

## Instructional Strategies: Recognition of Student Work

### Learn About Recognition of Student Work

Can you remember a time when a peer, teacher, or coach recognized the work you did as being valuable and important? How did that make you feel? The power of recognition has an overwhelmingly positive effect on students but unfortunately, doesn't happen as often as it should. Once a project has been completed, are students recognized for a job well done? How are they given an opportunity to share their work with others, receive recognition for their effort, and showcase the finished product?

Educational reformer, Dr. Phillip Schlechty best defines affirmation of performances as, "Persons who are significant in the lives of the student, including parents, siblings, peers, public audiences, and younger students, are positioned to observe, participate in, and benefit from student performances, as well as the products of those performances, and to affirm the significance and importance of the activity to be undertaken" (2002). Giving students an opportunity to have their work affirmed and recognized by others makes learning authentic and worthwhile. Some students may engage in the work from the start because they know their work will be affirmed by important people at the end.

Recognition in this sense should not be confused with praise or other kinds of extrinsic rewards. Although, praising students for the work they are doing is important, recognition is far deeper than that. Schlechty states that to "affirm or recognize student work is not to approve or disapprove; it is to declare that what happened matters and is important. Affirmation suggests significance and thus attaches importance to the event or action" (1997). Teachers hope that students take their projects home, share with their parents, and possibly save them in a portfolio. But the reality may be that students' work never makes it home, and all the hard work and effort the students put forth is never shared or recognized. By making the work visible to others the students get that opportunity to hear, "Job well done."

### Make it Happen in Your Classroom

Recognition of student work can take place in many different ways across all grade levels and subject areas. Providing students simple opportunities to display work in the hallways of the school or on a bulletin board in the classroom displays exemplary work to peers and school faculty and staff. Holding Parent and Community Nights, inviting experts into the classroom to see the work students have completed, and sharing work with younger and older buddy classes are all significant ways in which students can be recognized for their hard work and effort. Not only do students share the work products but the important learning that took place as well.

## Ways to Recognize Student Work

Discover ways to affirm and recognize student work at a classroom and school level.

Classroom Level	School Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Display student work in hallways of school</li><li>• Display student work on bulletin boards of classroom and invite parents and other school personnel to come by and view the student work and offer positive feedback</li><li>• Have a Parent Night, inviting parents and other family members to recognize student work</li><li>• Invite experts to view student performances, debates, or work products</li><li>• Have students share finished products with a same grade-level class</li><li>• Invite the principal, secretary, or other teachers in to view presentations and be part of the audience</li><li>• Post student work on classroom Web sites and invite family, friends, and community members to see the work and send emails to students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold Community Nights where family, friends, and community members are invited to watch presentations, view work products, and see performances</li><li>• Hold Science Fairs, Art Showcases, Literature Nights, Math Nights, and History Fairs where all students and classes are represented and are able to share work products with the guests</li><li>• Implement a buddy class system to pair older and younger classes together to share work with one another</li><li>• Hold a monthly or quarterly school walk-through where classes are able to visit other classrooms and view the work products of the students. Provide comment sheets to give recognition.</li><li>• Post student work on a school Web site and invite family, friends, and community members to see the work and send emails to classrooms</li></ul>