

# Workshop Topics from Jim Kestner

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## Classroom Management for Beginning Teachers

Jim Kestner will present his nationally recognized program in a high-energy session dedicated to helping teachers in their early career years address a wide range of classroom management issues. Teachers who attend will find strategies that lead students to make good choices, replacing controlling behaviors with strategies that lead students to monitor and take responsibility for their own behavior. Specifically, the session will address the following:

- \* Arranging the environment to improve student engagement
- \* Developing and implementing effective classroom policies
- \* Addressing common challenging behaviors
- \* Difference between controlling behaviors and building good decision-making skills
- \* Translating the concept of consistency to a variety of students and settings
- \* Establishing a character-building classroom culture
- \* Teaching self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility
- \* Self-esteem vs. self-respect
- \* Grading systems that encourage student effort and engagement
- \* Assessing student behavior
- \* Parent and administrator involvement
- \* Keeping and maintaining good records

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## Advanced Classroom Management

Jim Kestner will present his nationally recognized program in a high-energy session dedicated to helping experienced teachers address a wide range of classroom management issues. Teachers who attend will find strategies that lead students to make good choices, replacing controlling behaviors with strategies that lead students to monitor and take responsibility for their own behavior. Specifically, the session will address the following:

- \* What teachers should know about teaching Generation Z
- \* Developing character-based discipline
- \* Addressing common challenging behaviors
- \* Difference between controlling behaviors and building good decision-making skills
- \* Consistency
- \* Developing and implementing effective classroom policies
- \* Establishing a character-building classroom environment
- \* Teaching self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility
- \* Self-esteem vs. self-respect
- \* Grading systems that encourage student effort and engagement
- \* Assessing student behavior
- \* Parent and administrator involvement

The logo for Excellence in Youth features the words "Excellence in Youth" in a stylized, grey font. The "E" is large and blocky, with a diagonal slash through it. The "Y" is also large and blocky, with a horizontal line through it. The words "in" and "Youth" are smaller and positioned between the "E" and "Y".

Excellence in Youth

852 County Road 400 North  
Tolono, Illinois 61880  
ExcellenceInYouth.com



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## **Classroom Management and Trauma**

A nationally recognized specialist in classroom management and youth character development, Jim Kestner will present practical, hands-on strategies to address unique challenges for building bridges that empower your students to overcome barriers from traumatic environments and circumstances to find empathy, acceptance, predictability, and hope through their time in your class. Specifically, the session will address the following:

- \* Understanding the science of trauma
- \* Compelling students to pursue character-based discipline as a tool for overcoming trauma
- \* Facilitating student interpersonal communication, collaboration, and problem solving
- \* Addressing confrontational student situations
- \* Maintaining consistency in exceptional circumstances
- \* Accounting for trauma in everyday classroom policies
- \* Establishing a safe, trusting classroom environment
- \* Teaching self-respect as a strategy for surviving long-term traumatic environments
- \* Encouraging open communication
- \* Adapting the physical environment to promote safety and success
- \* Helping students set and achieve goals for managing uncertainty in their lives
- \* Addressing changes in parent and custodial relationships

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## **Empowering Students to Realize Their Academic Potential**

We all teach students with wide ranging ability. And while we focus much attention on differences, a characteristic many students share is falling short of their academic potential. Nationally recognized for his work with educators and students, Jim Kestner takes a fun and creative approach that equips teachers to empower students by (1) Recognizing the real reasons behind students' lack of performance and (2) Applying strategies that not only improve achievement, but also counter the factors that have stood in students' paths so far. Research-based approaches will help teachers empower students to become self-directed learners who set goals, improve study skills, maximize retention from textbook reading, take effective notes, manage time, organize for success, become better test takers, balance sports, activities, and academics, and tackle large, long-term projects. Teachers and administrators will improve students' academic performance by

- \* Relating strategies that empower students to differentiate between roadblocks over which they do and do not have practical ability to overcome;
- \* Explaining ways to equip students with research-based approaches to improving academic performance; and
- \* Devising plans that enhance students' intrinsic motivation to pursue their academic potential.

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## **Winning! Harnessing Gamification and Electronic Delivery to Reinvigorate Student Engagement**

Few days in school can top game days for building student excitement and engaging them in learning. This session will present perspectives and hands-on applications that equip participants to integrate students' natural love of gaming and friendly competition to any classroom. Jim Kestner, nationally recognized for his unique perspectives and methods for making a real difference with students, brings humor, anecdotes, and fun to a hands-on workshop that equips educators to use existing plans and resources in new ways. Participants will discover

- \* A step-by-step guide to gamifying existing curricula
- \* Electronic tools and resources that work in person and for remote learners
- \* Strategies for using gamification to differentiating instruction
- \* Collaborative strategies that bring new perspectives and resources to the classroom
- \* Ongoing support for implementing workshop strategies after the workshop has ended

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## **Writers' Workshop: A Self-Paced, Gamified Approach to Teaching All Students to Write**

Jim Kestner will introduce a ground-breaking curriculum, the Writers' Workshop. Writing instruction from Kestner's more than 30 years of experience as a dynamic speaker brings workshop participants an innovative, game-like approach to teaching writing skills, empowering teachers to differentiate instruction that truly meets a wide range of students' individual needs simultaneously. The option of an incentives-based, game-like interface equips middle and high school English teachers to harness the power of avatars and individual-based skill progression to shatter barriers and generate excitement in students as they gain ever greater writing proficiency along a virtual expedition to climb Mt. Everest. Every participant receives a free Writers' Workshop curriculum and implementation guide! Check out these exciting features:

- \* A series of 17 self-paced writing challenges adaptable to time frames ranging from a few units to an entire school year
- \* Real potential for students who need extra time a chance to master skills while simultaneously propelling gifted students to pursue advanced concepts that typically lie beyond the time available during the school year
- \* Instruction on customizing the curriculum to a variety of settings and applications
- \* Data collection and reporting mechanisms
- \* ELA standards-aligned curriculum for grades 6-12
- \* Web-based data and leaderboards for teachers who decide to gamify the program
- \* Easily adaptable for remote learning

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## **Resiliency in the Face of 21st Century Challenges to Student Success**

Stressors have always lurked in our schools, threatening students and diverting significant amounts of educators' time and energy from teaching the academic and life skills that are so crucial for student success. As we travel further into the 21st Century, messages from television, music, and social media represent only a few of the growing threats that surround students' school and home lives. Experts cite rising rates of student depression and suicide, and threats of verbal and physical harm seem more difficult to quell than ever before. This energy-packed session tackles modern stresses head on, reviewing sources of stress from academics/grades, sports and other activities, social media, friends, family, and more, incorporating an interactive approach that recognizes the limits of educators and parents to protect students from stresses and focuses instead on practical strategies that empower students to become more resilient, finding confidence, intrinsic motivation, and resolve to achieve success regardless of how many times they have fallen short. Those attending will take away inspiring activities and approaches that strengthen students' sense of purpose and belief in their abilities to overcome their circumstances and pursue success in school and in life. Specific strategies for gifted, average, and struggling students from a wide variety of circumstances will form a foundation, but teachers and administrators attending the session will take an active role in providing specific circumstances from their own experiences as the basis for much of the workshop's discussion. Teachers and administrators will improve students' resiliency by

- \* Demonstrating an ability to construct a climate for resiliency in classroom, sports, and activity settings;
- \* Extending workshop examples to students with whom they work in their schools; and
- \* Incorporating strategies for stress management and resiliency into lesson, practice, and activity plans.

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## **SEL and Student Success: A Step-by-Step Guide for Harnessing SEL Standards to Teach Real-Life Skills**

Jim Kestner, nationally recognized for his youth character development programs, will present practical, hands-on strategies for implementing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards that help you prepare students for success in the real world through activities and perspectives that won't require you to devote unrealistic amounts of time. The session will provide opportunities for you to identify topics most relevant to your circumstances. Here's a sample of issues we will address:

- \* Connecting the SEL Standards to your current curriculum
- \* Empowering students to overcome setbacks that threaten their success
- \* Equipping students with practical strategies to navigate complex interpersonal interactions
- \* Improving students' conflict management skills
- \* Teaching real methods for making good decisions
- \* Establishing methods for making individual students accountable for group success
- \* Teaching perspective taking as a means of enhancing student empathy
- \* Identifying perspectives for healthy and unhealthy tolerance
- \* Coping with differences that impact opportunity and fairness (appearance, means, ability, status, etc.)
- \* Engaging students in meaningful processes for addressing negative behaviors and attitudes

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## Preparing Post-Millennial Students for Leadership

Post-millennial students come to our schools, classrooms, and athletic teams lacking not only skills in leadership, but desire and commitment to lead as well. This entertaining and engaging session begins by examining the characteristics of post-millennial students, then equips teachers, coaches, guidance counselors, and administrators with surprisingly effective and practical ways to transform those characteristics into strategies that attract student leaders, inspire them to lead, and prepare them with skills and knowledge to grow their leadership skills in ways that benefit them and the students and adults with whom they work every day. The session is designed to maximize leadership in student and school organizations, on athletic teams, and in the school and community as a whole. The interactive, hands-on workshop will focus on two important areas: (1) preparing students to act as leaders and (2) equipping students with key skills and knowledge for leading successfully. Those attending will come away with a process they may implement to develop students through integrity, self reflection, long- and short-term goal setting, positive risk taking, coping with and planning for change, individual and group decision-making (including a process for making difficult decisions), commitment, progress monitoring, and sustainability. Teachers, coaches, guidance counselors, and administrators will prepare students as leaders by

- \* Relating a process for identifying and recruiting student leaders;
- \* Appraising students' knowledge and skill as leaders;
- \* Extending workshop leadership development concepts into attendees' settings to maximize the practical benefits to students, organizations, teams, schools, and communities; and
- \* Devising plans to establish leadership development as an ongoing process that becomes more and more effective over time.

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## Depth of Knowledge: Questions for Discussion and Assessment

This session will provide a hands-on approach to understanding and implementing Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DoK) in the classroom. The session is ideal for educators who have heard of DoK and may have seen the famous DoK wheel, but are uncertain about how exactly DoK can help them lead students to great success in school. Topics include the following:

- \* Addressing DoK purposes, misconceptions, and criticisms
- \* Integrating Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge - comparisons, contrasts, and applications
- \* Rolling with the Wheel - tasks as indicators of student knowledge and skill acquisition
- \* Designing learning activities - benefits of DoK in curriculum, unit, and lesson design
- \* Questioning and DoK - designing questions across DoK levels
- \* Assessing students' DoK - addressing class, school, district, and state implications
- \* Anticipating the future - experience, experts, and signs on the road ahead

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## New Teacher Bootcamp Kick-Off Workshop

The Excellence in Youth New Teacher Bootcamp is designed specifically for first-year teachers, though other teachers in early stages of their careers will also benefit from the workshop. During this one-day session, Jim Kestner will provide hands-on, practical preparation that will equip teachers to

- \*Improve classroom management
- \*Motivate students to engage in learning
- \*Differentiate instruction in ways that empower teachers to move beyond teaching to the middle, helping struggling students while simultaneously challenging gifted students to push themselves to realize their potential.

Even better, the workshop provides an introduction to the modular-based follow-up program which provides individualized support throughout the year, providing teachers with web-based modules AND live phone and video conference support for handling the entire realm of situations that come up through the year, including the unexpected. In addition to the topics of the workshop, follow-up Bootcamp modules address

- \*Curriculum development and alignment
- \*Student assessment
- \*Building student character, and more.

Sessions also support teachers themselves, including

- \*Meeting responsibilities of the profession
- \*Managing stress and time
- \*Keys to maintaining self-motivation through the demands of the school year.

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**Brief Bio:** Nationally recognized educator and youth character-development specialist Jim Kestner began his career as a high school English teacher and track and cross country coach. He teaches, conducts research, and works with teachers, parents, and students across the country to help young people realize their potential.

Jim has developed national programs on effective teaching and coaching and has taught at Northwestern University, Eastern Illinois University, and University of Illinois campuses in Urbana-Champaign and Chicago. He is a published author and nationally recognized speaker who has also appeared on television and radio programs.

For over 30 years Jim has conducted research and worked with administrators, faculty, parents, and students to empower individuals to realize their career and life potential. In 1999 and 2000 he developed the Dynamics of Leadership curriculum for Oprah Winfrey when she taught at Northwestern University. Kestner's other clients and business associates have included Warren Buffet, Coretta Scott King, Henry Kissinger, the National Education Association, Horace Mann Insurance Companies, the Abraham Lincoln Institute for Literacy in America, NASA, and several Olympic National Governing Bodies.

In 2019 Jim returned to the high school classroom teaching English at Villa Grove High School in Villa Grove, Illinois, where he also coaches cross country and scholastic bowl and sponsors Future Teachers, Writers' Club, and SWAT (Students with a Testimony). Kestner's other clients and business associates have included Warren Buffet, Coretta Scott King, Henry Kissinger, the National Education Association, Horace Mann Insurance Companies, the Abraham Lincoln Institute for Literacy in America, NASA, and several Olympic National Governing Bodies.