

Building Support For Your School: Using Children's Work to Show Learning

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Communication Challenges *difficulty getting messages through to people.*

Techniques of professional communicators Increasing need for educators to *adopt*

Relational Messages: *Messages you may be sending about you and your program that affects your relationship*

Strategic Communication *Consciously designing communication to achieve goals.* Documentation (evidence of children's learning) can be strategic communication

Good evidence is Convincing and Powerful: Shared example of George the Turtle Book

Documentation has great potential to communicate.

It is engaging, memorable and inspiring. Particularly memorable documentation, *presents stories* in a conflict-resolution format, and *provokes thinking* by raising a question or letting obvious conclusions go unstated.

Documentation is engaging and inherently interesting especially when it **emphasizes photos, drawings and other visually interesting forms of children's work**, *has close-up photos of people, tells stories, asks questions, and uses real objects* with dimension and texture rather than drawings or photos.

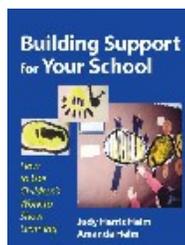
Children's drawings, quotes, stories and photos can communicate at an emotional level that statistics can never reach.

Documentation is memorable Comparison of story of turtle and statement

Documentation is inspiring Documentation can alter opinions.

After viewing the documentation display 45% percent agreed or strongly agreed with, "I was surprised how spiritual young children could be."

After viewing the documentation display, 79% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, "I feel more motivated to participate in the spiritual development of young children."



Building Support for Your School: Using Children's Work to Show Learning, Helm & Helm

Available from Teachers College Press Website, Amazon.com
or bestpracticesinc.net

Two Keys to Effective Strategic Communication



Relevant Message: Provide Meaning

Keep your message relevant, choose a message that has value for your audience

Keep a Tight Focus: Why focus matters

Inviting rather than overwhelming

People absorb message accidentally

Large pictures draw people in

Recall is only about 2-4 points anyway....

Less is more - 1-3 main points, back up these points with subpoints and evidence (documentation), suggest 1-3 “exhibits” per point, then leave out *anything* not related

Make the most of documentation’s capability to convince. Use multiple sources and types of evidence rather than a single source, include evidence of thoughts, not just samples of children’s work, let the evidence speak for itself, show documentation is scientific

Include evidence of thoughts, not just samples of children’s work.

Include quotations from children to indicate what they are thinking, their language, and words they are learning.

Tell the story of children’s efforts to answer a particular question or solve a particular problem.

Let the evidence speak for itself. Nothing is more convincing than the conclusions we draw ourselves, based on our own evaluations of the evidence.

Show how documentation is scientific: Let the audience know that documentation is a systematic process

Let checklists, portfolio pages, work sampling systems etc. show. Refer to norms and benchmarks to help the audience place the documentation in context. Standards or goals can be helpful in organizing documentation for communication

Goals can provide a focus for communications that increases effectiveness

Incorporating documentation into communications

Plan and Use Focused Displays

Don’t miss opportunities to communicate: Field Trip Permission, Parent Conference Form,

Other Ways to Incorporate: Develop position statements including standards such as (Reading and Writing as Discovery Preschool), Refer to standards in press releases and stories, Integrate and include standards in assessment systems and reports. Have a documentation portfolio for prospective parents and staff