

The mission of GISD is to ensure that every student achieves maximum potential.

## GISD Curriculum News

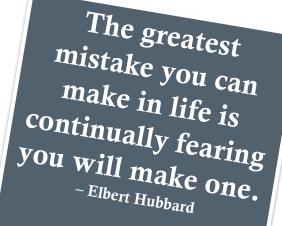
rigor/engagement/higher-order thinking

From the Desk of Keri Thoele, GISD Asst. Superintendent

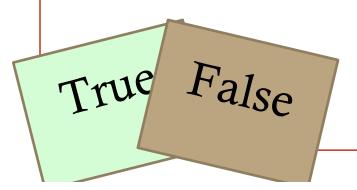
## The Importance of the SAFE Classroom

Risk-taking is a vital part of learning. Students have to know that they won't be ridiculed or humiliated for making a mistake or having the wrong answer.

Children are naturally curious, but in an unsafe environment, fear inhibits a student's ability to explore and create, which ultimately interferes with learning. A safe environment is created when the teacher validates and values each student and his or her contribution to the class.



Strategy of the Week: Hold-Ups



## Hold-Ups

**Concept:** Students are given a set of hold-up cards (your imagination is the limit) so that when questions are asked, they can all give their input, and the teacher can easily and quickly gauge understanding.

**Procedures:** 1. Provide students with hold-ups (a set of cards with a variety of answers on them, such as true or false; A, B, C or D; or numbers (for younger students). If answers will greatly vary, you can provide the student with a mini-whiteboard and dry erase marker. 2. As the teacher asks questions, students register their answers by holding up the card they think is correct or writing the answer on the dry erase board. 3. The teacher swiftly gauges the responses and adjusts instruction accordingly. It is very important to maintain a "safe" classroom so that

Sample hold-up to use when discussing the branches of government:

Judicial

JUST A FEW
VARIATIONS:
NUMBER CARDS
SELECTED RESPONSE
TRUE/NOT TRUE
MULTIPLE CHOICE
WHITEBOARDS

Executive

Legislative

students feel comfortable in responding. This activity will not work if the teacher or other students single out students who answer incorrectly. (Teachers should follow up after class or in tutorials with students who consistently are wrong. These students likely need individual attention.)

**HINT:** Inexpensive "whiteboards" can by made by simply laminating a small piece of poster board or construction paper. On the other end of the spectrum, if the technology is available, clickers may be used to accomplish the same task. Number cards work well for math classrooms, for questions such as "Which is a prime number?" or "What is the greatest common factor?"

## The Safe Classroom

To validate a student's incorrect response or attempt, you can often help students come to alternate conclusions with some simple statements:

- I see where you're going with that, but is that always true?
- Tell me more.

Wrong answers are a part of the journey of learning! (Himmele & Himmele 2011)