

Making Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Work Middle and Secondary School (Grade 4 and up)

Learning Goal

To consider the role of self-assessment and goal-setting in learning.

Self-assessment and goal-setting are essential elements of learning. In this session 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.

Materials

Book for each participant: Gregory, K., Cameron, C., and Davies, A. (2000) **Knowing What Counts: Self-Assessment and Goal Setting**. Courtenay, B.C: Connections Publishing.

Related Readings:

- Cameron, C. (1990). *Slowing Down to the Speed of Learning*. Primary Leadership Vol.2 No.1 Fall.
- Cameron, C. (1992-93). *Informal Reports*. Primary Areas Vol. 35 No. 3, Fall pp.96-99.
- Davies, A. & Cameron, C. (2000). Research Discussion Card 6: *Involving Students in Assessment*.

Getting Started

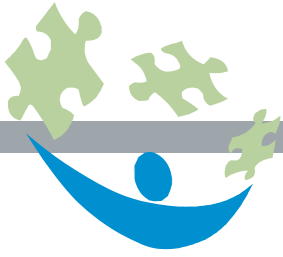
Ask each group to brainstorm their questions related to self-assessment. Ask them to prioritize their top three questions and write them on sentence strips to post. Invite each group to share and post their questions. When finished, ask them to choose a partner or group to work with to respond to one or two questions of interest.

Then their job is to:

- Choose something to read.
 - Decide how long you will read and read.
 - When time is up, show something or read a favourite sentence or two to your partner or group.
 - Read some more.
- Show and talk again.

Taking Action

Ten minutes before your time is over ask participants to choose one idea they would like to try in their class or school. Invite them to record their goal and tell someone else if they wish.



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Extending the Learning

Try your 'one new thing.' Keep track of what happens. Record your thoughts. Reflect upon what worked, what didn't and how you might change it next time.

Read about others' ways to involve students in self-assessment using one or more of the recommended resources or others with which participants are familiar.

Link to colleagues

Invite participants to talk about their own experiences using self-assessment with students. To begin, read the following e-mail message:

"This year I decided to start self-assessing in math. After teaching several lessons in math, I created an assessment piece to evaluate what the students remember from their learning of several days. We did pause & reflect, made notations on our work, did muddiest point cards, exit passes. After administering a short math assessment and corrected the papers, students were then asked to look at their errors, correct them and then complete the form 'to get better at math, I could....' I asked to be specific about the errors they made. Study harder, pay attention in class, listening to the teacher etc. was not what I wanted but rather what did you do wrong. I put the decimal point in the wrong place, I need to have a better understanding of place value, I have to watch the sign when performing an operation etc. Once they caught on to this and realized what they did wrong and how to improve, they became much more aware of the mistakes they were making. When I administered the chapter test, the class average was an 82. I asked another 5th grade teacher if he would share the results of his chapter test and this class scored a 55. I think this stuff works!!!

Sincerely
K.H., 5th grade teacher"

Discussion Card 6: Why Involve Students?

1. When students are involved in their own assessment, their self-assessments help teachers design instruction to better meet the needs of learning (Anthony et al. 1991; Elbow 1986; Preece 1995; Wiggins 1993).
2. When students are involved in their own assessment they talk about their learning as they look to criteria (what counts) in order to understand what needs to be done or learned. Talking about what needs to be learning and what it might look like helps people learn more because learning is socially mediated (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Black and Wiliam 1998; Bruner 1978, 1984; Feuerstein 1990; Luria 1981; Preece 1993; Smith 1986, 1995; Vygotsky 1862, 1978; Walters, Seidel, and Gardner 1994). It is only in interaction with the learner (i.e., socially mediated) that useful assessments can be made (Black and Wiliam 1998; Feuerstein 1990; Lidz 1995; Vygotsky 1962, 1978).
3. Self-assessment requires students to ask themselves questions. Similar to an 'expert', students use questions to guide their thinking (Schon 1983; Walters, Seidel, and Gardner 1994). Self-assessment requires students to answer basic questions about how they are doing and how they can do better (Kilborn 1990).
4. Self-assessment asks students to make choices about what to focus on next in their learning. When students make choices about their learning, achievement increases; when choice is absent, learning decreases (Purkey and Novak 1984| DeCharms 1968; Jensen 1998| Lepper and Green 1975; Maehr 1974; Mahoney 1974; Tjosvold 1977; Tjosvold and Santamaria 1977; Deci and Ryan 1985; Mager and McCann 1963).
5. When students are involved in their own assessment they consider their strengths and the areas they need to improve. By doing so, they have the opportunity to make the most of strengths and to correct or compensate for the weaknesses. This leads to greater success as learners and as people (DeCharms 1968, 1972; Pressley 1987; Sternberg 1996).
6. When students are involved in their own assessment, they know what needs to be learned and what constitutes proof or evidence, and they are able to give themselves feedback about their learning. Feedback is essential for learning (Black and Wiliam 1998; Caine and Caine 1991, 1997; Carr and Kemis 1986; Dewey 1933; Elbow 1986; Fredericksen and White 1997; Sawyer et al. 1992; Senge 1990| Stiggins 1996| Sylwester 1995; Wiggins 1993; Whiting et al.).
7. Limiting specific feedback limits learning. Students with poor marks are more likely to see themselves as failures. Students who see themselves as failures are less likely to succeed as learners (Black and Wiliam 1998; Butler 1988; Kamii 1984; John 1995; Seagoe 1970; Shepard and Smith 1986, 1987; Schunk 1996; Phillips 1995).
8. Ongoing, formative assessment does improve learning "The gains in achievement appear to be quite considerable, and as noted earlier, amongst the largest ever reported for educational interventions" (Black and Wiliam 1998, 61).

Suggested reading

- Black, P. and D. Wiliam. 1998. Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education*. 5 no. 1: 7-75
- Davies, A. ***Making Classroom Assessment Work***. 2000. Courtenay, B.C.: Connections Publishing.
- Gregory, K., C. Cameron and A. Davies. 2000. ***Knowing What Counts: Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting***. Courtenay, B.C.: Connections Publishing.