

Ways to Involve Students in the Classroom Assessment Process

Learning Goal:

This conversation will engage participants in exploring ways to involve students in assessment *for* learning processes.

Materials:

Knowing What Counts series: *Setting and Using Criteria*, *Self-Assessment and Goal Setting* and *Conferencing and Reporting*.

Getting Started:

Explain that the group will be engaging in an inquiry process based on their questions about involving students in various aspects of assessment *for* learning. Beginning with a self-selected assessment topic, participants will meet in groups, develop an inquiry question, plan, investigate, present their findings and reflect on personal connections and implications for action. This activity may take several hours and can be done across several meetings.

1. As a large group, ask participants to brainstorm topics related to involving students in the assessment process. Chart the ideas and ask for clarification of the topics. Classify the ideas to create sub-topics or more general categories.
2. Inquiry Process:
 - Step One: Grouping – participants will form teams around subtopics they would like to explore. The facilitator will monitor grouping and subdivide teams if they are too large or split the group by levels if appropriate (elementary, secondary or special needs).
 - Step Two: Planning – each team will discuss their topic and formulate a researchable inquiry question. The team will create a mini-action plan of areas to explore, allocate job responsibilities and set a deadline.



- Step Three: Investigating – each team will research their topic using the Knowing What Counts series and other resources to gather, analyze and synthesize the information.
- Step Four: Organizing – each team will determine their reporting format (PowerPoint, display board, exhibit, oral presentation, skit, etc.) and plan their presentation.
- Step Five: Reporting – depending on the time available, and number of teams, the facilitator may give a time limit (i.e. 10 – 15 minutes). Teams will report the results of their work including answers to their inquiry question and allow for follow-up questions.
- Step Six: Reflecting – ask teams to self-assess the process and the value of presenting and responding to other teams' questions. Would they have done anything differently? What learning will they carry into their own work? Ask for personal reflections as well a group reflection.

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Debriefing the Learning:

As a large group, discuss the inquiry process and ways it could be used with students. The process requires the teacher to facilitate and guide rather than present and disperse knowledge. Inquiry also requires students to be self-directed and responsible for their learning. How could this process be adapted for students of different ages and in different content areas? Discuss the culture of the classroom that would need to be established in order for students to engage in inquiry and self-assessment.

Taking Action:

Reflect on the presentations and an idea that may have intrigued you. Consider using a two-column learning journal: a column for Summary (a synthesis of what was presented), and one for Reaction (a response to what was presented that may include thoughts, questions, concerns, and implications for professional practice).

| Summary | Reaction/Action |
|---|---|
| Co-constructing criteria 4-Step process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm • Sort and categorize... | I like the idea of using something students know well at first to help get the distinction between criteria – things that count and are essential - and things that are personal preferences. I might start by inviting them to build criteria for a <i>cheeseburger</i> (the kind of cheese is a personal preference, having <i>some kind of cheese</i> is essential). I want students to understand that criteria help them know what has to be in their work <i>and</i> that they can add things that matter to them in the work they do. That there are different ways to show what they know and can do. |

Commit to conducting your own inquiry and/or commit to trying one of the strategies.

Extending the Learning:

Invite participants to bring in other resources that might add to their inquiry.

Consider using *Making Classroom Assessment Work*, the Leaders' Series and *Classroom Assessment: What's Working in High Schools?* - all available from Connections Publishing www.connect2learning.com.

Learning to Co-Construct Criteria with Students

Learning Goal:

This Conversation invites participants to reflect on the purpose of setting and using criteria. It suggests ways to begin involving students, and explores possible starting points.

Materials:

Each participant needs a copy of *Knowing What Counts: Setting and Using Criteria* by Gregory, Cameron, and Davies (Connections Publishing, Courtenay B.C. www.connect2learning.com/cp)

Sticky notes for each participant.

Getting Started:

1. Introduce this Conversation by noting that when students develop a “picture” of their learning destination, they are more likely to arrive at it. Today, we will read about and discuss:
 - A four-step process for setting criteria with students
 - A variety of starting points, using student examples
 - Some ways to assess student work in relation to criteria
2. Set criteria around something familiar such as an oral presentation, a research report, a friendly letter, or classroom clean up, using the four-step process described on pages 8 to 14 in *Knowing What Counts: Setting and Using Criteria*.

Debrief the process by asking:

- What is similar to something you already do?
 - What is different?
3. Encourage participants to talk in small groups, then ask for comments to be made to the whole group.



4. Explain that there are different starting points and considerations for setting criteria. For example, setting criteria about something students have a lot of experience with and knowledge about is different than setting it with students who have not yet begun to learn about what is important or what counts. Also, as students gain experience with the process of setting criteria it becomes easier and more simple to do.
5. To explore different beginning points, invite the group to do a jigsaw activity using *Knowing What Counts: Setting and Using Criteria*.
6. Form groups of five. Distribute sticky notes. Ask participants to read pages 7 to 14 in the text. Then, ask participants to choose one of the following sections of text to read, and use sticky notes to record margin comments.
 - All Pages 7 to 14
 - 1. Pages 14 to 17
 - 2. Pages 18 to 20
 - 3. Pages 20 to 21
 - 4. Pages 22 to 24
 - 5. Pages 24 to 26
7. After everyone has read, form “expert groups,” asking all the number 1’s, 2’s, 3’s, 4’s, and 5’s, to get together. Each group is to discuss their reading, and take a few minutes to plan a way to introduce it to their small group.

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Debriefing the Learning:

Ask participants to return to their original groups and explain each of the starting points they have read about.

As the speaker in each small group explains the starting point they read about, invite the others in the small group to make connections to:

- Something they already do that is similar
- Something new they might try
- One way they would like to involve students more

Taking Action:

Using a notebook or journal, invite participants to record one thing they've had confirmed, one thing they've been reminded of, and one thing they have learned.

Ask participants to choose one thing they are going to try in their classroom, and to tell someone their plan. Suggest that participants talk about their insights with a colleague as they leave.

Extending the Learning:

Extend the learning by asking participants to return at a later date to discuss what was tried, what worked, and what didn't. The group may report how they adapted the ideas to work with their students.

Continue to learn more about setting and using criteria by using one or more of the following:

1. Read Chapter 2 in *Knowing What Counts: Setting and Using Criteria*. Using an expert jigsaw strategy, try the 10 different ways to assess.
2. Read Chapter 3 in *Knowing What Counts: Setting and Using Criteria* and discuss the ideas with a colleague.
3. Interview a colleague about how he/she involves students in setting criteria.

Exploring Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting

Learning Goal:

This Conversation explores how self-assessment and goal-setting can be used most effectively to support student learning.

Materials:

The book, *Knowing What Counts: Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting* (Connections Publishing, Courtenay B.C. www.connect2learning.com/cp) for each participant.

Three sentence strips (strips of chart paper) approximately 5 inches (13cm) by 2 feet (60cm).

Thick markers for each small group

Sticky notes for each small group

Masking tape

Getting Started:

1. Introduce the Conversation by noting that self-assessment and goal-setting are essential elements of learning. Participants will read about and discuss:
 - A variety of ways students can be involved in self-assessment
 - Research that supports self-assessment
 - Key reasons for goal-setting
 - Strategies for helping students choose realistic goals
 - Ways to communicate evidence that students are working towards their goals
 - A process for monitoring, supporting, and celebrating goals
2. Divide into small groups and distribute three sentence strips to each group.



3. Ask each group to brainstorm their questions related to self-assessment and goal-setting. Ask the groups to prioritize their top three questions, and write them on the strips.
4. When finished, ask one group to read aloud one question, then post it on the wall. Ask others with similar questions to read aloud their question and post in the same vicinity.
5. Invite a second group to read aloud a question and post in a second area. Ask others with similar questions to read them aloud and post in the same vicinity. Continue until all questions have been posted around the meeting room.
6. Provide a brief oral overview of the book, *Knowing What Counts: Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting* noting that there are three kinds of self-assessment and two kinds of goal-setting ideas. Divide the large group into five small groups and assign readings as follow:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Pause-and-Think | Pages 12 to 19 |
| Look-for-Proof | Pages 19 to 28 |
| Connect-to-Criteria | Pages 29 to 38 |
| Short-Term Goals | Pages 39 to 42 |
| Long-Term Goals | Pages 43 to 48 |

Ask groups to read with two purposes:

- What ideas are useful to me in my context?
- What information or ideas could help us respond to the questions that are posted?

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Debriefing the Learning:

When participants are finished reading, ask them to review the ideas in their section with their group. Then, ask groups to provide responses to the questions posted earlier, using sticky notes to attach responses to the sentence strips.

Taking Action:

Ten minutes before the Conversation ends, ask participants to choose one idea they would like to try in their class or school. Invite them to record their goal and to tell someone their idea.

Extending the Learning:

1. Try your “one new idea”. Keep track of what happens and record your thoughts. Reflect upon what worked, what didn’t, and how you might change it next time.
2. Spend time reading other sections in the book and applying selected ideas.

Involving Students in Communicating Their Learning

Learning Goal:

This Conversation will help participants consider reasons and ways to involve students in communicating their learning.

Materials:

A copy of *Knowing What Counts: Conferencing and Reporting* by Gregory, Cameron, and Davies (Connections Publishing, Courtenay B.C. www.connect2learning.com/cp).

Getting Started:

1. To introduce this Conversation, summarize pages 7 to 9 in the text, *Knowing What Counts: Conferencing and Reporting*.
2. Form groups of five. Let participants know they will be participating in a simple jigsaw. They will read the text by assignment, then share what they have read:
 - Person #1 Work Samples: page 12 and Criteria with Evidence: pages 23 to 24
 - Person #2 Portfolio Afternoon: pages 13 to 16 and Home Performance: page 27
 - Person #3 Goal Envelopes: pages 17 to 19 (top) and Mind Maps: pages 25 to 26
 - Person #4 Subject Stations: pages 19 to 20 and School Performances: page 28
 - Person #5 Picture This: page 21 and Personal Newsletter: page 29
3. Ask participants to read, looking for ways to involve students in communicating their learning during the term and also to make connections to successful ideas.
4. After the reading, invite people to discuss the ideas, questions, and their own connections in their group.



Debriefing the Learning:

After participants have finished reporting on the ideas and their personal connections within their small groups, form one large group.

Invite people to share some of the ideas, questions, and connections that arose in the small groups.

Taking Action:

Ask participants to select one idea to think about or try.

Ask participants to return at a later date to discuss what was tried, what worked, and what didn't. Invite the group to talk about how they adapted the ideas to work with their particular students.

Extending the Learning:

Continue learning by selecting another conversation that complements this one. Suggest *Self-Assessment and Setting and Using Criteria Conversations*, as both of these ideas help students gain communication skills.