Chapter 2

Assessment of Progress in Literacy

Focus Questions

- How is assessment different from evaluation?

- What types of literacy assessment can be used in grades 4–8?

- In what ways can literacy assessment inform instruction?

Current Views of Assessment

‣ Many educators see a "testing frenzy" in schools.

‣ Common belief: If we want students to perform better, we need to test them more.

‣ Testing is about *evaluation*—placing a value on a performance.

Defining Assessment

‣ The process of gathering information (data) about students' abilities—to help teachers, parents, and other caregivers know more about a learner's strengths and weaknesses and thus provide appropriate instruction or assistance for the learner.

‣ More than just testing.

Reflections and Contemplations

- Do you feel it is important to know how schools and students are progressing in literacy?

- In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to gauge a student's performance?

- Is testing the best option?

Types and Examples of Assessment

▸ Formative assessment

- Ongoing
- Multiple instruments, daily observation, work samples

▸ Summative assessment

- Compilation of formative assessment provided at the end of a program or study units to report progress
- Report cards

Standards

- Signposts to document growth
- Basic types:
  - Professional teaching standards
  - Curriculum or content standards
- Standards and assessments being used:
  - Common Core State Standards
  - Next Generation Assessments
  - PARCC assessments
  - Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Feedback

▸ Useful information about what you did and didn't do in achieving a goal.

▸ In order for teachers to know what feedback to provide students, they need to do more *assessing;* that is, gather information about student learning while the learning is still happening.

Principles of Assessment

Involves daily observation

Takes many different forms

Avoids cultural bias

Involves student engagement

Focuses on students' abilities

Informs instruction

Assessment Options

- Formal vs. informal
- Least direct vs. direct
- Direct:
  - Teacher developed
  - One-on-one observations of what students can do
- Ongoing:
  - Data collected over time
- Indirect:
  - Data from standardized instruments or from outside the classroom setting

Assessment as a Continuum

Standardized achievement test | Standardized diagnostic test | Curriculum materials | State/district tests and prompts | Published IRIs* | Teacher-made tests | In-class discussions | Work samples | Running records | One-on-one observation of student in classroom

LEAST DIRECT   **MOST DIRECT**

(Formal)   (Informal)

* IRIs = informal reading inventories.

A Framework for Guiding the Assessment Process

What kind of information do I need?   How am I going to gather this information?

	DIRECT	ONGOING	INDIRECT
Structural analysis/ word analysis	One-on-one observation Word games	Anecdotal notes Running records	Stanford Diagnostic Subtest Woodcock Reading Mastery Test
Vocabulary	Observation Pretest Free writing Class presentations Vocabulary self-assessment charts Cubing activity	Daily discussions Anecdotal notes Weekly tests Writing samples	Stanford Achievement Test Language Assessment Scales Carver Vocabulary Test Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
Fluency	One-on-one observation Paired reading	Anecdotal notes Running records Tape recordings IRI/miscue analysis	State/district-developed instruments
Spelling	Free writing Pretests Dictations	Writing samples Journals Weekly tests	Standardized tests

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Guiding the Assessment Process, continued

Reading comprehension	Retellings QARs Discussions Cloze tests	Paraphrases Summaries Class contributions Sketchings IRIs	Standardized tests (Stanford Achievement, Metropolitan Achievement, California Achievement)
Writing	Free writing Journals Quick writes Editing checklist	Writing samples Daily work Norming/scoring writing collectively	Rubrics that accompany curriculum materials (scaled scores) Language Assessment Scales
Reading/writing attitudes	Reading logs Number of books read/written Teacher interviews	Conferences Reading response journals	Questionnaires Attitude surveys Interest inventories (published versions)
Student views of own literacy	Books chosen Self-evaluations Response journals Teacher interviews	Portfolio choices Dialogue journals Reflection log	Attitude surveys Reading surveys Questionnaires (published versions)

IRI = informal reading inventory; QARs = question-answer relationships

Common Assessment Classifications

Standardized testing (norm referenced)

Curriculum-based assessment (criterion referenced)

Standards-based performance assessment (criterion referenced)

Process-oriented assessment (criterion referenced)

Norm- vs. Criterion-Referenced Assessments

Norm-referenced

- Compare performance to norm
- Used annually as pre/post tests
- Precise, valid, and reliable
- High construct validity
- High reliability
- Yield global measurements of general ability

Criterion-referenced

- Assess student ability to perform a task
- Determine whether student can progress to the next level
- Used as often as needed
- High content validity
- Not concerned with reliability

Observations of Progress—
Using Anchor Standards for Reading

NAME: _____   GRADE: _____

STANDARDS	CONTEXT: Informational passage on Mt. Vesuvius[1]	DATE OBSERVED	CONTEXT: Informational passage on cloning[2]	DATE OBSERVED	CONTEXT: Fictional passage on bullying[3]	DATE OBSERVED
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	Students read a passage about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius that destroyed the Roman city of Pompeii. They write a newspaper article from the time about the event. They must include an interview with a survivor of the event. Using the facts from the passage, they must properly use direct quotations from the passage in the article.		Students read an article about cloning cats. They use the margins to annotate the first paragraph, noting the meaning or summary in the right margin, and the purpose or function it serves in the left margin. Then, students revisit these margin notes to support their claims as they write an essay to support or not to support cloning.		From this collection of stories, students read the story "Priscilla and the Wimps" by Richard Peck. Students discuss what happens to the antagonist at the end of the story and indicate what textual evidence they have to back up their idea(s).	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	Students identify and list facts leading up to the volcanic eruption and the consequences of the event.		Students examine the relevant anecdotes and details, which enrich the central theme. Students attend to the emotions expressed by the pet owners as they state their reasons for cloning their cats. Students act out or role play one person's reason(s) for wanting a clone of a beloved pet, or they develop their own reasons and act that out.		Students discuss bullying and identify examples of bullying in the text. Using these events, students discuss whether a solution to the school's bullying problem existed, and what might change as a result of the events at the end of the book.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	Students make a graphic organizer of events that occurred around the volcanic eruption. Then, using the graphic organizer, they write a paragraph to explain why the town was destroyed.		Using the pet owners who were interviewed in the article, students explain the pros and cons of cloning, and discuss to what extent each side's argument is appealing. Students create a T chart.		Students select a character to examine and write about. They examine descriptions of the character (what the character says, does, thinks; what others say about that character) and discuss how he or she contributes to or impacts the bullying at the school.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	Students keep a vocabulary log of volcano terms, terms related to destruction, and terms for specific tools or artifacts from Pompeii during that time period. Students share these lists with each other, build their lists, and use the vocabulary in their writing assignments to demonstrate precision and specificity in their writing.		By pointing out some of the article's stylistic choices and the effect they have on the text at large, teachers can improve students' recognition and understanding of these expressions—and thus of the larger text. Teachers can walk through some expressions from the text to determine meaning. Some examples are "The proof is in the Puddy-cat" and "Pandora's box." Students return to the text to find some expressions or new words or terms to interpret. Class discussion will revolve around the meaning of the expression, choice in using a word or expression, and what it does to the writing as a whole and for the reader. Students keep a log of these expressions or annotate them in the text.		Ask students to restate this quotation and explain its purpose and the extent to which it is effective: "Monk ran a tight ship." Ask students to identify other quotations from the book that describe a bully.	

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Observations of Progress, continued

STANDARDS	CONTEXT: Informational passage on Mt. Vesuvius[1]	DATE OBSERVED	CONTEXT: Informational passage on cloning[2]	DATE OBSERVED	CONTEXT: Fictional passage on bullying[3]	DATE OBSERVED
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	Because this text is divided into chapters, students will provide a title to each chapter that describes its point and purpose. Also, ask students to use the topic sentences and concluding sentences of the chapters to help determine effectiveness of the titles.		As you review the cloning article, note on your text: • Where you think the introduction ends • Where the author notes the main idea • Where the author shares the researcher's findings/conclusions • EVIDENCE INCLUDED • The article's conclusion Then, as you work with students, make sure they have noted these same parts in the article and in their own writing.		Ask students to highlight sections of the story that pertain to bullying. Or ask students to highlight sections of the text that use symbolism relating to biblical allusions. Have students discuss and share highlights to determine the author's intent.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	This text provides a great deal of information about Pompeii and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, but the story is told in a way that is easy to read and understand. Have students explain in list form the ways the author accomplishes this.		Students identify the author's intentions by examining the use of pet names, such as "Fluffy" or "Frisky." Students reflect on the author's purpose for using these names and what the effect is on the readers. Students use these examples to get at the author's bias.		This story is told from the point of view of a student at the school, who seems to be an outside observer. Have students explain in what ways this narrator helps the reader understand and believe the story. Does the narrator seem more reliable than if a main character had told the story?	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	Students will create a multimodal presentation about the damaging effects of volcanos, citing evidence from their text and including audio, video, and images to show their destructive nature.		To apply their new knowledge, have students use the following website to create their own genetically engineered clone; then, have them determine if cloning is a good idea. *Click and clone animation*, from Genetic Science Learning Center, University of Utah: http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/cloning/clickandclone		Students will create their own interactive story using the idea of bullying to share with the class. Students will work through the writing process and be trained to use a presentation tool such as Prezi or PowerPoint to create their interactive stories.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	Students are asked to write an essay about the extent of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and whether it could have been less deadly. Students must cite evidence from the text that offers support to their claims.		Students will look at the evidence, cite it, and judge evidence about cloning to determine to what extent they agree or disagree with the practice. Specifically, students could examine • differences between the clone and the original • arguments in favor of cloning • arguments not in favor of cloning • personal reactions to the claims		The teacher models finding one instance of Monk exhibiting power, cites page and paragraph, and models proper citation technique (quotation marks, page number, proper length). Start with an example from Standard 4 above ("Monk ran a tight ship"). Students can then work independently to find examples of Monk exhibiting power.	

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Observations of Progress, continued

STANDARDS	CONTEXT: Informational passage on Mt. Vesuvius[1]	DATE OBSERVED	CONTEXT: Informational passage on cloning[2]	DATE OBSERVED	CONTEXT: Fictional passage on bullying[3]	DATE OBSERVED
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	Students compare this text about Mount Vesuvius with an online source of the events (see CCRA.R.10, below); discuss the author's opinion about the events that took place. Students examine particular events or topics the author chose to leave out, exaggerate, or develop more fully.		Using the other articles on cloning presented to the class (see CCRA.R.10, below), students examine the bias in the original article, determine if any information was left out or further developed as compared with the others, and write a paragraph that discusses how this article influences or persuades the reader more or less than the others. Students identify articles that are more recent and offer more current information.		Students compare and contrast other works of literature on the topic of bullying and describe the authors' craft. Students identify the solutions to bullying as noted in the other works.	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy. CCRA.R.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	Students use online sources to learn more about the history of Pompeii and current information about Mount Vesuvius and the volcanos of the area. Students develop questions ahead of time that they then answer as they read the online materials. Students compare questions and their answers.		Students are presented with other article(s) on cloning and asked multi-leveled questions to check their comprehension of the text. Using the new articles' information, students compare and contrast ideas about cloning.		Ask students to read this chunk of the text before reading the story or hearing the title: "Monk's not happy with this answer, but by now he's spotted Melvin, who's grown smaller in spite of himself. Monk breaks his own rule by reaching for Melvin with his own hand. 'Kid,' he says, 'you're going to have to educate your girl friend'" (page 45). Ask them to select key ideas that this excerpt from the story contains. Students should be able to identify such ideas as aggression, bullying, and sexism. Students can learn more about these issues through other texts.	

*The standards used in this checklist are the English Language Arts Standards, College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading. Any state standards could be used, and the checklist can be made grade-level specific using state standards or the grade-level specific CCSS.

Sources:

(1) Kunhardt, E. & Eagle, M. (2003). *Pompeii—Buried Alive!* New York: Random House.

(2) Said, C. (2004, April 15). Here, kitty-kitty-kitty-kitty: Sausalito firm offers clones for $50,000, signs up 5 cat owners. *San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A1.

(3) Peck, R. (1984). "Priscilla and the Wimps." *Sixteen: Short Stories by Outstanding Writers for Young Adults.* Ed. D. R. Gallo. New York: Dell.

Achievement Tests

- Standardized, norm-referenced tests
- Large group of test-takers
- "Ballpark" estimate of reading performance
- Less helpful for discovering how to meet the needs of individual students
- Can be used to confirm results from direct assessments
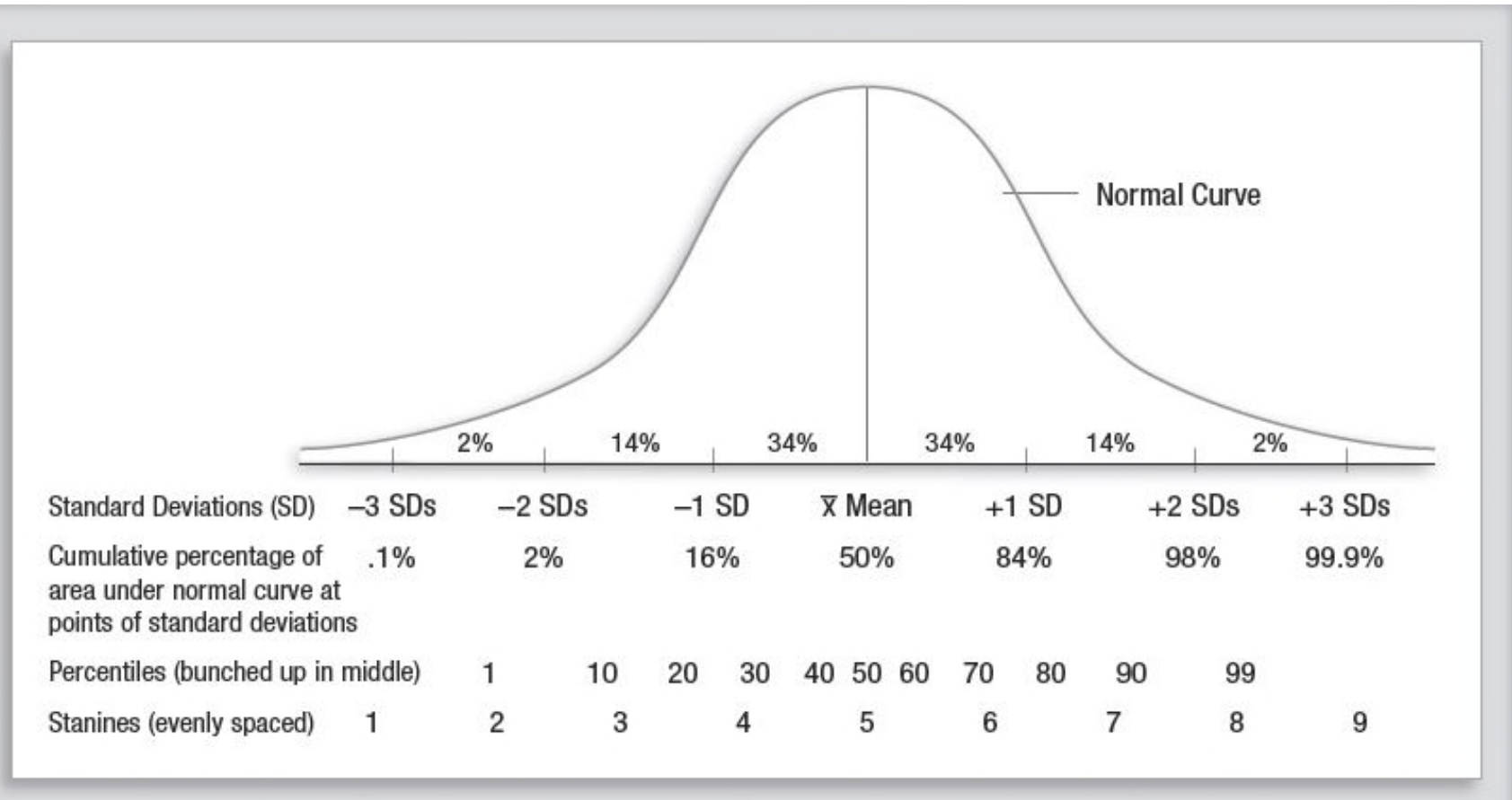
Examining Standardized Test Scores

TEACHER: Ms. G   GRADE LEVEL: 4   DATE: September

NAME OF TEST: CAT/6   DATE TEST ADMINISTERED: April

Pupil's Name	Word Analysis		Vocabulary		Comprehension		Comments
Carolyn B.	39	4	37	4	35	4	steady progress
Artis C.	34	4	53	5	36	4	good progress
Mary D.	49	5	23	③	23	③	vocabulary & comprehension
Isaac D.	63	6	83	8	74	7	could peer tutor?
Doug F.	18	②	29	③	18	②	use vocab. to build skills
Raul H.	38	4	38	4	6	①	focus on comprehension
Brandon L.	53	5	18	②	40	4	verify vocabulary
Cory M.	56	5	39	4	9	①	twins—but very different
Kerri M.	29	③	56	5	54	5	could Cory lean too much on Kerri?
Kalisha P.	36	4	26	③	3	①	focus on comprehension
Darlene P.	30	4	24	③	27	③	some comp. & vocab. work
Marcus R.	10	②	57	5	58	5	verify word analysis skills
Brenda R.	99	9	98	9	85	8	could peer tutor?
Sara R.	6	①	8	①	5	①	English learner: vocab work
Carmen T.	12	②	14	②	11	②	English learner: polysemantic words
Luis T.	37	4	31	4	14	②	comprehension strategies
Patricia W.	8	①	34	4	25	③	verify with an IRI
Mark W.	38	4	26	③	21	③	some comp. & vocab. help
Greg W.	57	5	38	4	37	4	good, steady progress
Linda Y.	36	4	35	4	16	②	comprehension strategies
	percentile	stanine	percentile	stanine	percentile	stanine	

*Below-average stanine scores are circled. Twelve of 20 students, more than half, are below average in comprehension. The instructional focus needs to be on comprehension.

Scoring Distributions for the Normal Curve

Standard Deviations (SD)	−3 SDs	−2 SDs	−1 SD	X̄ Mean	+1 SD	+2 SDs	+3 SDs
Cumulative percentage of area under normal curve at points of standard deviations	.1%	2%	16%	50%	84%	98%	99.9%
Percentiles (bunched up in middle)	1	10 20 30	40 50 60	70 80	90	99	
Stanines (evenly spaced)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Informal (Direct) Assessment

- Informal reading inventories (IRIs)
- Running records
- Anecdotal notes
- Checklists
- Scoring rubrics

- Cloze tests
- Writing folders
- Word lists
- Interest and attitude inventories

Reading Capacity Levels

Highest level of material a student can understand when a passage is read to him/her:

- Independent level

- Instructional level

- Frustration level

- Listening comprehension level

A Coded and Analyzed Running Record

CLAIRE'S READING

Claire made a number of errors on this text but she often self-corrected without any assistance. (Only a portion of the record is shown.)

CLAIRE'S RECORD

Analysis of errors and self-corrections
Information used

Page of Text	Running Record	E M S V	SC M S V
"Because I'm years older," Hannah smirked.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ R ✓ ✓.		
He gave up arguing and stomped off towards his	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
room. "See you in the morning," he said to	bedroom. She |SC / room. See ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Ⓜ Ⓢ Ⓥ / Ⓜ Ⓢ Ⓥ	M S Ⓥ
his mother to emphasize that he was ignoring	✓ ✓ and|SC emphases / R ✓ ✓ ✓ to | emphasize	Ⓜ Ⓢ V / M S Ⓥ	M S Ⓥ
Hannah.	Anna |SC Hannah|	Ⓜ Ⓢ Ⓥ	M S Ⓥ
He posed in front of his bedroom mirror. If	✓ possed / posed ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓. ✓	M S Ⓥ	
Hannah was a damsel in distress, she couldn't	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ district |SC ✓ ✓ / distress |	M S Ⓥ	Ⓜ Ⓢ Ⓥ
expect him to come galloping to her rescue.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓.		
She could stay tied to the stake. He would	✓ ✓ ✓ died|SC ✓ ✓ ✓. ✓ ✓ / tied|	M S Ⓥ	Ⓜ Ⓢ Ⓥ
charge in cutting this way and that with his	✓ ✓ ✓ the / ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ / this	M Ⓢ Ⓥ	
fearsome sword. All would fall before him and	✓ sword|SC ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ / sword.|	M S Ⓥ	Ⓜ Ⓢ V
he would fight his way to where she was tied	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
and then . . .	✓ ✓ . . .		

Her teacher summarized the analysis of the reading like this:

Claire uses meaning, structure, and visual information, repeats words occasionally, self-corrects most of her errors, picking up more visual information, and attempts all words.

Claire needs to take more responsibility for making all the information match. She needs to be encouraged to recognize when meaning is lost, and self-correct.

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Sample Anecdotal Notes

DATE	NOTES
12/4	During independent reading, Luke attempted a guess at a new word's meaning, spectacles. He said he remembered his brother talking about his glasses as his "specs."
1/6	Luke asked to return to the library to find a different book after starting one that he said was not interesting.
1/14	During guided reading, Luke came across the word tireless. He immediately recognized the -less ending and said "without tire." After a brief time, he said, "Oh, they wanted to make enough money to get a gift for their mother and they were working as if they were not tired."
1/27	Luke assembled a set of nonfiction literature and located several websites on the topic of planets. He has chosen drawings, charts, and diagrams as the activities he will use to show what he has learned.
2/17	Luke created an attractive and accurate mobile of the sun and the planets to share with the class as a visual for his oral report.

Student Self-Assessment Checklist

NAME: _Mark_

TITLE(S) OF WORK ASSESSED: _The Solar System_

Did I . . . ?

- ☑ have a plan before I started writing?
- ☑ write complete sentences that are not run-on sentences?
- ☑ write some compound sentences that are connected with *and, or, but*?
- ☑ write a good topic sentence for each paragraph?
- ☑ write supporting sentences that help support the topic sentence in each paragraph?
- ☑ write accurate nonfiction that is also interesting?
- ☑ provide good transitions between paragraphs?
- N/A write a story that has a beginning, a middle, and an end?
- N/A write a story with a problem and a solution?
- N/A describe the main character well?
- N/A include dialogue in my story?
- N/A use correct punctuation in any dialogue?
- ☑ use interesting and vivid words?
- ☑ confer with others to revise?
- ☑ edit my drafts?

Questions to Ask When Constructing Rubrics

- Do the degrees of quality change with specific detail so students know how to achieve growth?

- Will the rubric use language or numbers as scoring indicators?

- How will items be weighted?

- Does it include examples?

- Is it clear and relevant?

- What are the focus area(s) for instruction and assessment?

- Is it developmentally appropriate?

- Are form and function represented?

- Does it use clear, positive, observable language?

- Are there no zero scores?

Self-Assessment Scoring Rubric

RUBRIC: Creatures of the Sea From A to Z   STUDENT: Luke

Requirements	FANTASTIC 4	NICE JOB! 3	OKAY 2	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1	SELF-ASSESSMENT	TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT
Cover Page	Includes title, author, and an appropriate illustration.	Includes two of the three required elements.	Includes one of the three required elements.	Does not include any of the three required elements, or is missing.	3 I forgot to put my name on the cover page.	3 No name on cover page
Alphabet Pages	Each of the 26 pages includes all required elements: (1) target word (2) word used in context (3) three facts about word (4) illustration for the word	Most pages include at least three required elements, and frequently four elements.	Many pages include two required elements, with several including three or four elements.	Many pages include only one or two required elements, or some pages are missing.	4 I did pages for all the letters.	3 Sometimes the three required facts were left out.
Author Page	Includes author name, background information, an illustration or photo.	Includes two of the three required elements.	Includes one of the three required elements.	Does not include any of the three elements, or is missing.	1 I forgot to do the author page.	1 The author page is missing.

My strengths are: My illustrations are really first-rate. I am skilled at drawing.

What I need to work on: I need to read the directions for my assignments carefully.

Portfolios

▶ A collection of selected products accompanied by evidence of reflection and self-assessment

▶ Types:
- Electronic portfolio
- Working portfolio
- Showcase portfolio

How/Why Portfolios Can Help Teachers

- Allow students to self-assess
- Provide time for collaborative assessment
- Have a recursive structure
- Offer additional opportunities for feedback
- Involve non-competitive learning

- Accommodate individualized learning
- Maintain accessible writing
- Motivate students to revise, edit, share, and revisit their own writing
- Offer flexibility for students who are not done after writing draft(s)

Reflections and Contemplations

- Which do you prefer?

  - Norm- or criterion-referenced assessment measures?

  - Assessment that's more formal and less direct, or vice versa?

- Why?