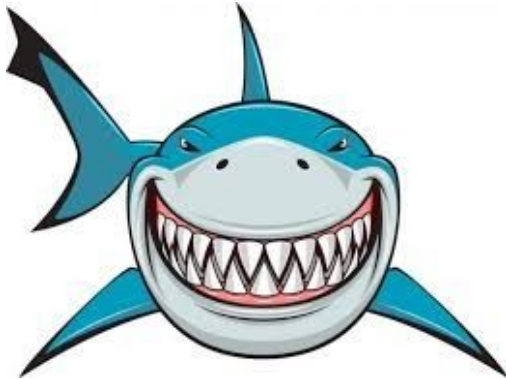


Poolville Elementary School
The Monarch Metropolitan

September 20, 2020: Edition XXVI - Grading Greatness

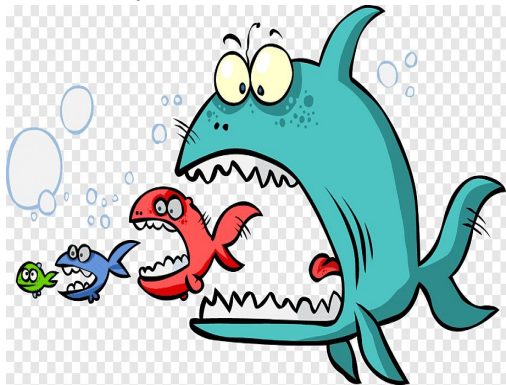
A Letter From the Editor: Sharks, Minnows and Grades!

Today's edition of ***The Monarch Metropolitan*** has me reflecting on a story my mother would tell us when we started reaching a breaking point. The story was called 'Shark bait.' The tale went something like this.



A marine biologist put a shark into a big tank at the time of a research experiment. Followed by that, he released some tiny bait fish into it.

As expected, the shark didn't wait to attack those fish and ate them. Later, a clear fiberglass was inserted into the tank which partitioned the tank into two and the shark remained on one side.



A similar set of bait fish was sent to the other side of the tank like before. And the shark attempted to attack those fish but failed by hitting on the fiberglass.

The shark attempted for several days until it gave up. Later, the biologist removed the glass from the tank, but the shark didn't try to attack the small fish.



The shark always continued to see a false barrier in the tank and stopped his attempts.

The moral of this tale is that it is quite common for people to give up after several setbacks and failures. In the shark's case, it led to starvation. Let's not starve. Let's always try and never give up. ***Let's THRIVE!***

So what does thriving have to do with our weekly learnings? That's easy. We are entering the final week of the first six week grading period. ***Let's not let collecting or distributing grades represent possible roadblocks that ultimately lead to individuals giving up.***



Grading elementary students is no simple task. Teachers must be objective, fair, and consistent, but the volume of grading to be done and lack of time to do it can make this process excruciating. Many teachers also find grading exhausting because they don't have a dependable grading system.

Before you can implement grading strategies, you first have to make sure that your assessments are effective. The purpose of assessment is to inform future teaching and accommodate student needs, but too often, teachers check for correctness, give a grade, and move on to the next concept. This leaves behind anyone still struggling and doesn't give students any information about what to keep practicing.

Assessment results are only helpful when you use them to determine what a student knows or doesn't know (not just whether they are right or wrong), find where discrepancies lie between your instruction and student comprehension and decide how to get everyone on the same page.

Teach smarter by designing meaningful forms of assessment that allow students to demonstrate exactly what they know at the conclusion of a lesson. These must be closely aligned to a lesson and its standards (assessing skills that haven't been explicitly taught is not equitable teaching) and able to be completed by all of your learners. After a lesson concludes and independent work is finished, use consistent criteria for grading, neatly document your findings, and articulate student progress to families.



As we all know, students already get plenty of tests, so why not let your students show what they learned creatively? Whether your students are reading independent books or your class has just finished a unit on space or pioneers, a culminating project can really cement that learning. *Here are tons of fun and creative ways for your students to show what they know.*



Create a poster	Make a timeline	Make a collage
Make a PowerPoint, SlideShare or Prezi presentation	Create a board game incorporating key elements.	Make a mobile
Design a model	Write a poem	Create a test about the topic
Make a shoebox diorama	Write and perform a skit	Make a word search
Use a 3-panel display board	Make a TV or radio commercial	Make a crossword puzzle
Write a report	Write journal/diary entries	Make an instructional video
Create a flow chart or diagram	Write a postcard or letter exchange	Give a presentation
Write an interview of a relevant person	Create a scrapbook	Create an interactive notebook
Create questions and an answer key	Create a photo album	Create a set of task cards
Write a newspaper article	Have a panel discussion of "experts"	Make a pamphlet or brochure
Perform a puppet show	Compose a rap or other song	Write a fable or myth about the topic
Hold a debate	Use a Venn diagram to compare two aspects of the topic	Create a help wanted add and a letter/resume to answer it
Hold a mock court case	Design a comic strip about the topic	Write a text message dialogue relevant to the topic
Create an episode of a reality show	Create a children's story about the topic	Write a series of tweets relevant to the topic
Create a game show	Create a map	Create a Facebook wall relative to the topic
Start a blog	Create a flipbook	Create a Pinterest board relative to the topic
Decorate a box and fill with relevant objects	Create a Cootie Catcher	
Create a foldable		



Create several bookmarks about different aspects of the topic	Write a recipe relevant to the topic (good for showing causes of an event)	Create a cereal-based on the topic (cover a cereal box)
Do a newscast	Write an acrostic poem	Assemble a time capsule
		Create an Internet scavenger hunt

Conclusion:

Grading is complicated and full of grey areas. Ultimately, there is no right or wrong way to grade your students as long as you hold them all to the same standards and use grades for good (not evil).

While grades do not define your students or their abilities, they do have a direct impact on their lives. They can discourage them and lead to unwanted competitiveness in the classroom. Some teachers even use grades to shame or guilt their students into trying harder but this only results in low motivation and poor self-esteem.

Use these tips for conscientious grading to prevent your students from feeling like their self-worth is tied to their scores and make the most of the process.

What to Do:



- Recognize student achievement and progress always.
- Differentiate between incomplete and incorrect work.
- Provide students with opportunities for revision.
- Make students aware of what you will be looking for when grading before they start an assignment.
- Give students meaningful and actionable feedback on their work.

Let's take research-based risks. It takes a village in the teaching world. I am grateful to be part of yours!

Let's change our practices. Out with the old, in with the NEW!

Let's use RESEARCH to fuel Monarch LEARNING!

Good luck!

- Jason Cheslock