

How assessment capable are you?

Are you assessment-literate? Do you have knowledge of ways of assessing what students know and can do, and know how to interpret the results of these assessments? Do you know how to apply these results to improve student learning? Are your students benefiting from your assessments?

Teachers must have assessment capability in order to guide and support their students' assessment capability. Teachers who are assessment capable (like assessment-capable students) take ownership of their learning, recognise areas for improvement, and take steps to improve their assessment capability. The following quiz might help you to identify how well versed you are in quality assessment practices, and to identify where you might changes in order to improve.

How often do you...	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Talk about goals and standards with students:			
Share your understanding of quality with students, and provide focused feedback about their work? <i>i.e. sharing exemplars or samples of previous students' work so students can see a range of ways to produce quality work</i>			
Adapt teacher resources for students to understand, by deconstructing criteria and descriptors, interpreting what they mean and applying them to real examples of work? <i>i.e. explaining learning intentions in student friendly language ““We are learning to count money so that when we go shopping we can check our change””</i>			
Explicitly teach students how to access and use materials (such as rubrics) that detail criteria and exemplify quality? <i>i.e. by encouraging students to create their own rubrics based on their analysis of quality examples</i>			
Model how to judge performance against success criteria or assessment criteria? <i>i.e. working through assessing an example or exemplar as a class</i>			
Provide opportunities for students to evaluate the quality of their work:			
Value mistakes as opportunities for growth? <i>i.e. telling students that their mistakes are interesting and useful for class learning; explore mistakes with the class showing interest in the reasons for mistakes and how they can be prevented</i>			
Enable students to take responsibility for themselves as learners <i>i.e. by reviewing their work and deciding what action to take to improve, or by deciding for themselves what evidence to produce to demonstrate meeting a goal</i>			

How often do you...	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
<p>Explicitly teach self-management skills?</p> <p><i>i.e. discussing how to manage distractions and what to do if you get stuck</i></p>			
<p>Explicitly teach students to review and evaluate their abilities, knowledge states and cognitive strategies?</p> <p><i>i.e. using self-assessment activities to focus on attitudes (what the student enjoyed), knowledge gained (what do they know or can do now) and how it has been learnt (what helped them to learn it)</i></p>			
<p>Devote time, support, and opportunities, in the context of learning, to help students plan, problem solve, and evaluate?</p> <p><i>i.e. getting students to spend time in groups examining the characteristics of examples; sharing problems that arise with the whole class and brainstorm solutions; providing dedicated improvement and reflection time to create and act upon feedback</i></p>			
<p>Share your teacher knowledge about the skills, strategies, and resources needed to carry out a task effectively?</p> <p><i>i.e. offering processes on posters or providing scripts for how to complete a task successfully, or using worked examples with the class</i></p>			
<p>Explicitly teach students how to self and peer assess and how to give and act on feedback?</p> <p><i>i.e. having the class generate criteria for assessment and practising focusing feedback on these; using frameworks or formulas (such as "two stars and a wish") for giving feedback</i></p>			
<p>Provide students with sustained and supported experiences in discussing/questioning and improving their work?</p> <p><i>i.e. providing time and frameworks for peer-assessment, engaging students in assessment conversations with you, and giving time for responding to and acting upon feedback</i></p>			
<p>Give students the specific language they might need to describe, discuss, and evaluate their learning?</p> <p><i>i.e. by making lists of what counts as good learning (what is important when we read out loud, what makes a good research report)</i></p>			
<p>Model effective problem solving approaches and demonstrate being a learner yourself?</p>			
How often do you...	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

Provide opportunities for students to modify work in response to assessment information:			
<p>Help students to learn how to monitor and improve the quality of their work both during and after its production?</p> <p><i>i.e. checking their progress against the learning intentions and success criteria for the lesson</i></p>			
<p>Provide a variety of exemplars which illustrate what is expected of the students?</p> <p><i>i.e. showing students the different ways that success in the learning intentions can be reached</i></p>			
<p>Give explicit teaching of fix-up / improvement strategies?</p> <p><i>i.e. checking punctuation by reading out loud, adding adjectives to a narrative, labelling drawings etc.</i></p>			
<p>Provide time, opportunities, and encouragement within the school day to improve work during its construction?</p> <p><i>i.e. beginning sessions by having students read and respond to feedback, structuring activities to include reflection time or questions</i></p>			
<p>Help students to identify where and when to make improvements?</p> <p><i>i.e. through guided questioning or having students check their work against scripts and rubrics</i></p>			
<p>Provide opportunities for evaluative conversations?</p> <p><i>i.e. discussing success criteria or a students' self-assessment, and setting new goals or working out improvement strategies, or dialogue with students through questions and responses in written feedback</i></p>			

Adapted from Booth,B., Dixon,H., & Hill, M. F. (2016). Assessment capability for New Zealand teachers and students: Challenging but possible. SET (2), 28-35. Retrieved from <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/nzcerpress/set/articles/assessment-capability-new-zealand-teachers-and-students-challenging-possible>