

Getting Students Involved in Their Learning

If you've been keeping up with recommendations for sound educational practices – those that result in increased student learning — then you've surely encountered the research that says students need to be *involved* in the learning process (including the assessment piece). With a new school year just under way, now is a good time for teachers to focus on this part of their instruction. Most teachers know that using hands-on kinds of instructional activities is one way to get students more “involved.” But what are some other strategies that help accomplish this goal? Here is a partial list for teachers to peruse. Use it as a springboard for staff discussions and for generating additional ideas.

1. Have the class help you create a rubric.
2. Ask students how they could show you that they know/can do what the learning goal (outcome or component) says.
3. Have older students keep their own individual “grade books,” showing how many points they have earned so far. Does their information match yours?
4. At the beginning of each class, call on someone to state the current learning target (outcome/component) that you're all working to accomplish.
5. At the end of an assignment, have the student respond to these questions.
 - What were you expected to do?
 - What did you do well?
 - If you had to do this task over, what would you do differently?
 - What should happen next?
 - What help do you need from your teacher?
6. When using rubrics, have students self-evaluate. First they score themselves on how well they thought they did, then they conference and compare their evaluation with the teacher's.
7. Explain an assignment, then get student input on when it should be due.
8. Have students create questions or tasks to serve as a good review for the class prior to a summative assessment.
9. Change parent-teacher conferences to parent-teacher-*student* conferences.
10. After finishing your planned instruction, ask students to think of another way someone could present/teach that information. Their ideas can be used for corrective instruction, review, or for you to use with next year's class.