

FOREWORD

IT'S A PLEASURE to introduce you to Rick Smith's new work. With so many books out in this area, it's hard to find a "stand out" selection, but this is different. In *Conscious Classroom Management*, Rick states that there are three primary areas of focus in the classroom: procedure, behavior, and content. Content has gotten the bulk of the spotlight, when it comes to brain-compatible teaching and learning. But behavior and procedure are equally important. Why not, as Rick suggests, use the simple power of visuals to help with classroom management?

The strategies in this book facilitate student autonomy and a sense of control in the classroom. The students use the images to self-assess and correct. They feel more empowered and in control of their behavior in the classroom and school. In addition, the strategies tend to lower kids' affective filters: the student stress that can come from unclear procedures and raised teacher voices is virtually eliminated.

This is a breakthrough book. Using simple images, the authors are providing a link between classroom behavior and what we now know about the brain. Each page brings the reader one insight after another. So many veteran teachers, after seeing the samples, are likely to say, "Why didn't I think of that ten years ago!" I found the book to be fresh, clear and relevant. You can't get much better than that.

ERIC JENSEN

AUTHOR OF *TEACHING WITH THE BRAIN IN MIND*

“A picture is worth a thousand words.”

— ORIGIN UNKNOWN

THE BEGINNING OF
THE INTRODUCTION

Introduction

CONSCIOUS TEACHING—an organization focused on supporting teachers to help students—has been doing workshops for teachers in the United States and internationally for decades. Whenever we share strategies involving the use of rubrics and visuals for teaching procedures, the level of excitement in the room skyrockets. Participants can suddenly see a clear road map for teaching procedures, and simple ways to save their voices, stop confronting their students, and do what needs to be done in a fun and efficient way. Effective classroom management, once hidden from view, suddenly becomes visible and doable. We've been asked for years to put these strategies into one handy tool. Here it is!

These strategies can help struggling teachers gain competency and mastery in teaching procedures, and they also can help master teachers go to the next step—and make their classrooms hum with efficiency and positive energy.

How to use this book

What is a rubric and how does it work?

A rubric is a scoring tool that lists the criteria for evaluation—and success—and condenses them into simple words, numbers, or images. An example would be the formula used by Olympic judges to score gymnastics. They begin with a series of criteria that will determine a final numbered score for each gymnast, with a 10 being a perfect score. At every stop along the scale, in this case 1 through 10, the gymnast knows exactly what performance elements will result in a particular score. The rubric allows for clear communication.

The same approach can be used with many procedures in the classroom. By breaking down procedures into rubrics, and reinforcing them visually, we can establish a common language with our kids and help them become more successful, at the same time reducing our stress. Because students all can refer to the same rubric, and adopt a common language for performance, they can self-reflect and self-correct, thus providing the students with more autonomy, and saving everyone time and energy.

One reason visuals and rubrics are so successful is that they provide crystal-clear road maps for students, with very little room for misinterpretation. Another is that our students have grown up in an ever-

increasing visual culture, with TV, the Internet, video games, and touch-screen cell phones. They're used to symbols, visual shortcuts, and interactive self-direction.

In this book, we often present rubrics with a 1-through-5 scale, but many teachers prefer a 1-through-4 or 1-through-3 scale. Others simply use an image of the ideal score, "the 10," foregoing the rubrics altogether. In whatever combination, rubrics and visuals often overlap and blend together. For some procedures, one teacher will use a single visual; another will use a rubric of progressive visuals.

"Students perceive rubrics as games rather than discipline, and so they are fun."

— JILL JENKINS
9TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS
SOUTH JORDAN MIDDLE SCHOOL, UTAH

Finding the strategies you want

You can read *Picture This!* cover to cover, look for particular solutions in the table of contents or index, or randomly flip through the pages to find sample photos that may spark ideas. Once you find an idea you like, you can:

1. Photocopy the photo from the book;
2. Use the photo in the book as a model for making your own drawings or photos;
3. Download the photo from our website;
4. Ask your students to create images that are akin to what you see in the book.

Online Access to Digital Media

All the images in the book are accessible online for easy downloading. There are also several video samples.

Go to www.consciousteaching.com/picturethis.html and login using the password that's on the sticker on the inside of the back cover of this book. The online resources are organized with the same table of contents as the book, so you can quickly find what you're looking for.