

HANDOUT #1

WEBCAST WARM-UP

QUESTIONS to think and talk about: PARENTS

1. How important do you think it is for parents of your students to have some information on Assessment for Learning?
2. What kind of information do you think might be helpful for parents/guardians?
3. What's the best way to get the information out there?
4. If you found the following letter stapled in the front of your own child's notebooks or copied on the back of marking sheets, how do you think you might respond?

Dear Families,

When you look at work that your son or daughter brings home you may notice that I mark in different ways. I have two main purposes for marking – one is to measure learning and the other is to support learning. Each purpose requires a different approach.

Sometimes you will see a number on the work such as 7/10, a rating scale or %. When you see any kind of score or number or symbol the purpose for marking is *to measure* your child's learning. This usually takes place at the end of a unit or area of study.

Other times I will mark work using a comment that identifies several strengths and a specific area that needs improvement (with no number or score included) followed by a suggestion for a next step. The number one purpose for this type of 'marking' is *to improve learning*. Your child is asked to take a next step to increase his or her achievement.

Just imagine trying to get better at your golf swing or your workout stretches if your instructor said to you at the end of the practice, "You're a 7/10 today." How does this help you get better? Our brains crave clear information on what is working and what is not to help us improve. Information that simply ranks and judges us each time we practice something does nothing to help us.

If you have any questions or would like more information on marking and feedback please just let me know.

Sincerely,
Caren Cameron