

Article By **Charles Silberman**. Email Charles at [charles.silberman@pgcps.org](mailto:charles.silberman@pgcps.org) to ask additional questions. Published on PE Central: 8-27-10.

**Question: Now that the year is winding down, is there anything you recommend that I can do to start preparing for next year? -Mr. G-**

**Answer:**

Dear Mr. G,

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. Just thinking about everything that happens in a school year is overwhelming. Trying to dissect that in order to learn from it and prepare for next year can seem even more daunting. I subscribe to a set formula for the end of the school year, especially because I have to plan for and execute field day at the end of the year, which is its own large task and leaves no time to start to think about next year. The formula I created is called **C.F.R.O.M.** It stands for **Celebrate, Forget, Rejuvenate/Reflect, Organize, and Move Forward.** I disseminate what each portion of the formula involves and means below.

**Celebrate** – You have accomplished a tremendous amount this school year. You may feel frustrated or tired, or a range of emotions as each year’s end is a unique time because each year is its own individual shell on a beach. Take the time to celebrate your accomplishments and appreciate what made this year special. This will allow you to appropriately say goodbye to the year, so when you start to think about next year, it is with the right frame of reference. Ending a year without the appropriate celebration or acknowledgement is like having a friend move without saying goodbye. Honor the year passed.

**Forget** – It is important to enter the planning for next year with a somewhat clean slate and refreshed state of mind. The best way to do that is to immerse yourself in another endeavor. This may be summer work, a vacation, chasing a hobby, or learning a new skill. This will help you get in to a different frame of reference other than teaching.

**Rejuvenate/Reflect** – Now that you have forgotten all about teaching, find time to recharge your batteries, however that works best for you. Some people like to sleep in, some like to exercise, and some like to surround themselves with others. Just find the time to get your energy level back up as high as you can so you may start to reflect on the year. When you’re ready to reflect, start to think about the year objectively. What went well? What changes should be made? You can categorize your reflections if that helps you think clearer. For example, you might look at each unit taught, classroom management, or the integration of technology, and so forth. The expectations of your school may give you some outline of how to evaluate your year, as well. Find what method works best for you and try to reflect as objectively as you can on practices and strategies you want to keep, get rid of, add, or enhance for the upcoming school year. During this process, try not to over think. Trust that what comes to mind initially, is most likely accurate, as you know your situation best. You may find it helpful to talk to a colleague or journal during this part of the process. You may

even find it necessary to revisit some teaching reference books to ensure you reflected on all aspects of your teaching.

**Organize** – In this portion of the process you want to start to plan and prepare your materials for the upcoming year. This will involve taking information from your reflection and spelling it out. Again, use the organization method that works best for you. Some ideas include using goal setting, outlining, and organizing by unit. Try to prepare yourself, so when you walk in the door to start the year, you have a solid plan of action that keeps you focused during those busy times.

**Move forward** – Now that you have celebrated, forgotten, rejuvenated, reflected, and organized, it is time to move forward. This mainly includes unit planning, lesson planning, and resource gathering. Since you created your structure and big plan in the organization stage, you are now ready to expand on that and start to plan out your year in detail. I suggest doing this in small steps over a period of days or weeks. Perhaps a set couple of hours each week will make this seem less overwhelming.

**Congratulations!** You are now ready to enjoy another wonderfully exciting year of teaching! You have completed the C. F. R. O. M. process. Please note that this process evolves at a different pace for each person, and that you will know when you're ready to move from step to step. You may also experience different parts of the process at different times based on your timetable. That is normal. This is a flexible process and goes differently for everyone.

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