



2. CRITERIA

Purpose: Provide and/or work with learners to develop criteria so they know what quality looks like.

When students understand the specific details required to get to their learning destination, they are more likely to arrive. But how do they get there? By making criteria for tasks and projects explicit, students have a clear and fair picture of what the desired level of performance looks like.

Pre-set criteria:

Using pre-set criteria with learners enables them to see and understand clear guidelines – as well as check their understanding along the way by referring to the criteria. Teachers can explain pre-established sets of criteria to the students. This enables students to see and understand specifics for various performance levels, and may or may not include the use of rubrics.

Setting criteria with students:

Setting criteria with learners also enables them to see and understand clear guidelines – as well as check their understanding along the way by referring to the criteria. Setting criteria with students brings them into the discussion and consensus about what quality looks like – in order to improve achievement. Students surprise us with what they understand about quality. In this scenario, teacher and students are collectively reviewing, contributing, and creating criteria together.

Examples of work may be helpful for students.

A. Small sampling of examples from many strategies you might try to develop criteria with students:

Primary:

1. Make a brainstormed chart together:
“What is important to include when we are creating a published book?”
2. Pick out key ideas together as a group. Use key language on one side, and student language to help explain it on the other side.

Intermediate:

1. Make a brainstormed chart together:
“What is important to include when we are writing a business letter?”
2. Pick out key ideas together as a group. Make a two-column chart. Use criteria phrase on left, and specific details to further explain each key criteria phrase on right.

Secondary:

1. Work with students or supply them with the criteria for a successful assignment, lab report, math assignment.
2. Review and summarize key ideas.

B. What are some other strategies that might work for explaining and/or developing criteria?