

# CREATING AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING WALL

By Kathy Brown and Sarah Martino

The classroom is your stage to set; so why not set it up for common core success by creating a Let's Learn Wall? A learning wall can serve as a visual anchor for students to rely on when articulating daily learning targets and instantly instills common core enthusiasm.

When creating an effective learning wall, first establish a prominent place in your classroom. Next, put each student's picture around the border of the wall to inspire ownership, interest, and a community of common core-focused learners. Title it "Let's Learn!" and put colorful stars all over the board to ignite excitement. Every student will be inspired to be a Superstar learner! Then, divide the wall into content areas for displaying the standards. Keep paperclips permanently attached to the learning wall so that kid-friendly standards can simply be slid into the correct content area on the day they are being targeted. Carefully choose which standards need to be displayed to best reflect the day's learning targets. Some standards can be stapled into the wall permanently as they are integrated into all lessons daily. For example, the Speaking and Listening standards that involve engaging students in collaborative conversations could be displayed on your learning wall for the entire year. Begin every morning by instilling common core enthusiasm with the chant... "Let's Learn..." as you direct attention towards the Learning wall. Engage students in echo reciting the daily goals as you point to the standards. Also during the day, reinforce the skills by intentionally checking the learning wall to review the superstar goals for that specific subject as you teach that content area. Be sure to discuss the Superstar learning goals for the centers too! Refer to this wall repeatedly so that children internalize the importance of the common core and of becoming focused learners.

Before we established a Let's Learn Wall, we were always disappointed at the end of the day when we asked our students about what they learned. They only commented on learning to have good behavior or to be a good friend. They never remembered the academic skills we had discussed even if when they were clearly written on a target. Now, thanks to our learning wall, when we reach the end of the day our students' little eyes quickly look over at the Let's Learn Wall. Then they enthusiastically quote the days standards. It is amazing!

As Kindergarten teachers we have always worked so hard and had so many daily goals for our students. Yet because many of our activities can appear to be just play, people from the outside looking in really underestimated the amount of learning that was taking place. Having a learning wall has changed that misconception. A Let's Learn Wall is a visual reminder for us as teachers of the daily skills to focus on. Plus, it is a visual anchor for our students to remember the important daily skills. Even our administrators can now quickly glance at the learning wall and clearly see that there is truly a lot of learning intentionally planned each day in kindergarten.

Kathy Brown and Sarah Martino are the authors of *Kindergarten and the Common Core: It's as Easy as ABC!* 2015, Capstone Professional.

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