**Academic Note**

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My demonstration proposal presents open response strategies for teachers and students to use in the classroom. It has been my experience that the majority of students have a problem deciding how to answer these questions. Furthermore, these questions are biased toward our more literate students. Therefore, my presentation offers some suggestions teachers and students may want to use when creating rubrics, decoding the question, answering the question and giving constructive feedback (*rather than just evaluative)*.

**Rubric**

To begin with, consider the creation of a rubric as being something that needs to be done with student input. They need to see the rationale behind the score. A rubric also needs to be in language students can understand and needs to be specific to the question they are answering. When students help with the composition of the rubric they are better able to understand what is expected. This view is supported by the research conducted by the Kentucky Department of Education.

**Decoding Skills**

After students have their rubric they are ready to attack the question with a specific strategy. The next step involves students using a highlighter or pencil to highlight their power verbs and circle their content vocabulary as they reread the question. These power verbs are going to explain what the student needs to do whether it is to describe, compare or list. Content vocabulary is necessary for students to converse or write intelligently about the topic.

**Answering the Question**

Even though restating the question is not required for open response questions, have them restate to help them maintain focus (Donna Vincent, “Assessing Core Content at Higher Levels of Thinking”). After students have the answer completed, require them to check their answer for mistakes and to read it through for clarity. You may wish to provide them a check list to help them with this process. Self-evaluation is an important aspect of writing.

**Constructive Feedback**

Finally, students need constructive feedback. Too often, teachers give the generic, evaluative feedback such as “Good Job” or “Better Luck Next Time” and students have no idea what they did well or how their answer was incorrect. By taking time to give descriptive feedback, teachers set the student up for success.(Gail Rhodes,Education Cabinet and the Kentucky Department of Education website).

When you consider that most students who struggle with reading and writing will struggle with constructive type questions, such as open response, it is beneficial to offer them some attack strategies that they can use. These include student involvement in rubric creation, decoding the question, self-evaluation and descriptive feedback. I have used this method in my class room and have seen an improvement in student responses. If you would like further information about this you may contact me at vickey15@yahoo.com.