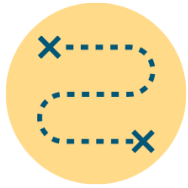


STUDENT VOICE & CHOICE TOOL



Batter Up Choice Board: Incorporating Student Voice into a Multiplication Unit of Study

By Jessica Solomon

TOOL DESCRIPTION

A Choice Board activity designed to be used at the end of a multiplication unit with the goal of providing skill practice and collecting artifacts of student learning to inform subsequent instruction, as an exemplar to inspire other educators interested in creating “choice boards”.

CRITICAL CONTEXT INFORMATION

This activity was developed for middle school (8th grade) English Language Arts students in a diverse urban magnet school for students identified as gifted and talented.

TOOL & LINKS

- [Batter Up!](#) (Choice Board Exemplar)

About this Tool & Guidance for Adaptation

A one-size-fits-all approach is not part of a Student-Centered classroom, and Choice Boards offer a differentiated approach to learning that targets multiple intelligences while also taking student interests into consideration. How do you get started?

1. Determine what you want your students to learn, gain, or do through their experience.
2. Establish criteria that ensures every child will find activities that are the “right fit” for them
3. Create norms that allow for effective classroom management during Choice Board activity times.
4. Identify how you will both assess student learning and follow up if students demonstrate signs of struggle.

The easiest type of Choice Board is a simple 9-square grid in which an activity is placed in each square. Students then can complete three choices in a row, column, or diagonal in a Tic-Tac-Toe style. However, there are many different types of Choice Boards to choose from, and a simple Google search will bring you to a wide variety of resources you can use to effectively create and implement choice times in your classroom.

Excerpted from *Innovation in Practice: A Student-Centered Learning Toolkit By Teachers, For Teachers*. ©The Teacher Collaborative 2022. [Theteachercollaborative.org](https://theteachercollaborative.org)



Please see the resource linked above as an example. More information about this exemplar:

The Batter Up Choice Board was created to provide performance assessment opportunities as we neared the end of a multiplication unit. The choices ranged in terms of cognitive demand, with more rigorous activities assigned higher point values. Though all students had to score 110 points in order to win their game, they could choose which activities could lead them there. Activities in the Dugout were worth five points, Singles were worth 10 points, Doubles were worth 20 points, Triples were worth 30 points, and Home Runs were worth 40 points. Each student needed to pick at least one activity from each tier, and they managed their materials with a Choice Board folder that I could evaluate as their games progressed. If I found that students were struggling with a particular skill or concept, I used the data provided by their learning artifacts to revisit those skills and concepts to ensure students moved towards mastery.

Teacher Narrative

In the past few years, as I've become more fluent in the principles of Student-Centered Learning—and therefore more reflective about how my practice influences learning outcomes—I've developed an interest in student choice as a driver of academic success. It can be understood as a component not only of student agency within the classroom environment, but also of other student-centered practices, including universal design, competency-based progressions, data-informed decision making, culturally responsive teaching, and project-based units of study. Student choice engenders a learning environment in which students feel empowered and in which the level of student engagement is notably improved. Their interests and identities are centered in the design stages of curriculum development, and they feel both respected and known.

I introduced Choice Boards as part of my mathematics units because they are an excellent way of providing choice to students as they gain mastery over new skills and concepts. They also allow me to maintain control of the curriculum and force me to be intentional in my determination of what activities will provide me with the data I need to drive student learning forward.

My observation is that students are collaborative and joyful when working on Choice Boards. I witnessed students proudly sharing their products with one another (unprompted!), asking clarifying questions, and providing feedback that helped drive student learning forward. Many of them used others' products (for instance, the memory card game) to help them practice their own skills. Though one might hesitate to create and incorporate choice boards in their practice because of a concern that students will gravitate towards less rigorous tasks, norms can be established that set expectations for student engagement, and Choice Board activities can be designed to ensure that every option is designed to offer students the opportunity to appropriately meet learning standards and benchmarks.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Jessica Solomon is a third grade teacher at The Rashi School in Dedham, Massachusetts. She embraces Student-Centered Learning practices as a way to more fully and authentically engage students across the curriculum. Her goal is for the students to become expert learners who are purposeful, resourceful, knowledgeable, and strategic in their approach to learning.

