

"Instructional Support Weekly"

Topic: Learning Contracts Encourage Excellence

A learning contract can be an effective tool for encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. However, not all learning contracts are the same.

Here are some ways to make learning contracts work for your students:

- **Start small.** Contracts are a learning experience for teachers, too. You can expand as your comfort level increases.
- **Analyze and prioritize.** Think about the skills and knowledge you expect students to learn—and how you will accomplish these learning objectives.
- **Teach students how to work independently.** Help student learn to manage their time.
- **Provide plenty of deadlines.** Make it difficult for students to put off work on their contracts until the night before it is due.
- **Offer real choices.** Provide students with a variety of activities that are interesting, but that still achieve your learning goals. Allow students to choose from a variety of ways to demonstrate what they have learned.

Have a great week!

From the Instructional Support Team at STM

Scott C. Greenwood and Patrick P. McCabe, "How Learning Contracts Motivate Students," *Middle School Journal*, May 2008 (National Middle School Association, www.nmsa.org)