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The best tool I found for collecting papers

Compiled by: teachertech

Last year I used my book club points (Scholastic) to order 2 long red pocket charts that I used to collect papers. The pockets were deep enough to hold the student's paper (landscape style) with about an inch or so showing. It also had a place to put a label on each pocket. (I put the students' numbers instead of names, with number 1 at the bottom.)

When the students arrived in the morning, they put their homework papers in their pocket and I could tell at a glance who, if anyone, was missing their work. It took me about 30 seconds to record missing assignments, then I pulled the papers out by starting at the bottom of the chart working my way up. When I was done, I had the students' papers in alphabetical order and the whole process took less than a minute!! My rate of homework returned increased dramatically because it was so easy for me to track returned papers (and I also think there was a little bit of peer pressure because everyone could see who was missing their work).

I orginally intended to just use the pocket charts for homework, but it was so easy to use, that I ended up having them turn in everything by using their pockets. I could keep an eye on the charts, and once I saw everyone had their assignment turned in, I pulled the papers so the pockets were ready for the next assignment. There were a few times when assignments overlapped, but I found it was still easier to go through the pockets and pull out all of one assignment, then pull out the other, than it was to have students turn papers into a tray.

The charts I got from Scholastic had 12 pockets. I just tried to find them online for you, but Scholastic has redone their site and I couldn't get to the Bonus Catalog. I found similar charts, but they only have 10 pockets and the ones I got have 12. You can find the 10 pocket version by searching for "file folder pocket charts" on google.

As far as checking homework, I do try to check everything the kids do and keep track of completion, but I don't record scores. I have read many good ideas online this summer and I am going to make some changes next year. I am going to give a homework grade by taking the number of assignments each child returns and dividing it by the number of assignments given. I am also going to do more checking of homework in class (especially math). There are 2 reasons I don't take grades on homework. First, homework is practice and I don't believe practice should be graded. Second, you will always have some kids whose parents tell them whether every answer they write is correct or not, and those kids who parents do everything they can to make it next to impossible for their kids to even get a chance to do their assignment, much less help them with it. I prefer to give grades on assignments that are completed in school, and only after the kids have had a chance to practice the skill.

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Hope this helps!

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