A Time to Shine: SELF-ASSESSMENT ASSISTING ENGLISH LEARNERS AND THEIR TEACHERS DURING REMOTE LEARNING

A 4-phase visual learning progression was designed for English learners at different grades and levels of English proficiency. It can be used as one of several sources to inform teachers of students’ content and language learning progress remotely.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

• Remote learning, which features the use of technology and online tools, can often exacerbate existing inequalities for English learners (Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands, 2020).

• English learners and their families are disproportionately affected by the lack of access to devices, digital resources, and internet access (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2018), among other educational and social challenges during the pandemic.

• Teachers who work with English learners report fewer hours of professional learning with digital resources compared to general education teachers and are more likely to use general education digital learning resources than those designed primarily for English learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

HOW ARE TEACHERS KEEPING TRACK OF STUDENT LEARNING REMOTELY?

• Remote learning increases the challenges of monitoring how well students are learning new content and English. Opportunities for assessment based on observations and interactions, as used in formative assessment, may be limited (see box with ExcEL teacher survey responses); educators require innovative ways to generate feedback for instruction and autonomous learning.

WHAT IS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT?

• The term formative assessment refers to a set of practices used by teachers and students intended to inform ongoing learning (Heritage & Harrison, 2019).

Formative assessment practices include: establishing clear learning goals and success criteria; eliciting evidence of learning during the ongoing flow of activity and interaction in the classroom; acting on evidence to advance learning; and student involvement through peer and self-assessment (Andrade & Heritage, 2017).

• Through self-assessment, students are supported to develop self-regulatory learning processes; they are able to assess how they are progressing to meet learning goals and make adjustments in their own learning process to achieve their goals (Bailey & Heritage, 2018).

WHY IS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT SO SUITED TO ENGLISH LEARNERS?

• Students are better able to demonstrate their content learning if assessed in authentic contexts; teachers also have the chance to clarify responses and tease apart content knowledge from language uses (Bailey & Duran, 2020; Bailey & Heritage, 2008; National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine, 2018).

• The interactive nature of formative assessment allows teachers to be open to the perspectives of English learners, making it culturally and linguistically sustaining; it provides opportunities for teachers “to understand first-hand how students build their [content] knowledge and utilize different linguistic resources to do so.” (Bailey, Wilkinson, Maher & Nyakoojo, in press).

• Even young students can successfully engage in self-assessment given appropriate supports (Bailey, 2020; Goral & Bailey, 2019).

EXCEL PARTNER DISTRICT TEACHERS REPORTING ON ONLINE ASSESSMENT

• Most teachers report they are keeping track of their English learners’ content learning to some degree (e.g., Google Meet for check-ins), but fewer for assessment of English language development.

• Just a quarter of teachers have encouraged English learners to self-assess and report their progress.

• Many teachers report challenges to remote teaching with their English learners, including concerns with technology, student engagement and participation, and levels of home support.

• Some teachers report difficulties in remotely assessing students formatively and authentically, particularly with young students.

• Teachers are requesting more professional learning on online/printed assessment resources for language and literacy development and communicating assessment practices to parents.
USING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL TO MONITOR AND SUPPORT ENGLISH LEARNERS REMOTELY

• The tool can be used in conjunction with the learning goals and success criteria of a specific online lesson (e.g., Students will explain their strategies for solving problems and give them their proper unit of measurement), or by students assisted to set their own (realistic) learning goals and self-assess using their own success criteria (e.g., I can read a part of an article and put important information into my own words).

• The tool can be used in a variety of ways and for different purposes: For example, daily with each remote lesson concluding with students placing their learning at a phase on the progression and reporting privately in a Chat Box to the teacher (see screenshot below). Teachers can use the information as feedback about which students they may need to work with individually, in small group sessions, or for follow-up instruction with the ESL/literacy coach or teacher.

A 3rd grade math lesson conducted on Zoom showing the Chat Box responses of several students
(Used by permission)

• Students can use the tool after they complete assignments offline, so they further reflect on their learning. Students can email or post responses online as feedback to teachers for future instruction or responses can remain solely as feedback to students to aide them in setting their own next learning goals.

• The directions on the next page are an introduction to the visual learning progression and provide more information. The different steps are optional but are a place to start.

REFERENCES


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Directions for Use of the Student Self-Assessment Tool*

[Available for download at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tLkTt1EKF0nY38fGL7P1eCCH2w1A6WFW/view?usp=sharing]

**Synchronous Use of the Self-Assessment**

During *online instruction* (whole class or small invited groups), use the Self-Assessment Tool (S-A Tool) to help establish progress in student understanding and to encourage student self-reflection on their learning. The progression is generic and can be used to monitor growth in academic content areas or English Language Development (ELD).

**Asynchronous Use of the Self-Assessment Tool**

During *offline tasks and assignments*, use the S-A Tool to encourage student self-reflection and to independently report their progress.

**Steps for Implementation** *(These entire steps can be followed for initial uses of the S-A Tool; omit The Rehearsal when no longer necessary)*

- **The Check In**
  Check on students' state of mind [Example: *How are you feeling today? Are you ready to learn? Thumbs up/down/middle: Enquire after any downs/middles.*]

- **The Rehearsal** *(Practice during online instruction; select the suggested wording for grade being taught (delete other grade level wording if distracting); if possible, use students' first language/translations to ensure full comprehension of the 4 phases of the progression)*

  *Assist* students in placing knowledge on the progression: Invite students to find the “best fit” for their knowledge of the Pokémon Universe of regions, types & trainers/Star Wars movie plots & characters/the NFL draft/the record of the US Women’s National (Soccer) Team - have students suggest their own domains of pop-culture knowledge).

  *Enquire* why students placed themselves at their chosen phases.

  *Ask* students to reflect on what they can do next (& set new learning goals) to increase their knowledge even if placed at Phase 4.

- **Setting Learning Goals (& Success Criteria)**
  *Initially* set learning goals and success criteria for students: ELD example (mindful/active listening skills): “Listen to two-step commands & show by appropriate actions.” Math Example: “Reason proportionally by first making comparisons of more or less for two quantities.”

  *Replace* with students setting their own learning goals: For young students and English learners, frame likely learning goals & success criteria using sentence starters such as “I can/know/understand ___________ and show this by doing __________.”

- **Invitation to Place Learning on The Progression**

  The focus is on students finding the “best fit” on the progression to characterize their current learning not on scoring themselves hence the progression is centered on descriptions of “*My learning is....*”

  Placement at these different phases should be used as feedback to the student and teacher about next steps for instruction so learning continues along the progression. Older students can be encouraged to complete the Next Steps section after the progression:

  *To get me to the next phase, I need more help with __________________________ or more information on ______________________________*.

## Student Self-Assessment Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE 1</th>
<th>PHASE 2</th>
<th>PHASE 3</th>
<th>PHASE 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seed &amp; Roots</td>
<td>New Shoot</td>
<td>Budding Flower</td>
<td>Blooming Flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grades K-2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grades 3-5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grades 6-12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grades K-2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...Like a seed growing under the ground</td>
<td>...Beginning to grow – you can see that I'm trying</td>
<td>...Not showing yet</td>
<td>...Like a big, beautiful flower</td>
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<tr>
<td>...Like a tiny shoot just above the ground</td>
<td>...Coming together – I have lots of the important parts</td>
<td>...Just emerging</td>
<td>...In full bloom but I am still learning a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...Like a bud growing tall and strong</td>
<td></td>
<td>...Developing nicely</td>
<td>...Fully formed but I can keep learning more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**My learning is...**

Next Steps:

To get me to the next phase, I need more help with _______________ or more information on _______________________________.

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