

The Five Week Summer School

In the [Our First Two Books](#) section of [Chapter 5 - The Twenty-Two IFs of The Interns' Years](#), I said that Mary and I were granted permission to write books about what we were doing in our classrooms as our Master's Theses. Mary's book was *Workjobs*. My book was *What To Do, Teacher?* "What to do, teacher?" was what many of my students would say to me when they had finished one assignment and wanted to know what they should work on next.

The purpose of [Chapter 6 - The Five Week Summer School](#) is to describe what I learned as a teacher in the five-week Summer School that was to be my fellow Intern Teachers' and my only student-teaching experience before becoming full-time teachers in the Fall. The purpose of [Chapter 7 - My Classroom - Years One and Two](#) is to relate what I learned as a teacher from that experience.

There are two problems, though. First, this is [The Book of IFs](#). Neither [Chapter 6](#) nor [Chapter 7](#) contain any IFs that would warrant inclusion in an IF book. Second, *What To Do Teacher?* contains thirteen chapters. There is no way to condense thirteen chapters into two.

Even so, I definitely want to share both my five week Summer School and my first and second year classroom experiences with anyone who might be curious to know why my class was the only one our Intern Supervisors filmed and shared with my fellow interns and other educators at the University's School of Education, as well.

My solution: Provide a summary here of what you might learn from *What To Do Teacher?* and then provide a link to a pdf downloads of the related chapters for any one who might be interested in learning more.

Second Thoughts

My first reaction to my experiences as I worked along side the master teacher to whom I had been assigned for my five week Summer School experience was, how could anybody teach in a classroom where the teacher was not respected and discipline had to be laid on with an iron fist? And, how could anyone learn? If this was what I had gotten myself into by signing up to be an Intern, then the little catch about teaching in an inner-city school in order to skip a year of student teaching and get a teacher's salary right away was no little catch at all. It was a major obstacle that I was not at all sure was worth the effort to overcome.

What was the point of throwing a year of my life away trying to teach children who weren't going to show me enough courtesy to even let me try to teach, and who didn't seem to want to learn in the first place?

I was committed to teaching, but I was not at all committed to teaching in the inner-city. I had now seen the inner-city and it wasn't very pretty. I began to think more constructive thoughts. I began to think of how best to get out of being an Intern without wrecking my chances to get into a regular teaching program. I began to think of how to quit.

Learning to Survive the Shock

My fellow interns and I were lucky enough to have our morning sessions of combat in the classroom followed by afternoons of lectures, both on the theory of cultural deprivation and on some practical suggestions as to what to do to make our lives as teachers easier.

We learned, for example, to look for causes in what we saw around us. The effects were easy to see and were, in fact, so distracting and depressing, that seeking out causes would, without the constant prodding of our supervising professors, easily have been given up for the more immediately rewarding approach geared toward vengeance and reprisal on my part, to "get even" with the kids for their various insolences and insults.

It is a lot easier in the short term to discipline a child for his or her evil ways than to take the time to see why the child acts as he or she does and look for some way to redirect his or her behavior. My urge to "get even" would most assuredly have gotten the better of me had I not been subject to a daily barrage of reminders and admonitions from our supervising professors.

Three Classroom Visits

What I was learning from my Intern Program professors did cancel out my desire to exit the intern program and gave me hope that I might be able to survive the experience of teaching in an inner-city school.

My original plan had been to refuse to use any of the traditional materials I would be given and simply start from scratch when I had my own class in the Fall. My initial Summer School experience caused me to lose faith in my ability to do something that rash. How could I create curriculum when I would be lucky if I could even control my class?

It was the three visits that I made to other classrooms in my Summer School that provided me with all the inspiration that I needed to recommit to my original plan of not using any of the usual teaching materials and finding new and better ways to teach.

What To Do Teacher?

www.center.edu/WhatToDoTeacher.shtml

The Five Week Summer School

Chapter 1 - Mrs. Spencer's and My Class

Chapter 2 - Three Classroom Visits