

“Walking the Talk” with Davies, Herbst & Augusta

How It Works in My Classroom

By: Brittany Fitzgerald

How did it start?

- Participated in a 2 ½ day conference in August 2013.
- Learned a lot of great new ideas from Anne Davies, Sandra Herbst and Brenda Augusta.
- Decided to incorporate these great ideas in my classroom.

What great things did I learn?

The most important things I learned at the conference:

- Students need to be very involved in the assessment process from the beginning.
- Begin with the end in mind. At the start of a new unit be sure to explain the learning target to students in student friendly language.
- Co-create learning goals with students that are connected to outcomes.
- Co-create criteria with students for what is expected of them.
- Show students exemplars.
- Use self-assessment and peer assessment often.
- Collect evidence of student learning from a variety of sources (triangulation of data).
- Assess all the time, but don't evaluate too early.

Catching Fire: Poster Project

- Students in my Grade 9 English began a novel study in September 2013 for Suzanne Collins novel “Catching Fire”. I decided to try co-creating criteria with them, using what I learned from the conference, for this assignment.
- The poster project was to serve as their first major project for the year and for this novel study. We had read half of the novel when they began working on their posters.
- In order to use what I learned in August, I followed a step-by-step process to complete this project with my students.

What steps did I follow?

Step One: Begin with the end in mind.

-Create a clear learning target that is connected to outcomes.

-I explained the purpose of the project to my students before we even started working on posters.

-I wanted them to show me that they could:

- respond personally to the novel (Show me what you think about...)
- use writing and other ways of representing to explore their thoughts, feelings and learnings (Write your thoughts, feelings and new things you learned about the novel...)
- create a text independently that included a variety of representations (create a poster to display your thoughts, feelings and learning)

Steps....

Step Two: Creating Criteria

- After I had explained the outcomes we would be working with I asked my students to brainstorm what should be included in the poster in order to show that they achieved the outcomes.
- First we brainstormed a huge list of things they thought should be included.
- Then we put their ideas into categories.
- Next, we decided on what all of the categories should be worth on their mark.
- Finally, I typed up the assignment sheet with their criteria and handed it out. I got the students to look at it and see if they thought we should make any changes.
- We decided on a due date together.

Brainstorming (Picture)

Categorizing (Picture)

Final Assignment Sheet

Exemplars

Because I had never done this exact project before I did not have any past student posters to show them that followed the exact criteria.

However, I did have some posters students completed the year before based on the same novel. I showed them the posters and the assignment sheet.

I explained what each poster was marked as and why.

Past Posters (Picture)

Assessing Throughout

The posters took a long time to complete. Students really put a lot of effort into doing their best. I conferenced with each student throughout the project. We read over their rough drafts, discussed their ideas for the final poster and continuously referred back to the criteria and learning target.

Including Self and Peer Assessment

- While conferencing with students throughout the project I would ask them to self-assess. (How do you think you are doing with the project? What are you proud of? What do you think you need to work on?)
- Students would also have informal discussions with one another to discuss their progress.
- All of the assessment (mine, their own and their peers') really helped to get students thinking more about their work.

Student Samples

Student Samples

Student Samples

Final Thoughts

- I think that co-creating criteria with my students worked out really well. The students were very invested in the project and felt like they had more ownership. I try to include them in the assessment process as much as possible. I also include them in important decisions in the classroom. For example, what unit they would like to do next, the type of project we will complete, etc.
- I will continue to use what I learned in the “Walking the Talk” Conference in my teaching. Another teacher and I are currently working on a project with our classes in which we co-create criteria, set learning targets together with our students and continuously use self and peer assessment. It is going very well so far!