



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2008-2009

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Teacher Tip of the Week
New Teacher Support
Program
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Using Rubrics to Evaluate Student Performance

ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

ties that define the student's work as a novice, basic, proficient or advanced level. The final result is a rubric that can be left as a qualitative assessment tool, highlighting where the student needs to focus in order to improve.

HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://www.fontifier.com/>

Fontifier lets you use your own handwriting for the text you write on your computer. It turns a scanned sample of your handwriting into a handwriting font that you can use in your word processor or graphics program, just like regular fonts such as Helvetica.

Evaluating student performance can be simplified by using the rubric as a scoring or performance assessment tool.

Grading with Rubrics

A rubric is a tool designed to present students with a concise description of what constitutes quality work. It helps a student understand how an assignment will be evaluated and can assist a teacher with determining if the student's work meets all requirements being assessed.

A specific characteristic of all rubrics is that they are not used only by the teacher. Students should be provided with a copy of the rubric being used to assess the assignment before the assignment is due. One way is to provide students with a copy of the rubric when first introducing the

assignment, which allows them to know how the final product will be assessed and where they need to focus their efforts for success. Another way is to wait until part way into a project, allowing students to self-assess their work and make corrections or additions where needed.

Types of Rubrics



There are two general categories of rubrics: **holistic** or **analytical**, though the two are sometimes combined to form a hybrid. Holistic rubrics are generic grading guidelines which frequently take the form of a checklist and result in a single grade. Analytical rubrics provide a more categories and descriptions than holistic rubrics and frequently result in more than one grade or assessment result.

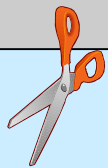
Holistic and analytical rubrics lead to two different ways of providing a grade. By their nature of being grading guidelines, holistic rubrics typically result in one final grade. Analytical rubrics, however, provide a detailed analysis of the student's work without assigning a traditional percentage or letter grade. The hybrid approach allows for teachers to adapt the analytical rubric so that it can provide a traditional grade, however these adaptations tend to be as different as each teacher's teaching style.

Overall, rubrics are a valuable assessment tool. They provide a systematic approach for teacher's to follow in order to create meaningful assessments. Rubrics also easily can be used for student self-assessment and self-evaluation. Finally, they can be used for traditional grading, skills assessment, or a combination of both.—*Tammy Andrew*

Creating Rubrics

Creating holistic rubrics tend to be quicker to create than analytical rubrics. Typically, these rubrics assign a value for different criteria; for example, correct spelling being worth 4 points and 1 point removed for each mistake. All values then determine a specific final score.

Creating analytical rubrics starts with determining all areas which should be evaluated, and then further defining those areas into specific criteria. For example, one area might be writing skills and a specific piece being assessed is spelling. The criteria are then further described by quali-



Cutting Corners

ZIPLOCK DISPLAYS

Buy the Large (Gallon size) ziplock baggies—they need to be large enough to hold a piece of 8 1/2 x 11 paper. Decorate a bulletin board with whatever you choose and staple the individual bags to the board - make sure to staple on the top and close to the edges so that you can slide children's work into the bags. Put each child's name under, or somewhere around the bags and you can easily display their work without putting any staples in it.

Four Habits of the Math Mind

There are four great math habits your students should be encouraged to incorporate automatically into their problem-solving strategies. These problem-solving strategies can be used in their everyday encounters with math as well as on high stakes tests.

DRAW A DIAGRAM

Creating a visual representation of a problem will help your students break it down and understand it. This will also help your students determine a plan for solving the problem by helping to identify the critical parts of the problem.



“The thing always happens that you really believe in; and the belief in a thing makes it happen.”—

Frank Lloyd Wright

BREAK APART A PROBLEM

An effective technique for attacking a challenging problem is to break it apart and analyze the problem and its parts. This will help students identify any missing or extraneous information, as well as the necessary information. Consider having your students practice just breaking apart and analyzing some problems, and not solving them.



USE ESTIMATION

Encourage your students to use estimation as a problem solving technique. Your students

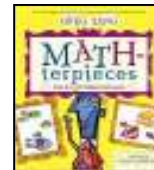
should always begin tackling a difficult problem by estimating a range of reasonable answers. During high stakes testing this will help your students narrow down possible correct responses, and will help your students identify if they have come up with an incorrect solution.

CHECK THAT THE SOLUTION IS REASONABLE

Checking if a solution is reasonable and checking a solution for reasonableness in the context of the problem is something that should not be overlooked as an important step in the problem solving process.

ESSENTIAL MATH STRATEGIES YOUR STUDENTS SHOULD APPLY WHEN SOLVING PROBLEMS IN HIGH STAKES TESTS

FROM THE BOOKSHELF



Math-Terpieces : The Art of Problem-Solving by Greg Tang

In his most groundbreaking book since *THE BEST OF TIMES* (Fall 2002), Greg Tang underscores the importance of four basic rules in problem-solving. Keeping an open mind, looking for unusual number combinations, using multiple skills (like subtracting to add) and looking for patterns, will guarantee any child success in math. In *MATH-TERPIECES*, Tang continues to challenge kids with his innovative approach to math, and uses art history to expand his vision for creative problem-solving.



Elizabeth Alexander 2009 Inaugural Poet

Elizabeth Alexander was a toddler in a baby stroller when her parents took her to hear Martin Luther King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington. Now, it's Alexander's turn to move the nation.

Alexander, professor of African-American studies at Yale University, was chosen by President-elect Barack Obama to compose and read a poem for his inauguration on Jan. 20. "I'm completely thrilled and deeply, deeply honored," Alexander said Thursday.

Alexander's mother is a historian specializing in African-American women's history at George Washington University. Her father was a presidential civil rights adviser and secretary of the Army. "The civil rights movement was fully alive in our home," Alexander said. Attending King's 1963 speech was an iconic moment for the family.

She becomes only the fourth person in history to read a poem during a presidential inauguration. The last poet to have this honor was Miller Williams, who read for President Bill Clinton's second Inauguration 1997.

TEACHING SUGGESTION: READ SOME OF HER POETRY TO YOUR STUDENTS ON INAGURATION DAY:

<http://www.elizabethalexander.net/home.html>

New Teacher Support Participants:



Carol Hale
Lebanon High School
Spanish I & II



Amanda Eaken
Gladeville Elementary
Counselor

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I love the opportunity to teach others what I love so much. Being a part of student's lives everyday fulfills me."—Carol Hale



WHY DID YOU BECOME A COUNSELOR?

"I became a school counselor because I wanted to help children with their problems. Children are facing so many challenges in today's society. They need someone to talk to and be an advocate for them. I always felt like children sensed a genuineness in me that is perfect for counseling. Children need to feel that they have someone at school they can trust to talk about their feelings and problems. I always wanted to make a difference in this world and school counseling was the way for me."—Amanda Eaken

What does a teacher make?

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?" He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers: "Those who can do. Those who can't teach." To corroborate, he said to another guest: "You're a teacher, Susan. Be honest. What do you make?"

Susan, who had a reputation of honesty and

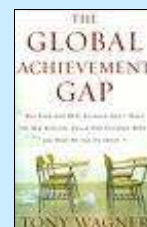
frankness, replied, "You want to know what I make? I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I can make a C+ feel



like a Congressional Medal of Honor...You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them apologize and mean it. I make

gize and mean it. I make them write. I make them read, read, read...I make them show all their work in math and hide it all on their final drafts in English. I make them understand that if you have the brains, then follow your heart...and if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you pay no attention to them. You want to know what I make? I make a difference. What about you?"—*Barbara Blackburn*

From the Bookshelf:



The Global Achievement Gap by Tony Wagner

Despite the best efforts of educators, our nation's schools are dangerously obsolete. Instead of teaching students to be critical thinkers and problem-solvers, we are asking them to memorize facts for multiple choice tests. This problem isn't limited to low-income school districts: even our top schools aren't teaching or testing the skills that matter most in the global knowledge economy. Our teens leave school equipped to work only in the kinds of jobs that are fast disappearing from the American economy. Meanwhile, young adults in India and China are competing with our students for the most sought-after careers around the world.

Education expert Tony Wagner has conducted scores of interviews with business leaders and observed hundreds of classes in some of the nation's most highly regarded public schools. He discovered a profound disconnect between what potential employers are looking for in young people today (critical thinking skills, creativity, and effective communication) and what our schools are providing (passive learning environments and uninspired lesson plans that focus on test preparation and reward memorization).

He explains how every American can work to overhaul our education system, and he shows us examples of dramatically different schools that teach all students new skills. In addition, through interviews with college graduates and people who work with them, Wagner discovers how teachers, parents, and employers can motivate the "net" generation to excellence.



Master Teacher Tips... Parent Relationships

Whenever you send a note to parents, prioritize your points in the message and make sure every word actually advances this message. Then, continue by following these guidelines. First, avoid big words and the use of educational terms. Use words you are sure these parents will understand. When you finish a draft, cross out words with many syllables and rewrite the message. Second, use bite-sized chunks of information to grab parents' attention and understanding. This will not happen if you're packing too much into each sentence. Third, read your note aloud. If it sounds natural, it is fine. If it's unfriendly, stiff, or bureaucratic, rewrite it.

Whenever you are talking to parents about their child's performance, make sure you are ready to answer the following six questions because you can be assured that some or all of these questions are on the minds of parents.

- 1) HOW IS MY CHILD DOING?
- 2) WHAT DO YOU EXPECT MY CHILD TO ACHIEVE?
- 3) HOW DO YOU JUDGE THE SUCCESS OF MY CHILD?
- 4) IS MY CHILD KEEPING UP WITH THE CLASS?
- 5) WHERE IS MY CHILD HEADED ACADEMICALLY?
- 6) WHAT MUST MY CHILD DO BETTER?



Upcoming Events

Inauguration Day—January 20

**National Soccer Coaches Week
January 14-18**

**Healthy Weight Week—
January 18-24**

Humanitarian Day—January 15

**Winnie the Pooh Day—January
18**

For a Laugh!

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www.martybucella.com



"True, we have encouraged you to use your imagination, but not in Math."