

Section I

Program Overview and Rationale

Purpose and Rationale

Purpose

The primary art curriculum is based on the *Foundation for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Education Curriculum*, which provides the framework for arts education and reflects research, theories, and classroom practice.

This guide, which serves as a practical framework for art curriculum, is to be used as a resource for learning and teaching. It provides guidelines upon which teachers, administrators, students, and others working collaboratively in the learning community should base decisions about learning experiences, instructional techniques, and assessment strategies.

This curriculum describes learning experiences for Kindergarten to Grade 3 that cumulatively provides opportunities for learners to develop knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to express their ideas, understandings, and feelings through art. The guide reflects an integrated view of learning *in* and *through* art. Learning in art is focused on creativity and artistry, where learning through art is about using art and the creative process as a method for students to learn about non-art curriculum units.

Diagram of outcomes (EGL, GCO, KSCO, SCO) on pages 32-33.

Statements of learning outcomes provide the framework for design and development of curriculum. In addition to general curriculum outcomes (GCO), this document provides key stage curriculum outcomes (KSCO) for the end of Grade 3, and specific curriculum outcomes (SCO) for Kindergarten/Grade 1 and Grades 2/3.

Rationale

Education in art helps students become selective and discriminating in their judgements, improving their understanding of environment and cultures.

Education in art is essential education. Human experience is ordered in various ways: kinesthetically, musically, numerically, textually, verbally, and visually. Students need to experience and practice recognizing and understanding the relations between these areas of human experience if they are to gain the optimal benefit from their education. Art education encourages students to consider the relation between verbal and visual learning or, in other words, visual literacy. Education in art helps students become selective and discriminating in their judgements and improve their understanding of their visual environment.

When schools provide suitable and imaginative art programs that combine the disciplines of intellectual activity with physical skills in creative problem solving, they are supporting the individual growth of students and are contributing to the development of their personality. Students who participate in successful art programs gain a knowledge of art and its role in human interaction, and develop an understanding and appreciation of the arts of other cultures, both historical and contemporary.

Students learning art must develop basic skills and acquire a working knowledge of the fundamentals and history of art. Both facets lead to worthwhile art experiences, which incorporates the satisfaction of achievement and the understanding of the creativity of others.

Contexts for Learning and Teaching

Six Key Features of K-3 Art Curriculum

1. *This art curriculum is defined in terms of outcomes.*

The identification of outcomes clarifies for students, teachers, parents, and administrators the specific expectations of what students should know, be able to do, and value as a result of their learning in art.

2. *This art curriculum emphasizes the importance of students' active participation in all aspects of their learning.*

This curriculum engages students in a range of purposeful and inventive experiences and interactions through which they can develop the processes associated with creating, contextualizing, reflecting on, and responding to their own and others' artwork.

3. *This art curriculum provides a basis for assessing learning in and through the arts.*

This curriculum engages students in analytical, critical, and reflective thinking about their learning in and through art. The use of a variety of assessment strategies will help teachers address students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles and needs, and will provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress toward achievement of the designated learning outcomes. This document includes suggestions for a collaborative assessment process that involves all participants and allows learners opportunities to celebrate their successes and to learn from their multiple attempts. A comprehensive assessment process is a powerful tool to enhance student learning.

4. *This art curriculum is designed to nurture the development of all students.*

This curriculum recognizes that learners develop and learn at different rates and in different ways. In recognizing and valuing the diversity of students, the learning environment should allow for a range of learning preferences, teaching styles, instructional strategies, and learning resources. Everyone's lives are shaped by issues of social class, race, gender, and culture. Learning contexts and environments must affirm the dignity and worth of all learners.

5. *This art curriculum emphasizes the personal, social, and cultural contexts of learning and the power that art making has within these contexts.*

This curriculum promotes self-esteem and self-understanding, as well as appreciation of the world's social and cultural contexts. Students are encouraged to recognize the power of creativity in constructing, defining, and shaping knowledge; in developing attitudes and skills; and in extending these new learnings in social and cultural contexts.

Since art making is an extension of personal identity and a defining feature of culture, it is critical that the curriculum respects, affirms, understands, and appreciates personal and cultural differences in all aspects of learning.

6. *This art curriculum provides a framework for making connections with other subject areas.*

This curriculum recognizes the importance of students working in and through art. As students learn in the arts, they develop specific skills, understandings, and confidence necessary for self-expression. As they learn to make connections with other subject areas by learning through the arts, they are engaged in a kaleidoscope of learning experiences that enables the development of personal, social, and perceptual skills.

Primary Artistic Development Stages

Creating images is a human activity which begins early in life. Scribbling precedes image making in much the same way as babbling precedes speech. Children expand and build on their abilities as they mature, progressing through a series of stages of artistic development where sets of common characteristics can be identified for age groups. As with all developmental stages, children proceed through them at different rates and often exhibit characteristics of one or more stages at the same time. After years of studying children's drawings, Viktor Lowenfeld (1947) identified six general stages of emotional and mental development. Two of these artistic development stages, commonly observed in primary grades, are preschematic (K, Grade 1) and schematic (Grades 2, 3).

- Preschematic (K/1)

In the preschematic stage, *schema* (the visual idea) is developed. Often a child will draw the same object (e.g., a tree in the same way over and over). Images are represented from cognitive understanding rather than through observation. Images, mainly circular shapes and straight lines, are used to create representations. Drawings often show what the child perceives as most important about the subject. There is little understanding of space, as objects are placed randomly and appear to float on the page. The use of color is more emotional than logical.

- Schematic (2/3)

In the schematic stage, shapes and objects are identifiable, contain some detail, and are related in space by using a baseline. Exaggeration, where one part of the image is larger compared to other aspects, is often used to express strong feelings about a subject. Children in the schematic stage also use interesting techniques to solve representation problems, such as showing the inside and outside of an object or person at the same time.

Outcomes in this art guide have been organized into two discrete sets according to the artistic development stages. An awareness of artistic development stages is necessary in order to establish individual levels of expectations for students, to provide information for selecting suitable art activities, and to support questioning that is developmentally appropriate.

Please refer to *Stages of Art Development* in **Appendix A** for further information about the preschematic, schematic, and post-schematic stages.

Value Individual Differences

In any group of students, a wide variety of abilities, strengths, and needs is evident in art making. Students vary in visual perception, in their ability to organize visual elements, to handle art materials, and to comprehend and articulate art concepts. It is important to remember that every child is capable of visual expression and that every visual expression is worthy of merit. Please refer to the section *Meeting the Needs of All Learners* on page 11 for more information on this topic.

Expanding Subject Matter

Subject matter for primary students is limitless since the whole world is to be learned about. Students make images about everyday events, about things they have seen, things they know, dream about, or imagine. Young children often begin with the physical self. As they grow older, their interest in humans expands to include other people such as family members, friends, and people in the community. They become interested in other aspects of themselves, such as their emotional and social dimensions, as well as natural and built environments. Activities, objects, and events associated with music, sport, play, work, holidays, festival days, literature, and drama are rich sources of material for art making. As long as the topic is relevant to students, the process of visual expression provides them with many opportunities for introspection and reflection.

Process & Product Equality

Art making is as much about process as it is about product. This curriculum focuses on three equally important aspects of art: create, contextualize, and reflect. Sometimes art lessons may be primarily concerned with a particular art concept (e.g., finding examples of different kinds of line or textures and recording them on a chart) or with exploring materials and how to use them (e.g., experimenting with thick and thin paint and large and small brush use) more so than with creating a finished product. Other lessons may revolve around looking at art created by others and thinking about why it was created, how it was created, or how it might be used to improve personal art making.

It is also important that there be ongoing sequential activities in primary school, designed to guide the development of specific art making skills and processes (e.g., properly using a brush, brayer, and weaving loom). Students need opportunities to practice and refine their abilities over time. A range of existing materials, techniques, technologies, and human resources offer many possibilities for enhancing this type of learning. Whatever lesson focus is used, students must always be provided with opportunities to share what has been learned.

Art Across the Curriculum

Art sparks conversation and inquiry. It offers all teachers in the school environment opportunities to collaborate in devising opportunities for rich, connected learning. Conceptual development through art is highly motivating, enriches learning, and connects learning with students' lives. Creating, understanding the context of, and reflecting on art can enhance learning experiences in all other areas of curriculum.

Infusion of art in other curriculum areas must be designed in such a way that art outcomes are met by participating in the experience. Focusing on art outcomes will mean that the art activity designed will provide more meaningful learning in the subject areas represented. In a science unit on plant growth, observational drawing skills can be taught to enable students to document observations of plant growth and specific characteristics in their science journal. Looking at botanical drawings can illustrate the characteristics of observational drawing. Students can learn when and why such drawings became important and how they are related to scientific study. Infusion of art into the curriculum must be distinguished from isolated, add-on art activities that have no basis in the art curriculum.

Literacy in Art

Through early explorations with art materials, young children begin to develop graphic symbols that represent their thoughts. Their earliest responses involve manipulation of materials for kinesthetic purposes creating random scribbles (scribble stage). As further control is gained, certain movements are repeated, leading to specific marks (preschematic stage). A point is reached where the child begins to identify marks with objects in the environment (schematic stage). This verbal naming indicates intent. Over time, the grouping of recognizable objects may have narrative aspects. This is a child's first foray into story writing. In Kindergarten and Grade 1, students begin to pair their drawings with words to create parallel meaning. Over time, text replaces drawing as the primary carrier of meaning.

Many of the contextualizing and reflecting activities carried out in art classes support the development of visual literacy, media literacy, and critical literacy. Visual literacy, the ability to respond to visual images based on aesthetic, emotive, and affective qualities, in other words, visual comprehension, is a natural extension of the skills learned in looking at art. Visual literacy also encompasses the ability to respond visually to a text (e.g., create personal interpretations of a poem or story by drawing, painting, making a collage or sculpture, or creating multi-media productions).

Art experiences enhance critical literacy skills, the ability to deconstruct various types of text including visual texts to determine/question the social, historical, and economic contexts of a situation. Through looking at different types of art through time and cultures, students are given the tools they need to become thinking, caring citizens.

Art experiences also encourage the development of skills needed to gain meaning from mass media such as magazines, video, and film.

Critical Literacy in Art

Literacy, as it was once understood—the ability to decode and make sense of a written text—vital as it is, is no longer a sufficient preparation for children growing up in an increasingly complex world. Critical literacy is becoming more central in continuing efforts to educate students in ways that help them grow into informed, autonomous, caring, and engaged citizens.

When meaning is said to be socially constructed, it means that most of what is known/understood about the world and one another is determined by cultural and social expectations and by ways in which individuals are positioned. It cannot be assumed that the laws, values, customs, traditions, and manners learned from one setting are universally interpreted and accepted in the ways in which they have been learned.

Critical literacy is all about examining and learning to examine constructs. Knowledge, truth, education, and language can never be neutral or context free—they are constructed by individuals who have a history and a point of view. Critical literacy involves questioning these assumptions. It involves helping learners come to see that they construct and are constructed by images; that they learn how they are supposed to think, act, and be from the many visuals that surround them.

One of the goals of the primary art curriculum is to give students the tools they need to become thinking, caring citizens. Therefore, they have to be taught to deconstruct the visual texts and images that permeate their lives—to ask themselves the following questions about the intent, materials used, processes applied, and contextual reference of the visuals:

- Who created the artwork (age/gender/race/nationality)?
- How does the artist's identity influence the overall meaning?
- For whom is the artwork created?
- What materials did the artist use to create it?
- What process did the artist apply to create it?
- What is the topic and how is it presented?
- How else might it have been presented?
- What has been included and what has been omitted?
- What does it teach me about others and their place in the world?
- What does the art mean to me and what could it mean to others?
- Does this art challenge what I believe? How?
- Does it support what I believe to be true? Why?
- How might this artwork be affecting me?

Critical literacy teaches children to begin to make intelligent, considered, humane decisions about how they choose to accept, resist, or adapt understandings they have unravelled. It encourages children to look with open minds, to explore many sides of the same issue.

Media Literacy in Art

Media literacy is the ability to understand how mass media (TV, film, radio, still images, and magazines) is influential, how it produces meaning, how it is organized, and how to use it wisely.

The influence of media, such as film, videos, posters, advertisements, computer games, and popular music, is pervasive in the lives of students today. Therefore, it is important that, beginning in the primary grades, students learn to use media resources critically and thoughtfully.

Media literacy is a form of critical thinking that is applied to the message being sent by the mass media. In visual literacies in the primary grades as well as in art, students can begin to develop media literacies by asking themselves questions such as the following:

- What is the message?
- Who is sending the message?
- How is the message being sent?
- What is the aim of the message being sent?
- How does the message relate to me?
- How does the message relate to others?

Students make sense of media messages based on their prior knowledge and experiences. After considering their personal connections, they can learn to analyse and evaluate the ideas, values, techniques, and contexts of media messages. Media literacy activities should be integrated into the curriculum. The following are some examples of such activities appropriate for the primary grades.

Ask students to:

- examine the format and features of children's magazines
- visit a newspaper office
- respond personally to a poster, still image, advertisement, video, or film
- extract a detail from an image printed in a newspaper or magazine that would change the original meaning/context of the full image
- write print captions for a variety of images
- create a collage of mass media images to reflect a feeling or a theme
- write a story to go with a photograph
- respond to the art illustrations in picture books
- think about the style of the text (font) and how it impacts the message or meaning being conveyed
- create visual images to go with a story, book, or poem and discuss reasons for their choices

Meeting the Needs of All Learners

Art experiences and activities must address the needs of all learners. Teachers can develop creative ways to engage students with varying sensory, physical, or intellectual abilities by adapting materials, tools, facilities, and human resources to meet individual needs. For example, students with visual difficulties require many opportunities to experience art and art making through the other senses. Consideration also has to be given to the placement and size of visuals, as well as the degree of contrast and quality of art reproductions and projections.

Students who have problems with motor activities can engage in art making in collaboration with partners or by using alternate methods, or adaptive devices (e.g., four-holed scissors, hand strap tool holder, bulb holder, or an adjustable easel board). Open discussion among learners often yields valuable, creative, and collaborative ways to support and assist students in ways of learning differently.

A gender-equitable learning environment allows females and males equal access to strategies and resources. High expectations are articulated for both male and female learners. Gender-fair language and respectful listening are modelled. There is an avoidance of stereotyping with regard to leadership activities, roles, and learning styles. The work of both female and male artists and gender portrayal through artwork are examined regularly. Sufficient time is provided for discussion of issues in this area.

An inclusive classroom values the social and ethno-cultural backgrounds of all students. Diverse family customs, history, traditions, values, beliefs, and different ways of seeing and making sense of the world are important contexts for enriched learning through art. All students need to see their lives and experiences reflected in artwork. All students need opportunities to share in their own and others' cultures by examining local and global art.

Students who, for whatever reasons, feel alienated from learning in a classroom often benefit greatly from experiences in art. Whether art making provides an opportunity to express frustrations, anger, fears, or simply offers a time for quiet reflection, it is important to provide a careful balance of support and challenge for students who feel insecure, inept, or different from others.

Assessing and Evaluating Student Learning

Assessment involves the use of a variety of methods to gather information about a wide range of student learning. It develops a valid and reliable snapshot of what students know and are able to do; one that is clear, comprehensive, and balanced. Evaluation should be based on the range of learning outcomes addressed throughout the year and should focus on general patterns of achievement in learning in and through art, rather than on single instances, in order that judgments are balanced.

Assessment: the systematic process for gathering information on student learning.

Evaluation: the process of analyzing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information and making judgements or decisions based upon the information gathered.

Not all art activities will result in a final product such as a sculpture or a painting, and as some students move through the process, they naturally continue to raise ideas, revise understandings, refine skills, and experience new feelings and attitudes. When artwork is produced as a result of a learning process, it is an extension of the important journey students have taken. Assessment should reflect all of the creative processes used to achieve an outcome. Students should constantly be challenged to examine their artwork, discuss and share ideas with others, and bring learning to new levels of understanding. To this end, assessment strategies should:

- enable all students to discover and build upon their own interests and strengths
- engage students in assessing, reflecting upon, and improving their learning
- provide multiple indicators of student performance
- affirm students' differing learning styles, backgrounds, and abilities
- reflect the fact that experimentation, risk-taking, and creativity are valued
- enable teachers to assess both specific and overall tasks
- provide teachers with information on the effectiveness of the learning environment
- allow for collaborative setting of goals for future learning
- communicate information concerning the learning with all partners, including children and parents/guardians

Diverse Learning Needs

Assessment practices must be fair, equitable, and without bias; creating opportunities for students to have a range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Teachers should use assessment practices that affirm and accommodate students' cultural and linguistic diversities. Teachers should consider patterns of social interaction, diverse learning styles, and the multiple ways oral, written, and visual language are used in different cultures for a range of purposes. Student performance takes place not only in a learning context, but in a social and cultural context as well. Teachers should be flexible in evaluating the learning success of all students and seek diverse ways for students to demonstrate their personal best.

In inclusive classrooms, students with special needs have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in their own way and at their own pace, using media that accommodate their needs. They may not move through the process in the same way as their peers; indeed the criteria and methods of achieving success may be significantly different from those of their classmates.

Four Partner Assessment

There are four partners that have a role in the assessment of student learning in art. At different times, depending on the outcomes being assessed, students, peers, teachers, and parents/guardians can add to the understanding of how well students achieve specific outcomes. The degree to which students can participate is determined by their developmental readiness, which increases as students move through the primary grades.

1. Student

Self-assessment is perhaps the most powerful type of assessment because students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, which leads to goal setting and more independence. It is important that students are aware of the outcomes they are to achieve and participate actively in assessment; developing their own criteria and learning to judge a range of qualities in their artwork.

Students who are empowered to assess their own progress are more likely to perceive their learning as its own reward. Rather than asking, *What does the teacher want?* students need to ask questions such as, *What have I learned? What can I do now that I could not do before? What do I need to learn next?* Through this heightened sense of ownership, students develop essential critical thinking skills, confidence, and independence of thought. There are age appropriate ways to engage primary students in self-assessment (e.g., journals, conferencing, questioning, simple checklists, surveys) and it should be encouraged in simple ways beginning in Kindergarten.

2. Peer

Peer assessment provides opportunities for students to respond to the work of other students and to learn from the responses to their own artwork. The degree of sophistication of peer assessment is dependant on the developmental stage of the student. Very young students can provide simple responses (e.g., what they did or did not like, or something new to try). They can also use checklists to assess group participation in activities.

3. Teacher

Teacher assessment is the most prevalent form of assessment in primary grades. Teachers utilize both formative and summative assessment to ensure an optimal teaching/learning environment. The role of **formative** assessment is to determine the degree of learning that has occurred and to adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers' use of **summative** assessment provides the data used for reporting. Both provide important information and when used together, can build a comprehensive picture of learning.

4. Parent/Guardian

Parent/guardian assessment provides a different view of student learning that no other partner is in a position to give. Parents' knowledge of their children is gleaned from their interactions in learning situations at home. Two-way communication journals between home and school provide a way to value parents' understanding of their children's learning profile and open up two-way communications between home and school. When curriculum nights are held, parents learn about the expectations for their children. These school experiences can be expanded by asking parents to participate in assessment through observation and discussion of student portfolios at parent-teacher conferences. Forms can be designed to provide a structure for their input.

Appendix E contains a range of assessment strategies and forms.

Eight Strategies for Collecting Data

Effective assessment of learning requires diverse strategies to gather information in a systematic way. In planning art experiences, teachers should use a broad range of strategies that give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know, can do, and value. The following represents a variety of ways in which students and teachers can assess learning in and through art.

1. Work Sample/ Performance

Students' artistic products are an excellent source of assessment data. There are many opportunities to create work samples throughout the art curriculum. Not all work samples are written; teachers should seek variety in output to enable students with different strengths and needs to illustrate their learning. Variety in types of work samples and performances also provides a more balanced picture of the learner:

- *oral* – report, taped interview, personal response
- *written* – report, story, art journal, worksheets
- *visual* – construction, diagram, chart, web, mural, diorama, display, slideshow, photograph, model, mask, costume, sculpture, simple time line, poster, graphic organizers

2. Art Journal

Art journals are an important component of a comprehensive assessment plan in art. They provide opportunities to record experiences, inspiration, personal response, as well as a way to assess development. Students can begin using art journals in Grade 1 if the tasks assigned are developmentally appropriate.

Art journals must be woven into the routines of the classroom and receive recognition when students use them for different purposes. Entries can be brief; a time allotment of 15 minutes is sufficient for primary grades. There will be times when a group journal entry will be more applicable. These can be written on chart paper and posted in the classroom.

Two broad areas of use for art journals are sketching and writing.

Sketching :

- Responsive Drawing: Students can draw subjects of their choice or topics assigned by the teacher.
- Illustration: Students can sketch or doodle as they are being read to. Teachers can assign specific tasks for illustration (e.g., sketch how a character felt; what the house would look like if it was old, new, or bigger; the best, most exciting, or scariest part of the story).
- Future Planning: Students can sketch their ideas for an upcoming art project that will be executed through another art form such as sculpture, printmaking, or painting.

Writing:

- Research Notes: Student can take sketchbooks to the library or on a field trip to record information through drawing and writing. There are many books available that model formats for research notes based on drawing and writing.
- Personal Reflection: Art journals can be used for personal responses to activities or events (e.g., a fieldtrip, guest speaker, video, or art reproductions). The teacher can also ask students to record key ideas from learning. Journals allow teachers to determine how much a student has understood about a concept or learning event, and what they found interesting, challenging, easy, or what they disliked.
- Lists: Students can keep lists of words that prompt images, titles of artwork they like, or ideas for new work.
- Questions: As students listen and work, they often have questions they want answered. If the teacher is not immediately accessible, the question(s) can be recorded in their art journals for discussion later.
- Image Collection: Students can be encouraged to collect pictures that will inspire future art making. They can also extend their learning by choosing pictures of art they like, examples of different art and design elements and principles.

3. Portfolio

Portfolios are essential to assessment in art. A portfolio contains samples of student artwork over a period of time. It is a powerful assessment form that represents a rich source of authentic information on projects and efforts. Depending on how portfolios are used within the class, they may contain:

- samples of work such as drawings, paintings, or prints in progress
- samples of reflective writing or sketches
- responses to own or others' artwork
- personal questions or comments about an artwork
- explanations of steps or procedures used and difficulties and solutions encountered
- photos, pictures, and lists of resources used

There are two main types of art portfolios:

- **Process Portfolio:** Also known as *work* or *storage* portfolio, it contains material related to student achievement. The teacher decides what will be included in the process portfolio but it is usually maintained by the student.
- **Product Portfolio:** Also known as the *showcase* portfolio, it accumulates at specific times from items in the process portfolio. Samples can be student or teacher selected, but must demonstrate achievement of specific outcomes and provide students an opportunity to reflect on their artwork.

4. Observation

In primary classrooms, formal and informal observation is a very important assessment strategy. Watching students engaged in classroom art activities gives valuable information on every aspect of student learning. The effectiveness of observation increases when teachers focus on specific curriculum outcomes and design ways to record what has been observed. Observation occurring naturally throughout the learning process can provide information about students’

- day-to-day performances
- work habits, feelings, and attitudes toward art
- frustrations, joys, and levels of persistence
- abilities to work independently and collaboratively in art making
- preferred learning styles
- development of ideas and understanding

5. Student-Teacher Conference

Teachers meet with small groups or individual students to discuss various activities in art. These conversations yield valuable information about learning habits, feelings, and attitudes. They provide immediate opportunities for looking at artwork to date and recommending new directions. They allow for on-the-spot planning and goal setting.

6. Questioning

Questioning within the context of art lessons and during student-teacher conferences, can provide valuable information about student learning. The kinds of questions teachers ask send powerful messages to students about what is valued in the learning process. Open-ended questions challenge students to think critically by allowing students to organize and interpret information, make generalizations, clarify and express their own thinking, understand concepts, and demonstrate originality and creative ability.

7. Questionnaire/Survey

A questionnaire or survey might, for example, follow an interview or project to determine how well the team functioned and how well the individuals participated and contributed. These may be developed independently or collaboratively by teachers and students.

8. Peer Response

Students responding to others’ artwork is useful for evaluating the works being viewed and also the understanding of the students who participated in the discussion. Valuable insights may be gained from students’ assessment of and responses to the art and views of their peers.

Four Methods to Record and Organize

Assessment data must be organized and recorded if teachers are to refer to it to improve teaching or use it for reporting purposes. Such records give concrete evidence of students' learning. Four suggested methods for recording data include anecdotal response, checklist, rating scale, and rubric.

1. Anecdotal Response

An anecdotal response is a short narrative description of observations in the classroom. Teachers develop effective means of recording information within the context of teaching (e.g., at-a-glance sheets containing a small space for each student). This information gathered informally is later organized in binders or files. Planned observations may be organized a little differently. Teachers decide which students will be observed, what is being observed, and record the information in its final form within the context of observing.

Anecdotal comments should lead to interpretation and recognition of patterns of learning that emerge over time. Gathering, recording, and reflecting on anecdotal responses based on both systematic and incidental observations of students' learning, yield rich information for making judgements.

2. Checklist

Checklists are methods of recording information gathered through observation. They can be designed for use with an individual student over time, or formatted for use with a small group or a whole class. Checklists can be overwhelming if there are too many in use or too much content is focused on, so teachers need to identify only important concepts, skills, and strategies when creating them. Sometimes teachers devise formats that allow them to use both checklists and anecdotal responses together for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

3. Rating Scale

A rating scale is based on descriptive words or phrases that indicate performance levels. As teachers observe, they compare what is seen with a scale and choose the degree that best describes the observation. Rating scales usually offer three to five degrees of discrimination.

4. Rubric

A rubric is a guideline for rating student performance that can be *holistic*, where one score summarizes many aspects of a performance, or *analytic*, where each aspect (criteria) of the performance is scored separately. Rubrics can be used to assess products such as portfolios, learning logs, multimedia work, or performances such as a presentation or a demonstration of a technique. All rubrics should contain these common features:

- focus on measuring a stated outcome
- use a scale of values to rate performance (highest rating representing the best performance work)
- describe graduated levels of quality to define specifically the range of performance possible

The forms in **Appendix E** can be used with various assessment strategies.

