

Developing an Assessment with Students' Help

After several lessons on benchmark fractions and percentages and graphing, students have been tasked to design and conduct a survey, then analyze the resulting data and represent it. They will then be expected to do an oral presentation about their findings. Before setting them off to do the task, the teacher asks them to think about what their presentation should look like when it's done well.

They first begin to brainstorm some of the things that students think are important in presenting:

Speak loudly

Don't fidget

Make eye contact

Because her focus is on the math that students have been learning, she nudges them by asking, "What about the graph that you will be talking about?"

They then chime in with more ideas:

Has to have a title

Needs labels

Has to be colorful

She does not criticize them for considering that colorfulness is a criterion they think is important since the students are learning to self-assess. But, she also thinks they are missing a couple of key assessment points. So she asks if she can add a couple of criteria to the list. She suggests:

The data and the story you present must be in agreement

The graph must be based only on the data that you collect

Now that the students have a set of criteria to work from, together they build a rubric with the teacher's support.

They begin with a blank table and insert their criteria in the left column.

Criteria			
Speak loudly			
Don't fidget			
Make eye contact			
Has to have a title			
Graph has labels			
Graph is colorful			
The data and the story you present must be in agreement			
The graph must be based only on the data that you collect			

She feels this is a bit much for students so asks them to think about what the first three criteria are about. Someone suggests that they are about effective presentation skills, so they adjust their criteria and then begin to establish their rubric.

Criteria			
Effectively presents	Speaks loudly, doesn't fidget, and makes eye contact	Sometimes speaks loudly, but doesn't look comfortable speaking in front of others	Has to be asked to speak up, does not make eye contact, and is clearly uncomfortable
Graph has labels	Clearly labeled correctly and no spelling mistakes	Labels are hard to read or misspelled	No labels
Graph is colorful	Lots of color	Some color	Blah, no color
The data and the story you present must be in agreement	The presentation is about the data and the graph	Mostly the presentation is about the graph but the speaker gets a little sidetracked	Speaker does not use the information from the data or graph to tell her story
The graph must be based only on the data that you collect	The graph and data collected match	The graph left out some small bit of data	The graph isn't about the data that was collected

Now that the students clearly know what is expected of them, the teacher sets them off to do their task. She makes sure that the rubric is posted so that they can refer to it as they work through their task.