



Breakthrough
COLLABORATIVE

2008

Breaking it Down: The Basics of Teaching
Breakthrough Collaborative Teacher Guidebook

Brought to you by:

Breakthrough's Program Team




545 Sansome Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94111
Phone: 415.442.0600

students teaching students

Breakthrough Collaborative

teach@breakthroughcollaborative.org

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Intro

How to Use this Book



Teaching is a Learned Skill

The Breakthrough Model is incredibly simple: take bright middle school kids who care about going to college, and let bright high school and college students help them over the hurdles and roadblocks that their schools and the system have put in their paths.

As simple as the model is, the execution requires a level of commitment that other internships just don't ask of people. Yes, you will put in long hours, and you will take on management responsibilities you may be unfamiliar with. The greater challenge, though, is that *you will be performing a job that takes years to master*. The stakes are high too.

There is the question I hear most often from the people I talk to about the program. If you are demanding college from your students, many of whom are suffering from low performing schools and inexperienced teachers, why are you teaching them with undergrads? This question is fair, and one that we work hard to answer: our young teachers bring in a passion and innovation that can change lives, as long as they are **relentlessly trained, supported, and coached** in the science and art of teaching throughout their summer.

Teacher Support at Breakthrough

The Mentor Teachers you work with this summer will be professional, experienced teachers, tasked with making sure that you perform in the classroom as a teacher should. Your orientation week will pound into your head the ins-and-outs of lesson planning and classroom management, and any challenge you face in your classroom can be solved with just a question to your mentors, your directors, or your peers. There will be Breakthrough teachers fulfilling their 2nd, 3rd, or even 5th summer, and they will be an invaluable resource.

Only through constantly exchanging feedback with your Mentors will you improve and ensure that your students have the knowledge they need to excel in the honors classes in High School. Demand critical feedback, and always be questioning your own performance.

That is the critical balance to strike with your work here: **You need to bring your A-Game, be confident and strong in your leadership, and you must never forget that you are a new teacher, that you need to struggle for every bit of skill and knowledge, and that you cannot succeed without seeking help.** Lots of it.

Using *Breaking it Down*

This guidebook is meant to supplement the training and support you will receive from your directors and Mentors during orientation and through the summer. The writing in here is meant to be clear, engaging, and precise, and you would do yourself a favor by reading as much as you can before the summer begins.

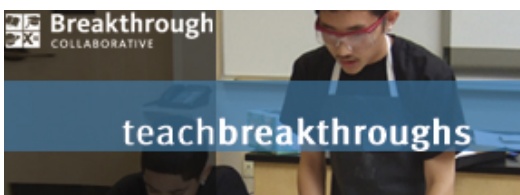
Chapters provide solid top-level descriptions of teaching theory, much of which will be familiar to you if you've taken any Ed classes. There is also some procedural instruction for developing plans and lessons, and some good things to pay attention to in your classrooms. Following instructional chapters are "Toolkits." These are worksheets and items to print out and use directly in your planning or teaching. New teachers can lose a lot of hours creating materials from scratch. Experienced teachers know that the thoughtful "borrowing" of lessons and tools is an essential skill that allows you to stand on the shoulders of the giants that came before you. The Toolkits will also be available in an editable Word Doc format, allowing you to personalize printouts for your classes. Whatever you need that isn't in the toolkit is probably floating around the office somewhere, so be sure to ask your Mentors and directors for help navigating your resource room.

Breaking it Down is an electronic resource that you should have available to refer to time and again throughout your service. You can print the whole thing out, if you choose, you can keep it on your laptop or desktop or in a key drive in your pocket, or you can print out pages and sections as you need them.

It's no secret that you are the best resources we have for improving our systems and programs, so please be sure to send me your feedback. What could use more clarification? What's hard to use? What great resources did you create this summer that you think the rest of the Collab could use? Your input will be folded into everything we do here, and good stuff will be shared with the other teachers on TeachBreakthroughs.org, the Breakthrough Teacher Blog.

Staying Engaged With the Network

After your summer, you won't be done with us. Breakthrough teachers pretty much always go on to do big things, and it's in our interest to make sure you do as many of those things as possibly with us. We are always looking for new site directors, national staff members, consultants, and friends out there in the education world. It's not all selfish, though. Breakthrough has been around for a long time, and our name is recognized as something valuable. Foundations, graduate schools, and wonderful peer organizations are always asking me to get access to you and your resumes. The trouble is that I can't find your good work if I don't know how to reach you. Your e-mail address changes, you move, you grow older, and you miss out on our new projects and initiatives for alums.



We're working on some big things when it comes to providing support to you past your Breakthrough summer, but we need to keep you engaged. The first thing you can do (right now!) is **become a loyal subscriber** to TeachBreakthroughs.org. We'll always go there first with our posts and requests, and by subscribing you'll be sure to not miss a thing. We also try to keep TB updated with current education news and dispatches from our alums. Check it out! **-Bobby Cupp, Teacher Excellence Specialist**