

# PROMOTING POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM: MARKING PAPERS

## GRADES K-12

Many of the things teachers do to promote, or inhibit, positive self-esteem, comes from unintended actions. There are obvious things teachers do, such as who is called on in the class, who's papers are posted on the bulletin boards...but there are less obvious things that are done; actions which directly affect the students positive self-esteem. The most frequent area where this is the case is with marking student papers.

The following are some quick tips which any teacher can immediately use in improving the positive self-esteem in the classroom:

1. **NEVER GRADE IN RED INK.** Red is a "negative" color. Think: stop signs and lights, warning labels, poison, etc. Our society has conditioned us to immediately view red as something negative. Subconsciously, (and often conscientiously), a paper that is handed back full of red marks tells the student that he or she is a "dummy". A "self-fulfilling prophesy" often results with these students!
2. **USE GREEN OR BLUE INK.** Green, on the other hand, is a "positive" color, as is blue to a lesser extent. When green is used, corrections, or markings, become more of a "constructive criticism" type of comment.
3. **USE A SLASH "/" RATHER THAN AN "X" WHEN MARKING A WRONG ANSWER.** Again, for the same reasons one does not use red ink. The "X" is a negative symbol.
4. **MARK NUMBER RIGHT OUT OF THE TOTAL, VERSUS MINUS THE NUMBER WRONG.** Do you accentuate the positive, or the negative? 2/20 still looks better than -18.

Also be aware of cultural differences. For instance, NEVER write a Korean student's name using red ink (even if it's a friendly note to the child). In the Korean culture, writing someone's name in red is a sign of death! Korean parents are often horrified when papers come home with their child's name written in red!

\*\*Suggested by Dr. Scott Mandel on

<<http://www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/ClassroomManagement.html>>