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IN THE CLASSROOM

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The Einstein Times

Creating a science newspaper in middle school

Scientists formulate theories about problems and perform multiple experiments based on these theories and ideas. Their results are then shared with others through reports and articles published in scientific journals. Not only do scientists need to possess the skills necessary to perform these experiments, but they must also be well versed in the language skills necessary to communicate their results to the larger scientific community.

Proficiency in the language arts is meant to enhance one's ability to convey ideas to others. As children are expanding their knowledge of scientific concepts, familiarizing themselves with the techniques and equipment used in experimentation, their language and communication skills must be nurtured as well. Setting up a science newspaper will help children not only share their knowledge of science with their peers, but also help to build the students' writing skills and style. The children also feel a great sense of accomplishment when the articles they have written are printed with their bylines and are distributed to their peers. They feel their words really mean something when they are publishing their discoveries to share with their friends, families, and teachers.

In our school, we publish a science information sharing vehicle (a science newspaper) called *The Einstein Times*. This monthly publication is printed on legal paper and then folded in half for distribution. The newspaper contains articles about independent student experiments, class experiments, science fiction stories, poetry, and items of interest from the local news. The student editors also pack "fun" things into the newspaper such as science related cartoons, puzzles, and games.

Producing a Science Newspaper

The project begins when students write news articles and give them to their science teachers. The



student editors then read the articles for accuracy and help the authors proofread for errors. After correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation, the edited articles are then turned over to the typing staff. Using word processors, they format the articles and prepare them for publication. The newspaper is now ready for the layout staff. These students actually put the paper together by placing articles and information on appropriate pages. Finally, the masthead and the statement of ownership, including editors and faculty advisers, are placed into the layout along with the "fun" stuff, and a newspaper is born.

Printing, folding, collating, and distributing are all that stand between the authors and the readers. These steps are quickly performed by an enthusiastic distribution staff, and the paper is in circulation. Along the way, many students put in countless hours after school and during lunch periods to create each issue of the paper, but the children feel it is well worth the effort. In addition to learning about science and developing language skills, the variety of jobs and duties mastered have given the students a sense of accomplishment and feelings of self-worth. They have been able to proceed from a conceptual idea to a printed newspaper that shares science ideas and findings with other children in the school. *The Einstein Times* ties creativity, science learning, verbal and written language, and students' high energy levels into a vehicle which drives the educational engine. ☛