

Open For Business

We're now set. The COL/file folder will quietly take care of the important task of collecting book reports. At the same time, since each student is responsible for turning in his own report and marking off his own student number, everyone will be getting practice at becoming self-reliant. They won't have to involve you or anyone else. They'll do the whole thing all by themselves.

As if that weren't enough, there are two other advantages to using a Check Off List in this fashion.

Advantage One

power
love
fun
freedom
safety

You will be providing your students with a wonderful opportunity for exercising freedom. It's the simple freedom to get up out of your seat and turn in an assignment. This is much better than the typical excuses students come up with for getting out of their seats. They'll either sharpen a pencil or get a drink of water they don't really need. The book report COL/file folder technique will allow students to get up on their own, turn in their book reports, and experience the immediate benefits of taking care of themselves.

Advantage Two

This type of assignment gathering is a model of what I've come to call *asynchronous* collection, or collecting an assignment from students at different times. Most of the collection techniques being used by teachers are synchronous ones. That is, we're gathering everyone's assignment at the same time.

Examples of synchronous methods:

- students place homework in a tote tray as they enter the room in the morning
- students pass their completed assignments to the end of the row
- team captains collect work from team members
- the teacher stands at the door and gathers papers as students leave

For the most part—80% of the time—this is the way you want to go. Synchronous methods are efficient and expedite the collection process. They enable you to quickly gather up assignments and then get everyone back on task.

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For the other 20% of the assignments you collect—especially something like a book report which students complete at different times—the asynchronous method will be more effective. By allowing each student to determine the best time to turn in an assignment, the teacher provides an opportunity for the assignments to be processed in a more timely and rewarding fashion. Overachievers no longer have to wait for everyone else. They are free to turn in the assignment as soon as they've finished it and then move on to something else.

Let me show you the striking difference between the two methods. I'll start by showing