



Copyright © 2009 Pearson Canada Inc., Toronto, Ontario.

All rights reserved. This publication (work) is protected by copyright. You are authorized to print one copy of this publication (work) for your personal, non-commercial use only. See [Terms of Use](#) for more information.

Permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, use on an interactive whiteboard or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise. Contact the [Permissions Department](#) for more information.

Except as allowed in the preceding paragraphs, you may not modify, copy, distribute, republish, commercially exploit, or update this publication (work) or any other material on this web site without the prior consent of Pearson Canada. No intellectual property or other rights in and to this publication (work) are transferred to you.

Self-Reports and Self-Assessments

“If you want to appear accountable, test your students. If you want to improve schools, teach teachers to assess their students. If you want to maximize learning, teach students to assess themselves.”

– Rick Stiggins


A self-report is independent of a student’s work. For example, a student interest inventory is a self-report. In contrast, a self-assessment requires students to use their self-knowledge to make reasoned, metacognitively driven assessments of their own work. The two techniques are grouped together here because they are both forms of assessment *as learning*.

Why Use These Techniques?

The tools included in the techniques of self-reports and self-assessments provide information about students’ readiness, interests, learning preferences, and attitudes. This information can be extremely useful when you are planning a unit or lesson, instructing students, or assessing learning.

Tools to Consider

Tool	Description	Examples
Inventory	A collection of questions or statements based on a theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple intelligences inventory (see <i>Evidence to Action</i>, Blackline Master 1.3, Multiple Intelligences Inventory) • Triarchic intelligences inventory (see <i>Evidence to Action</i>, Blackline Master 1.4, Triarchic Intelligence Preferences) • Learning styles inventory (see <i>Evidence to Action</i>, Blackline Master 1.9, Your Learning Preferences Profile)
Survey or questionnaire	A collection of questions or statements focused on a particular area, often interest or attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest survey (see <i>Evidence to Action</i>, Blackline Master 2.6, I Find This Interesting...) • Assessment attitude survey (see Blackline Master T41, Attitude Survey: Assessment)
Quick responses	Oral questions, usually answered nonverbally or orally, related to students’ preferences and readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Fingers • Three Thumbs • Four Corners
Pre-Assessments	A variety of tools that allow students to self-report about their background experience, knowledge base, level of skill, and attitudes related to an upcoming unit of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know-Want to Know-Learned (KWL) charts (see Blackline Master T42, Variety of Pre-Assessments) • QuickWrites and QuickDraws



Some researchers suggest that there are really just three categories of self-assessment activities, with the categories based on their complexity and the time they take to complete:

- Pause and Think—Take a minute to reflect on learning, orally or silently.
 - Look for Proof—Assess an aspect of a work sample and look for proof to support the assessment.
 - Connect to Criteria—Assess work in relation to criteria.
- (Gregory, Cameron, & Davies, 2000)

In other words, the assessment *as learning* activities described in this book are all forms of self-assessment.

Steps

1. Decide exactly what you need to know, based on a clear idea of how you will use the information. Students will quickly stop putting effort into self-reports if the information languishes in a file folder.
2. Choose the appropriate tool to gather the information you need.
3. Create the questionnaire, survey, or pre-assessment (or modify an existing one) to make sure it captures the information you need and is at a reading level that is appropriate to students.
4. If you are creating an attitude survey, see Blackline Master T43 (Attitude Survey Criteria). If creating a pre-assessment, use Blackline Master T44 (Pre-Assessment Criteria).
5. Determine when to administer a self-report. It is very useful to have students complete a self-report twice—once at the beginning of a year or unit of study, and again near the end, after students have had a wide variety of experiences. You will then be able to show them that learning preferences and knowledge, and even attitudes (from a class, rather than individual, perspective), *can* change.

“One of the strongest motivators is the opportunity to look back and see progress.”

– Jan Chappuis





6. Use the data you gather from self-reports, along with your observations and professional judgment, to provide students with learning and assessment experiences that will lead to growth and achievement.
7. Remember to model and encourage metacognitive thinking at every opportunity. Give students the language for thinking and talking about their work. See *Evidence to Action*, Blackline Master 4.2 (Talking About Thinking).

What to Watch For

Issue	Solution
Not knowing what to do with the results of pre-assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design the pre-assessment after you have identified your goals for the unit. This will allow you to gather specific information through the pre-assessment. Responses to open-ended questions such as “Tell me everything you know about...” take a long time to sort through and may not give you the information you need for planning.• Pre-assess several weeks in advance of a new unit so you have time to use the data in your planning.
Learning preferences that are challenging to support (for example, accommodating musical-rhythmic learners in your Science class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be cautious about altering instructional or assessment activities on the basis of self-reports alone. Students must have extensive and in-depth knowledge of who they are as learners before their self-reports will allow you to make valid inferences about what they need.• Use self-reports and self-assessments to build students’ self-understanding. Use self-reports, your own observations, and professional wisdom to design high-quality instructional and assessment activities.• Talk with students about the real meaning of various learning preferences. For example, being a musical-rhythmic learner means not that you like music, but that you are naturally drawn to solving problems and creating products through that intelligence. (See <i>Evidence to Action</i>, pages 26–27.)
Requiring students to sign their names to attitude surveys so self-reports about attitudes can inform instructional decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not require students to sign their names. They are not free to self-report honestly if they fear, rightly or wrongly, that their views will be held against them. Use attitude surveys to develop group summaries of attitudes. For individual assessments, use observation and conversation.

Issue	Solution
<p>Inaccurate self-assessment by students (They may not know what they don't know, or may rate themselves too high or too low for a variety of reasons.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need the opportunity to self-assess a piece of work at multiple points through the process. As they see that their understanding is improving over time, some will discover that their early self-assessments were inaccurate. • Clear criteria provide objective evidence that allows you to discuss any persistent self-assessment concerns with students.
<p>Students awarding themselves higher marks than the teacher would give, thus skewing students' grades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessments are assessment <i>as</i> learning activities. They should have no impact on a student's mark on an assignment or grade on a report card. Assessment <i>of</i> learning, or evaluation, is strictly the teacher's responsibility.

Time-Saving and Organizational Tips

- ✓ Use the class profile form provided on Blackline Master T45 (Class Profile) to consolidate information gathered from various inventories and surveys. Doing so will make it fast and easy to group students.
- ✓ Share class profile forms with others who teach your students. Doing this saves time and prevents students from complaining about completing yet another inventory.
- ✓ Keep pre-assessments short. Since they do not count for grades, you want to be able to scan the results and get the information you need quickly and efficiently.
- ✓ On a pre-assessment, group together all questions or activities about a particular understanding or skill. Doing so allows you to easily identify what students understand, as well as gaps in their understanding.



Engaging Students Through Self-Reports and Self-Assessments

- Young adolescents are usually fascinated by the process of self-discovery. It is extremely engaging to see that their teacher genuinely wants to know more about them, and wants to do everything possible to encourage their success.

“A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience.”

– Jack Mezirow

→ Students often experience assessment as something that is “done to them.” Self-assessments, along with other assessment as learning activities, allow students to see themselves as partnering with you in the assessment process. They become motivated to take increasing responsibility for their learning.

→ When students self-identify their learning needs and use these to set their own goals, they feel more empowered to achieve them.

To Explore Further

In Your Role



As a group, make a list of all of the different forms of self-reports and self-assessments that you use, and discuss the merits and challenges of each. Individually, select one form that you have not used and test it in your classroom.

Pre-assess student knowledge or attitude about an upcoming unit by giving students the unit's essential question. Then, have them write or discuss responses to any of the following pairs of prompts:

- I can explain/I can't explain
- I know/I don't know
- I remember/I don't remember
- I like/I don't like
- I am looking forward to/I am not looking forward to
- I am interested in/I am not interested in
- I am good at/I am not good at



As a group, discuss any of the following significant issues in self-reporting:

- encouraging honest reports from students who either do not trust that the report will not be used against them, or who have been taught to agree with authority figures
- dealing with honest, negative responses
- assessing student attitudes through observation, especially where there is cultural variation in student behaviour (e.g., avoiding eye contact as a sign of respect)

Learn More

W. James Popham (2003), “The Value of Affective Assessment” in *Teach Better, Test Better: The Instructional Role of Assessment*, pp. 106–121. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

In This Section

- p. 131 Pre-Assessment
- p. 132 Quick Response
- p. 134 Quick Response
- p. 136 Inventory

TEACH IT**Learning Goal**

Perform mental addition and subtraction of integers.

Lori plays games such as “I Have, Who Has?” with students as a warm-up and review at the start of math class. Each student is given a card that has an answer and a question. See sample card in margin.

See BLM T46 (I Have, Who Has?) for all game cards.

The game moves quickly, with students listening to the questions and responding if they have the correct answer on their card.

I have +6.

Who has
 $(-3) - (+5)$?



I Have, Who Has?

ASSESS IT**SUPPORT IT**

“I Have, Who Has?” and other review/warm-up games serve two purposes. They are a form of diagnostic (pre-assessment) or formative assessment (quick response) for the teacher, providing quickly obtained information about who needs additional support. They are also a self-assessment for students, providing immediate feedback about the accuracy of a student’s work.

TEACH IT

In a Four Corners activity, students are asked to choose one of four or more options. They physically move to a place in the classroom to indicate the choice they have made, and then they discuss their choice with others who made the same choice.

ASSESS IT

CLASS
ROOM

Assessing Anchor Samples

James used the Four Corners structure to have students assess anchor samples of an art activity before they began the activity. (See pages 58–59.) Students moved to the art piece that they thought was the superior example, and discussed their choice with others in the same location. Then, a representative provided feedback to the rest of the class.

CLASS
ROOM

Assessing Preferences

Matthew used the Four Corners structure to have students determine their favourite learning station after completing an “assessment carousel.” (See pages 35, 68, and 143.) Once they had chosen a corner, students discussed what their choice said about their learning preferences.



SUPPORT IT

Four Corners activities have the advantage of providing teachers with an “at a glance” assessment opportunity. James can direct student attention to specific aspects of anchor samples, and he can address any misunderstandings about the art assignment before students begin to work on it.

Matthew’s use of Four Corners provides his class with a visible record of the variation in learning preferences in the classroom. Matthew can use this information to draw students’ attention to this variation so that they are supportive of all learning preferences. He might also record student choices on a class learning profile (see Blackline Master T45, Class Profile); then, he will have this information available to assist him when he is designing future learning stations.

Four Corners activities are not always practical. Sometimes you will want students to offer a quick response to a question of preference or readiness without getting out of their desks and without making their responses obvious to their classmates. In those instances, alternatives to Four Corners include these:

- ✓ Five Finger Assessment, where five raised fingers means the student could teach the topic, down to one raised finger meaning “I know nothing about this topic”
- ✓ Three Thumbs Assessment, where an upturned thumb means “I’ve got it” or “I agree,” a thumb turned down means “I’m lost” or “I disagree,” and a thumb in the sideways position means “I’m not certain I understand” or “I’m neutral about this question”
- ✓ Colour Cue Assessment, where different colours of paper, sticky notes, or paper cups indicate different preferences, and students hold up a colour in response to a question



TEACH IT

Learning Goal

Apply knowledge of a narrative element to the creation of a quick response.

Grade 10 students in Jen’s locally developed English class have been studying the elements of narrative. (See pages 32–34 and Blackline Master T47, Unit Plan: Narrative for more details.) At the start of each class, Jen uses a quick response activity to remind students of what was done the previous day, or to anticipate the work to be done.

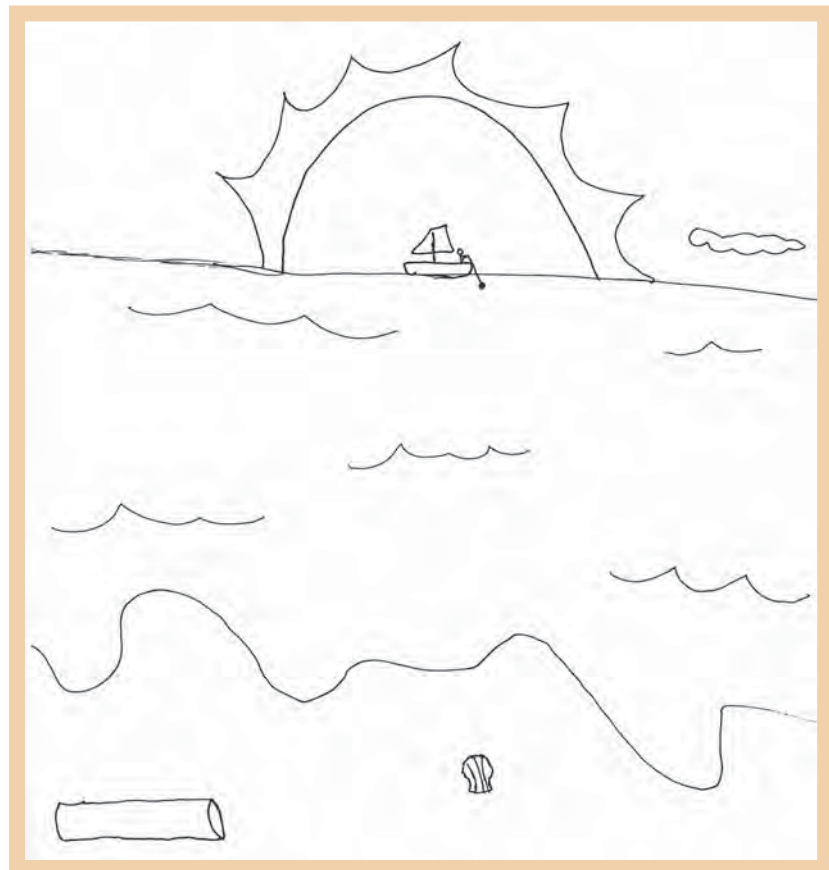
ASSESS IT



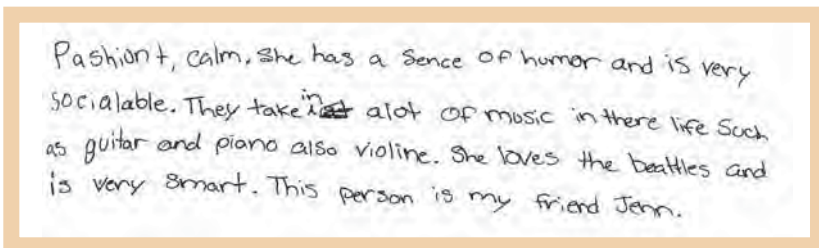
QuickDraw and QuickWrite

The two samples provided here are responses to the following prompts:

- QuickDraw (Setting)—Think of a place. Draw the setting



- QuickWrite (Character)—Write for two minutes. Tell me about your best friend.



SUPPORT IT

These quick responses provide Jen with either diagnostic or formative assessment information, depending on when in the unit she chooses to use them. As diagnostic assessments, they provide baseline information about a student’s understanding of the elements of setting and character, so Jen knows what she needs to address during the unit.

To increase their effectiveness as formative assessments, Jen reminded students to address what they had learned about the different aspects of each narrative element.

You can turn the quick responses into self- and peer assessments:

If	Then
Students do not address all four aspects of character (what the character says and does, what others say about the character, and how the character interacts with others)	(Self-Assessment) Have students identify which aspects of character they have written about, and then add the missing aspects.
Students do not identify three aspects of setting (place, time, and environment)	(Peer Assessment) Have students trade drawings with a partner, and ask the partner to attach a sticky note, identifying the place, time, and environment shown in the drawing.

Inventory

TEACH IT

Teachers who differentiate their instruction often use inventories to increase students' awareness of variations in learning preferences, and to inform decisions about instructional approaches.

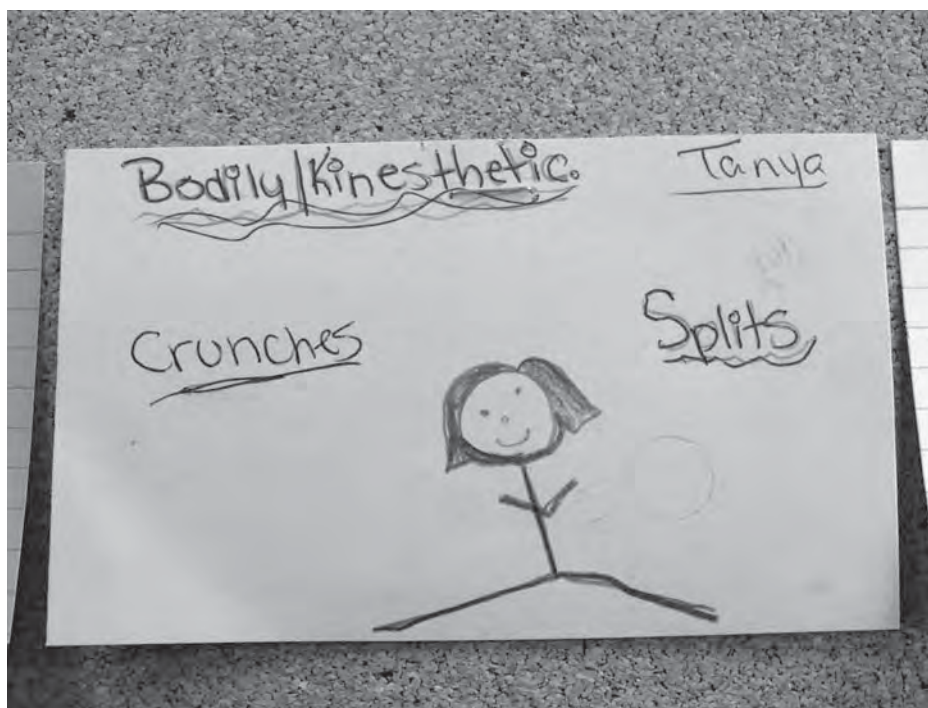


Lori and Jen each taught students about intelligence preferences by administering multiple intelligence inventories. (See *Evidence to Action*, Blackline Master 2.4, Lots of Ways to Be Smart!)

ASSESS IT

Lori had students graph their learning style and intelligence preferences on a class bulletin board. Jen had students complete individual graphs.





SUPPORT IT

The two groups of students had similar results—a declared preference for musical-rhythmic and interpersonal learning. The teachers were not concerned when they recognized that this was an expression of interests rather than preferences for learning through these forms. The inventories had served their purpose of engaging students in discussions of the wide variety of ways that individuals learn.

Lori uses the bulletin board graph as an ongoing reminder to herself, and to students, of the wide variety of strengths there are in her classroom. She tries to concentrate on one preference for a week or two of lessons, and she tracks her use of the preferences in order to ensure that all are addressed over time.

Jen uses the results of students' intelligence inventories to structure learning station tasks for her unit on elements of narrative (see Blackline Master T47, Unit Plan: Narrative).

