DOINGWHATWORKS

Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Clear Expectations for Students

MacArthur Ninth Grade School, Texas • December 2009

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

Practice: Student Use of Data

Highlights

- MacArthur Ninth Grade School uses product guides* and rubrics to provide clear expectations for students and grading criteria.
- Students self-assess using the product guides and rubrics before teachers provide feedback.
- Product guides and rubrics help students gain ownership over their learning.

About the Site

MacArthur Ninth Grade School

Houston, TX

Demographics

83% Hispanic

12% Black

4% White

79% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

MacArthur Ninth Grade School uses student achievement data to support instructional decision making through such activities as:

- Engaging in three-week and six-week assessment cycles
- Embedding data use into the school's mission and vision
- Using data to develop curriculum and key areas of focus for instruction
- Implementing tools for students that provide clear expectations and grading criteria for all core classes
- Accessing and analyzing data from the districtwide data warehouse system

Full Transcript

Presentation Title: Clear Expectations for Students

Title slide text: MacArthur Ninth Grade School uses product guides* in core subject areas. Product guides define the expectations for students. Each product guide lists the required components to successfully complete the product or project. D'Ann Delgado, assistant principal for curriculum at MacArthur Ninth Grade School, discusses how the school has developed product guides and rubrics.

Slide 1: Product Guides

Text: The product guides define exactly what the final product should include and how it should look. Students know the key content that must be included in the product. English teachers use product guides to help students understand the requirements to complete a book project. For example, the product guide states that all major events must be included in the story retelling.

Audio: At MacArthur Ninth Grade School, we use product guides in all of our classrooms. A product guide sets clear expectations for the students. It tells the students what to do and how to do it. They create a set of guidelines for the students to follow, and each student can measure their product against the guidelines.

Slide 2: Rubrics

Text: Rubrics are used to accompany the product guides. They outline the assessment criteria that the teachers will use. Teachers in each content area work together to develop these tools. The product guides and rubrics are the same for all assignments within each content area to establish consistent standards across classrooms.

Audio: A rubric, on the other hand, has all the information given in the product guide in addition to content that is aligned with the state standards, that are subject-specific, and points assigned to each category. Product guides are developed alongside the rubric. Core teachers develop product guides and rubrics during department planning periods.

Slide 3: Use in Core Content Classes

Text: All core content area teachers consistently use product guides and rubrics. However, the ways that they are used may vary by content area. In English, teachers combine the product guide and rubric into one document. They feel this format fits better for the assignments students are required to complete, such as an essay.

Audio: We use product guides in all core subject areas. In English, product guides and rubrics are used with expository and analysis writing, with major projects, and with portfolio assessment.

Slide 4: World Geography and Algebra

Text: In content areas such as world geography, teachers use product guides to outline the content required for a major project. They also use the product guides to frame discussions with students on the content of their projects. Algebra teachers use them to provide clear expectations for the six-week student projects. For each content area, teachers tailor the product guides and rubrics to fit the specific subject content.

Audio: In World Geography, they're used to guide discussion for an upcoming project, to aid in critiquing and completing the project, and they're used in objective grading. In Algebra, they're used in the GT and pre-AP classrooms for six-week projects and to ensure the quality of student work.

Slide 5: Biology

Text: The biology teachers at MacArthur frequently require students to create a product or complete a project. For example, when students study the molecule, they are required to create a visual display that shows the steps for the synthesis of new molecules. The product guide describes the components for the final product.

Audio: In Biology, they are used for major assignments and for products that directly link construction of a model or diagram to a tested standard or TEK. For example, when students are working on science fair projects, they have a product guide that lays out all the components for the project, such as the guidelines for research, the paper, and the bibliography.

Slide 6: Examples

Text: Teachers also provide examples of completed products. The examples are supposed to range in quality so students can see good, mediocre, and poor examples of the product. Students can use these models to assess their own product.

Audio: In all classrooms, along with the rubric, the teacher must have examples—a couple of exemplary examples, a mediocre example, and a poor example. These are very tangible for the student.

Slide 7: Self-Assessment

Text: Student self-assessment is an important aspect of using the product guides and rubrics. Teachers assess student work only after the students use the rubric to assess their work. They are guided by the examples provided and the criteria outlined on the rubric.

Audio: It is important for the student to self-assess, using the product guide and rubric, before the teacher provides feedback because this develops ownership for the student. The teacher then provides specific feedback to the student as they work together to achieve a specific level of standard.

Slide 8: Identification of Problematic Areas

Text: Product guides and rubrics are useful tools for teachers. They help teachers identify areas of strength and weakness in their classrooms based on a clear set of expectations and assessment criteria. The rubrics can help teachers identify trends or patterns in student responses and work products.

Audio: Product guides aid teachers once they've used them for a period of time, because they allow the teachers to identify problematic areas for students and help them to understand what they're doing and how to improve in those areas. For example, when students are writing analysis papers, they often have difficulty finding textual evidence that supports a point that they make. Our English teachers have worked together in department planning periods to scaffold lessons to help students with textual support.

Slide 9: Goals

Text: Staff members want to expand their use of product guides and rubrics. Ultimately, all classes will implement them for key assignments. Teachers also want to increase students' ownership in their own learning by involving the students in the development of product guides and rubrics.

Audio: It is our goal that we begin to use product guides and rubrics in all of our classes, not only in our core classes. We hope to raise rigor and increase academic achievement. Our next level is to involve students in the creation of product guides and rubrics.

* To help students better understand expectations for completed assignments, MacArthur Ninth Grade School developed product guides for all major core subject assignments (e.g., essays, projects, drawings, charts). Each product guide is tailored to the subject and assignment. The product guides clearly explain the specific requirements to complete the assignment. Rubrics that are aligned to the requirements are used to assess students completed products and assignments.