

3d Using Assessment in Instruction

Assessment of student learning plays an important role in instruction; no longer does it signal the end of instruction; it is now recognized to be an integral part of instruction. While assessment of learning has always been and will continue to be an important aspect of teaching (it's important for teachers to know whether students have learned what was intended), assessment for learning has increasingly come to play an important role in classroom practice. And in order to assess student learning for the purposes of instruction, teachers must have a "finger on the pulse" of a lesson, monitoring student understanding and, where appropriate, offering feedback to students.

Of course, a teacher's monitoring of student learning, though the action may superficially appear to be the same as that of monitoring student behavior, has a fundamentally different purpose in each case. When teachers are monitoring behavior, they are alert to students who may be passing notes, or bothering their neighbors; when teachers are monitoring student learning, they look carefully at what students are writing, or listen carefully to the questions students ask, in order to gauge whether they require additional activity or explanation in order to grasp the content. In each case, the teacher may be circulating in the room, but his/her purpose in doing so is quite different in the two situations.

Similarly, on the surface, questions asked of students for the purpose of monitoring learning are fundamentally different from those used to build understanding; in the former, teachers are alert to students' revealed misconceptions, whereas in the latter the questions are designed to explore relationships or deepen understanding. For the purpose of monitoring, many teachers create questions specifically to determine the extent of student understanding and use techniques (such as exit tickets) to ascertain the degree of understanding of every student in the class. Indeed, encouraging students (and actually teaching them the necessary skills) of monitoring their own learning against clear standards is demonstrated by teachers at high levels of performance. In this component. Elements of component 3d:

Assessment criteria

It is essential that students know the criteria for assessment. At its highest level, students themselves have had a hand in articulating the criteria for, for example, a clear oral presentation.

Monitoring of student learning

A teacher's skill in eliciting evidence of student understanding is one of the true marks of expertise. This is not a hit-or-miss effort but one planned carefully in advance. Even after careful planning, however, the teacher must weave monitoring of student learning seamlessly into the lesson, using a variety of techniques.

Feedback to students

Feedback on learning is an essential element of a rich instructional environment; without it, students are constantly guessing about how they are doing, and how their work can be improved. Valuable feedback must be timely, constructive, and substantive and provide students the guidance they need to improve their performance.

Student self-assessment and monitoring of progress

The culmination of students' assuming responsibility for their learning is when they monitor their own learning and take appropriate action. Of course, they can do these things only if the criteria for learning are clear and they have been taught the skills of checking their work against clear criteria.

Indicators:

- Teacher paying close attention to evidence of student understanding
- Teacher posing specifically created questions to elicit evidence of student understanding
- Teacher circulating to monitor student learning and to offer feedback
- Students assessing their own work against established criteria

3d Using Assessment in Instruction—Possible Examples

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>A student asks, “How is this assignment going to be graded?”</p> <p>A student asks, “Does this quiz count towards my grade?”</p> <p>The teacher forges ahead with a presentation without checking for understanding.</p> <p>The teacher says: “Good job, everyone.”</p>	<p>Teacher asks: “Does anyone have a question?”</p> <p>When a student completes a problem on the board, the teacher corrects the student’s work without explaining why.</p> <p>The teacher, after receiving a correct response from one student, continues without ascertaining whether all students understand the concept.</p>	<p>The teacher circulates during small group or independent work, offering suggestions to groups of students.</p> <p>The teacher uses a specifically formulated question to elicit evidence of student understanding.</p> <p>The teacher asks students to look over their papers to correct their errors.</p>	<p>The teacher reminds students of the characteristics of high-quality work (the assessment criteria), suggesting that the students themselves helped develop them.</p> <p>While students are working, the teacher circulates, providing substantive feedback to individual students.</p> <p>The teacher uses exit tickets to elicit evidence of individual student understanding.</p> <p>Students offer feedback to their classmates on their work.</p> <p>Students evaluate a piece of their writing against the writing rubric and confer with the teacher about how it could be improved.</p>

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC
<p>There is little or no assessment or monitoring of student learning; feedback is absent or of poor quality.</p> <p>Students do not appear to be aware of the assessment criteria and do not engage in self-assessment.</p>	<p>Assessment is used sporadically by teacher and/or students to support instruction through some monitoring of progress in learning.</p> <p>Feedback to students is general, students appear to be only partially aware of the assessment criteria used to evaluate their work, and few assess their own work.</p> <p>Questions, prompts, and assessments are rarely used to diagnose evidence of learning.</p>

Critical Attributes

<p>The teacher gives no indication of what high-quality work looks like.</p> <p>The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson.</p> <p>Feedback is only global.</p> <p>The teacher does not ask students to evaluate their own or classmates' work.</p>	<p>There is little evidence that the students understand how their work will be evaluated.</p> <p>Teacher monitors understanding through a single method, or without eliciting evidence of understanding from all students.</p> <p>Teacher requests global indications of student understanding.</p> <p>Feedback to students is not uniformly specific and not oriented towards future improvement of work.</p> <p>The teacher makes only minor attempts to engage students in self-assessment or peer assessment.</p>
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PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<p>Assessment is used regularly by teacher and/or students during the lesson through monitoring of learning progress and results in accurate, specific feedback that advances learning.</p> <p>Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria; some of them engage in self-assessment.</p> <p>Questions, prompts, assessments are used to diagnose evidence of learning.</p>	<p>Assessment is fully integrated into instruction through extensive use of formative assessment.</p> <p>Students appear to be aware of, and there is some evidence that they have contributed to, the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Students self-assess and monitor their progress.</p> <p>A variety of feedback, from both their teacher and their peers, is accurate, specific, and advances learning.</p> <p>Questions, prompts, assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students.</p>

<p>Students indicate that they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.</p> <p>The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding during the lesson. Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements.</p> <p>Feedback includes specific and timely guidance, at least for groups of students.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to engage students in self-assessment or peer assessment.</p>	<p>In addition to the characteristics of “proficient”:</p> <p>There is evidence that students have helped establish the evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Teacher monitoring of student understanding is sophisticated and continuous: the teacher is constantly “taking the pulse” of the class.</p> <p>Teacher makes frequent use of strategies to elicit information about individual student understanding.</p> <p>Feedback to students is specific and timely, and is provided from many sources including other students.</p> <p>Students monitor their own understanding, either on their own initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher.</p>
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