



# Becoming Your Own Best Teacher

Becoming Self-Assessors

## Contents

Assessment in Education .....	2
We will cover: .....	2
What does assessment as learning look like? .....	3
Understanding the three approaches to assessment.....	3
Why is it Important to teach learner’s how to use assessment as learning?.....	4
Prerequisites for Assessment “AS” Learning.....	4
Five Step Introduction Plan .....	4
Evaluating Plan Success.....	5
Critical Evaluation Tool.....	6
1. Self-Assessment Rubric for Projects .....	6
2. Reflection Journal Template .....	6
3. SMART Goals Framework .....	6
Call to Action .....	7
Appendix.....	8
Sample Rubric_ .....	9
Self-Assessment Rubric .....	10
Reflection Journal.....	11
SMART Goal Planning.....	12
References .....	14

# Becoming Your Own Best Teacher: Becoming Self-Assessors

## Assessment in Education

Assessment in education is surprisingly controversial. My personal experience as a successful learner may have shielded me from this debate, but research reveals deep divisions.

“Black and Wiliam reviewed over 250 studies and concluded that intentionally using assessment to promote learning enhances student achievement.” (1998)

However, more recent research suggests that the impact of formative assessment varies—  
“Cai et al. found significant benefits for low- and medium-reading achievers but not for high achievers.” (2022)

To explore this further, I examined the OECD’s PISA assessments, widely regarded as benchmarks in international education. “Some scholars argue that PISA rankings are influenced by how background variables are selected, potentially shifting country comparisons.”(Hopfenbeck, 2022)

The debate over the value of assessment continues, but what do these studies have in common? They focus on assessment **of** or **for** learning but overlook the importance of teaching learners to use assessment as learning—an essential step in fostering self-directed, lifelong learners.

## We will cover:

- What does assessment as learning look like
- Understanding the three approaches to assessment
- The importance of teaching learner’s how to use assessment as learning
- Prerequisites for assessment “AS” learning
- Introduction Plan


## What does assessment as learning look like?

**Assessment as learning** occurs when “learners take an active role in evaluating their own progress. They monitor their understanding, ask questions, and apply various strategies to assess what they know and can do.”(Harapnuik, 2022) This process fosters ownership of learning, as students reflect on their work against established criteria, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and set goals for their continued growth.

### Understanding the three approaches to assessment.

The table below takes a comparative look at the three approaches to assessment.

Type	What It Means	Example	How You Use It
Assessment <b>of</b> Learning	Measures what you’ve learned (summative).	Exams, final grades.	Reflect on your results to identify strengths & areas for improvement.
Assessment <b>for</b> Learning	Helps teachers guide learning (formative).	Quizzes, practice exercises.	Use teacher feedback to adjust how you study before the final test.
Assessment <b>as</b> Learning	You assess yourself to monitor growth.	Reflection journals, self-checklists.	Take ownership of your learning proactively seek new insight and set personal goals.

 **Real-Life Example:** Think of an athlete training for a competition:

The athlete watches a video replay of their performance. - Assessment of Learning,

Coach provides tips and suggests on areas where additional practice should be focused.

Adjustments are made to the athlete’s training regiment - Assessment for Learning,

“The athlete critiques and reflects on their own performance and sets a new personal goal”(William, 2011) and self monitors progress.

*To help learners become self-directed we need to change the Learning environment so Assessment As Learning can be incorporated into our courses more often.*

## Why is it Important to teach learner's how to use assessment as learning?

When learners engage in assessment as learning they develop essential soft skills that benefit both their professional and personal lives. Below are some key skills that self-directed learners cultivate. Try to complete the last three on your own:

- Self-awareness
  - Critical thinking
  - Self-reflection
  - Communication
- \_i\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ (2 words)
  - \_d\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ (1 word)
  - \_s\_ i \_\_\_\_\_ (1 word)

## Prerequisites for Assessment “AS” Learning

If you've already read my post, [Implementing the Learner's Mindset-Encouraging a Feedforward Strategy](#) on [thepowerofknowledge.ca](http://thepowerofknowledge.ca) you already understand the importance of mindset. If not, I encourage you to pause here and review it. The post explores the learning environment needed for success and provides actionable strategies educators can use to shift Learner mindset.

## Five Step Introduction Plan

1. Provide leadership training on self-assessment and self-directed learning, highlighting their benefits. Align the content with the organization's strategic goal of fostering employee ownership in continuous improvement
2. Develop a workshop on Feedforward, introducing key concepts, sharing sample criteria from other programs, and co-designing an evaluation rubric with learner input.
3. Practice rubric-based assessment by having learners evaluate "Exemplar" and "Great foundation, but..." samples. Debrief as a group. Model the evaluation process by verbalizing thought processes for each criterion.
4. Embed reflection activities throughout the course, using strategies like One-Sentence Summary, Muddiest Point, and 3-2-1 to deepen learning.
5. Guide learners through a goal-setting model, incorporating self-monitoring techniques to track progress.

## Evaluating Plan Success

Included below is a list of possible success indicators that the department leaders will track to ensure their team is moving towards self assessment because the skills taught will be essential to meet our strategic goals.

### 1. **Learner Self-Assessment & Reflection**

Use self-assessment tools like journals, surveys, or reflection prompts to measure growth. **Example:** Have learners write a reflection on how they planned, monitored, and adapted their learning.

### 2. **Goal setting and Progress Monitoring**

Assess whether learners set clear, realistic learning goals and track their progress. **Example:** Use a goal-setting framework (e.g., SMART, GROW) and review progress reports.

### 3. **Demonstration of Metacognitive Skills**

Evaluate how well learners articulate their thought processes and learning strategies. **Example:** Assign metacognitive activities where learners explain how they approached a problem or project.

### 4. **Learner Autonomy in Assignments**

Observe whether learners take initiative, seek out resources, and adapt to challenges. **Example:** Provide an open-ended project and assess how learners independently research and problem-solve.

### 5. **Peer and Leader Feedback**

Use peer evaluations and leader feedback to gauge learner engagement in self-directed strategies. **Example:** Ask peers to assess each other's ability to give and receive Feedforward.

### 6. **Performance on Self-Directed Tasks**

Measure how learners perform on assignments that require independent learning and critical thinking. **Example:** Assess a project where Learners must find, evaluate, and apply new information to solve a problem relevant to their duties.

# Self-Directed Evaluation Tools

## 1. Self-Assessment Rubric for Projects

Rubrics can provide students with informative feedback on their strengths and weaknesses so that they can reflect on their performance and work on areas that need improvement. (NC State University, 2024)

✔ Example: Evaluating research effort – Click [HERE](#) for template.

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## 2. Reflection Journal Template

✔ Example: Weekly learning log – Click [HERE](#) for template.

Rate your confidence on the content covered.

Rate your work habits for the week.

Write about:

- One thing you learned this week.
  - One thing that challenged you.
  - One thing you want to improve.
- 

## 3. SMART Goals Framework

💡 Set goals using the SMART method (Develop Good Habits, 2020)

*Goals need to be S.M.A.R.T. which means:*

- S. Specific: What do I need to improve?
- M. Measurable: How will I know I've improved?
- A. Achievable: Is this realistic?
- R. Relevant: Why does this matter?
- T. Time-bound: When will I achieve this?


Click [HERE](#) for template.



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## Call to Action

The best learners don't just wait for feedback—they take charge of their own learning!

 Download the Self-Assessment Toolkit (Self Evaluation Rubric, Reflective Journal prompts, and Goal-setting worksheet) to start your Learners on their journey toward becoming self-directed learner!

 Take the first step today!

# Appendix

# SAMPLE RUBRIC

	OPPORTUNITY	COMPETENT	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
Technique / Concepts	Work lacks understanding of concepts, materials, and skills.	Work shows understanding of concepts, materials, and skills.	Work reflects understanding of concepts and materials, as well as use of skills discussed in class.	Work shows a mastery of skills and reflects a deep understanding of concepts and materials.
Habits of Mind	Learner passively attempts to fulfill assignment. Additional exploration and mindfulness of possibilities is an opportunity. Learner should explore more than one idea.	Developing exploration of possible solutions and innovative thinking. Learner has more than one idea but does not pursue.	Learner explores multiple solutions and innovative thinking develops and expands during project.	Consistently displays willingness to try multiple solutions and ask thought provoking questions, leading to deeper, more distinctive results. Learner fully explores multiple ideas and iterations.
Reflection & Understanding	Learner shows little awareness of their process. Additional opportunity to demonstrate understanding of content.	Learner demonstrates some self-awareness. Work shows some understanding of content, opportunity for Learner to provide additional thought processes behind their decisions.	Learner shows self-awareness. Work demonstrates understanding of content and most decisions are conscious and justified.	Work reflects a deep understanding of the complexities of the content. Every decision is purposeful and thoughtful.
Craftsmanship	Work is messy and craftsmanship detracts from overall presentation.	Work is somewhat messy and craftsmanship detracts somewhat from overall presentation.	Work is neat and craftsmanship is solid.	Work is impeccable and shows extreme care and thoughtfulness in its craftsmanship.
Effort	Learner needs to show more effort. Opportunity to develop time management skills..	Work complete, additional focus on finishing touches would demonstrate appropriate effort to elevate work to the proficient level..	Completed work in an above average manner. Learner needs to go one step further to achieve excellence.	Completed work with excellence and exceeded expectations. Learner exhibited exemplary commitment to the project.

## Self-Assessment Rubric

	<i>OPPORTUNITY</i>	<i>COMPETENT</i>	<i>PROFICIENT</i>	<i>DISTINGUISHED</i>
<i>Technique / Concepts</i>				
<i>Habits of Mind</i>				
<i>Reflection &amp; Understanding</i>				
<i>Craftsmanship</i>				
<i>Effort</i>				

# Student Academic Self-Assessment



Score #	Content details
<b>Score 4</b>	I feel I fully understand the content and could teach it to a classmate.
<b>Score 3</b>	I feel I have successfully learned the content and will remember it in the future.
<b>Score 2</b>	I feel I am progressing, and developing understanding, but need support sometimes.
<b>Score 1</b>	I feel I am struggling with some or all of the content.

**1<sup>st</sup>** - Use the Self-Assessment Rubric (above) to express your academic confidence in our most recent content:

**Subject:**  
**Unit:**  
**Lesson:**

Content details	Score #
Enter content specifics such as "place value" or "decimal place"	
Enter content specifics such as "place value" or "decimal place"	
Enter content specifics such as "place value" or "decimal place"	

**2<sup>nd</sup>** Work behavior self-assessment. Rate yourself below: 1= Not really; 2= 50% of the time; 3= 95% of the time; 4= Yes, I did;

Behavior	Score #
I completed my classwork and homework on time.	
I listened carefully to classroom discussions.	
I asked and answered questions.	
I actively collaborated with my classmates, but just when appropriate.	
I took notes, read notes, and/or studied notes or study guide.	

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Weekly Learning Log

Below write 1 thing you learned this week, 1 thing that challenged you, and 1 thing that you would like to learn more about.

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# SMART Goal Planning

# SMART Goals Printable

S

## Specific

- Who: Who is involved?
- What: What do you want to accomplish?
- Where: Where will you complete the goal?
- When: When do you want to do it?
- Which: Which requirements and constraints might get in your way?
- Why: Why are you doing it?

M

## Measurable

- These goals are defined with precise times, amounts, or other units—essentially anything that measures progress toward a goal.
- A measurable goal statement answers questions starting with “how,” such as “how much,” “how many” and “how fast.”

A

## Attainable

- Attainable goals stretch the limits of what you think is possible. While they’re not impossible to complete, they’re often challenging and full of obstacles.

R

## Relevant

- *Relevant* goals focus on what you truly desire.
- They are the exact opposite of inconsistent or scattered goals. They are in harmony with everything that is important in your life, from success in your career to happiness with the people you love.

T

## Time-bound

- Time-bound goals have specific deadlines. You are expected to achieve your desired outcome before a target date.
- Time-bound goals have specific deadlines. You are expected to achieve your desired outcome before a target date.

Your SMART Goal Statement

Get This FREE Printable at: [DevelopGoodHabits.com/smart-template](http://DevelopGoodHabits.com/smart-template)

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