



# Coach's Corner

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“Never say ‘I can’t’,  
say ‘teach me how’.”

Challenge your students to  
change the phrase “I can’t” to  
“can you please teach me how”

## STRATEGY SIDEBAR

### You Make it!

The *You Make It* strategy places the plans in the hands of the students, yes it might be scary, but it allows students to problem solve by having them justify what would best demonstrate their knowledge.

**Begin with the standards.** Based on the standards have students decide how they feel they can best demonstrate that they understand the concepts.

**Next build the project/assessment.** Have students design the process for their project or test that will demonstrate their knowledge.

**Then create the rubric.** Have students decide how the project/test should be evaluated by designing the rubric that will be used for the assessment.

**Finally complete the task.** Have students demonstrate their knowledge by completing the project/task/ assessment they created.

It is so important for students to take ownership of their knowledge and education. Since this will be relatively new to the students, it is vital that we guide them in their assessment designs, and provide probing questions that will extend their projects to meet our objectives. Allowing students to decide how they will demonstrate what they know places the learning in their hands, which is where it should be.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms: Writing for Reflection

*Writing for Reflection* is a self-assessment and goal setting skill that will help students for a life time. Reflecting is a process by which we continue to grow and strengthen any craft. The struggle comes with providing students the time to reflect, which, as with anything in education, is difficult to find. Reflection is a valuable skill for both teacher and student, so why not do it together. An easy way to implement this is through assessment reflection. After you give an assessment, have students reflect on their progress while you do the same.

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms: Use of Problem Solving Methodology

*Problem solving* is also a great skill that will be valuable forever. In our instant gratification society, it is hard to step back and allow students to grapple with a problem long enough to find a solution, similarly it is hard for us to relinquish control and just let them figure it out. Our students want the answer now, and we want them to get the answer now. Check out the back for some aspects to consider when building a problem solving classroom.

## Homework vs. No Homework

There is an ongoing debate and multiple research studies about whether or not homework is necessary, so I thought it might be interesting to pose the same question to you. Do you give homework, and if so why? There are many reasons to have students continue their learning and practice when they leave school, but does your philosophy of homework match the content of homework? Johanna Sorrentino's article *The Homework Debate*, poses two questions for teachers to think about when assigning homework:

1. Does this assignment make kids more excited about the topic and learning in general?
2. Does this assignment help kids to think more deeply about questions that matter?

Just a few thoughts to ponder as we begin thinking about the lessons and strategies we are going to take into next year.

## Coming to the end

We are quickly approaching the end of the year, which means the end of our time together. I can't thank you enough for allowing me to be your coach, trusting me to guide you appropriately, and fostering the skills I will need for future coaching endeavors. Our final objectives will include a final meeting to review your work plan, an honest chat where you can provide me with feedback on our semester together, and a post survey where you can evaluate how you feel about a few specific focus areas we had for this semester. I will be setting up our final meetings during the first week of June.