



 **TeacherVision**

# The Ultimate Back-to-School Guide:

9 Ways to Become a Better Teacher  
and Develop a Positive Mindset



#### USING THIS GUIDE:

- **What is FutureFit?**

Learn more about FutureFit and how it can benefit your students on [page 18](#).

- **Accessing resources:**

Almost every headline is a link to the resource. Where multiple resources are grouped under one headline, links can be found in the description.

## True educators continuously seek out new ideas and fresh perspectives.

Teachers are always thinking about their students, but devotion to their progress shouldn't come at the expense of your own. That's why we've created a guide for teachers based on our nine future-ready skill domains: self-awareness, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, persistence, initiative, real-world effectiveness, and community engagement.

The resources we've included will help you both in and outside the classroom. Some were written or designed specifically for teachers, while others encourage personal or professional growth.

Keep reading to get started on becoming your best self!

# Table of Contents

→ SELF-AWARENESS	4
→ COLLABORATION	6
→ SERVICE MENTALITY	8
→ CRITICAL THINKING	9
→ PROBLEM SOLVING	10
→ CREATIVITY	12
→ PERSISTENCE	14
→ INITIATIVE	16
→ REAL-WORLD EFFECTIVENESS	17
→ ABOUT FUTUREFIT	18

# Self-Awareness



## KEY SKILLS

Block out distractions and stay focused on the present. Cultivate a positive attitude and use good judgment to reinforce your image as a role model for your students. Lastly, allow students at least a modicum of self-direction, which will help them to realize their own academic potential.

The ability to reflect upon one’s behavior and manage emotions is crucial for both teachers and students. These tools will assist with focus, emotional flexibility, cultivating optimism, and objectivity.

### [Calm App for iOS](#)

Relax, breathe, and focus better using this app, which offers users monthly and yearly subscription options. Guided meditation sessions on a variety of topics are available in lengths of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 minutes so you can fit a daily meditation into your personal schedule.

### [PBS TeacherLine](#)

This is a great way to keep up with professional development year-round. Choose from facilitated or self-paced courses, where you’ll learn new teaching strategies and interact with subject experts.

### [You Are a Badass: How to Stop Doubting Your Greatness and Start Living an Awesome Life](#)

According to *Publisher’s Weekly*, this *New York Times* bestseller is “more feisty than academic,” bringing a “fun, feminine verve to now well-tread self-help tropes.” Add it to your reading list and get ready to take on the world (or the classroom).

### [How Successful People Think: Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life](#)

Authored by leadership expert John C. Maxwell, this quick 160-pager will get your creativity flowing and help you think outside the box.

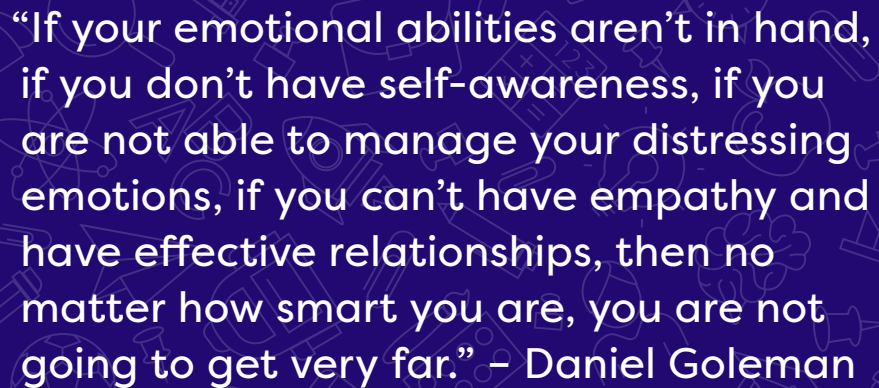
### [The Mindfulness Coloring Book: Anti-Stress Art Therapy for Busy People](#)

Adult coloring books are all the rage for a reason: they help decrease stress and clear your mind. Break out the crayons and bring on the clarity!

### [Introducing Mindfulness: A Practical Guide](#)

Looking to be more “present” in your daily life? Learn how to block out distractions and channel your focus to where it needs to be with this guide.





“If your emotional abilities aren’t in hand, if you don’t have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can’t have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.” – Daniel Goleman

### **10 Ways Teachers Can Create a Positive Learning Environment**

There is a direct relationship between the kind of learning environment teachers create in their classrooms and student achievement. Here are 10 ways to develop a positive one.

#### **Dealing With Parents, Peers, and Administrators**

While establishing relationships with students is paramount in the classroom, you should outline strategies for communicating with adults as well. [Reach out to parents](#) at the first sign of a problem, [build community](#) with co-workers to improve your mental and physical health, and work towards creating productive dialogues with [administrators](#).

#### **Unique Daily Affirmations App**

It’s easy to get bogged down by negativity spread by others at work. Using this free app, you can start each day on a positive note and bring that energy into the classroom with you. (Bonus: *The Educator’s Room* outlines [10 Ways to Deal With the Negative Teacher](#).)

**NEXT UP: Collaboration**

# Collaboration



## KEY SKILLS

In order to collaborate productively with fellow teachers, administrators, parents, and students, you must be able to effectively communicate thoughts, ideas, concepts, and emotions. You should remain open to new perspectives, empathetic to the needs of others, and realistic about your own views.

For teachers, the ability to communicate effectively — both verbally and in writing, individually or in a group — is a critical job qualification. It's equally important to continually re-evaluate your communication skills, introduce new perspectives and truly understand the needs of your students. Here are some resources to help.

### **Watch Yourself Teach**

Analyze the environment you are co-creating with your students by observing yourself while teaching. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Build Community With Parents**

Stay in touch using [ClassDojo](#) and [Remind](#), two apps that help teachers connect with parents and students. (Alternative option: You can share news and updates by creating a private Facebook group and inviting parents.)

### **Getting There: A Book of Mentors**

Good mentors are hard to find, but this book features 30 of them. Use the insights shared by leaders in a variety of fields and apply them to your own career goals.

### **10 Ways to Promote Diversity in the Classroom**

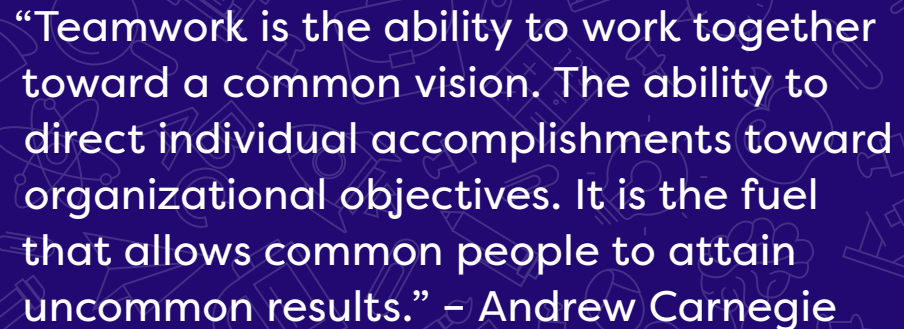
From playing dress-up to bringing in bilingual guests, these 10 ideas will help students from all walks of life feel at home in your classroom or school.

### **10 Apps That Promote Empathy and Compassion**

For better or for worse, technology is changing the way people interact with each other and the world. Help students forge solid emotional connections and socialize with kindness using these 10 engaging apps.

### **4 Proven Strategies for Teaching Empathy**

This Edutopia article succinctly outlines four tried-and-tested methods to help your students understand and empathize with the perspectives of others.



“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” – Andrew Carnegie

### **[365 Journal Writing Ideas](#)**

This book of writing prompts will have you on your way to a productive year of self-reflection, creativity and more focused direction.

### **[Strategies for Teaching Culturally Diverse Students](#)**

This popular TeacherVision resource will help you develop stronger teaching and learning relationships with culturally diverse students.

### **[Tips for Getting Feedback From Your Students](#)**

You might be the teacher, but you can learn a lot from your students as well! Establishing a regular feedback cycle in your classroom enables you to learn about and adapt your teaching style.

**NEXT UP:** [Service mentality](#)

# Service mentality



## KEY SKILLS

Increase your global awareness by being cognizant of the similarities and differences among diverse cultures. Cultivate new opportunities to help others, and share your time, knowledge and experiences as you go.

As a teacher, you're utilizing your own talents to further the interests of a larger community every day, but you shouldn't allow this localized focus to come at the expense of the bigger picture.

### [Why Global Awareness Matters to Schools](#)

In today's increasingly interconnected world, can we help students look beyond their "bubble" and become global citizens? Get ideas from *The Guardian*.

### [7 Apps for Building Global Awareness in the Classroom](#)

Help students increase their cultural understanding and brush up on world geography and languages using the 7 apps on this list, which was compiled by Common Sense Media based on user reviews and each app's "Learning Rating."

### [Apps for Volunteering](#)

Find the best places to make an impact in your community using these (mostly) free apps.

### [5 Ways Literature Can Teach Global Lessons in Elementary Classes](#)

You know that children's literature has the ability to dispel stereotypes, introduce new perspectives, celebrate diversity, instill empathy and more. *Edutopia* lays out five creative ways to connect reading with global awareness in the classroom.

### [PBS NewsHour](#)

Introduce students to world news using a trusted and reliable source.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

– Mahatma Gandhi

**NEXT UP:** [Critical thinking](#)



# Critical Thinking



## KEY SKILLS

Stay ahead of the game by continuously seeking out new opportunities for learning and by improving your ability to process information from various sources efficiently. While doing so, be cognizant of your personal biases and how they affect your work.

Keep your sense of curiosity keen and your analytical skills sharp with these articles and tools — after all, you always want to stay one step ahead of your students!

### [Defining Critical Thinking](#)

Start at the very beginning.

### [6 Exercises to Strengthen Your Critical Thinking Skills](#)

Maintaining a strong core doesn't just apply to physical fitness — it's crucial for strengthening your mind as well. Use these 6 strategies to keep your brain engaged.

### [Apps to Train Your Brain](#)

Whether you want to improve cognitive function or decrease anxiety, there's an app for it. Find excellent options [here](#) and [here](#).

### [Implicit Bias Awareness](#)

Test your own bias, learn how to promote inclusivity and find tools to reduce gendered workplace bias with this curated list from Berkeley Lab.

“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” – Aristotle

**NEXT UP:** [Problem solving](#)

# Problem Solving



## KEY SKILLS

When implementing new solutions, create a defined workflow and delegate responsibility clearly. Recognize your own limitations and ask for help when you need to.

If you're experiencing a problem in your school or classroom, chances are you're not alone. There are many places to find help and community online — you just have to know where to look!

### [30 Do's and Don't's of Classroom Etiquette for Students and Teachers](#)

Create a harmonious classroom environment using this TeacherVision resource for both teachers and students.

### [r/Teachers](#)

Get advice and engage with fellow teachers on Reddit.

### [WeAreTeachers HELPLINE](#)

Have a question? Message it to WeAreTeachers and they may share your query with their million-plus social followers for an answer.

### [50 Fab Apps for Teachers](#)

Scholastic shifted through the hundreds of learning-focused apps to pick their top 50. You'll find options for language arts, math, science, special needs and more on this comprehensive list.

### [Simply Kinder Facebook Group](#)

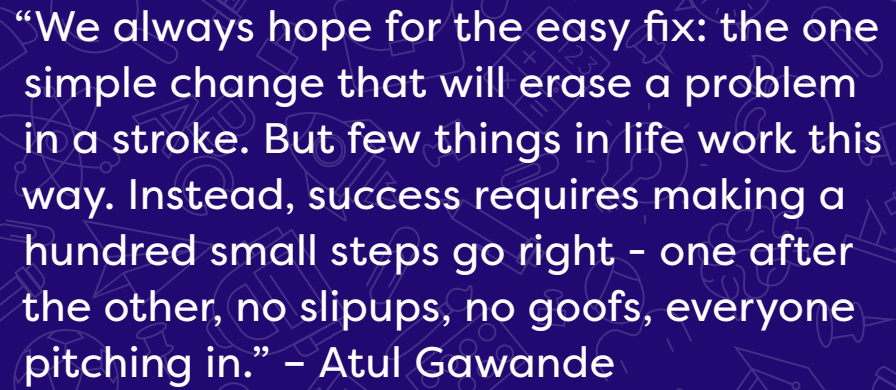
Engage, collaborate and learn from other kindergarten teachers.

### [Tame the Classroom Facebook Group](#)

The name says it all! "This is the place for teachers to share ALL of the things that help them tame their classrooms on a daily basis."

### [Twitter Education Chat Calendar](#)

Want to know when relevant Twitter education chats are happening? This calendar breaks it down by day, time, and hashtag.



“We always hope for the easy fix: the one simple change that will erase a problem in a stroke. But few things in life work this way. Instead, success requires making a hundred small steps go right - one after the other, no slipups, no goofs, everyone pitching in.” – Atul Gawande

#### **[Productivity Tools for Teachers](#)**

PBS Learning Media’s digital tools help personalize learning experiences and connect students to curriculum.

#### **[Standards for Good Teaching](#)**

It’s always a good idea to revisit the basics at the start of a new school year.

**NEXT UP: [Creativity](#)**

# Creativity



## KEY SKILLS

Take ideas and turn them into concepts with real-life applications. Continuously evaluate the feasibility of new ideas and create realistic workflows to implement them.

You owe it to yourself and your students to make time for a little creativity in life and in the classroom. If you're experiencing a creative lull, try some of the ideas below.

### [To Encourage Creativity in Kids, Ask Them: "What If?"](#)

In this January 2017 *New York Times* article, children's book author Matt Richtel talks about teaching children the "what if" exercise he used to write his latest book, "Runaway Booger."

### [Creativity Belongs to Children](#)

While this FamilyEducation piece is aimed at teaching children, it's core message is relevant for people of all ages: when creating art, rely less on technique and more on creativity and intuition.

### [101 Ways for Teachers to Be More Creative](#)

With all the required testing and documentation in education these days, it can be difficult to find ways to inspire creativity in your students – or yourself. However, we're betting that you may be able to squeeze in at least one or two of TeachThought's suggestions for finding creative inspiration.

### [Pinterest](#)

There's no shortage of creative teaching ideas out there, and thousands of them can be found on Pinterest! Following other teachers and exchanging ideas is also a great way to connect and collaborate with others in the education community.

### [The Little Spark - 30 Ways to Ignite Your Creativity](#)

Use the 30 ideas found in this book as a month-long creativity challenge, or browse through at your own pace when you need a little inspiration.



“Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.”  
– Edward de Bono

### **5 Free Apps That Can Boost Your Creativity**

An app can't transform you into a artistic genius, but it may be able to snap you out of a creative funk! Download one (or all five!) of these free apps and see where the inspiration leads you.

### **What Are the Best Communication Skills to Have?**

Communication matters — having solid communication skills is strongly tied to professional success. Here are a few of the most important skills to hone.

**NEXT UP:** [Persistence](#)

# Persistence



## KEY SKILLS

Stay flexible and retain your self-confidence, even when faced with adversity or the threat of failure. Reflect upon your mistakes and positively apply those lessons to future challenges.

A key factor of success is how you respond to the roadblocks in your life. Use mistakes to “fail forward” and identify potential opportunities for growth. These resources will help you stay positive and rebound quickly after a setback.

### [7 Ways to Get Past Tough Situations Quickly](#)

There’s no use in dwelling on the past. Here are a few strategies for dealing with a difficult situation or career setback in a minimal amount of time.

### [21 Ways to Learn From Failure](#)

We teach our students that mistakes are okay as long as we learn from them, so why is it so difficult to accept that advice as adults? Use these 21 ideas to learn from failure and keep improving.

### [25 Killer Actions to Boost Your Self-Confidence](#)

Overcome fear — especially fear of failure — by working on your self-worth and self-esteem. It’s important to realize that while you’ll never completely erase fear from your mind, you’ll have the confidence to know you can overcome it.

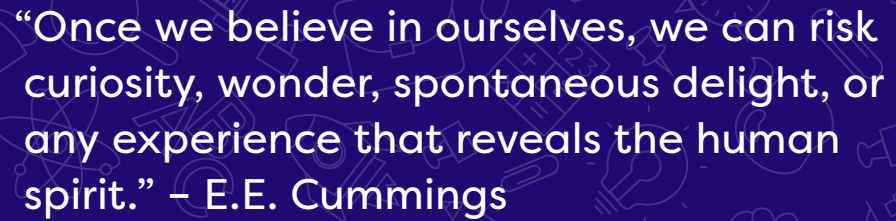
### [Diana Laufenberg: How to Learn From Mistakes](#)

In this TED Talk, longtime social studies teacher Diana Laufenberg shares three surprising things she has learned about teaching — including a key insight about learning from mistakes.

### [Personal SWOT Analysis: Making the Most of Your Talents and Opportunities](#)

Using this free tool, you’ll identify your own weaknesses as well as available opportunities for career advancement. By doing so, you’ll be able to work on areas of weakness and grow both personally and professionally.





“Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight, or any experience that reveals the human spirit.” – E.E. Cummings

### **[Self-Improvement: 6 Things You Can Do to Enhance Yourself and Your Career](#)**

Regardless of how many years you’ve spent teaching, there’s always room for improvement. This article focuses on developing strategies for enhancement rather than dwelling on the problems that hold you back.

### **[Free Spirit Publishing’s Social-Emotional Resources](#)**

From dealing with teasing and managing anger to encouraging positive character development and instilling a sense of leadership, TeacherVision’s resources from Free Spirit Publishing will help guide your students towards becoming their best selves.

**NEXT UP:** [Initiative](#)

# Initiative



## KEY SKILLS

Hold yourself and others accountable for their actions, seek out opportunities for intellectual and professional growth, and tackle new challenges with focused enthusiasm.

Approach new challenges enthusiastically and teach your students about the benefits of self-motivation using these resources.

### [Four Tips for Building Accountability](#)

Use these tips from Harvard Business School to help improve your classroom strategies and become a model of accountability for your colleagues and students.

### [Building a Culture of Accountability](#)

While this piece was written with a corporate audience in mind, its lessons are applicable to the classroom environment as well. Set clear expectations if you want to empower your students to succeed.

### [Teachers Need a Growth Mindset Too](#)

You encourage students to develop a growth mindset, but do you follow your own advice? Learn how to use daily reflections to pinpoint areas of weakness and tweak your teaching style over time.

### [What It Takes to Be a Teacherpreneur](#)

Are you born an entrepreneur, or can you learn entrepreneurship? If you're interested in developing the 9 skill domains outlined in this e-book, it's the latter.

### [Building a Sense of Urgency in the Classroom](#)

Keep students engaged and provide them with a purpose to drive their learning. Be a part of your classroom — by keeping yourself in motion, you'll keep students there as well.

### [Is It Enough for Teachers to Have a Growth Mindset?](#)

To get students develop a growth mindset, you can't just talk the talk — you must actually walk the walk and incorporate it into your teaching practice.

**NEXT UP:** [Real-world effectiveness](#)

# Real-world effectiveness



## KEY SKILLS

Lead your students to new achievements and guide the development of new skills. Adapt to new challenges and employ daily reflection as a tool for personal growth.

Walk the walk, practice what you preach, make sh\*t happen... however you articulate it, applying what you (and your students) learn in the classroom to the real world is a skill that needs constant nurturing and development.

### [How to Create a Culture of Achievement in Your School and Classroom](#)

While most school improvement plans or education reforms are centered around curriculum, things like classroom atmosphere and school identity can play a large (if intangible) role in student achievement. Learn how to create a positive culture of achievement with this book, which you can get in print or as an e-book.

### [Why Don't We Teach Life Skills In Our Schools?](#)

Young adults are entering the workforce without learning communication skills, conflict management, how to accomplish practical tasks, or even basic empathy. This hurts their career prospects and delays their entrance into “adulthood” — so why don't we teach these things in schools?

### [5 Apps to Transform Teaching and Personalize Learning](#)

Digital tools have created a cultural shift in education — one that is moving away from traditional teaching methods towards student-centered learning. These 5 apps will assist with the integration of new technology into new teaching methods.

### [The Importance of Teacher Reflection](#)

Teachers are always operating on a time crunch. Read about four crucial components of teacher reflection and how to apply the information learned.

“You manage things; you lead people.”  
– Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hopper

**NEXT UP:** [What is FutureFit?](#)

AF ABOUT FUTUREFIT

# What is FutureFit?



## 3 TYPES OF RESOURCES:

- **FutureFit Projects:**

Complete project-based lessons;

- **FutureFit Boost**

**Activities:** Short, focused activities designed to accompany other TeacherVision resources;

- **FutureFit Supplementals:**

Specially-curated worksheets, videos, lesson plans, reading guides and related resources.

TeacherVision's FutureFit is a curriculum enhancement framework designed to empower K-8 teachers to easily integrate social-emotional learning and character education into traditional academic curriculum. Through specially-curated resources, project-based lessons, and a variety of mini-activities, educators can bring life skills to the classroom and new life to their teaching.

The FutureFit skill domains, conceived with input from educators, focus on a "whole child" approach – inspiring students to reach their full potential in the classroom, in college, in their careers, and in the community. [Learn more here.](#)



**Join TeacherVision today**

Membership starts at only \$7.95/month, with full access to all of our teaching resources.

**TEACHERVISION.COM/FREETRIAL**