

SELF-ASSESSMENT

If students are to function as independent learners they must be given frequent opportunities to monitor, reflect upon, and evaluate their own progress, learning strategies, work habits, products, and achievements. Self-evaluation should become a key activity in every classroom. Students should be invited to evaluate the instructional materials with which they work and the learning activities they engage in and are exposed to at school. Young children are natural evaluators. Unfortunately, this is often unrecognized and discouraged at school. Following are several strategies for facilitating evaluation by students.

Learning Logs/Journals

Learning logs are notebooks in which students periodically record their insights, observations, or feelings about themselves as learners and about what they are learning. Learning logs are intended to encourage self-monitoring and reflection and they inform both the reader and the writer. The teacher might, for example, begin by simply asking the students, at the end of a unit or an activity, to reflect on three things they have learned, or one thing they found confusing. If appropriate, the students may then be invited to compare their conclusions with a partner. With young children, the process can be conducted orally; older students may prefer to occasionally write their reflections and responses in a booklet specifically designed for the purpose. The decision to share the contents with other students should be left entirely to each student.

It is best to use a variety of prompts or lead-in phrases. *By selecting the prompts carefully, teachers can encourage students to become constructively analytical about, and more aware of, their own learning styles, approaches, strengths, preferences, and shortcomings.* For example:

Preferences

The most interesting thing about _____ was...
My favorite part of the school day is when...
My favorite kind of question is the type that...
I prefer to work by myself on activities that...

Learning Style and Strategies

When I have to do a project, the first thing I like to do is...
If I can, I try to avoid activities that...
I work best when...
When I don't understand something, I...

Strengths

I'm getting much better at...
One good question I asked (or thought of) today was...
One of the things I do best is...
I can help people in my class with...
I'm proud of the way I...

Areas in Need of Improvement

I need to work harder on...

I'm still not sure how to...

I need to get help with...

I wish I were better at...

The part I found the most difficult was...

Students should be invited to contribute interesting lead-ins of their own. *As with anything, the procedure needs to be used sparingly, but systematically*, so that it does not become tedious or degenerate into "reflection-on-demand", but does lead to the development of reflection and analysis.

Journals

Journals are slightly different from learning logs in that they are “more free” with students choosing their own math topic and question to write about. Students frequently have a hard time creating journal entries when they first begin to write them, especially if they are already well-advanced in school. The teacher may need to initially provide prompts for students to help them get comfortable with constructing journal entries.

Sample Journal Prompts

- How would you teach someone to add two-digit numbers?
- What is one area of math you feel confident in? Why?
- Judy was absent today. What will you say to her if she calls you tonight and asks what we did in class?
- Write a story problem using this number sentence: $65 - 32 = 33$.
- Write everything you know about the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$.
- Make up a rhyme or a funny sentence to help you remember the algebraic order of operations.
- The most important thing I learned in math this week was... .
- Make up a number pattern and tell about it.
- Describe what is going on in your mind mathematically right now by completing one of these statements: I think..., I feel..., I know..., I wonder..., I guess... .

Teachers who have students write in their learning logs/journals are, of course, obligated to read and respond frequently to the entries. But they will find many of the students' responses refreshing and original and the process will be one of the most pleasant of their tasks. *To reduce the amount of time spend reading journals, some teachers have students box or underline portions which they think they would like the teacher to read.* Opinions vary on whether or not to give comments, especially ones that suggest corrections or a need for improvement; frequently are good sources of information about students' attitudes and misconceptions as well as emerging classroom problems. *Teachers can often find out more about the students' thinking and degree of understanding from learning logs/journals that from most other methods of assessment.*

LEARNING LOG FRAMES AND PROMPTS

- This piece of work shows...
- The best part is...
- If I did it again, I would...
- It was hard for me to learn...
- I used to think...but now I know...
- Three things I want you to notice about my work are...
- I was surprised to learn that...
- A question I am curious about and want to find the answer to is...
- I was on the right track with my idea about...but what I didn't know was...
- Today my thinking is like...because both...
- Today my thinking is like the color...because both...
- Today my thinking is like the animal...because both...
- Today my thinking feels like...because both...
- I've been thinking...
- What's on my mind?
- Three things I wonder about...
- What were you trying to do today?
- How do you feel about what you were doing?
- What part did you struggle with?
- What changes did you make?
- How did your thinking change?
- If you were going to do this again, what changes would you make?
- Today we worked on...
- The part I like best is...

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Name _____ Date _____

Completion of my assignments (I am a responsible worker):

_____ All assignments were turned in on time.

_____ Most assignments were turned in on time.

Number of _____ late assignment(s)

Quality of my class work for the week (I do quality work):

(You may check more than one choice below.)

_____ Quality work

_____ Good work

_____ Fair work

_____ Work that needed to be redone

My overall Behavior:

_____ ΠΠΠΠΠ _____ ΠΠΠΠ _____ ΠΠΠ _____ Π

Working as part of a learning community (I am an effective group member):

_____ ΠΠΠΠΠ _____ ΠΠΠΠ _____ ΠΠΠ _____ Π

This week I was proud of _____

Next week I will try to _____

The most important thing I learned this week was _____



LEARNING REFLECTIONS

1. The big idea in this unit was _____

2. When I read about this topic, I learned _____

3. When I wrote about this topic, I learned _____

4. I made connections during this unit. One connection I made was _____

5. Something I discovered was _____

6. A question I still have is _____

7. I helped _____

8. In groups I _____

9. The best thing I did in this unit was _____



Name _____ Date _____

Looking back on the week:

Some things we did ...

Some things I learned well enough to teach a friend ...

The part I liked best about the week was ...

Something I am (confused/wondering) about ...

Other Suggestions for Self-Assessment

- 4 Use bookmarks for a weekly self-grading system. Have students give themselves a grade each day for classwork and for homework on one side of the card. On the other side, have them fill in responses to questions such as the following:

The thing I enjoyed most in math this week was _____.

I am most proud of _____.

One thing I didn't like was _____.

I wish _____.

Collect the bookmarks on Fridays and distribute new ones on Mondays. Monitor responses, looking for patterns of learning for students. Give students feedback individually, perhaps through interviews.

- 4 Have students assess their work as a group during cooperative learning activities. You may wish to develop a form for this.

