

Contents of my backpack



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Although I am only at the beginning of my teaching career, I feel as if I have many things already stowed away in my Dakine green, black, and white plaid backpack. My items are similar to Mr. Goldman's items in that they have very little to do with the topics that I teach but are able to transform my classroom environment, stay along the guidelines of time management, and allow students to learn at their own pace.

The items that I have in my backpack include: a Nerf basketball, wireless mouse, pens and pencils with colorful erasers, 3 ring hole punch, dollar store multi colored star stickers, a small bust of George Washington, and a mustache mug. Not all of these items are essential teaching tools but some of them are used so frequently that I could include them in my curriculum. The Nerf basketball is used just about every day in my math class, it helps me get volunteers for questions, provides a reward to students, and encourages others to be supportive of their classmates.

The last two coincide with a game I stole from a teacher in the district high school called ' Math-sketball'. It's a simple game where everyone works out the problem on the board and after the buzzer counts down students need to have their answer written on their scorecard. Those students who answer correctly get to line up for a free throw shot with the basketball, students cheer each other on to make the basket and if a student misses, classmates are there with words of encouragement.

This mini failure of missing a shot and the support of their classmates to try again next time is important for the students. I teach 6th, 7th, and 8th grade math students in a Resource Room at a middle school. The wireless mouse

allows me to use the technology in the room without being plastered to the wall which would allow students to get distracted with other things going on in the room or outside the windows. I am able to keep close enough to my students, check their progress with the material, as well as circulate around the room to keep an eye on drifters.

My 3 ring hole punch is one of my best items. I use it to keep myself organized with binders, lessons, units, tests, and other materials, but I also use it to hole punch everything that I give the students. This helps them with their organization but doesn't stop them from misplacing their homework. I will have to find a reasonable price for microchips that I can attach to homework assignments so it is never misplaced or lost in a locker.

The dollar store multi colored star stickers are used as a reward for students who are ready for class, hand in assignments, score well on tests, or help out during the class without being asked. It's a way to keep the students active and engaged without constantly reminding them to do something or not to do something. I am sure that over my teaching career more items will be put into the backpack and that some items will be replaced or taken out of the backpack, but as long as my mustache mug doesn't crack, chip, or shatter, that will be my staple item, how else will I be able to fuel up during the day?