

# do things better

Useful news and tips from all over

## Less TV time

Educational psychologist Jane M. Healy, Ph.D., says that too much TV can result in impatient children with low attention spans. These kids have trouble reading, listening, and processing non-visual information. The violent or sexual content of some TV shows can also cause young viewers to accept violence as normal or to imitate sexual behavior, (such as all the little girls who want to be like the Sex Bombs). What can you do? First, don't keep the TV on all day. Decide what you'll watch and keep the TV off at other times. Set rules, like homework first before TV watching, or set aside a time just for reading or playing a board game. Make TV watching a learning experience by discussing the shows with children.



## Protect money from scammers

Everyone wants to make more money, especially during these hard times. Unfortunately, this has led to a number of get-rich-quick, "pyramid" schemes that have duped many innocent Filipinos. According to a November 2004 report by Own Santos in *Cosmopolitan Philippines*, even prominent politicians and celebrities have been taken in and lost large amounts of money. So how do you know an investment is legit, how do you know it's legit? *Cosmo's* advice: Stay away from plans that promise huge earnings ("double your money in a year!"), force you to buy expensive products ("just invest P10,000 for your starter kit"), and say you'll earn money through recruits rather than selling products ("you'll earn commissions from what your downline sells"). If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

## Chocolate is good for you

Good news for dessert lovers: chocolate may have health benefits. Dark chocolate has been found to improve blood circulation, lower blood pressure, and even alleviate allergies. It turns out that raw cocoa, the base ingredient of chocolate, contains many antioxidants in the form of flavonoids—the same stuff found in plants and fruits that helps to cleanse our bodies of toxins run to the nearest candy store and indulge. Chocolate is still rich in fat and sugar, so consume in moderation. And finally, bear in mind that the darker and less processed cocoa is, the more antioxidants it has. Try a daily cup of good old native *tsokolate* but skip the milk to enjoy maximum benefits!

## Walk stiffness away

The Mayo Clinic and CNN report that arthritis sufferers do benefit from exercise, even though they may feel too sore to move around much. No matter how small, any movement helps. Walk (using a cane if necessary), stretch, garden, even dance! It's also important to build muscle using weights (you can use canned goods, water bottles, and other moderately heavy household items). Arthritis sufferers can



begin with a five-minute daily routine and build up gradually as they grow stronger. Three 10-minute sessions a day may be more manageable than a 30-minute session, but can be just as beneficial.



# Happy New Classroom!

The school year may be halfway over, but 2005 is just beginning. Here are some New Year's resolution suggestions that can make both teaching and learning more effective and fun for everyone.

BY MARICRIS SIMPAS

## 1. I promise to update my lesson plans

Lesson planning is a tedious chore for most teachers, but as we all know, it is an important tool in delivering a good lesson. Take the extra effort to update and customize lesson plans for your class this year.

**Already doing this? Take it a step further:** "Trendify" your lesson plans. Don't just stick to textbook examples when doing exercises. Learn what your students are into (TV shows and movies, comics and books, actors and singers—you get the picture), then "jazz up" your plans with these. The kids will have a blast solving how many enemies Ragnarok has and constructing sentences about M<sup>U</sup>lawin. You can even rewrite the lyrics of a pop song with facts to make memorization easier.

## 2. I promise to join the computer bandwagon

If you still think a mouse is just a small mammal, you need to improve your technology skills. Computers can help you prepare classroom materials, compute grades, and find more information through the Internet, which has thousands—maybe millions—of sites on lesson planning, classroom techniques, and fun-filled activities.

**Already doing this? Take it a step further:** Make a class website. It's free and easy. Internet cafes are becoming more accessible and affordable all over the Philippines. A smart student may be able to help you; if not, talk to a computer technician or teach yourself by surfing the Internet for information. You can include photos and a description of your class, the names



of your students, what you've learned, your goals for the year, and so on. Your students will love having their own website, and parents who have access to the Internet are sure to visit, too.

**Does your class or school have a website? Send us your web address and we will do our best to feature your handiwork in *Star Teacher!* Email: [teachers@readerstransform.com](mailto:teachers@readerstransform.com) or text 0927-9133712.**

## 3. I promise to do less talking and more facilitating

Why not lessen lectures and instead plan activities that are more student-centered? For example, you can ask your class to do research presentations. This allows them to actively participate in meeting learning objectives.

**Already doing this? Take it a step further:** Be a games master. In-

volve students in treasure hunts, dramatizations, choral reading, and game show contests. Math and science classes can hold a scavenger hunt where computation problems are hints, while English and Filipino teachers can use riddles or sentence completion.

## 4. I promise to take a break

Why wait for summer to enjoy a much-deserved break? Simple activities like watching a movie, gardening, or having a picnic with your family can greatly lessen the stress and tension created by teaching. Include mini-vacations during the school year in your calendar.

**Already doing this? Take it a step further:** Include wellness activities in class. Fight stress for both you and your students. Before a lesson, have everyone in the class do a couple of stretching or breathing exercises. Ask students to share an inspirational quote or story, or tell your own. Conduct lessons once a week outside the classroom. Surprising your students with a change of pace once in a while will make them look forward to your classes.

## 5. I promise to read for myself and not just for class

Have you recently read for your own entertainment? Getting new ideas in other aspects can also help enrich your lessons, aside from helping you with your life and relieving stress.

**Already doing this? Take it a step further:** Read a type of book you haven't read before. If you're used to reading English books, try a Filipino novel (or vice versa). Stuck on romance novels? Try a business book. What about a historical novel or biography? *For ideas on books you might enjoy, check out our quiz on page 18.* ★

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