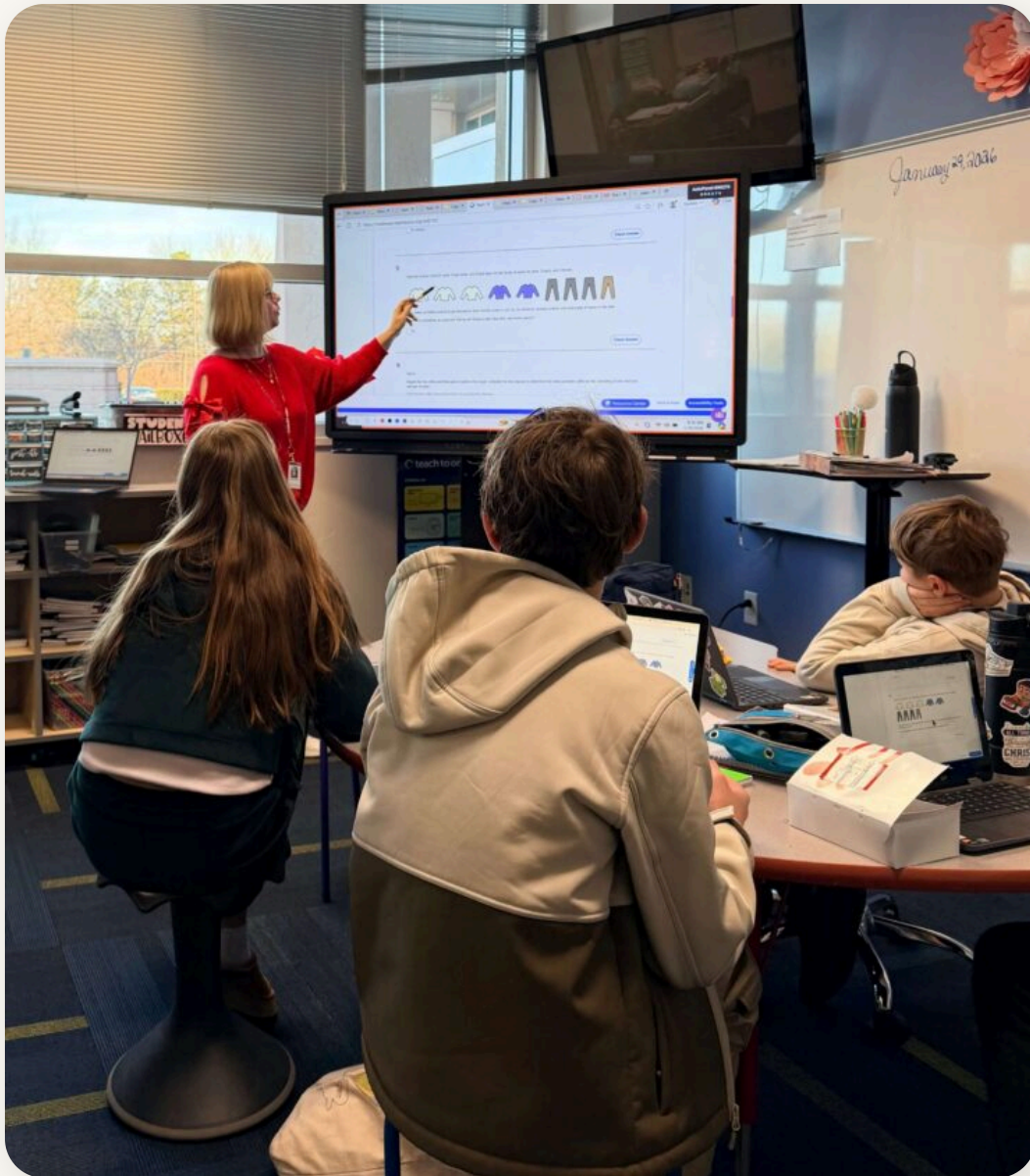


Celebrating Progress at Mid-Year: How I Reset and Refocus With My Students

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By Nicole Forness





Mid-year is one of my favorite times to pause and reset in the classroom.

By this point in the school year, we have momentum, but it is also a time when students (and honestly, teachers too) can benefit from a chance to reflect, refocus, and build energy for what comes next. For



me, this is when I revisit expectations, help students look at their progress, and set the tone for a strong next stretch of learning.

In my sixth grade math classroom, celebrating progress is a big part of that. It is not something we save for the end. It is how we keep students motivated and moving forward all year long.

Why I Reset at Mid-Year Environment

At mid-year, I like to go back over expectations and procedures with my students.

We revisit how I want them to work through a skill, how to approach assessments, and how to use practice problems productively. It is a chance to reframe and remind students what success looks like in our classroom.

- I also use this time for goal setting tied to *Teach to One Roadmaps*. We look back at the previous month and talk about progress:
- Did you meet your goal?
- If not, what got in the way?
- What are you going to do differently this month?

That reflection piece is really important. It helps students take ownership and move forward with a plan.



Making Progress a Weekly Expectation

One thing that has helped in my classroom is setting clear expectations around progress.

I have a minimum number of skills I want each student to complete each week, based on where they are on their *Roadmap*. It is not one-size-fits-all, but every student has a goal and knows what they are working toward.

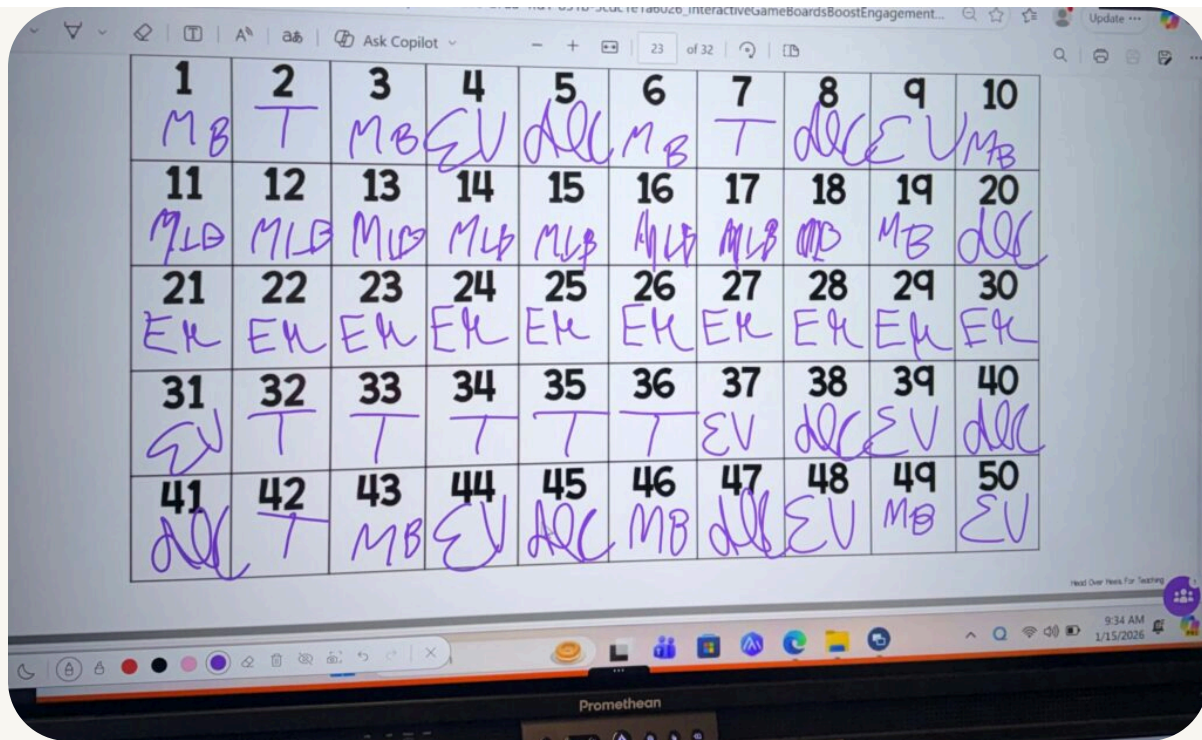
We also look at what is coming up, especially MAP testing, and talk about how much progress students can make on their *Roadmap* before then. I want them to see that the work they are doing now matters and connects to bigger goals.

When people ask about the mindset needed to get to something like two skills a week, I always come back to expectation.

I am a veteran teacher, and when my administrators said we were doing *Teach to One Roadmaps*, I went all in. I have seen it work. I have seen it help my students, especially in their MAP test scores. I think because I believe in it so strongly, my students believe in it too.

Celebrating Progress (and Keeping It Fun)





My students are sixth graders, so I know we need structure and fun.

I really believe in sprinkling in celebrations along the way and making progress something students feel excited about. We celebrate big milestones, like when students complete their *Roadmap*, and my class really does cheer each other on.

A few things we do in class:

- **Lottery board:** I use a numbered grid on the board. As students finish a Skill Challenge question correctly, they get to get out of their chairs and put their initials in one square. There are five chances to do this, so it builds in a lot of classroom movement, which they love. At the end we draw numbers, and if your initials are in the square that gets picked, you win a prize. (This is the interactive game board template I use.)

• **Two Skill Tuesday:** This is run through *Teach to One Roadmaps*



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My students get really excited about the possibility of being recognized across all users.

- **Class-wide rewards:** If everyone meets their weekly goal, we celebrate together with a class reward, like a popsicle party. It gives students a shared goal and helps build a classroom culture where they encourage each other to stay on track.

These types of incentives build energy and motivation, and it creates positive peer pressure in the best way. Students want to see each other succeed.

And honestly, some of the best celebrations are the ones students describe in their own words:

“My friend and I were both trying to finish the 6th grade Roadmap before February break, and when we did, it felt so good!”

“I set a goal of finishing my 6th grade Roadmap before Christmas, and I was so excited when I did! I could start January fresh with the 7th grade Roadmap and push myself to get ahead!”

My Role During Independent Learning Time

We chose to begin with individual learning first so students could develop clarity and I am constantly moving around the room.

I go from student to student to encourage, redirect, remind, and support. The program does so much to organize learning and give students a path, but what I really appreciate is that it gives me a strong handle on what my students need.



That means I can spend my time reinforcing and encouraging instead of trying to figure everything out from scratch. My students value that support, and I think that teacher presence makes a big difference.

What I'm Looking At in the Data

I check student progress several times a day.

I am usually looking at:

- **Overall Roadmap progress** (where students are across their full *Roadmap*)
- **Weekly progress** (what they are getting done right now)

I use both because I want to know the big picture and also stay on top of short-term momentum.

I also put reminders on the board for the class, like specific skills students should focus on or how many skills they have left. Those visual reminders help keep goals front and center.

What I've Seen Change in Student Ownership

We've used *Teach to One Roadmaps* for three school years now, and one of the biggest changes I have seen is student agency.

My students are much more involved in their own learning. They will say things like, "I really want to finish my *Roadmap* by a certain date," and they understand what they are working toward. When students are asked what they love about our school, I often hear: "I can work at
own pace in math."



Before *Teach to One Roadmaps*, we did some differentiation, but it was not personalized in the same way. A lot of our goals were centered on MAP testing, not specific concepts or lessons. This has really changed everything for us.

My Mid-Year Reminder to Other Teachers

Mid-year is a great time to pause and ask:

- What is working?
- What needs a reset?
- What will help students finish strong?

For me, the answer is usually some combination of clear expectations, frequent check-ins, student goal setting, and celebrating progress along the way.

When students can see their growth and feel supported, they stay engaged. And when progress is something we celebrate regularly, it helps students believe they can keep going.

About the Author

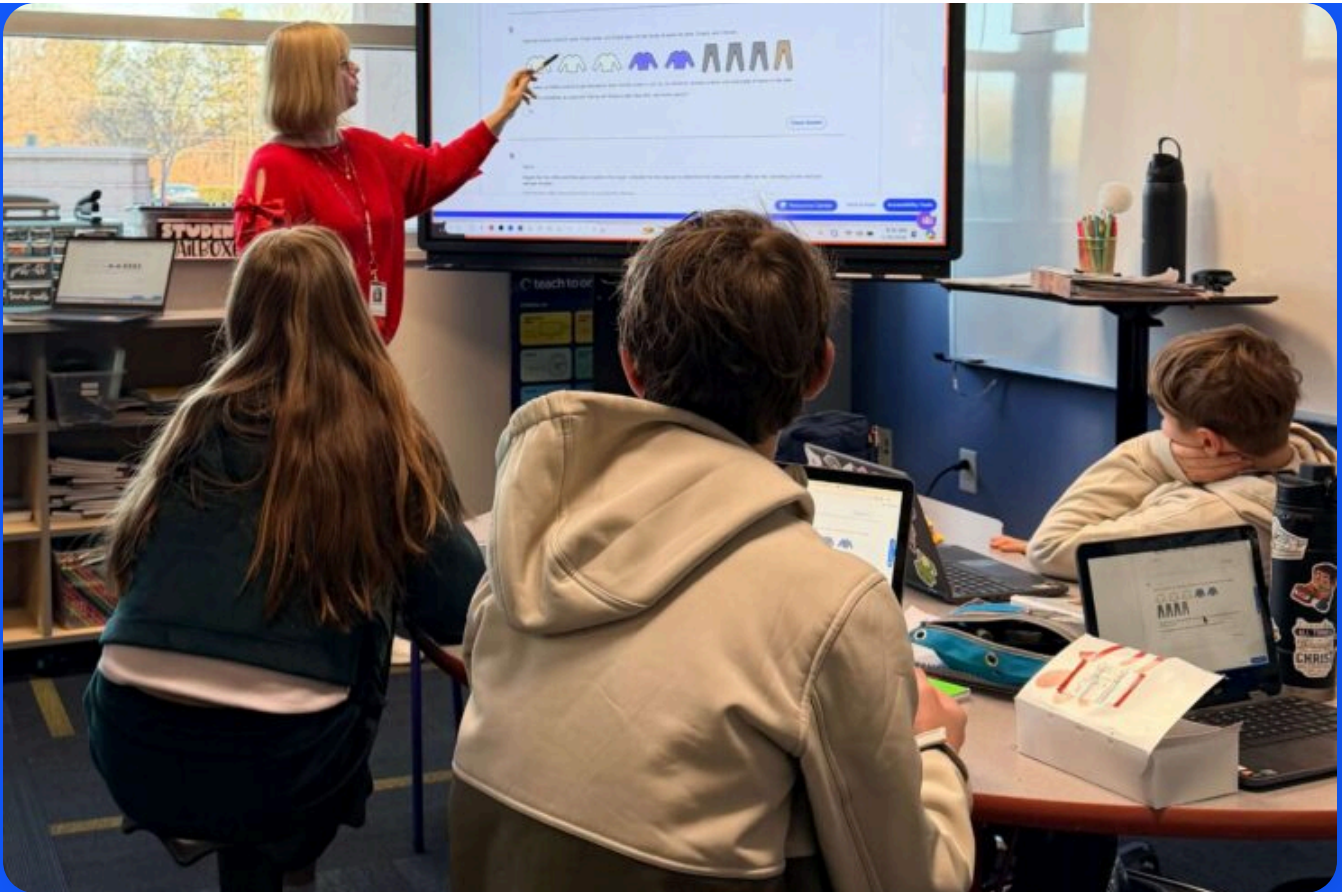




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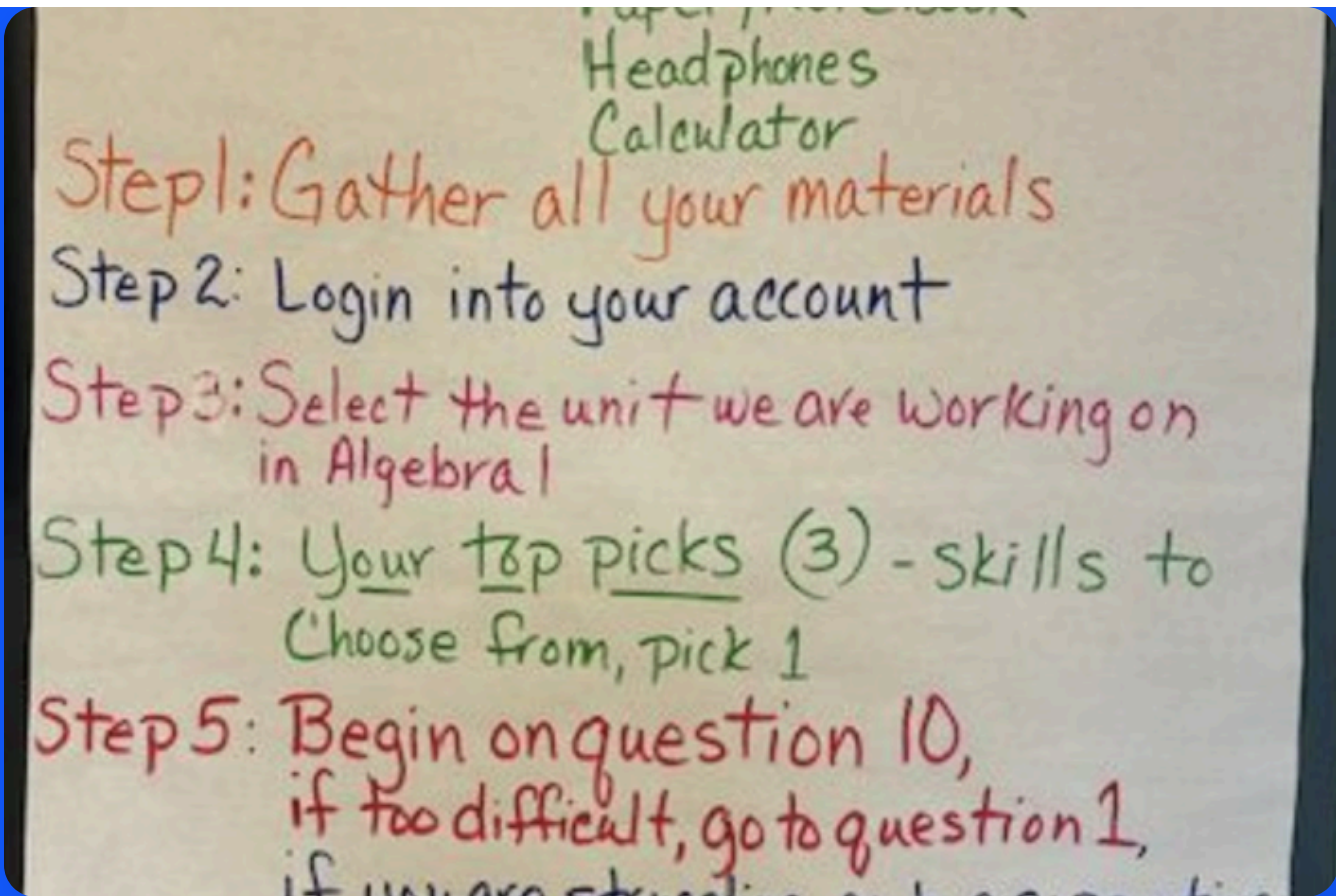




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