



# EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

## Anchor Charts: Making Thinking Visible

### Purpose

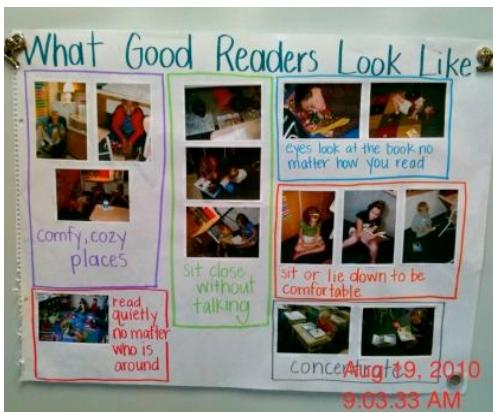
- Anchor charts build a culture of literacy in the classroom, as teachers and students make thinking visible by recording content, strategies, processes, cues, and guidelines during the learning process.
- Posting anchor charts keeps relevant and current learning accessible to students to remind them of prior learning and to enable them to make connections as new learning happens.
- Students refer to the charts and use them as tools as they answer questions, expand ideas, or contribute to discussions and problem-solving in class.

### Building Anchor Charts

- Teachers model building anchor charts as they work with students to debrief strategies modeled in a mini-lesson.
- Students add ideas to an anchor chart as they apply new learning, discover interesting ideas, or develop useful strategies for problem-solving or skill application.
- Teachers and students add to anchor charts as they debrief student work time, recording important facts, useful strategies, steps in a process, or quality criteria.
- Students create anchor charts during small group and independent work to share with the rest of the class.



Above: <http://www.suite101.com>



Above:  
<http://twowritingteachers.wordpress.com/2010/08/23/evolution-of-anchor-charts/>

### A Note on Quality

- Anchor charts contain only the most relevant or important information so as not to confuse students.
- Post only those charts that reflect current learning and avoid distracting clutter—hang charts on clothes lines or set-up in distinct places of the room; rotate charts that are displayed to reflect most useful content.
- Charts should be neat and organized, with simple icons and graphics to enhance their usefulness (avoid distracting, irrelevant details and stray marks).
- Organization should support ease of understanding and be accordingly varied based on purpose.
- Charts are best in simple darker earth tones that are easily visible (dark blue, dark green, purple, black and brown—use lighter colors for accents only).

For a wide variety of sample anchor charts, see  
<http://www.readinglady.com/mosaic/tools/AnchorChartPhotographsfromKellyandGinger/>