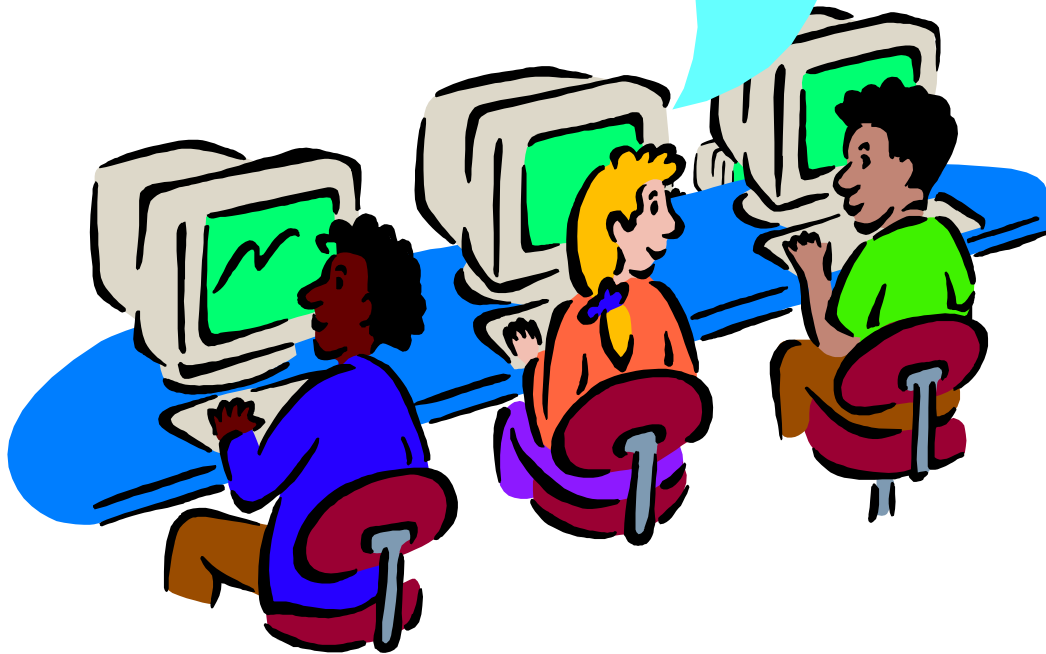


I'm sure glad our language arts teacher is involved in Making Connections. This is GREAT!!!



Content Maps

Activity Summary:

This activity gives students an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned as they proceed through the project. They can then represent their learning in a variety of forms, including text and graphics.

Materials:

- Student Notebooks
- Butcher Paper (optional)

What To Do:

- Make a Content Map yourself illustrating the content that you expect the students to learn. This can be used as an example so they understand what is expected of them. You can also use Content Maps from previous projects as examples.
- On a weekly basis, have the students add the content they learned to their Content Maps. If you wait until the end of the unit, it's hard for students to remember what they have done. Also, they can use the "in-progress" Content Maps as notes to help them with current problems they are encountering.
- Toward the end of the unit, you can give the students time to complete and polish their Content Maps.

Notes to Teachers:

- The Content Map is an excellent document to use for assessment.
- You may also find it can be the centerpiece of one-to-one discussions around the activity of the group.
- The Content Map is also a nice thing to have around when parents visit, along with the end project, because it clearly shows the content that was learned and the problems that were solved as the unit progressed

<<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/Activities/ContentMaps.html>> Adapted with permission from San Mateo County Office of Education.

Designing a Rubric

Activity Summary:

Establishing a common understanding of the assessment process and allowing students to participate in creating their own assessment standards are important components of project-based learning. Student-created rubrics emphasize student decision-making, collaborative learning, performance-based assessment, and "real world" connections. Rubrics can be used for planning and assessment by students and teachers throughout the project, and as tools for media literacy.

Materials:

- Sample rubrics
- Media or project examples showing a range of achievement and accomplishments
- A place to write for all to see (chalkboard, white board, chart paper, etc.)
- For a discussion of rubrics, see Forum piece: Define "rubric" and the 2/4/97 Workday Notes (Rubric Notes and Rubric Development)

What To Do:

1. Familiarize students with the concept of a rubric. Begin by posting or distributing copies of rubrics for students to read. Make available media samples or projects that can be assessed using one or more of these rubrics. Allow students time to read through and view the media and rubric samples.
2. In groups, assess the media samples or projects using the rubrics. Ask the students in each group to evaluate the samples, come to a decision on an appropriate score, and be prepared to explain their assessment to the class. Questions for discussion:
 - How difficult was it for the group members to reach a consensus? What areas, if any, did group members disagree on or find confusing? How did they resolve the problems they encountered?
 - What would have to be changed in each project or media sample for it to receive a higher score?
 - How could the rubric being used be changed to better fit the projects or media samples being assessed?
3. As a class, teachers and students prepare a rubric that they will use for their upcoming projects. Teachers will have assessment criteria, constraints, and values they would like represented in the rubric, which they should discuss with the class (for example, how will the projects be grounded in the curriculum? And what role do regional, state, and national standards play in the project and assessment, and how should these be reflected in the rubric?). Other questions for the teacher and the students to address while creating the rubric include:
 - How can the rubric incorporate or reflect the values and concerns of the school and the community?
 - Should there be one rubric for all projects?

- Should there be several variations for different types of projects or for groups with different goals?
 - Will the rubric be "holistic" (have a single score for the whole project), or will there be scores for different aspects of the project?
 - How will "collaboration" and other components of the development process be incorporated into the rubric?
 - How will the rubric be used (in planning, design reviews, midpoint assessments, preparing and assessing a pitch, final evaluations, etc.)? And who will be the assessor (teachers, mentors, parents, classmates, the students working on the project, etc.)?
4. As the projects get under way and students, teachers, and mentors use the rubric (for planning, design reviews, and other assessment activities), the class may want to assess how well the rubric is working. Questions for discussion:
- Does each party feel comfortable using the rubric?
 - Could minor changes be made to the rubric to make it work better?
 - Are the examples given still appropriate and clear to all involved?
 - Do students have any other questions, suggestions, or concerns about using the rubric?

Variations:

- Instead of breaking into groups, teachers may prefer to keep the class together for the whole activity, especially if working with very young students.
- Rubrics are used in many different settings in the real world. Teachers could expand the discussion on rubrics by bringing in examples used by corporations and other professionals.

<<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/Activities/DesignRubric.html>> Adapted with permission from San Mateo County Office of Education.

Defining *Rubric*

What is a rubric? It can be a guide for critiquing the effectiveness of media projects and for planning project designs, a tool for assessment used by teachers and students, or the process of establishing the essential goals and assessment criteria of multimedia projects in your class.

A rubric is a set of categories that define and describe the important components of the work being completed, critiqued, or assessed. Each category contains a gradation of levels of completion or competence, with a score assigned to each level and a clear description of what criteria need to be met to attain the score at each level.

As an assessment tool, rubrics allow for complex critiques of multimedia projects, presentations, written reports, and other classroom work. Because the criteria for assessment are clearly defined, teachers and students share an understanding of the project goals and criteria, and the various levels of completing the defined criteria. Rubrics also allow for various modes of assessment. Using the rubric, teachers can assess projects, student groups, or individual students; and students can use the rubric for self-assessment as individuals or in groups, and also for peer assessment.

Rubrics can also be used to critique current media productions, existing web pages, advertisements, and so forth by students and teachers trying to develop greater media literacy. By breaking down the media components into different categories and defining various levels of competency in each category, students will have a structure for uncovering and analyzing the various components of the media. They will also have a guide for creating their own media designs and a tool for assessing the effectiveness of their projects as they design, review, and revise them.

Although using an existing rubric for assessing, critiquing, and planning media projects may be quite appropriate, there are additional benefits to creating a rubric with the class. Students will not only understand but also be actively engaged in the process of determining the criteria used for their assessment. It is also a great opportunity for a discussion of what makes for effective and interesting media projects and for the creation of a collaborative, student-directed set of essential criteria. And finally, because multimedia projects are usually integrated into an ongoing subject-based curriculum, the standard for "what makes a good one" may need to be adapted to fit each project's individual goal.

< <http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/ThoughtPieces/Rubric.html> > Adapted with permission from San Mateo County Office of Education.

What Is a Rubric?

A rubric is a set of guidelines that distinguishes the quality of performances or products.

What different kinds are there?

Holistic: yields a single score for overall work.

Analytic-trait: looks at separate dimensions or aspects of the work; yields a separate score for each.

Some other key terms

Dimension of performance - where to look

Criteria - what to look for

Standard - an arbitrary level of a criterion

Procedure for writing a rubric :

1. Gather a range of examples.
2. Sort into 3 or 4 piles; list attributes as you go.
3. Consult pertinent literature.
4. Cluster 3 to 6 key traits
5. Write a clear definition of each trait.
6. Write a description of each level.
7. Anchor with benchmark examples .
8. Revise after use!

Helpful hints

- For a first rubric, focus on the highest level.
- Seek a wide range of excellent examples.
- Keep it simple.
- Limit yourself to four levels.
- Aim for mid-level of generalization.
- Use unique descriptors; avoid relative terms.
- Keep the "distance" between levels equal.

< <http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/Activities/rubricnotes.html> > Adapted with permission from San Mateo County Office of Education.

Sample Rubric

Score Levels	Multimedia	Collaboration	Content
5	Students have used multimedia in creative and effective ways that exploit the particular strengths of the chosen format. All elements make a contribution. There are few technical problems and none of a serious nature.	Students were a very effective team. Division of responsibilities capitalized on the strengths of each team member. The final product was shaped by all members and represents something that would not have been possible to accomplish working alone.	Meets all criteria of the previous level and does one or more of the following: reflects broad research and application of critical thinking skills; shows notable insight or understanding of the topic; compels the audience's attention.
4	Presentation blends 3 or more multimedia elements in a balanced, attractive, easy-to-follow format. Elements include original student work. With minor exceptions, all elements contribute to rather than detract from the presentation's overall effectiveness.	Students worked together as a team on all aspects of the project. There was an effort to assign roles on the basis of skills/talents of individual members. All members strove to fulfill their responsibilities.	The project has a clear goal related to a significant topic or issue. Information included has been compiled from several relevant sources. The project is useful to an audience beyond the students who created it.
3	Presentation uses 2 or more media. There are some technical problems, but the viewer is able to follow the presentation with few difficulties.	Students worked together on the project as a team with defined roles to play. Most members fulfilled their responsibilities. Disagreements were resolved or managed productively.	The project presents information in an accurate and organized manner that can be understood by the intended audience. A focus is maintained throughout the piece.
2	Presentation uses 2 or more media, but technical difficulties seriously interfere with the viewer's ability to see, hear, or understand content.	Presentation is the result of a group effort, but only some members of the group contributed. There is evidence of poor communication, unresolved conflict, or failure to collaborate on important aspects of the work.	The project has a focus but may stray from it at times. There is an organizational structure, though it may not be carried through consistently. There may be factual errors or inconsistencies, but they are relatively minor.
1	Multimedia is absent from the presentation.	Presentation was created by one student working more or less alone (though may have received guidance or help from others).	Project seems haphazard, hurried, or unfinished. There are significant factual errors, misconceptions, or misunderstandings.
	Multimedia score =	Collaboration score =	Content score =

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Production Teams

Activity Summary:

Production teams set the stage for student direction. Production teams that work together for the duration of a long-term project can provide multiple opportunities for students to collaborate with each other and play active roles in the learning and production process. Production teams can also provide unique opportunities for assessment and reflection. The goal of planning for production teams is to provide adequate structure for students to function independently.

General Idea:

Planning for production teams will involve a consideration of constraints and negotiables. What will the teams be required to do, and what will they be determining on their own? Generally, production teams are intended to give students opportunities to make decisions and problem solve jointly, engage in real-world roles and project management, and become personally invested in the success of their production. You may wish to focus on a small number of specific goals for the production teams. In any case, the purpose and goals of working in production teams should be communicated clearly to students.

Planning for production teams is essentially planning the structure that your students will need to be able to work independently. Successful production teams get students to make plans and decisions on their own and rely on each other's work. Establishing transparent goals and expectations for teams, defining roles and processes ahead of time, and providing early and frequent feedback will support students when they work in groups. Plan time for class discussion and instruction on how to collaborate effectively (the activity Student-Led Discussions prepares students to participate in peer discussion and decision-making).

Production teams should be sized and structured so that each student can contribute to the group, sometimes lead the group, and sometimes use the technologies that are integral to the project. It may be appropriate to create a set of predetermined roles that students will fill, or it may be more beneficial for the students themselves to identify all of the jobs that need to be done and divide them up as they see appropriate. Heterogeneous group composition, which can be defined in several ways (by skill level, technical experience, gender, etc.), will challenge and benefit students. Considerations for planning specific groups are as follows: Will each student be able to contribute in a meaningful way to this group? Will each student be challenged in some way? What special tools will this particular team benefit from (e.g., a system of frequent feedback, a structured division of labor)?

The establishment of production teams will provide a number of opportunities for reflection and assessment. If involved in a long-term project, repeated assessments will paint a more accurate picture of the team as it learns to work together and will provide important comparisons of early and later work.

Assessment Ideas for Production Teams:

- Write periodic group and individual activity reports to document all of the work that has been done in a specific time period.
- Create a rubric (by the teacher or by the class) to assess not only the final product but also the process of production, including skills used in collaboration.
- Document ideas in design/idea notebooks for periodic review, feedback, and assessment.
- Have students assess themselves as a production team or individually. Reflect on group functioning and individual contributions to the group, in journals or elsewhere.
- Have students conduct peer assessments, with production teams assessing each other.
- Create design reviews within the team or which involve the teacher or whole class (see the activity Peer Design Reviews).

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Student-Led Discussions

Activity Summary:

Student-led discussions will be an important aspect of group projects. Whether practicing informal collaboration or more formal, real-world type meetings, students will benefit from taking time early on to develop strategies or guidelines for good student-led discussions. By developing and reflecting on student roles, ground rules, and other aspects of group discussions, students can enhance the efficiency of the discussions. An established structure for such discussions will also support students' willingness to risk expressing ideas and increase their participation in the process.

What To Do:

The following are suggestions and considerations for teachers and students who are planning for student-led discussions.

1. Students may begin by discussing the potential benefits and potential problems of leading their own discussions. These thoughts should be recorded and can serve as guidelines as strategies are developed.
2. Appropriate group behavior should be discussed and identified. Students may want to set specific ground rules by answering some of the following questions (or it may be sufficient to merely discuss them and raise awareness of the issues):
 - What are ways to make sure that all who want to can contribute their thoughts?
 - Will the group make decisions by voting or by consensus?
 - What are ways to help the group stay focused?
 - What makes a good agenda? Will the group benefit by having an agenda every time? Sometimes?
 - Who will get the group back on task if it wanders?
3. Appropriate individual participation should be discussed. Questions for students:
 - What responsibilities do individual group members have to the group?
 - What is the difference between contributing and dominating the discussion?
 - What is the best way to respond if you don't agree with someone's statement?
4. Students may want to define specific student roles, or assign jobs to help the group function smoothly. They may wish to develop and establish standard roles (such as facilitator, recorder, timekeeper, reporter, etc.) ahead of time. The group may also benefit from first listing all of the roles and duties required of their particular group and then assigning those jobs to group members. It is important that the duties of each role be specific and defined for the entire group beforehand, to avoid leaving students with titles but no idea of how to perform their roles. Students should also determine a method for choosing who will fill each position, including a plan for giving all students the opportunity to occasionally lead the group.
5. After a few tries at student-led discussion, students will benefit from a round of reflection on the process. Students can discuss what strategies have worked well and which need

improvement. This is also a time to bring up new concerns about the functioning of the group discussions and suggestions for improvement. Students may reflect verbally or in written form about their own performance in the group. Questions for students:

- How have I contributed positively to the group?
- How can I improve my future involvement in our group discussions?

Notes to Teachers:

Student-led discussions allow teachers to play the role of observer and occasional facilitator. As students work in groups, teachers will have opportunities to hear the concerns and successes students express to each other. When circulating among groups, teachers should focus on developing an ear for hearing these opportunities to support student learning. Teachers can listen for any significant project or group issues that students are struggling with and use this information to assist students on the spot, to plan upcoming activities, or to start a classroom discussion or brainstorming session. Teachers can also listen for indications of successful, productive work within groups to help students see the positive work they are doing and reinforce their efforts.

Questions for Teachers:

- What are expressions of the normal give-and-take that comes with group work?
- What are indications that groups are engaged in successful or productive work?
- What are indications that the teacher should step in and mediate or facilitate for the group?

<<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/Activities/studentdiscussions.html>> Adapted with permission from San Mateo County Office of Education.