

One of my goals as a leader in the MVCSD is to communicate better with all stakeholders. Throughout the school year, I'll do my best to put out six to eight blogs about topics relevant to Mount Vernon High School. My first blog centers on teachers and our focus for the 24/25 school year.

The two big focus areas for MVHS Teachers during early dismissal days and professional learning community time are:

1. Adjusting instruction based on assessment (formative and summative) data.
2. Developing effective teaching practices by having clear targets, rubrics, feedback, scrimmages, and self-reflection.

In the 2017-2018 school year, Mount Vernon HS & MS made the shift to a form of standards based graded called Evidence Based Reporting (EBR). At Mount Vernon Middle School and High School, we aim to help students grow in competence and confidence to help prepare them to be successful in the real world – be that college, the workforce, the military, etc. To help deliver on that belief, we know that students need to:

- develop skills that transfer across disciplines in school and in life
- develop self-efficacy (the belief in one's ability to succeed or accomplish a task)
- be self-reflective learners

We believe this is done by using the following evidence-based teaching, learning and grading practices in the classroom. Mount Vernon High School shifted to EBR for three main reasons:

Develop Transferable Skills

We believe that focusing on transferable skills allows students to apply their learning across disciplines. We aim for students to be able to perform these skills regardless of ever-changing content in the world. These skills are timeless and will be used throughout a student's life.

We believe that content knowledge is important so that students can do something larger or more transferable with that knowledge. Content is the context in which we teach students to apply the skill.

- Teachers focus on transferable skills, summatively assessing these and communicating students' mastery levels of the essential standards and targets for a class.
- Rubrics serve as a roadmap, clarifying what proficiency involves/looks like for each transferable skill.
- Teachers provide context within units to help students build content knowledge. Focusing on the transferable skills helps students retain and apply their content knowledge.

Develop Self Efficacy

We believe students should have permission to fail (without penalty) in the middle of learning

and grow as a result of that failure.

We believe self-efficacy leads to confidence. When students aren't afraid to fail, this leads to students' confidence to try something and creates future experiences in which students develop reliance and trust in their own thinking.

We believe self-efficacy also leads to agency. When students have the belief that they can do something, they create multiple practice experiences through which they increase their skills and develop their ability to go out there and do it. These actions are self-generated and intentional.

- Clear learning expectations allow students to see a target and know what they need to do in order to meet those expectations. Teachers use rubrics that contain scaled targets and success criteria that define proficiency.
- Multiple formative assessments within each unit provide students with practice opportunities (not graded) that help them grow their learning and their confidence. In addition to smaller formatives, scrimmages are provided to help students interact with the mastery experience as they practice and get feedback with the transferable skills.
- Students engage with each transferable skill multiple times throughout a course, developing and maintaining their learning and skills within a body of evidence.

Be Self-Reflective Learners

We believe that when students self-reflect on their own learning, they are able to grow their own learning.

We believe that meaningful self-reflection helps students develop trust in their own thinking, which leads to future growth and learning stamina.

We believe student reflection aids teachers in capturing student thought processes and enables teachers to adjust instruction accordingly.

- Clear targets/scales with success criteria (rubrics) allow students to reflect on where they are in relation to the target and what they need to do to grow their learning.
- Assessments capture student thinking to help teachers see student learning, recognize misunderstandings, and provide responsive instruction
- Formative assessments provide practice opportunities for students during the learning process. This allows students to grow their own knowledge/skills over time.
- Scrimmages are provided to help students interact with the mastery experience and develop transferable skills before being summatively assessed.
- Teachers provide feedback in a variety of forms for students to grow their own learning.
- Rubrics provide space for students to reflect on their progress.

The belief statements and action steps were created by Assistant Principal, Matt Thede, and Curriculum Director, Michelle Boyden. As a leadership team, including Instructional Coach, Mrs. Tenley, we'll work with the MVHS Staff to implement effective teaching practices focused on transferable skills, self efficacy and self reflection. We understand it's not how any of us went to school and acknowledge it's different. We are committed to the work ahead of us to help our students be the very best they can be. As stated earlier, our goal is to help grow student competence and confidence. We want MVHS graduates to find high levels of success in their next step!