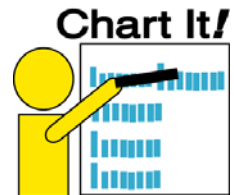# Writing Anchor Papers with Students
Learning About a Rubric from the Inside Out

A powerful way to help students understand what the elements of a rubric really mean is to write anchor papers reflecting each level on a rubric WITH the students. Here's how:

1. Either write yourself, or locate a piece of writing that represents a "2" on the rubric you are hoping to help the students understand. (On a four point scale this is a paper that is just below proficient.) Project this piece of writing on the screen or chart paper so that all of the students can see it.

2. Provide each student with a copy of the rubric you will be illustrating with the anchor papers you will be writing together.

3. Read the "2" to the students aloud and ask them to find evidence from the rubric for why it's a "2". For example, students may say, "*I think it's a "2" because it uses a lot of everyday words instead of more interesting word choices.*"

4. Using a piece of chart paper take suggestions from the class and collaboratively rewrite the "2" paper to make it a "3" or proficient paper.

   PLEASE NOTE: you will need to have taught the students about each of the elements on the rubric before attempting this lesson.

5. Next, take the "3" paper and re-write it collaboratively with student input to make it a "4". There may be times during this process that you make suggestions yourself if the students are stuck for ideas about how to write an advanced paper. Early in the school year, you may even model and think aloud as you go to compose this yourself in front of the students.

6. Finally, revisit the "2" paper and collaboratively re-write it to make it a "1". Display this paper as well.

7. Use these exemplars as anchor papers for students to refer to as they learn to evaluate their own writing throughout the year.

Portfolio Wall with Anchor Papers

When teachers display anchor papers and rubrics alongside the portfolio wall of student writing, expectations for writing at grade level can be made very explicit for everyone.

CCSS Writing Anchor Standard 5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

GRADE 3 SAMPLE LEVEL 2 Anchor Paper

Saving Water

Water is rely important. Everyone needs water to live. I learn that peple use about 100 gallons a day of water. Peple use water to drink and wash and water ther gardens. When I was little I like to play in the water. I'm going to ask my mom to save water.

- Weak topic sentence
- Few facts
- Simple details
- Simple sentences
- Some verb errors
- Some spelling errors

GRADE 3 SAMPLE LEVEL 3 Anchor Paper

Life's most precious resource is water. People can't survive without water to drink, wash, and irrigate the plants that become our food. People use about 100 gallons a day just in their homes. We need even more than that to grow crops!

However, many people don't have enough water to live. They live in parts of the world with droughts, or not enough rain. They also sometimes live where the water has been polluted and it makes them sick if they drink it. We all need to work together to save water so that everyone on earth can have the water they depend on to survive!

definition

- Topic sentence is clear
- Facts and definitions
- Transition words
- Ideas are grouped into two paragraphs
- Concluding statement
- Sentence variety: simple and compound

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