

YOUR PERSONAL LEARNING GUIDE FOR

# KEEPING *the Momentum* STRONG

*in the Critical Middle  
of the School Year*

**By Robert L. DeBruyn**

Author of *THE MASTER TEACHER Weekly Pd PROGRAM*

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# About The Author

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Internationally known author and presenter, Robert L. DeBruyn is the founder of THE MASTER TEACHER®. He has written *THE MASTER TEACHER* publication since founding the organization in 1969. Over 1,500 issues and one half-billion copies of his weekly program of staff development have been sold—making him one of the most widely read educational authors in the world. *THE MASTER TEACHER Weekly Pd PROGRAM* has been used by teachers and administrators in all 50 states, every province of Canada, and 25 other countries.

DeBruyn is a powerful speaker who has worked extensively with students, teachers, and administrators through workshops and seminars, and as a keynote speaker in the areas of discipline, motivation, leadership and management. His messages reveal a deep commitment to children and a great respect for the work of teachers and administrators.

DeBruyn is a senior editor to *The Board*, a semimonthly training program for school board members. He is one of the creators of *Northstar for Principals*, a monthly publication for principals, and *Galileo for Superintendents*, a monthly publication for superintendents.

He has authored and co-authored numerous books, such as four prominent books on student behavior including *You Can Handle Them All*, two influential books on educational leadership including *Causing Others to Want Your Leadership...for Teachers*; and a leading book on the most successful teacher characteristics and beliefs: *Voices from the Field: What Is a Master Teacher?*

His contribution to education has been honored by induction into the Kansas Teacher Hall of Fame.

## **Other titles authored or co-authored:**

Personal Learning Guides:

*Assessment*

*Creating the Environment to Maximize Student Learning*

*THE MASTER TEACHER's Secrets for Deepening Learning for All Students*

*Starting Strong in the First 60 Days of the School Year*

*Keeping the Momentum Strong in the Critical Middle of the School Year*

*Finishing Strong: the Last 60 Days of the School Year*

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# Introduction

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After the excitement of the beginning of the year has worn off, teachers and students may find themselves just going through the motions of teaching and learning. As everyone settles into a routine, it helps to be reminded that seeking out new teaching methods can breathe new life into the classroom and benefit students.

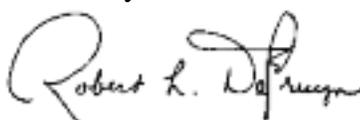
It's important for teachers to reflect periodically on practices that will keep their energy high and creativity fresh. This book will help teachers do just that. It is focused on a four-step learning process designed to enhance and further your professional growth. Reading each lesson and practicing the four-step learning process will help you grow professionally. Every step is important. To actually acquire and remember knowledge, it's important to write what you learned as well as what you already knew. Likewise, it's essential to know what worked and didn't work—and to reflect on the learning process and make adjustments. When reflection is followed by adjustments—that is, what you will do differently as well as when you will do it—you will learn and grow from your professional experiences.

As you use the personal journal, you will find that it not only serves you during this year of education, but it can become your guidepost for every school year throughout your career. Simply write your journal entry after reading each message, and apply what you've learned in the classroom.

As educators, we know our careers must center on lifelong learning as well as reflect the distinguishing characteristics of lifelong learners. Lifelong learners continue to learn, take action and apply what they have learned, review and reflect on the results of that application, and make adjustments that contribute to their professional improvement and growth. This book will help you achieve these goals.

You have my best wishes for an exciting school year and a great career ahead.

Sincerely,



Robert L. DeBruyn

Author of *THE MASTER TEACHER Weekly Pd PROGRAM*



Notes

Therefore, we would be wise to focus on our own professional attitudes.

The first professional attitude we need to adopt is that we are employed to meet the needs of students and to provide for their success. This means we must be student-centered *always* and know that our role is to serve students, not personal or special interests. If we extend this attitude to its fullest, we will not just resolve to give our students a *good* teacher. Rather, we will resolve to give our students the *best* teacher they have ever had. The power of this one attitude can be enormous.

The second vital attitude is also very powerful. We must resolve that how we teach will be determined by how students learn. Once we approach teaching with the intent of teaching the student, not just the content of our lessons, we will have the chance to meet all our learning outcomes. We will view our function as taking our teaching to the student, rather than bringing the student to our teaching. In truth, this is what differentiated instruction is all about.

**We must believe that  
excellence can be achieved—  
even with limited resources.**

Adopting a third professional attitude can give us a power that will elude anyone who doesn't hold this stance: We must believe that excellence can be achieved—even with limited resources. We must know that having more resources helps, but it does not necessarily correlate with improved student learning. Once we embrace this attitude, we're more likely to employ the personal strengths we need to be highly successful in the classroom. Certainly, we will more likely focus on imagination, creativity, effort, and commitment rather than on simply acquiring more resources.

Fourth, we need to hold the attitude that parents are sending us the best young people they can. This attitude will help us realize that the function of teaching and the role of the teacher is to pick students up wherever they are and take them as far as they can go. If we don't hold this attitude, the blaming will begin—and so will the failures of some students. It is this attitude which will enable us to come to the realization that we must be capable of providing equitable opportunities for every student regardless of his or her ability, experience, language, economic status, or human condition. This belief can also lead us to know that we can help



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# Personal Learning Journal

This is your personal learning journal for the middle of the school year. It focuses on a four-step learning process specifically designed to enhance lifelong learning. Every step is important. To actually acquire and remember knowledge, it's important to write what you learned as well as what you already knew. Likewise, it's essential to know what worked or didn't work—and to reflect. When reflection is followed by planning adjustments—that is, *what* you will do differently as well as *when* you will do it—long-term learning and improvement are enhanced.

As you use the personal journal, you will find that it not only serves you during your first year in education, but it can also become your guidepost for the middle of every school year. *Simply write your journal entry after reading each message, and apply what you've learned in the classroom.*

## I. Learning/Planning

a. What did I already know about this topic?

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b. What did I learn that was new?

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## II. Action/Application

a. What did I do that worked?

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b. What did I do that didn't work?

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c. What did I *not do*—and what happened?

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### **III. Reflection/Assessment**

a. What will I do with what I've learned from my experience?

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b. What do I still need to learn on this subject?

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c. How can I get this information?

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### **IV. Change/Adjustment**

a. What will I do differently the next time?

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b. When will I use what I've learned? (first day of school, first week of school, before grade cards go out, etc.)

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