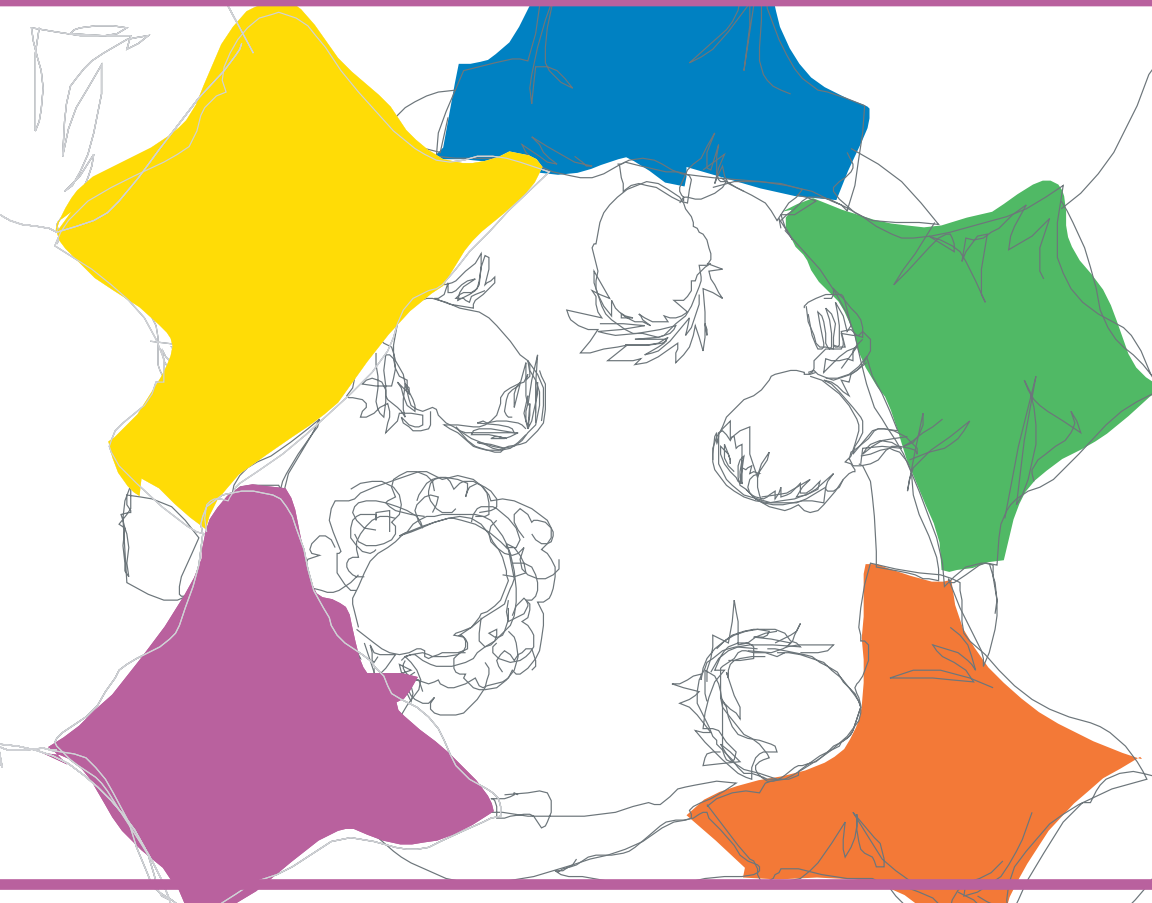
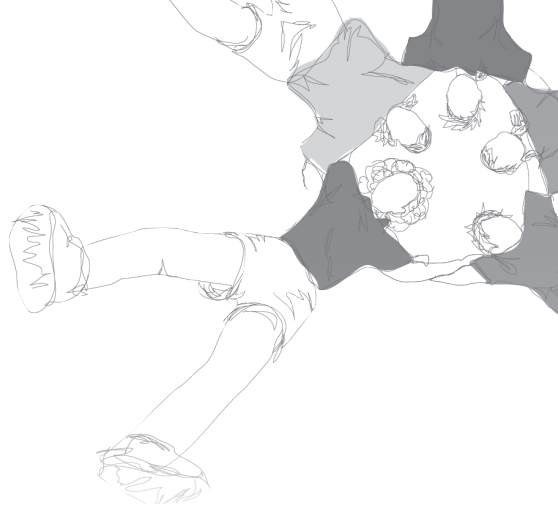


*Third Edition*

# ***Making Classroom Assessment Work***



Anne Davies, Ph.D.



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Third Edition

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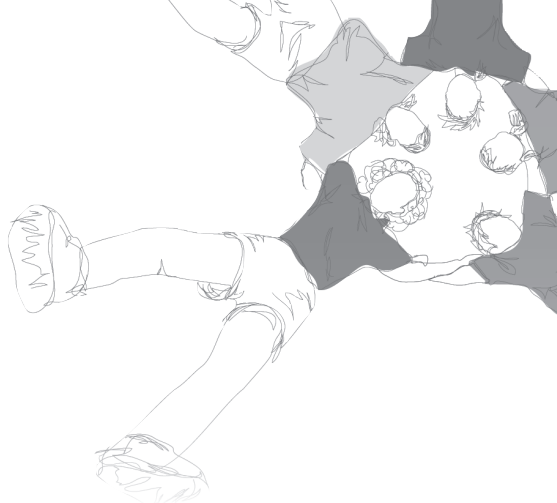
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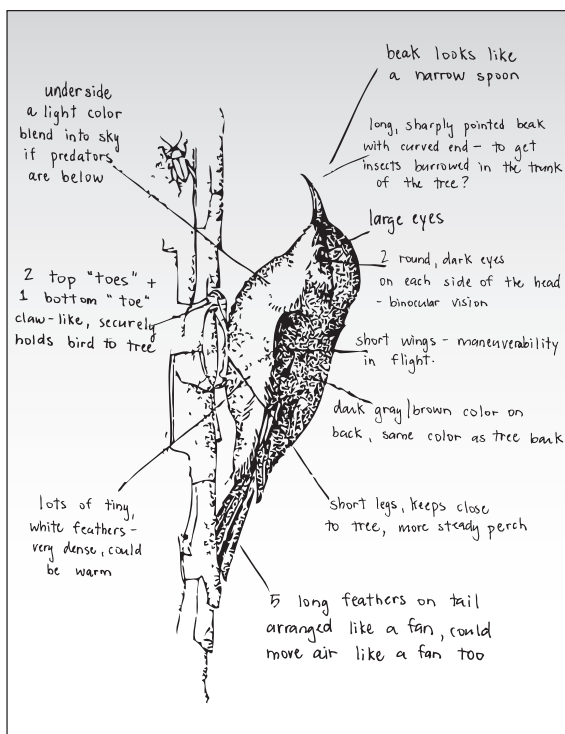
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Mr. M posts samples and criteria on his school's website so students and parents can access them easily. Students (and others) use the samples and the criteria to give themselves and their peers specific, descriptive feedback.



With thanks to Polly Wilson, Maine

Ms. L has a collection of line drawings, paintings, prints, and sculpture to show art development over time. She asks students to analyze different pieces prior to self-assessing or giving peer feedback. This practice helps them become more specific in their feedback to themselves and others, and is therefore, more helpful for further learning.

Mr. R has a collection of research projects from previous years to show his students what is possible and what success might look like. Prior to beginning a research project, he asks students to work in groups to analyze the projects. Then, as a whole class, they develop criteria to guide their work towards quality.

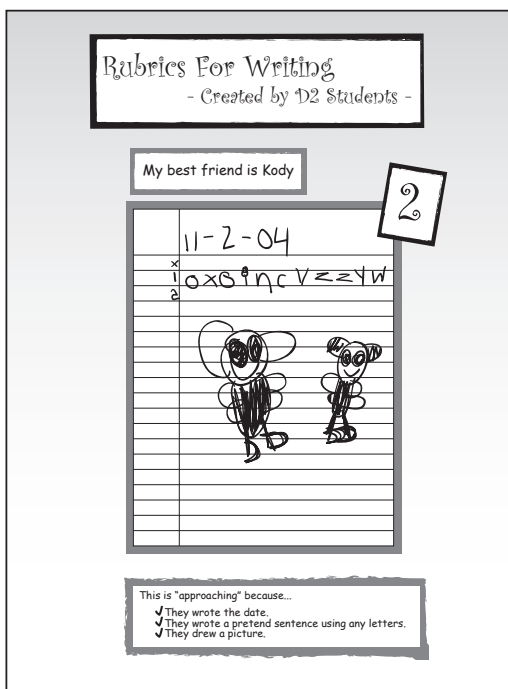
Ms. Z posts two or three numbered samples of maps with the criteria that the class developed with her assistance. Prior to meeting for peer feedback, students are given time to compare their work to the samples. They record which sample their work most resembles and why.

Mr. C posts two samples of reader responses to show students the way to quality. While their work is in progress, students are asked to compare their responses to the samples. Later, students may be asked to self-assess in relation to the criteria posted with the samples, or to decide which sample their work most resembles and why. This self-assessment is attached to their work and submitted to the teacher.

Ms. D and Mr. L both ask their high school students to donate their portfolios for them to use with subsequent classes. Each year a few students are happy to do so. The teachers use these portfolios to demonstrate to their Social Studies and Mathematics students how their portfolios might look. They also lead a discussion about what could make the portfolio more effective.

*Using samples to show ways to represent learning*

Teachers will often use samples to help students see the range of development over time – for example, a series of writing samples that show development towards increasing quality. Teachers will also use samples to illustrate the many ways students can represent what they’ve learned. When students are able to select different ways to show what they’ve learned, more students are likely to be able to show their learning and the form of representation is less likely to be a barrier to their success.



With thanks to Pauoa School, Hawaii

*Using samples to help others understand learning*

Showing samples can help teachers answer students’ questions – “What do you want?” “How good is good enough?” “What does excellence look like?” – by illustrating the standard. Comparing student work to samples, models and criteria can also help us respond to the parent who asks, “How is my child doing?” or to others who ask to see proof of student learning. When meeting with parents, teachers use collections of samples to show the gap between the student’s current level of quality and the next level. This helps parents understand the ways they might support future learning. When others look at children’s collections of evidence of learning and compare them to the quality expected by the standards, they gain insights that help close the achievement gap.



## Guiding Our Own Learning

Develop a plan for collecting evidence by returning to your earlier description of what students need to learn, be able to do, and be able to articulate (see *Guiding Our Own Learning* on page 32).

Think about the evidence of learning you and your students will be able to collect. Consider observations, products, and conversations.

Make a list of all the evidence related to the learning destination.

When you are finished, review the list, asking yourself:

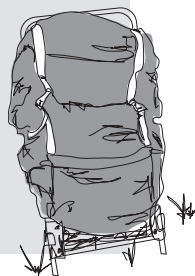
- Will my evidence show whether or not students have learned what they needed to learn?
- Is there any evidence I am collecting for which I am not accountable?
- Am I collecting evidence from multiple sources?
- Am I collecting enough evidence to see patterns over time?
- Am I collecting too much evidence? Is there anything I can stop collecting?
- How can my students be involved in collecting and organizing the evidence?

Show your draft to a trusted colleague. Ask if he or she thinks there is anything you have missed or anything you could delete. Consider the suggestions and make your own decision.

When we divide up the responsibility for developing the first draft, everyone benefits – we improve our work and have more confidence in it. Talk about your list of evidence with others. Share your list. Invite others to share their work with you. After you have piloted the process with one subject area, proceed to do the same with other subject areas or courses.

## Guiding the Learning of Students

Prepare the students to *assess their way to success* by asking them to identify all the evidence they might have that shows proof of meeting the learning destination. Ask them to consider not only what *you* would need for proof but also what *others* (i.e. parents, employers, other institutions) would need for proof. Make a joint list of all the possible ideas for evidence of learning in relation to the learning destination. Remind them that the evidence is only a record of what they have learned; it isn't – and can never be – the whole story.



## Evaluating the Evidence

Evaluation is a process of looking at all the evidence, comparing it to the description and samples of quality, and asking: *Did this student learn what was to be learned? How well?* When we evaluate, we determine the worth or value of the evidence – we appraise it with respect to excellence or merit. Simply totaling the grades in our record book means that important evidence may not be considered. To evaluate well, we should look at *all* the evidence – observations, products, and conversations. We can then use this evidence to determine whether the student has met the widely-held expectations for his or her age.

*Triangulation of evidence* – looking at evidence from three different sources – is essential because it puts single pieces of evidence into context. As a judge in a court of law must examine all the evidence in light of the legal statutes, teachers must look at all the evidence in light of the description of learning. We must consider the entire range of indicators – the evidence students have collected, the self-assessments they have made, our observations, criteria-based assessments attached to projects or assignments, performance grids, rubric scores, and grades from projects and tests.

Three-Way Conference Goal Sheet		
Name: _____ Date: _____		
Goals I have chosen to work on this year:		
Goal 1: <u>improve on home work in math-</u> <u>fewer than 5 wrong</u>		
Goal 2: <u>improve on writing skills -</u> <u>write at least 5 writing pieces</u>		
<b>Student Will:</b> show homework to mom. Show down in math. Ask for help.	<b>Parent Will:</b> GOAL 1. a. CHECK HOMEWORK b. QUIZ ON MATH FACTS GOAL 2. a. LOOK OVER WRITING PIECES b. MAKE SUGGESTIONS	<b>Teacher Will:</b> Correct the math in a timely fashion. Give assistance. Set clear expectations for written pieces.

An outline of this Conference Goal Sheet is available as a Reproducible on page 126 of the Appendix.



## Reporting

Reporting used to be a special event that happened only at set times in a year. Now it is an ongoing process that involves students, parents, and teachers in examining and making sense of a student's learning. Every time students speak with their parents about learning, they are reporting. That is, whenever they take home a sample of their work and discuss it, or invite parents to a portfolio afternoon to look at their work or to participate in a student-parent-teacher conference, they are reporting.

<p><b>Mid-Term Informal Report</b></p> <p><b>By:</b> _____</p> <p><b>My personal goal for this term was:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Please notice how I:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- have achieved my goal.</li><li>- am working on my goal.</li><li>- am thinking about starting to work on my goal.</li></ul> <p><b>You can know this because:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Parent(s)' Comments:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Parent(s)' Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Teacher's Signature:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Date:</b> _____</p>
---

*Formal* evaluating and reporting is usually required by legislation or policy and is a process of looking at the evidence, having conversations and conferences about what the evidence means, and keeping a written record of the conversation for the learner's permanent file.

Increasingly, teachers are involving students in the conferencing and reporting process and inviting them and their parents to be part of student-parent-teacher conferences. The purpose of these conferences is to look at the evidence, highlight strengths, discuss areas needing improvement, and set goals during the reporting period.

The following stories illustrate how four teachers are using the reporting process with their primary, intermediate and secondary classes.

Mrs. H has created an observation chart for her early primary class that details what she needs to be teaching and observing in different subject areas.