

## Teachers New to *Everyday Mathematics*: Advice from Colleagues

1. I am new to EM. Do you have any advice or survival tips for teachers new to *Everyday Mathematics*?
  2. How might I prepare parents at the beginning of the school year to support their children's *Everyday Mathematics* experience?
  3. What strategies might I use to help a new student fully participate in *Everyday Mathematics* lessons?
  4. How might I support language-rich lessons for students new to *Everyday Mathematics*?
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1. **I am new to EM. Do you have any advice or survival tips for teachers new to *Everyday Mathematics*?**
    - If you have an overhead projector, use it. You can get a set of overhead manipulatives. I use those all the time. I place my students in a U shape so that I can see quickly when they put up the slates.
    - TRUST THE SPIRAL! The kids might not get it at first, but just keep going!
    - Take the training.
    - Find out if there is a EM users group in your area. We have a users group that meets four times a year. It is wonderful to talk with other teachers using EM. Join the listserve. It has a lot of great ideas and is a good place to go when you have questions."
    - Keep at it! Don't get too bogged down with finishing every single problem on every single page. Also, don't talk too much. Kids will not be engaged if you are doing all of the talking. Incorporate peer discussions throughout the lesson to keep kids engaged.
    - Read the Teacher Lesson Guide carefully and thoroughly. Runoff everything needed for Home Links/ Study Links or Math Masters prior to beginning a new unit. Build binders that contain everything needed for each unit (I have two: one for units 1-5 and one for units 6-10).
    - Hang in there for the first year! It often takes 3 years before teachers and students feel comfortable with the routines and the expectations.
    - Stick to the program, everybody must be on board. Support each other. Give it time, it really does get easier!
    - Look long and hard at goals for a lesson. Think about what your students should be expected to do with the lesson content.
    - Don't try to teach every lesson to mastery. All students will not master the same content at the same time. One of the great features of *Everyday Mathematics* is the spiral. Students have opportunities over time (sometimes over several grade levels) to access concepts and skills.
    - Stay on schedule and remember that it comes back so you don't need every student to understand everything before you move on.



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- We just completed our first year of EM - all grades, K-6 were included, after teaching for many years from a traditional series in a self-contained setting. We had an inservice before we got the materials, then met as grade levels to go thru the materials, especially the Games Kit, making additional copies of any game listed for our grade level on card stock, laminated it and cut it out so each classroom had enough sets of everything—one set for every two kids, plus one or two extra. We ran all the extra game stuff at once, then divided it up among us and we each cut apart and labeled the items needed for our own classroom. We then met again as a group and divided the 'goodies' into plastic clasp envelopes that were color-coded. One tip we got was to color the ends of the decks of the cards themselves with markers—orange, red, blue, whatever, then when you ran out of single colors, color half the top and bottom of the decks one color and the rest the other color. We just put adhesive labels on the outside than said 'Orange' or 'Blue', so when more than one set of cards was needed for a game, they could get back to the correct clasp envelop when class was over. All during the school year, we met one day a week for 60-90 minutes to do lessons plans and play any of the games or go over any of the alternative methods of teaching a concept that were unfamiliar to us. We always met a week in advance. We took turns running the needed worksheets for the week for the whole group. About 3 weeks into the year, we met with a rep from EM so we could ask questions now that we had been working with *EM* for a while. This happened again in March, just to touch base and see how we were doing and if there were any new concerns.

## 2. How might I prepare parents at the beginning of the school year to support their children's *Everyday Mathematics* experience?

- Hold open House talks about the program and Home Links/ Study Links.
- Have a Math Night where the students and parent play the math games. It helps with terminology.
- Hold a parent night on algorithms and the philosophy of program. This information can also go home in newsletters.
- Hold a Math Night with descriptions of the program and ways parents can help their child. Show them examples from saved work from the previous year.
- Teach parents a lesson from the program.
- Track down resources on the web. You could start with the *Everyday Mathematics* support for parents. The publisher, Wright Group/ McGraw-Hill also has a parent page. Some districts have created parent resources. One example of a parent handbook comes from Michigan.





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### 3. What strategies might I use to help a new student fully participate in *Everyday Mathematics* lessons?

- Have them jump in. Because of the spiral, they will be exposed to skills and concepts that were covered previously.
- Have peers help each other.
- The *Differentiation Handbook* may provide suggestions that are helpful for supporting the language and the routines of the problem. See pages 8-38.
- Make sure to provide opportunities to get parents of new students on board. Invite them into the classroom to observe or to help with games or with stations. Consider holding a family math night.

### 4. How might I support language-rich lessons for students new to *Everyday Mathematics*?

- Create a Math Word Wall. Vocabulary for each unit can be found in the *Differentiation Handbook* in the unit specific pages.
- See the vocabulary development suggestions in the *Differentiation Handbook* on pages 17-19.
- Have students keep notebooks where they can record ideas and new vocabulary.
- Use Math Word Bank pages that can be found in the masters section at the back of the *Differentiation Handbook*.

