

Teacher Tip of the Week

Grading Papers

The grading of papers—homework, projects, tests, etc.—can quickly overwhelm you and undermine your mission. If you're exhausted by paperwork, you cannot serve your students well. Keep the following in mind to avoid a massive paper pileup!



AVOID COLLECTING EVERYTHING. A common mistake is to collect all assigned work. Be selective in what you collect and grade based on the purpose of the assignment. Generally, collect Summative Assessments and do not collect Formative Assessments.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS. If the assignment measures mastery of a concept or skill, collect and grade it. These assignments are "summative" and are often given at the end of instructional segments. Included here are: formal tests and quizzes, essays and other writing assignments, reports and the creation of products. (brochures, pamphlets, posters, etc.)

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS. Assignments given to practice a new skill or to reinforce a developing concept are "formative", and you should not grade these. They are designed to provide practice and to give informal feedback on students' progress towards acquiring new skills and concepts.

BUT THEY WON'T DO IT IF THEY DON'T GET A GRADE FOR IT: Strategies for motivating students to complete work not collected or graded include:



CLIPBOARD CHECK SHEET. Use this for assignments that you check regularly. Create a roster with columns for specific tasks (warm-ups, classwork, homework, etc.). Put the roster on neon paper—picking up the "Neon Green Clipboard" is a great way to alert students that you are checking work. As students finish an in-class assignment, place a check to note completion. You can record a week's worth of "grades" in this way. Convert checks to points and then transfer them to your grade book weekly.



WALK AROUND ROSTER. Use a similar roster to grade homework. Tell students to put homework on their desks. Pick just a few items to check visually so you can quickly sample the work. Also, give a check for just having the homework on the desk. Example, if the assignment had 10 questions, tell the class that you are checking answers to #4 and #9. Walk around the room, inspect the papers and give a check mark for each correct answer to those two questions, along with a check for having the homework on the

Volume 3, Issue 4, 2007



Points to Ponder
privately...or with
colleagues

PRAISE

- Do you agree that we need to give praise as much as students need to receive it? Why or why not?
- Name at least two actions or characteristics you can praise in the student in your classes who seems most lacking in praiseworthy traits.
- What effect does insincere praise have on students? On you?

Advice & Support from the Veterans

Harry & Rosemary-
Wong
Educators



Teachers who are efficient and effective are more capable of affecting the lives of students than teachers who are not efficient and effective. Perhaps you have heard the definition of education—"Education is not teaching people what they do not know. Education is teaching people to behave as they are not already behaving."

For instance, what is the difference between a student who is tardy and a student who is not tardy? Between one who turns in the homework and one who does not? Between one who studies for the test and one who does not? It is not height, age, sex, race, religious affiliation, or socio-economic background.

IT IS BEHAVIOR OR ATTITUDE. You

and give a check mark for each correct answer to those two questions, along with a check for having the homework on the desk. (You can do this while students are doing other work.)

A NOTE CONCERNING “EXTRA CREDIT”. When students—and sometimes parents—ask if there is any opportunity to earn extra credit you must be ready to state your policy clearly. Use these guidelines to establish your extra-credit practices:

EXTRA CREDIT IS EXTRA. Give opportunities to do extra work only when students have completed all expected, assigned work to begin with. Make it clear that the work you assign is not optional and cannot be simply replaced with alternate extra work.

BE EQUITABLE. If you offer an opportunity for extra credit, offer it to all students who meet the above criteria.—*Margaret Donahue*

IT IS BEHAVIOR OR ATTITUDE. You change or affect the attitude of a student, and you suddenly have a student who is not tardy, participates in class, does the homework, and studies for the test.

YOU WERE HIRED TO AFFECT LIVES. You were hired not so much to teach 3rd grade, history, or physical education as to influence lives. Touch the life of a student, and you will have a student who will learn history, physical education, even math and science, clean the erasers, staple all the papers, and turn cartwheels to please you.

Teacher Tips...Grading & Testing

If you have to give negative feedback to students about performance, be sure to take two actions. First, rehearse the difficult parts of the message you have to deliver. This will ensure that you are as tactful as possible and that you remain motivating rather than demotivating. Second, avoid talking only how poorly the student performed yesterday or on the last test. Rather, relate recent performance to that of the whole grading period or the entire year. If you focus only on the last test or yesterday, the student may believe that much of what you are saying is really irrelevant or insignificant.

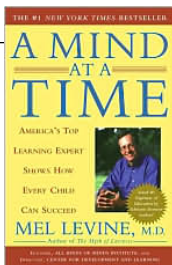


Helpful Websites for Teachers

FIND OUT HOW YOUR SCHOOL CAN RECEIVE BOOKS

First Book is a national nonprofit organization that provides new books to kids through eligible community organizations that serve children from low-income households. If you would like to find out how to receive books, visit FirstBook.org

Suggested Reading for Teachers



A Mind at a Time By Mel Levine

“Different minds learn differently,” writes Dr. Mel Levin, one of the best known learning experts and pediatricians in America today. Some students are strong in certain areas and some are strong in others, but no one is equally capable in all. Yet most schools still cling to a one-size-fits-all education philosophy. As a result, many children struggle because their learning patterns don’t fit the way they are being taught.

In his #1 New York Times bestseller, *A Mind at a Time*, Dr. Levine shows parents and teachers how to identify these individual learning patterns, explaining how they can strengthen a child’s abilities and either bypass or help overcome the child’s weaknesses, producing positive results instead of repeated frustration and failure.

Need a laugh?



New Teacher Support Group Participants



KRISTLE CHALOS
MT. JULIET ELEMENTARY
KINDERGARTEN

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER:

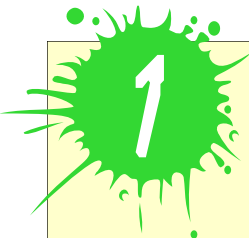
“To say that I was born to teach sounds so very cliché, but for the moment it is the best use of words. My mother is a kindergarten teacher, and if I were to be totally honest, she warned me about the negative aspects of teaching. Yet that did not stop me from walking into her classroom each year and falling in love with her children. Teaching has filled a missing link in my life. I love my children. I think about them when I lay my head on my pillow. I love being creative and finding innovative ways to reach those “unreachable” ones. No child is unreachable.”—Kristle Chalos



APRIL BAIRD
MAP ACADEMY

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER:

“I became a teacher because some of the teachers I had in high school showed me how teaching can make a difference in a student’s life. I saw how wonderful they are and I wanted for my students to think that about me and education. My teacher told me, ‘Teaching is a passion for learning.’ I still talk to those teachers today and I still think they are wonderful.”—April Baird



Marzano's Nine Essential Instructional Strategies

Number One: Identifying Similarities and Differences

The ability to break a concept into its similar and dissimilar characteristics allows students to understand (and often solve) complex problems by analyzing them in a more simple way. Teachers can either directly present similarities and differences, accompanied by deep discussion and inquiry, or simply ask students to identify similarities and differences on their own. While teacher-directed activities focus on identifying specific items, student-directed activities encourage variation and broaden understanding, research shows. Research also notes that graphic forms are a good way to represent similarities and differences.

Applications:

- * Use Venn diagrams or charts to compare and classify items.
- * Engage students in comparing, classifying, and creating metaphors and analogies.

Next week: #2 Summarizing and Note-taking

It is the policy of the Wilson County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.