspired me to develop creative solutions to their challenges. Gradually, my bag started to fill to contain many practical suggestions, as well as the wit and wisdom of a seasoned professional. It became the book I had been searching for over many years, and I will unpack it here.

Today, when people ask about my responsibilities as a “learning specialist,” I respond that I am a “helper.” Each fall, I bring my bag to school in excited anticipation of the experiences that will continue to expand it.

Most educators have enormous responsibilities but little time and limited resources. I’ve tried to make my suggestions in a direct, to-the-point, jargon-free, and user-friendly way with a bit of humor thrown in for good measure. I hope readers will find this book enjoyable and informative.

Open the bag and enjoy!