

Collecting Evidence of Learning

Collecting evidence of student learning is an essential step to knowing how well they are doing and what could be done next to help them improve in their learning. It forms a basis for making appropriate teaching and learning decisions and helps to justify answers to questions like these:

- ▶ How are students learning in class?
- ▶ How do I know students are learning in class?
- ▶ Do students know how they can demonstrate their learning?

So... how can teachers (and students) collect the appropriate evidence to answer these questions? The sections below provide various considerations to ensure appropriate and quality evidence is being collected.

VALIDITY: MEASURE WHAT IS INTENDED TO BE MEASURED

To ensure the evidence of student learning is valid, the chosen assessment method and tool must measure what it aims to measure. When assessing student learning, teachers need to ensure the assessment elicits appropriate information related to the intended goals and outcomes of learning. For example, one would not use a weight scale to measure height. When the evidence of learning does not relate to what is intended to be measured, the assessment information is invalid and a different approach is necessary.

Example: To understand how well students can **apply** a gameplay concept in a physical and health education class, a multiple-choice test would not provide the appropriate information. It might reveal their knowledge of the concept, but it does not provide information on their ability to use the gameplay concept being learned. The multiple choice evidence would be invalid.

ALIGNMENT: KEEP THE INTENDED LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES TOGETHER

Evidence of learning is useful for students when it is aligned with what they have been learning in class. The curricular learning standards (or outcomes) must be aligned with the daily learning tasks (or goals) related to the standards. This alignment creates clarity between what is being learned in class, how students are currently doing, and what they can focus on to improve their learning. It helps to eliminate confusion for students in what they are learning in class, what they are trying to show in their efforts, and what success could look like in their physical and health education class.

Lastly, by aligning the evidence of student learning with the intended curricular learning standards, extraneous factors – such as behaviour, tardiness, wearing appropriate attire, and other non-academic factors – do not misrepresent the progress and achievement of student learning. These extraneous traits should be separated so the evidence of student progress of the intended goals and outcomes does not get combined with non-academic evidence, resulting in a lack of clarity and misinformation.

VARIETY: COLLECT EVIDENCE OF LEARNING IN VARIOUS WAYS AND AT VARIOUS TIMES

Gather multiple pieces of evidence and use a variety of approaches to collect it to ensure that students can accurately show the depth of their learning.

This approach:



helps to honour student learning differences,



provides them the opportunity to receive ongoing feedback so they can progress in their learning, and



ensures that student achievement in learning is not determined by one piece of evidence. A single piece of evidence could be misleading in several ways (e.g., the assessment was unclear, the student was absent for a few classes leading up to the assessment).

Gathering multiple pieces of evidence does not mean the same as re-assessment or do-overs. Rather, it is a process to help ensure that both teachers and students have enough

information to make a reliable judgement on the quality of their learning achievement over time. This ensures that students have a chance to grow from their initial demonstrations of learning and that no one assessment tool or method will determine how a student can show their learning.

When and where possible, it is also helpful to provide students with a voice in how they want to demonstrate their learning – as long as their options lead to valid information aligned with the intended learning outcomes.

TRIANGULATION OF EVIDENCE

Consider the process of triangulating evidence to help ensure that the evidence of learning being collected is valid, aligned to the intended learning standards, and comes from a variety of appropriate sources.

Triangulation uses three methods to consider when collecting evidence of learning. But not all three methods need to be used. Each method is described below.



Observations: watch what students are doing with their learning, individually and/or with others. Examples: presentations, demonstrations of a skill or concept, role playing, group work dynamics. Evidence can be collected formally (e.g., checklists, rubrics, plickers) or informally (e.g., anecdotal notes) and used to inform teaching and learning decisions.



Products: use tangible samples of student work, including tests, exit tickets, projects, journals that collect evidence of student learning.



Conversations: discuss their learning with students and use their responses to gauge their depth of learning. These conversations can happen formally (e.g., interviews) or informally (e.g., a side conversation) and can help the teacher to understand more deeply what a student knows about a topic. Conversations can also explore potential misunderstandings that might have been missed in a different assessment method (e.g., a written test).

WHICH METHOD TO USE

To help understand which of the three methods to consider when using a triangulation of evidence approach, it is important to look at the verb(s) used in the curriculum learning standards (or outcomes). These verbs communicate what students should be doing with what they are learning. They indicate how the evidence of learning should be collected.

Example:

a) When a student is asked to **describe** something, they can do so in a conversation with the teacher and/or by developing a product (e.g., a written response). Either method allows the student to describe what they were learning.

b) When a student is asked to **apply** a motor skill, they could demonstrate their learning in front of the teacher (observation), and/or if available, they could record a video (product) of them applying the skill and the teacher could use it to assess their learning.

Either method allows the student to show the teacher what they can do with the motor skill being assessed. Having a conversation with the student might help highlight what they know about the motor skill, but it would not provide valid information on what they can currently do with it.

