

Strategies and tools to engage students in self-assessment

A range of strategies and tools are available for self-assessment. Tools, such as learning journals, portfolios and conferences, involve a student reflecting on their performance and presenting evidence of their progress and achievement against success criteria.

Learning journals/Learning logs

These can be used by students to:

- maintain a record of the processes and strategies students use with their learning
- reflect on their learning
- record class and individual long-term and short-term learning goals
- plan steps to achieve the goals
- monitor progress towards goals.

Tips for using learning journals

- Make the learning journal an integral part of teaching and learning – as important as the pen/pencil/laptop.
- Incorporate 5-10 minutes reflection time for students to discuss and record their learning in their journals at the end of a lesson – sentence starters and prompts may be provided if necessary. For example,

| Sentence starters | Prompts |
|---|---|
| <i>Today I learnt/Now I know...</i> | <i>What is one thing you learned?</i> |
| <i>I now feel confident about ...</i> | <i>What was the most important thing you learned?</i> |
| <i>I felt confused when .../I'm having problems with...</i> | <i>What questions do you still have?</i> |
| <i>What I would most like to know is...</i> | <i>What successes did you experience?</i> |
| <i>I was pleased with...</i> | <i>What are the challenges you faced?</i> |
| <i>My teacher explained...</i> | <i>What strategies helped you learn?</i> |
| <i>I was unsure about...but now I ...</i> | <i>What would you do differently next time?</i> |

- During the introduction of a tricky new concept or activity, pause and ask students to paraphrase the idea or task in their learning journals – share a few explanations out loud and discuss as necessary.

- Before beginning a lesson have students divide a page into two columns. In the first column, have students record teacher-identified key words. During the lesson have students record teacher-identified key words in the first column and ideas relevant to the key words in the second column.
- Have students record long-term class learning goals, short-term class learning goals and individual learning goals as well as steps to achieve the goals. Revisit these periodically to allow students to evaluate their progress towards the goals and plan next steps.
- Have students include scaffolds or templates used for assessment and feedback and/or goal setting in their learning journals.

Portfolios

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student's effort, progress, or achievement in a given area(s).

Engaging students in gathering evidence, giving feedback and communicating their learning encourages students to take responsibility, own their learning, and monitor their progress.

When compiling a portfolio students need to:

- be clear about the purpose of the portfolio and the learning goals that will be the focus of the portfolio
- select samples of their work that show progress over time on achieving the goals
- reflect on what has been learned and what's next in the learning
- share information with teachers and parents to communicate their learning.

Tips for using portfolios

- Inform parents of the purpose and plans for the use of the portfolio.
- Include a variety of tasks and artefacts that demonstrate the full range of learning and provide a complete picture of progress over time.
- Develop prompts to guide students' thinking about samples that could be completed and filed in the portfolio:
 - My learning goal was ...
 - I chose this piece because ...
 - It demonstrates my progress in ...
 - A next step for me is ...
 - My new learning goal is ...
- Consider digital portfolios which are easy to store and access.

Student-led conferences

Student-led conferences capture the full value of self-assessment.

As with self-assessment students need to receive explicit instruction about their role in conferencing.

Tips for using portfolios

- Modelling by the teacher is an effective way to show students what is required. Select an anonymous or exemplar portfolio of student work samples, and use the following guidelines to demonstrate the conference. Describe:
 - how feedback from teachers, peers and self were applied and how the feedback helped to improve the work
 - the features that make the work effective and how is it an improvement over an earlier piece
 - what has been learned
 - the next steps in learning
 - how this work relates to the long and short term learning goals.
- Design simple templates or instructions for students. For example, Be prepared to talk about and show evidence of:
 - 1 some things you did successfully
 - 2 some things you could improve upon
 - 3 next steps.
- Practise student-led conferences with peers and teachers prior to including parents.