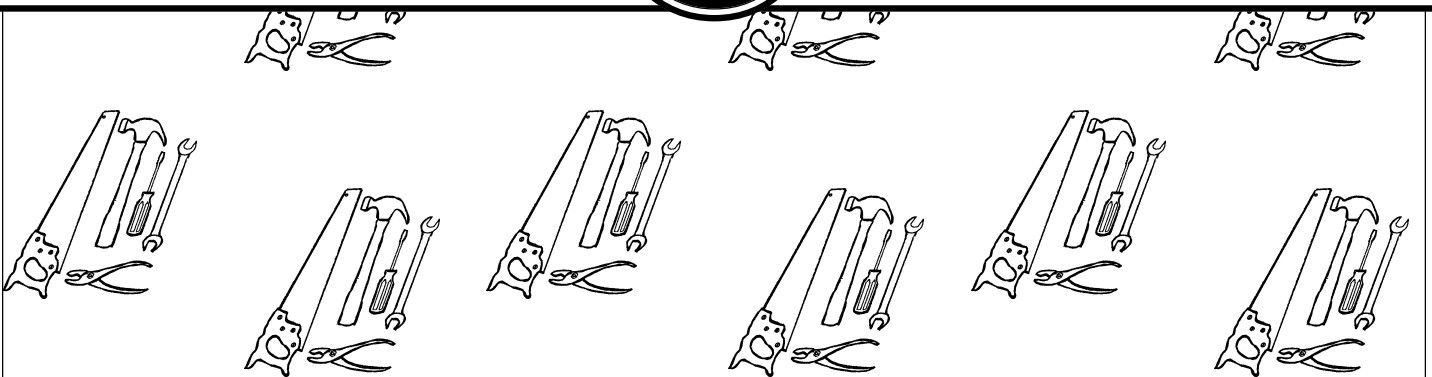


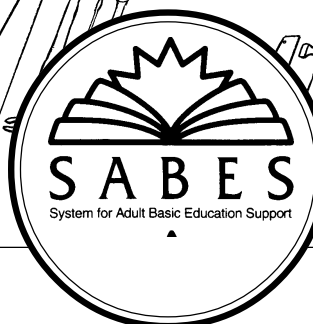
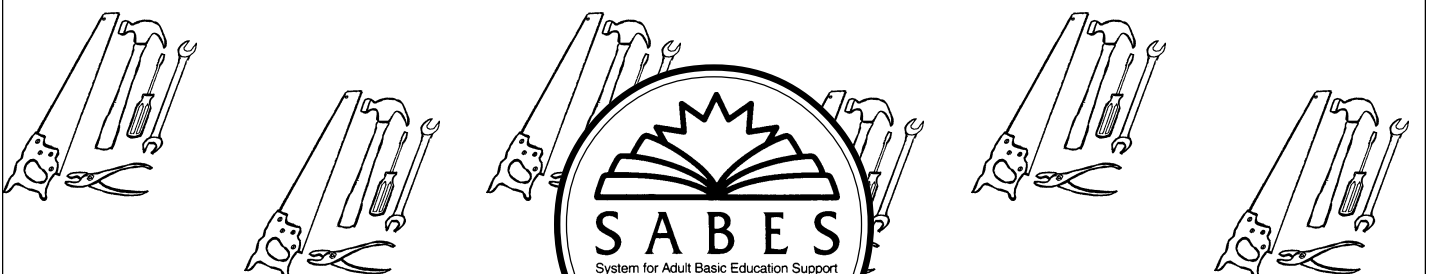
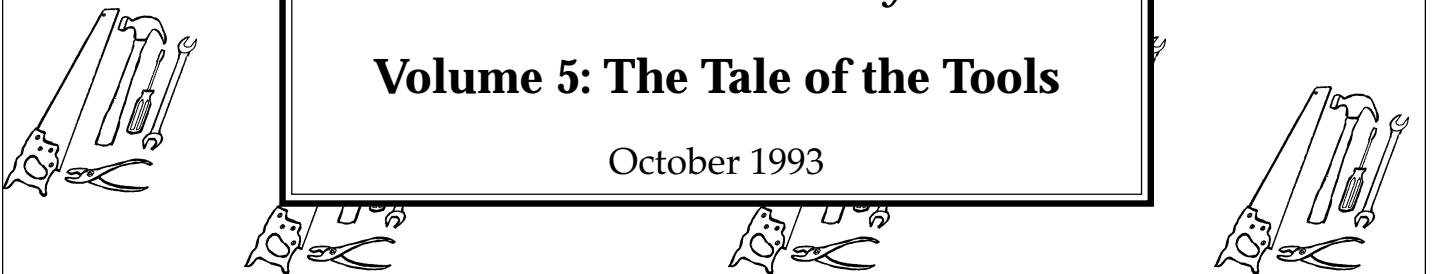
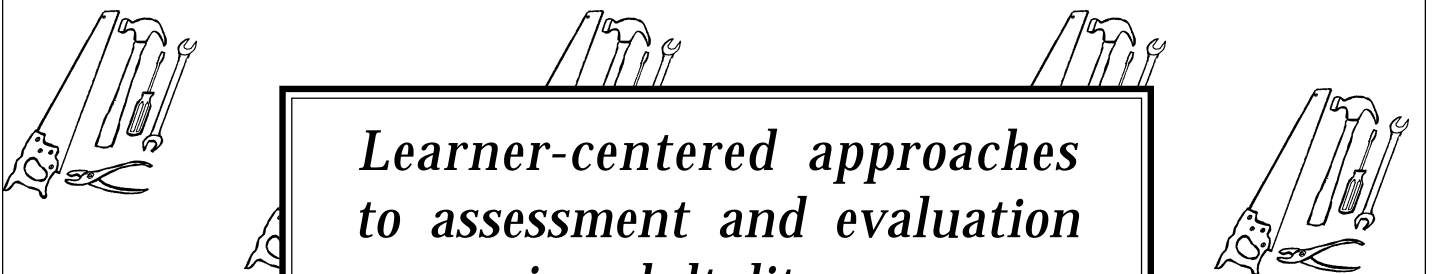
Adventures **in** Assessment

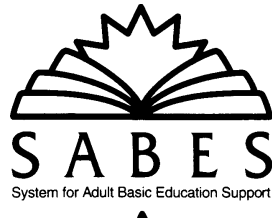


*Learner-centered approaches
to assessment and evaluation
in adult literacy*

Volume 5: The Tale of the Tools

October 1993





SABES is the System for Adult Basic Education Support, a comprehensive training and technical assistance initiative for adult literacy educators and programs. Its goal is to strengthen and enhance literacy services and thus to enable adult learners to attain literacy skills.

SABES accomplishes this goal through staff and program development workshops, consultation, mini-courses, mentoring and peer coaching, and other training activities provided by five Regional Support Centers located at community colleges throughout Massachusetts. SABES also offers a 15-hour Orientation that introduces new staff to adult education theory and practice and enables them to build support networks.

SABES also maintains an adult literacy Clearinghouse to collect, evaluate, and disseminate ABE materials, curricula, methodologies, and program models, and encourages the development and use of practitioner and learner-generated materials. Each of the five SABES Regional Support Centers similarly offers program support and a lending library. SABES maintains an Adult Literacy Hotline, a statewide referral service which responds to calls from new learners and volunteers. The Hotline number is 1-800-447-8844.



The SABES Central Resource Center, a program of World Education, publishes a statewide quarterly newsletter, "Bright Ideas," and journals on topics of interest to adult literacy professionals, such as this volume of "Adventures in Assessment."

*The first three volumes of "Adventures in Assessment" present a comprehensive view of the state of practice in Massachusetts through articles written by adult literacy practitioners. Volume 1, **Getting Started**, includes start-up and intake activities; Volume 2, **Ongoing**, shares tools for ongoing assessment as part of the learning process; Volume 3, **Looking Back, Starting Again**, focuses on tools and procedures used at the end of a cycle or term, including self, class, and group evaluation by both teachers and learners. Volume 4 covered a range of interests, and Volume 5: *The Tale of the Tools* is dedicated to reflecting on Component 3 tools of alternative assessment. Future volumes will similarly cover either a variety of issues or specific topics.*

*We'd like to see the Spring 1994 **Adventures in Assessment** focus on people's use of **Adventures in Assessment**. We'd appreciate your contribution. Contact Editor Loren McGrail to discuss your submission.*

***Adventures in Assessment** is free to Massachusetts programs; out-of-state requests will be charged a nominal fee, at cost. Please write to, or call:*

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SABES Central Resource Center
World Education
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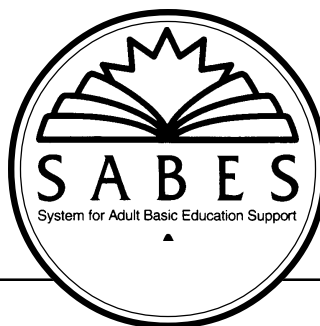
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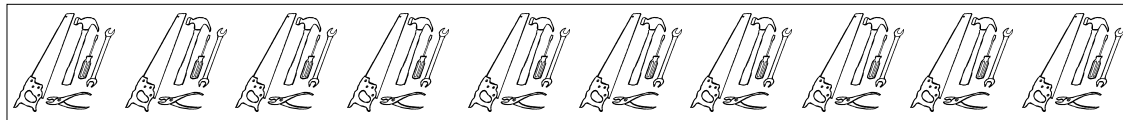
October 1993

EDITOR: Loren McGrail

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Rick Schwartz

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The Tale of the Tools

A Matter of Stance and Dance

Learners Logs will never be a finished product.

Gear

Examining inconsistent results, my colleagues and I reconsidered the tools .

Mueller

I am still uncertain about the best ways to document the development of self-esteem and community, but I do feel that my teacher log will play an important part.

Barry

Obviously nothing that is based on human beings' changing needs and goals is ever finished or perfect.

Kelly

I have a lot more questions than answers. In fact I am going to be revealing a lot of (gulp) mistakes , which Lord knows teachers do not really make.

Trunnell

of the programs involved in this project developed assessment and evaluation tools that were based on educational theories or approaches, on who their learners and teachers were and, finally, on what the goals and interests of the learners were and how they *used literacy* in their daily lives.

These reflective writings which are the focus of this volume of **Adventures in Assessment** are documentations of inquiry, teachers researching their practice. As Whiton says about the writings in **Adventures in Assessment** in general, “*This is the place where other teachers can listen not only to the “tale of the Tools” but to the narrative, the story of who, why, and how come*” (Whiton, *Documenting the Voices*, paper delivered at AAACE, 1993).

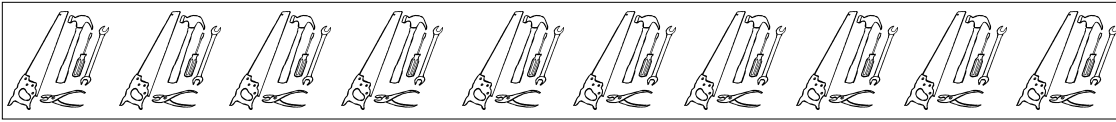
Just as authentic assessment asks learners to develop the habit of pausing to reflect before moving on, so too must teachers adopt the practice of “*taking time to stop and think, to observe and make sense of the activities and progress of their students*” (Lessoules and Gardner, 1992). This sentiment is echoed by Stephen Brookfield when he says, “*Becoming skillfull teachers is a matter of stance and dance. It is a process that involves us taking a critically reflective stance on practice, studying our actions and reasoning about teaching as open-ended, problematic phenomena. It also engages us in a dance of experimentation and risk-taking in which we explore how learners experience learning*

by
Loren McGrail



Editor
SABES Central
Resource Center/
World Education

Never finished or perfect, uncertainty, inconsistent results, more questions than answers. These are just a few of the voices of reflection from the authors who participated in Component #3 of the Greater Opportunities in Adult Learners Success (G.O.A.L.S.) Project developed by Sandy Brawdgers for the Bureau of Adult Education and coordinated first by Lindy Whiton, then Charlotte Baer and Caroline Gear. Each



while living out our pedagogical convictions and trying to realize democratic values in our practice (Brookfield, 1993).

I want to understand the students progress. I want to see and I want the students to see the complicated reality of learning.

Trunnel

DOCUMENTING LEARNING: WHAT THE LEARNERS GET

How learners experience learning is a theme that reoccurs throughout all these teachers' stories. For Mueller in *Analyzing Self Evaluation Checklists: A Starting Point for Dialogue*, the concern is how can students take responsibility for their own learning? Her careful analysis of the data her checklists revealed about Maria and Carlotta lead her to ask "*Is it important that students move in a linear progression in their language acquisition or English usage?*" This question is of particular importance to teachers working with ESOL students who are interested in documenting **acquisition**, not just language learning. This question also reflects Mueller's understanding that a lack in linear progress may also indicate a significant difference in how learners perceive their own progress. "*If big gaps exist between their perceptions of their abilities and ours, then it is important to dig deeper into the 'why'.*" The self-evaluation checklist then becomes the starting point for dialogue, not the end point.

For Barry, writing about and with her student Pat in *Reflections on On-going Assessment: Documenting Self-Esteem and More*, the issue of how learning is experienced was focused on how Pat **felt** she

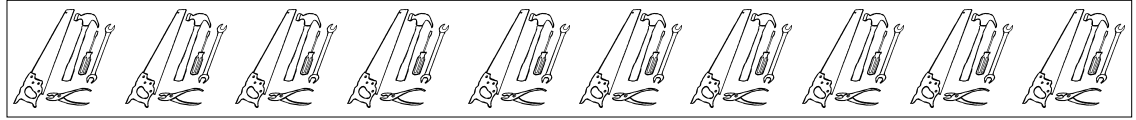
was making progress and how she **knew** when she was. Barry's main concern was that while Pat's development of self-esteem and sense of community were apparent from her accomplishments and conversations with Barry, the tools and procedures used in the program did not reflect this back to the learner. Barry's reflection is a critical looking back at what her tools both documented and revealed to her as a teacher and what they revealed or did not reveal to her student Pat.

Barry's comment "*We need to have more frequent conversation about learning moments and more time together to analyze the data gained from these checklists*" is echoed by many authors but probably most strongly by veteran tool maker and mentor, Janet Kelly. In *A Reflection on the Ideal vs the Real* Kelly admits, "*I think we have relied more on what we as teachers thought was important to learners, what we were interested in knowing about their progress, what we thought we could document, and what we thought funders would want to know.*"

She goes on to say that these beliefs still form the basis of choices in assessment practices but that she hopes the program will find ways "*to invite learners to share more effectively in decisions not only about program and curriculum evaluation but also in the selection of and critique of materials for their own assessment portfolios.*"

Like Barry, Kelly's reflection piece also examines and critiques previously published tools at the Read/Write/Now Program and discusses the development of new tools. Of particular note is the discarding of learning logs (a tool much favored in Barry's program) in favor of a

Barry's reflection is a critical looking back at what her tools both documented and revealed to her as a teacher and what they revealed or did not reveal to her student Pat.



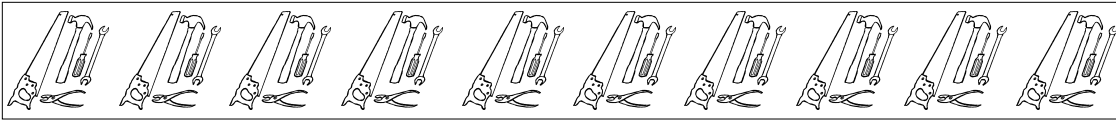
shared teacher's log where *"Significant anecdotes and observations could be recorded on a joint teacher/learner from each learning contract period or month."* Kelly's experience, like Barry's, reminds us that what seems to work best is time and trust. *"The longer learners are part of the learning center community, the better they get at telling us what works for them, what does not, what they like and do not like and why"*

Trunnel, in *Danger: Road Construction Ahead*, like Barry and Kelly, is also concerned with how the learners experience the tools he has created. *"If you asked them about these tools, they would likely have much different responses and potentially much different assumptions about what should be assessed and what indicators they need."* Similarly he finds the teacher log to be an invaluable tool that records more completely the emotional and highly complicated task that learning is beyond skill acquisition. His use of the teacher log demonstrates one of the key principles of learner-centered assessment — assessment must feed back to instruction. Trunnel suggests that the notes he keeps are also for his own improvement, what strategies he has used, what has worked, what has not. He even suggests, "Perhaps there is a way it can be used too in teacher-sharing at my center or in a teacher self-evaluation." Critical self reflection is a hallmark of all these reflective writings, however Trunnel stands alone in his ability to see and then identify the different kinds of checklists, *"The checklists that I use are skills based, not strategy based, and thus do not record all the information I want."*

His use of the teacher log demonstrates one of the key principles of learner-centered assessment — assessment must feed back to instruction.

Like Trunnel, Gear in writing about *The Learning Log: Evolution of an Assessment Tool* was interested in how to create a tool that recorded information that was useful to the teacher and the student alike. Her needs and questions are different but just as important: *"How can we get students to look at their own learning? How can we see their learning as a process and evaluation of their progress as part of the process? How can we get the students to measure their own progress rather than rely solely on the instructor? How can we get our students to answer the weekly evaluation questions with more than one sentence? How can we get our students to critique the classes and know it isn't going to be taken as an insult to the instructor?"*

Revising tools was a similar concern for Oesch. In *Adapting Tools To A New Program*, Oesch describes how tools designed for one program were revised or adapted to another at the same agency. Some of you familiar with Martha Germanoski's article, in the first issue of *Adventures in Assessment*, will recall her goals checklist and the daily log. These tools have been adapted and revised to assist learners in taking responsibility for their learning, not fix the learner but help the learner build on his/her strengths. Oesch also states that the revision in the EGAP (Educational Goals Assessment Package) led to changes in the curriculum. This is a good example of how a change in the assessment "tail" can wag the curriculum "dog."



DOCUMENTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

For Judy Hofer and Pat Larson in *Reflecting on the Links Between Literacy Practices and Community Development*, the issue of building on learner strengths is a collective endeavor. “*We want to set forth right from the start that people coming to an adult education program must take an active role in their own learning, and that working within a group will enhance that process... Getting a GED and improving reading and writing skills barely scratch the surface of what is needed for people to get out of poverty and exercise more control over their lives.*” Hofer and Larson are concerned with bringing the larger community into the classroom and the classroom to the larger community and how to create tools that measure not only individual progress but how to assess what people do as a group/community. They have benefited and borrowed from Sondra Stein’s *Framework for Assessing Program Quality* designed for community-based programs for the Association for Community-based Education. This framework and a view of literacy as practice helped them to generate a list of guiding questions that guided their inquiry. Some of the questions are as follows: *How do we assess improvement and change as a continuous process not only for the individual but for the community of individuals? How do we assess if there is movement or change on a continuum in terms of community development by people participating in programs*

and by the program? How do we develop a language of assessment which takes into account the development of community and collaborative efforts at adult education centers which also speaks to the needs of funders?

THE STANCE AND THE DANCE

Becoming skillful teachers in learner-centered approaches to assessment is a matter of stance and dance. It is a process that requires us to take a reflective stance on our practice (both past and present), to be clear about what we stand for or are trying to achieve, yet to pose questions rather than seek simple solutions, to be open to engage in a dance of experimentation and revision, and finally to risk finding out not just how our learners experience learning but how we help or fail them in that process. The G.O.A.L.S. Project allowed a handful of practitioners in the state of Massachusetts the resources, time, and money to carefully map their route and compare their travels. The toolkit, according to Trunnel, is the “Atlas, that we hope will help others explore other roads and paths.” To make the trip a little smoother, we have included these reflective writings as a kind of legend to understanding why some roads are paved while others are still dirt roads.

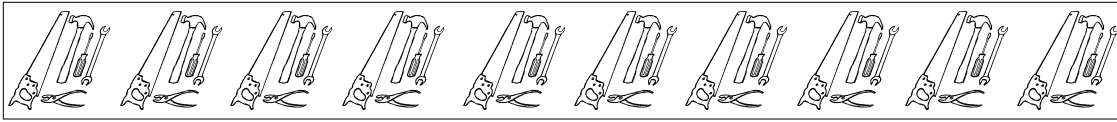
As editor of *Adventures in Assessment*, I invite you all to contribute your reflections or reactions so that we may learn from each other, discover new roads together.



Becoming skillful teachers in learner-centered approaches to assessment is a matter of stance and dance. It is a process that requires us to take a reflective stance on our practice (both past and present), to be clear about what we stand for or are trying to achieve, yet to pose questions rather than seek simple solutions.

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Zessoules, R. and Gardner, H. “Authentic Assessment: Beyond the Buzzword and Into the Classroom,” in Perrone, V. (ed), *Expanding Student Assessment*, 1991. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 47-71.



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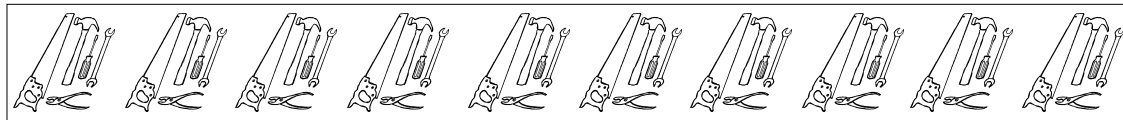
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The Alternative Assessment Aspect of the G.O.A.L.S. Project

The Process of Component #3

This issue of *Adventures in Assessment* is dedicated to discussing the process a group of teachers involved in alternative assessment went through over the past year. The group that put together the articles contained here were originally drawn together to complete part of the Greater Opportunities in Adult Learners Success (G.O.A.L.S.) Project.

The original intention of the G.O.A.L.S. Project, which was developed by Sandy Brawders for the Bureau of Adult Education, was to investigate and develop an accountability system which would be a true reflection of the field, one that intrinsically asks teachers, directors and learners their opinion on "What are ya doin'? What would be helpful? When are you having problems? How do you make changes? Did you discover anything new this year that you would like to share?"

The G.O.A.L.S. Team interviewed the staff of more than 70 programs. We talked to both teachers and directors. We interviewed 250 learners, both ABE and ESL (see *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 1). We asked the field to be a part of a discovery process. Although this project has come from the Bureau of Adult Education and not the field, it has adopted several different techniques to get at the language the field uses, to get at the needs of the field, to find a true reflection and voice of the field.

Although the original intention of

gathering this group together was not for staff development nor as a teacher research project, it has been both. What resulted was both good staff development and a form of teacher research.

THE ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT ASPECT OF G.O.A.L.S.

The objectives of the G.O.A.L.S. project were as follows:

- Have an accountability system that reflects the **entire** field;
- Provide an opportunity for all voices to be heard;
- Give individuals an opportunity to impact on state policy making;
- Develop a learner-centered accountability system¹;
- Look for an organic language of evaluation that is accessible to the learner, not 'secret knowledge' only decipherable to bureaucrats;
- Be able to pay for what it asks;
- Create an appropriate framework, rather than rely on already-existing frameworks that may be inadequate;

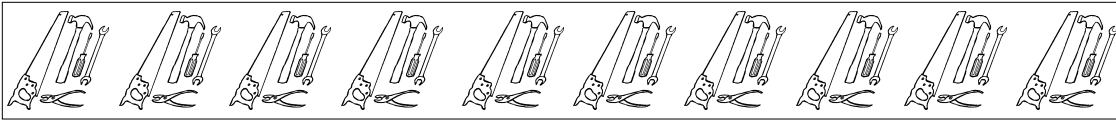
This project assumes a staff development network and system in place where there is support for change (training) in the field (SABES).

Component #3 is the section of the G.O.A.L.S. project that looks at alternative means of assessment. The Department of Education chose to run this component as a teacher-based research project to develop a state run accountability system, one that would foster a

by
Lindy Whiton



Western Mass. SABES;
former Coordinator,
Component #3



dialogue with adult learners, teachers, and other staff, legislature, the federal government and the public at large.

The questions that were important to us throughout the entire project were:

- What must the Bureau know in order to fund successful programs?
- How does the Bureau open lines between programs and the Bureau so that learners benefit from everyone's expertise?
- What do the programs need from the Bureau to best do their jobs?
- Can we develop a system of accountability that truly represents the variety and richness of programs, thus reflecting the variety and richness of learners?
- In Component #3, can we develop a document that similarly represents our variations and that allows for one piece of the puzzle to be placed, so that when we step back and look at all the components as a whole, alternative assessment is clear and helpful?

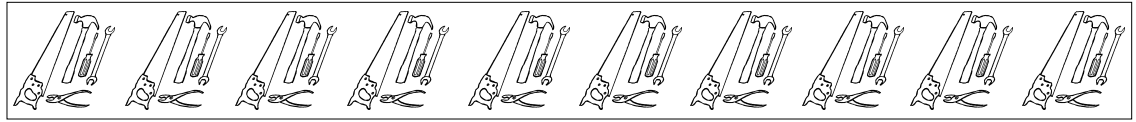
The majority of the participating programs already had in place curricula that reflected the principles of alternative assessment, and were attempting to develop tools to inform teachers and learners as to the effect of these curricula. (See *Adventures in Assessment*, Volume #4 - Whiton and McGrail.) This group believed learners' goals were not only important but a driving force in curriculum, thus, these assessment practice are based on the individual goals of the learner as well as the goals of the individual programs. Whether we are teaching ABE, GED, or ESL literacy practices have to directly relate not only to the goals of learners, but to their immediate lives as well. Our beliefs are

backed by the works of Lytle (1989, 1990), Auerbach (1990), Spruck Wrigley (1992) and Fingeret (1989). To discuss learners' growth by talking about standardized increases in reading levels "ignores other legitimate criteria for evaluating a literacy program, like the quality of the curriculum, teaching, or its connection to significant social issues relevant to students' lives and interests; and, it fails to recognize that increases in reading scores have little to do with the way adults live and use literacy in the real world" (McGrail 1991). And with ESL literacy students, standardized assessments "fail to distinguish between language, literacy, and culture; that is, they don't tell us whether the learner has trouble with an item because he or she (a) is unfamiliar with the cultural notion underlying the task (b) lacks the requisite knowledge of English vocabulary or sentence structure or (c) does not have enough experience with reading and writing to complete the task" (Spruck Wrigley, 1992).

*Reading assessment must reflect recent advances in the understanding of reading process. The **International Reading Association** is concerned that instructional decisions are too often made from assessments which define reading as a sequence of discrete skills that students must master to become readers. Such assessments foster inappropriate instruction.²*

Thus, based on the educational theories that drive the program's curriculum, each of the programs involved in this project developed assessment/evaluation tools that consider who their

Look for an organic language of evaluation that is accessible to the learner, not 'secret knowledge' only decipherable to bureaucrats



It was fascinating to see the variety of tools. Even more impressive were the variations on the same tools. Teachers had adapted models to make tools that were appropriate for their sites and needs.

learners and teachers are, the goals and interests of their learners, and how they used literacy in their daily lives.

The development of a community of learners is an extremely important factor in the success of learners' reaching their goals and our curricula and our assessments/evaluation tools need to reflect this, too. These practices inspire and cultivate community involvement and ownership of educational decisions in the classroom.

The articles that follow reflect the hard work of these programs. They combined what they knew about alternative assessment with the needs of the Bureau, and the needs of other programs. These articles, or notebooks, are the product of the process that Component #3 went through while wrestling with the issues of accountability, assessment, and evaluation. They don't say, "Here, just duplicate and standardize these tools." Rather, they relate the process they went through in developing the tools to help other practitioners develop their own tools based on their own curricula, learners, and classrooms.

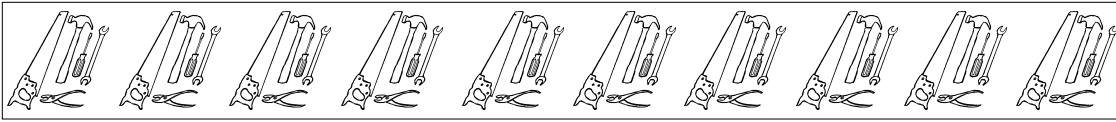
THE PROCESS OF ASSESSING ASSESSMENT

The first meeting was in April, 1992. We introduced ourselves, then immediately sat down to the task of defining assessment and evaluation. First, we attempted to get the entire group to settle on one definition of assessment and one of evaluation. We could not. We agreed to disagree. (Since then, we have reached agreement.)

At the end of the first meeting, we decided the goal of the next meeting would be to share the tools the group's

members had already developed and to describe our programs to each other. This was done in early June, 1992. It was fascinating to see the variety of tools. Even more impressive were the variations on the same tools.⁴ Teachers had adapted models to make tools that were appropriate for their sites and needs. By the end of our sharing, we knew we needed some format to bring us all together. I was then asked to write a philosophical statement and some ideas for direction, distribute this paper to everyone, and then call us back together. At this point I developed the chart (Figure 1) adapted from Rena Sofer's work (Sofer, Rena, *Complete Theory-to-Practice Handbook*). It lists all the different types of tools that had been adopted by the programs and fits them into a framework that addresses accountability issues. The paper also divides tools into the categories "Starting Up," "On-Going," and "Looking Back" (Auerbach, McGrail, *Adventures in Assessment*, Volume 1).

At our next meeting, we decided to split up into groups that represented these three categories. These groups would develop a tool kit including examples of tools in each category and describe when, why, how, and who might use these tools. This discussion raised the question of what the tool kit had to do with accountability. Could the tool kit gather the type of information that DOE was requesting? It was felt that for the majority of these programs, reading levels, acquiring a job, or entering college were not the only outcomes nor were they the only measures of success. Actually, in terms of reading levels, we thought just the opposite, that



to talk about reading levels was irrelevant to literacy programs. The types of measures we felt were important were not addressed by either state or federal reports.

The teachers wanted to talk about changes in attitudes or smiles, involvement with school systems, or finding a home. Where was the mechanism to talk about community involvement, or the changes in empowerment, or the willingness to believe you can make a change as a measurement of success for programs? These measures do not fit neatly onto a linear chart that denotes increase in something. For most of these programs, linear charts contained the information they believed the Commonwealth wanted and that contradicted what they believed was their mission. At this meeting the “Looking Back Group” decided to tackle the task of discussing the larger community changes within their category and create a fourth group. (This discussion is reflected in the articles.)

For the next several months, people met in their smaller groups and attempted to visit each other’s programs. In early October, we regrouped, gave updates and began the topic of Quality Indicators, sharing a copy of the Federal indicators and a copy of the indicators developed at ACBE by Sondra Stein and Susan Rosenblum. We decided to read all the articles and return in November to put together recommendations from the Massachusetts quality indicators.

At the November meeting, we struggled with what we saw as the real issue, namely that the concept of accountability needed to be changed from a hierarchical linear concept to a more

cyclical concept. One suggestion was that programs needed to be better apprised of the needs of the State DOE and how they were accountable to the Federal DOE so they understood the Bureau’s constraints. Although the group felt it was difficult to improve the ACBE job, the teachers did establish a list of recommendations and also generated proposals for an accountability system that would reflect those quality indicators.

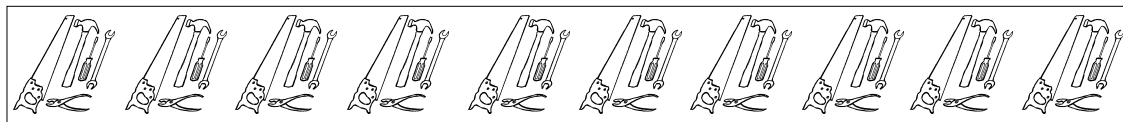
After our November meeting, there was a long break until February. We decided to finish the “Notebooks” and to create documentation about the notebooks for others in the field, and to document some changes that individuals have gone through. It was at this point of the process that I went on to a new job, leaving the group to write up their experiences and their feelings.

THE FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

This work was used to develop the indicators for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These teachers’ articles and the Alternative Assessment Notebooks reveal all the earmarks of quality staff development. The process:

- Networked teachers together across disciplines, programs, and the state;
- Provided a chance to share materials, methodology and ideas for further programming;
- Gave an opportunity to discuss issues at a time in our profession when we rarely have time to stop and reflect upon any form of assessment;
- Enabled them to read other people’s work (including but not limited to Lytle, Fingeret, and Stein), and
- Allowed them to begin to document their ideas.

Where was the mechanism to talk about community involvement, or the changes in empowerment, or the willingness to believe you can make a change as a measurement of success for programs?



Even though the original intention may not have been to create a successful staff development experience, it was a natural by-product of the experience.

Much attention has been given to the use of teacher inquiry groups as good staff development. Lytle and Cochran-Smith argue it is a “way to generate both ‘local knowledge’ and ‘public knowledge’ about teaching; that is, knowledge developed and used by teachers for themselves and their immediate communities, as well as knowledge useful to a larger community” (1992). So, even though the original intention may not have been to create a successful staff development experience, it was a natural by-product of the experience.

Because of the different perspectives of the teachers, it was similar to a multi-level classroom. However, all of the teachers had years of experience from which to draw. Sometimes it was difficult to balance the task of looking at the issue of accountability and what the Bureau had hired me to do and to engage in this staff development activity.

As I have said previously, I found this experience to be very similar to the process of inquiry and to the process of staff development. The clearest proof is that the practitioners who came into this component in April of 1992 claiming they had no tools in place, but were really interested in learning, are the ones with the most energy to see this group continue. They are the ones committing themselves for another year. Those practitioners who had already given the topic a lot of thought and creation seem to be interested in moving to another

topic. It is the sign of good staff development when there is excitement remaining in those who still feel they have something to gain from the experience.

As for an accountability system, I believe the point of all this work is to show that accountability cannot rest on the learner’s achievements. Comparing learners does not make a program accountable. The idea is to work with the program, inclusive of the learner, to create quality programs. Those indicators of quality programs that are agreed upon should be measured by program development and not by looking at standardized reading scores. Component #3 has helped to better define the roles of assessment evaluation and accountability, and it is important for us to stop using those words synonymous and interchangeable. We must be accountable to our own knowledge and not give in for the sake of convenience.

Footnotes

¹ Public policy is usually created by administrative and governmental offices and then individuals are asked to be responsible and implement that policy. This project is attempting to get around making that mistake and systematically and intentionally asked for individual and group input.

² International Reading Association. (1988). Resolution on reading assessment. Newark, DE: Author.

³ A method of training which causes participants to first define for themselves a concept and then, by joining with more and more people, have to agree upon a definition with a group.

⁴ Examples of the types of tools can be found in *Adventures in Assessment*, Volume 3, article by Eileen Barry.

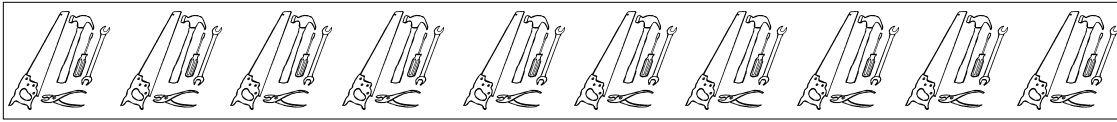
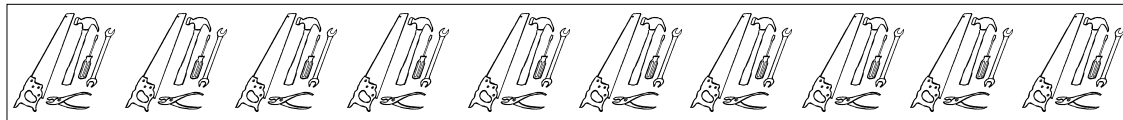


FIGURE 1*

Assessment Tools	Cognitive Processes and Affective Factors	How to Administer	Possible Scoring	How results are determined	Uses	When to Administer
Reading Behavior (I.R.I.)	Reading interests reading strategies	Individualized student reads to teacher	Percentage graph (informal Miscue Analysis)	Percentage of types of miscues and comprehension score	Determination of strengths and weaknesses in reading	Intake on-going
Reading Behavior (Questionnaire)	Reading interests Reading strategies Reading attitudes	Either individually or in groups of peers	No Score. Teachers understanding of students' interpretations	Answers to questions determine students' understanding of print for teachers	Determination of strengths and weaknesses and understanding in reading	On-going
Writing Assessment Conference & Folder	Writing interests Writing strategies Technical skills Writing attitudes	Teacher and student meet together to conference	Not applicable	Results are clear by viewing development of writing strategies	Conferences allow for individualized writing process	On-going
Writing Assessment Portfolio	Writing strategies and development of technical skills	Students choose writing samples and place in portfolio to be viewed	Holistic scoring is possible	Teacher can either use holistic numerical scoring or give qualitative feedback	Concrete examples which students choose to indicate growth	On-going
Program Magazine and Books Published	Creation of concrete product	Develop program policy for choosing finished student works for publishing	n/a	n/a	Published pieces can be seen as final product and used for evaluation	Looking back
Spelling & Vocabulary Graphs	Spelling, word meaning word recognition	Individually with instructor	Graph	Number correct out of 10	Understand growth in spelling	On-going
Anecdotal Records (students)	Learner generated	Either from form or retrieve from journal entries	n/a	n/a	Develop curriculum and program policy	Looking back
Anecdotal Records (teachers)	Teacher generated	Either from form or retrieve from journal entries	n/a	n/a	Develop curriculum and program policy	Looking back
Classroom Evaluations (students)	Learner generated	Handout questionnaire end of whatever cycle that needs to be evaluated	n/a	n/a	To inform teachers. To create change in curriculum or methodologies	Looking back
Program Evaluations (teachers & students)	Learner generated	Handout questionnaire end of whatever cycle that needs to be evaluated.	n/a		To inform. To create change or validate present policies or curriculum.	Looking back On-going
Books Read (form)	Teacher generated	Students could have their own forms in portfolios	n/a	Concrete evidence of not only how many books read but which books, i.e. topics	Concrete information for both student and teacher	On-going Looking back
Attendance	Learner generated	Daily logs or sign-in sheets	numerical	counting	Quantitative information or profile information	On-going
Graduation	Learner generated	SELF EXPLANATORY	SELF EXPLANATORY	SELF EXPLANATORY		Looking back

*This is the original version of the toolkit. The latest version was not available at time of publication.



Assessment Practices & Tools at Read/Write/Now

A Reflection on the Ideal vs. the Real

“Reflection” may be too serene and contemplative a word for what I’m going to do in this piece and definitely for the place I’m doing it from. There is traffic whizzing by outside my sunporch as I write, cats walking over my paper, and the constant awareness of my baby son’s sleeping presence in the next room. Is he *really* sleeping? Did that last truck’s passing wake him?

I’m struck by how like my program’s one room environment this distraction-packed home space is, at least when there are no classes in action. In the program space the distractions are endless phone calls, visitors, various staff people coming and going, learners coming to visit or check out books, daily details, and unforeseen crises that are all part of life in a learning center.

Yet, despite the distractions, reflection and review of assessment practices and tools still happen. They have become a part of what we see as necessary to make our curriculum as responsive as possible to learners’ goals and needs. I would like to be able to say they had a more central, deliberate place in the work of our program, but because of our small budget and resulting shortage of staff hours, much of the work of assessment is fit into too little time around the edges of classes and preparation of materials. In principle it is central, in practice it doesn’t get enough time yet.

We are working on it. We have a one-

year writing and publishing grant that allows teachers some more hours. At least this year we have the possibility of making the real more like the ideal in terms of better integrating assessment into curriculum and program development.

Another goal for this year is to make our assessment process and tools more responsive to the needs of learners. We are beginning to hear what learners have to tell us about the kinds of assessment tools we use and the way we use them. I think we have relied more on what we as teachers thought was important to learners, what we were interested in knowing about their progress, what we thought we could document, and what we thought funders would want to know. These beliefs still form the basis of our choices in assessment practices, but I hope we will find ways to invite learners to share more effectively in decisions not only about program and curriculum evaluation, which they currently do, but also in the selection of and critique of materials for their own assessment portfolios.

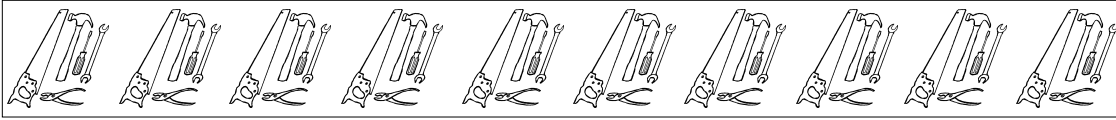
RETHINKING TOOLS AND PRACTICES

After the first two volumes of *Adventures in Assessment* came out, I began to rethink some of the choices of tools and practices I’d included with the articles about Read/Write/Now. That’s partly because of the nature of this kind

by
Janet Kelly



Read/Write/Now
Springfield



of assessment as well as the nature of writing and publishing. Obviously, nothing that's based on human beings' changing needs and goals is ever finished or perfect. Our needs and goals are continually changing and new information or a new perspective on an old practice requires making revisions in what was "perfect" for last year, or yesterday. Many forms designed to fit a perceived need in assessment have seemed perfect until they were put to practical use. Then the revisions needed become obvious. Also, sharing or publishing anything I've put in writing, whether it's a grant proposal or a poem, is one sure-fire way of seeing it with new eyes, sometimes through the responses of readers and sometimes through being able to stand back far enough to see it in a new way. This is one of the great things about this journal — learning from what other people are doing by reading articles and talking to people and learning more about what we are doing by writing about it.

It's also been interesting to hear about ways other programs have adapted things we use; this has helped us see our own practices in a new light, too. The journal has helped expand our collaborative style of working together to include other teachers in other programs. Our own program has expanded to include a family literacy program funded by Even Start, which is a collaboration with the Springfield School Department. The Even Start staff have brought new ideas and a family literacy perspective to portfolio assessment, which has been a positive addition to our overall assessment process.

WHAT'S IN A R/W/N PORTFOLIO NOW?

GOAL SETTING:

initial screening & placement interview, including responses to teacher-made reading comprehension exercise, various leveled reading samples if needed, and Slosson score
goals checklist
learning contract

READING:

list of books read
reading conference record
reading conference checklist
reading progress checklist
beginning readers progress checklist
samples of beginning readers language experience stories
reading miscue analysis results
reading response journals, student individual reading records, self-evaluation of reading responses

WRITING:

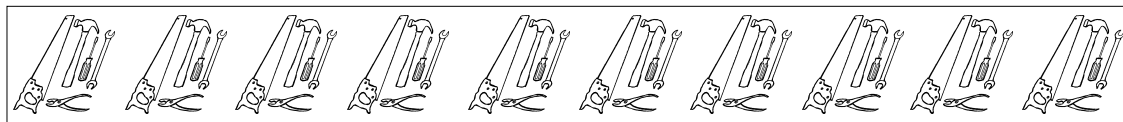
first writing sample
dialogue journal samples
other dated writing samples
writing conference record
writing progress checklist
published writings

OTHER:

learner's self-evaluation forms
math activities record
computer activities logs - various programs
teacher' logs (anecdotes & observations - kept in separate notebook)
evidence of learning/progress significant to learners - copy of driver's license earned, letters sent to newspapers, representatives, etc.

Janet Kelly, *Read/Write/Now*
9/20/93

Our needs and goals are continually changing and new information or a new perspective on an old practice requires making revisions in what was "perfect" for last year, or yesterday.



CHANGES IN THE READ/WRITE/ NOW PORTFOLIO

What's in a portfolio at Read/Write/Now these days and how it differs from what was in a portfolio two years ago is something I'd like think about on paper. Looking at the summary that was included in the November '91 issue of *Adventures*. I see things we've kept doing and things we've let go due to lack or relevance or time.

In the category of "Goal Setting", we continue to use an extensive interview in our initial screening with a placement "test" that includes a teacher-made reading comprehension sample, the Slosson Oral Reading Test to evaluate word recognition and decoding skills, and a writing sample. The Even Start adult education staff used the Fry readability scale to level various passages of writing by adult learners and created questions to assess comprehension for more definitive placement of learners.

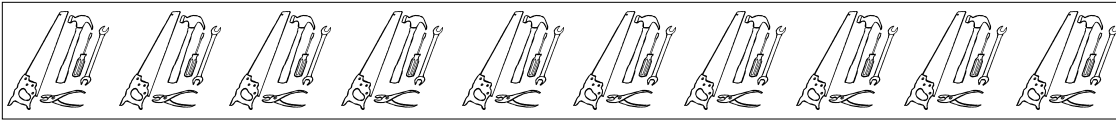
The Read/Write/Now Screening & Placement Interview as published in Vol. 1 of *Adventures* is an example of a tool that seemed to address a perceived need, but didn't work in the real situation at all. On the final page I had put in a statement/question about drugs and alcohol use that I thought would clarify a previously unstated and murky policy. It was to be read and signed by both interviewers and interviewees. The first time I tried to use it I found that I couldn't; the first face-to-face meeting with a prospective learner didn't feel right for dealing with this issue. Things sometimes look so appealing on paper but make no sense in practice. So that part of the form was eliminated.

The Read/Write/Now Screening & Placement Interview as published in Adventures is an example of a tool that seemed to address a perceived need, but didn't work in the real situation at all.

Our Goals Checklist has stayed about the same for a couple of years, with only minor revisions. The Even Start team used it as a basis for designing a family literacy goals checklist, and added a feature of choosing short and long term goals. Learning Contracts are still vital pieces of our program and assessment process. We have seen a lot of growth in both learners' and teachers' ability to use this tool to name and reach goals. We've all gotten better at being more realistic and organized about arriving at workable goals and breaking them into understandable steps. New staff are helped in this by seasoned learners and staff and new learners are helped in the same way. Knowing our limits without limiting ourselves too much is one of the great balancing acts of adult life, it seems. We're always working on that one.

One change we've made in relation to Learning Contracts is setting aside time for individual learning contract conferences at the beginning of each class cycle instead of trying to do lengthy conferences during regular class time. This has helped us to really hear each person, find out what they need and want to do, and also helps determine how committed a learner is who we have questions about from past history. Sometimes a contract review session includes an update and slight revision of a learner's goals rather than a whole new set of goals.

Often, the review shows a progression from one set of goals to a logical next set. James M., who accomplished his long-term goal of attaining a Commercial Driver's License after his 20 year factory job ended when the factory



closed, got a job driving a bus this summer. His goals for this fall include improving his map reading skills.

Some of the tools for reading and writing assessment are still used as described in Vols. 1 & 2 of **Adventures** while others have faded away from disuse, been purposefully retired, or are used differently now. We still use learners' book lists and reading conference records as tools for ongoing assessment. In addition, Marilyn Antonucci, a Read/Write/Now teacher who is now a part of the Even Start team, developed another form, the Reading Conference Checklist, which provides a framework for seasoned staff to do a more comprehensive reading conference or helps new staff and substitutes understand what's involved in an individual reading conference. This form is used as needed throughout cycles.

The Reading Progress Checklist is still used to record development of reading strategies of all but beginning level readers. The comments section has become a place to summarize reading progress as observed by teachers. A Beginning Readers Progress Checklist was developed by Marilyn Antonucci to assess the development of reading behaviors and strategies by learners in the "0 - 1.9" reading level category. These learners' portfolios also include samples of their language experience stories and cloze activities. Two tools that have faded away are "Looking At Your Own Reading Behavior" and the modified Burke Reading Interview. They may be used in reading groups as a stimulus for discussion about the reading process, especially in a group of

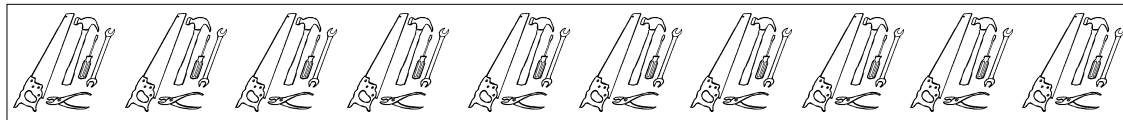
learners new to the program.

Reading Miscue Analysis continues to be an important component of our reading assessment, but routine detailed miscue analysis with all learners for whom it is appropriate is still a goal rather than a reality. The biggest barrier to frequent, comprehensive miscue analysis has been too few staff to schedule the uninterrupted time needed with learners to do the miscue inventory and analysis afterwards. We also need more staff development time to practice doing miscues so that more than one or two teachers are comfortable doing it.

Reading Response Journals have also been added to some learners' portfolios. Readers who have gotten involved in writing responses to their independent reading have chosen to use another one-page form to periodically evaluate their own written response. This encourages the development of critical reflection of reading and validates the active aspect of the reading process — what the reader brings to the text and what meaning he/she makes of it.

Writing assessment still consists of a first writing sample, dialogue journal samples, other dated writing samples and published writings. We have aimed for, but not completely routinized, learners and teachers deciding together about what goes into portfolios. We need to add a simple statement about who picked which piece and why. We know this at the time and think we're going to remember, but sometimes it gets lost along the way. The Writing Progress Checklist has been substantially revised to reflect the kind of analysis of learners' writing we really do and have time for. The form is used

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A poet/teacher once said his favorite line in a poem is the one that needed to be thrown out to make the poem work. Learning logs were like that favorite line for me.

twice in a cycle and compared. The Writing Conference Record kept in each learner's writing folder has been revised slightly to encourage recording any writing activity, rather than just "skills worked on". Several teachers have found it useful to keep more involved logs of where learners are in their writing, but these notes don't find their way into the portfolios.

LEARNING LOGS A FAVORITE, BUT DISCARDED FOR NOW

A poet/teacher once said his favorite line in a poem is the one that needed to be thrown out to make the poem work. Learning logs were like that favorite line for me. I was very attached to the idea, partly because I did something like them in an alternative education class in high school and loved it. However, nobody else liked them, learners or staff, so they were thrown out. I keep hoping to devise some variation on the logs that will mean more to people. The format used the same four statements to elicit learners' comments on their own learning in and out of the program on a weekly basis. Many learners gave rote answers, often using the previous week's log as a pattern. Most people felt it was something they were doing for teachers, not for themselves. Although some people did start to use the logs to reflect on their learning and let us know about things they liked and didn't like, most people never seemed to feel ownership of the logs. We've considered using one different question each week, but we haven't tried it yet. Meantime there is always a lot of talk about learning, about what works and doesn't, but learners are not necessarily putting it into writing.

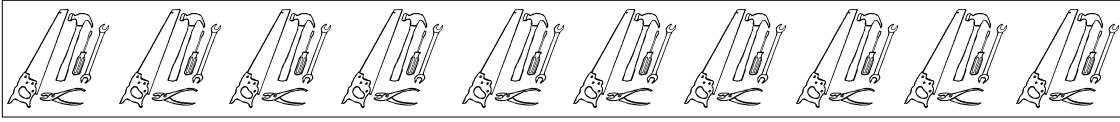
This kind of talk often finds its way into dialogue journals.

We continue to use a revised form of the Teacher's Log for Observations & Reflections and find it very helpful. One challenge is finding a way to make significant entries in the logs part of learners' portfolios. The logs are primarily used for teachers to reflect on how particular learners are doing, document evidence of literacy learning and growth in self-esteem, and make note of interests and needs to follow up on. Significant anecdotes and observations could be recorded on a joint teacher/learner form each learning contract period or month. This would give definite shape to teachers sharing their observations with learners and act as another forum for learners to tell teachers what they have observed about their own learning. (I hear the Read/Write/Now staff saying: "Somebody stop her before she creates another form!")

Learners' self-evaluation forms, which include some program evaluation, are revised as needed by staff every cycle. It would probably be very useful to ask learners to help us devise a better way to elicit critical responses to questions about program design and effectiveness. What seems to work best is time and trust. The longer learners are part of the learning center community, the better they get at telling us what works for them, what doesn't, what they like and don't like and *why*.

SOME TIME TO THINK, PLEASE

If I won the lottery and could start an endowment fund for Read/Write/Now so that shortages did not exist, one thing



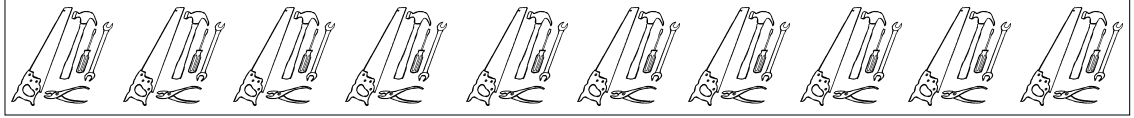
I'd do (after making all staff full time with benefits, adding more classes, and having windows put in our room) is hire a clerical person to help us maintain the organization. This mythical person could also answer the phone and do other essential work that would allow teachers and myself to spend more time on making the real assessment process and tools a little more like the ideal ones we keep striving for.

One thing I have recognized in these few years of being involved in alternative assessment is that we can't go back. Standardized tests alone would

never capture the range and richness of literacy learning, personal and social growth, awareness and involvement in community life and issues, and that overused but apt work, 'empowerment' that happens in the lives of adult learners. Tests alone could not show these things in ways authentic enough to satisfy either learners' or teachers' need to know. So, lottery or no lottery, we are committed to this process of continual rethinking, reflecting, streamlining, expanding, and revising assessment tools and the ways we use them.



One thing I have recognized in these few years of being involved in alternative assessment is that we can't go back.



READING CONFERENCE CHECKLIST

WHAT: teacher's checklist to organize information from an individual reading conference with developing and more advanced readers

WHY: helps teacher categorize and analyze information from conferences, as well as remind her/him which areas to pay attention to in reading conferences

HOW: on an individual basis, as needed

WHEN: especially helpful when a teacher is new to reading conferences; done throughout the class cycle, although not necessarily with every reading conference.

Name of Student

Date

Name of book

Approximate level

How well did student enjoy this book: Very Well Some Not Very Well

Appropriateness of this selection: Good Too Easy Too Hard

I. Comprehension: General Understanding of book: Good Fair Poor

1. Retelling Very Good Good Fair Poor

- Unaided recall
- Accuracy of recall
- Recall when asked questions

2. Recognition of:

- Character identification
- Character descriptions
- Events in succession
- Plot summary

II. Oral Reading: Fluency:

Rate: Good Too Slow Too Fast

- Word-by-word reading
- Poor phrasing
- Lacks good sight vocabulary
- Reversals: letter/word/phrase
- Gross mispronunciations
- Substitutions
- Self corrects
- Ignores punctuations
- Repetitions: word/phrases
- Omissions: sounds/words
- Additions: sounds/words
- Confuses similar-looking words
- Loses place frequently

Responds to unknown words by:

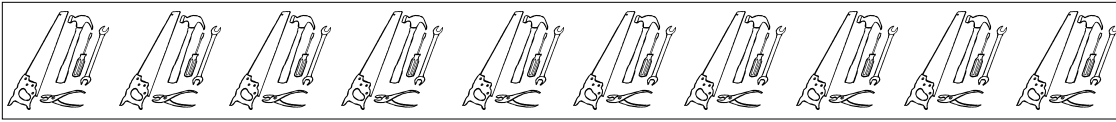
III. Word Recognition: General accuracy of word perception: Good Fair Poor

Needs help in:

- Context clues
 - Syntactic context clues: signals provided by word endings, function words and word order
 - Semantic context clues: meaningful relations among words
- Configuration clues: the shape of the word
- Phonemic analysis: knowledge of words or word parts (e.g. window and sill=windowsill)
- Structural analysis: knowledge of affixes and bases of words
- Accurate, rapid word recognition

Summary:

Recommendations:



SELF EVALUATION OF READING RESPONSES

WHAT: learner's form to use to reflect on own reading responses in response journals

WHY: gives more advanced readers an opportunity to look back at and value the growth and variety of their responses to reading they have had over a period of time

HOW: learner looks over response journal of a period of time (6-8 weeks) and then uses the form to reflect critically on the responses and the process

WHEN: intermittently, throughout the class cycle.

A response journal is a notebook or folder in which students record their own personal reactions to, questions about, and reflections on a book they are reading with a group or independently. A response can also be about a TV show, a movie, a meeting, or a family event, that was meaningful to the student.

The student is developing awareness of, and eventually commitment to, their own learning processes necessary to help them develop effective reading strategies.

The Response Journal is read by the teacher and, because it is "personal" writing, it is not marked for mechanical accuracy or stylistic features. A reply to the student is not necessary in the journal itself.

Name of Student _____

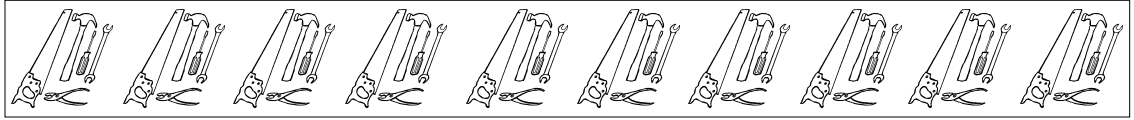
Date _____

Evaluation period from _____ to _____

1. With which response are you most satisfied?
Why?

2. With which response are you most dissatisfied?
Why?

3. What can you do to try to make your responses more satisfying?



BEGINNING READER PROGRESS CHECKLIST

WHAT: teacher's comprehensive checklist for assessment of individual beginning reader's reading behavior and development over a period of class cycle

WHY: to organize and categorize reading assessment information in an accessible format to help teachers plan activities for individuals and reading groups as well as to document learner's progress in the beginning stages of reading development

HOW: teacher looks over logs and reflects on learner's reading behavior in class, individual and group work with reader, learner's self-assessment and reporting of reading behavior outside of class and complete checklist

WHEN: towards end of learning cycles

(adapted and expanded by Janet Kelly from Sylvia Greene's Writing & Spelling Progress Sheet, from "Basic Literacy Kit" (1989))

Reader:

Teacher

Date:

Consistently Evident

Sometimes Evident

Not Yet Evident

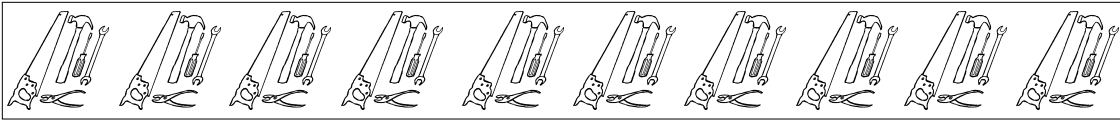
1: Gaining confidence in self as potential readers

- 1. Follows the sequence of events in a story
- 2. Expects words to make sense
- 3. Uses directional conventions
 - 3a. Follows print in left to right direction
 - 3b. Goes to next line (left again on line below)
- 4. Understands that for every spoken word, there is a written one (one-to-one correspondence)
- 5. Understands that the shape of a written word remains constant
- 6. Learning to use the following cues:
 - 6a. Picture cues
 - 6b. Semantic cues (what makes sense)
 - 6c. Syntactic cues (what sounds like language)
 - Expects text to follow accepted speech patterns
 - 6d. Graphophonic cues
 - 6d1. Developing a sight vocabulary
 - 6d2. Reading words form own vocabulary
 - 6d3. Reading words from reading materials (LEA and reading texts)

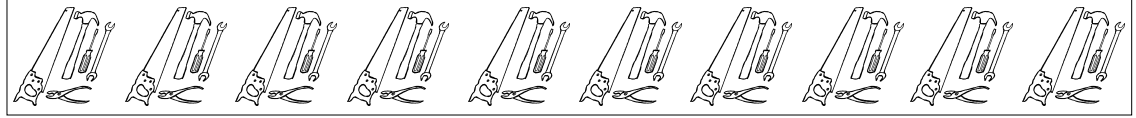
Consistently

Sometimes

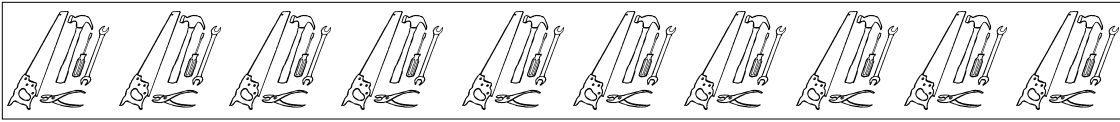
Not Yet



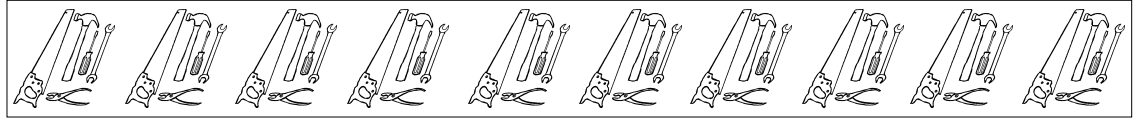
	Consistently Evident	Sometimes Evident	Not Yet Evident
7. Developing concepts about print:			
7a. Identifies alphabet letters			
7b. Prints letters (manuscripts form)			
7c. Writes letters (cursive form)			
7d. Recognizes punctuation marks:			
7d1. period			
7d2. comma			
7d3. question mark			
7d4. exclamation mark			
7d5. quotation marks			
7e. Understands spacing between words			
7f. Understands one-to-one word matching			
7g. Building awareness of shapes of words			
7h. Building awareness of length of words			
8. Letter/sound responses (identifies sounds):			
8a. Initial consonants			
8b. Consonant clusters			
8c. Short vowel sounds			
8d. Long vowel sounds			
8e. Double vowel sounds			
8f. Makes simple substitution of initial consonants			
9. Word analysis			
9a. Sees the endings on words, -s, ed, ing			
9b. Sees compound words			
10. Developing a pattern of strategies for getting meaning from words			
10a. Predicts which word makes sense			
10b. Understands oral cloze activities			
10c. Confirms if word does make sense			
10d. Initiates a new word which does make sense			



	Consistently Evident	Sometimes Evident	Not Yet Evident
<p>II. Involvement in Writing</p> <p>1. Participates in Shared Reading</p> <p>1a. Reads daily news story (teacher/learner generated)</p> <p>1b. Reads text of stories from Big Books (teacher made materials/commercial)</p> <p>2. Developing reading skills by Shared Reading (supported reading)</p> <p>2a. Enjoys reading with others</p> <p>2b. Understands about directional conventions</p> <p>2c. Reads familiar refrains in a shared reading group</p> <p>2d. Reads the simpler words in a shared reading group</p> <p>2e. Increasing listening and spoken vocabulary through story language</p> <p>2f. Increasing own understanding of more complicated sentence structure</p> <p>2g. Uses new sentence patterns in conversations</p> <p>2h. Developing ear for more varied vocabulary</p> <p>2i. Increasing comprehension by understanding more complicated storyline</p> <p>2j. Increasing sight word bank</p> <p>2k. Developing fluency</p> <p>2l. Developing intonation, appropriate voice tones</p> <p>2m. Rereads a shared reading text independently</p> <p>2n. Shares in discussion about story content with group</p> <p>3. Developing as a reader by using other supported reading activities</p> <p>3a. Listens to tapes</p> <p>3b. Listens to tapes/turns the pages/looks at illustrations</p> <p>3c. Follows the words with finger while listening with tapes</p> <p>3d. Selects and reads an appropriate text with assistance (assisted reading)</p> <p>3e. Choral reads with a peer (paired reading)</p>			



	Consistently Evident	Sometimes Evident	Not Yet Evident
4. Individualized reading			
4a. Reads own writing materials			
4b. Reads familiar books			
4c. Choosens new books to read independently/taking new books home.			



A study of the practice of alternative assessment

DANGER: Road Construction Ahead

When A. first joined the class one year ago, she met with L., the previous teacher. The classroom was small with fluorescent lighting, but sun shone through the windowpanes. The walls, painted yellow, were concrete blocks. Other students worked on their assignments quietly, alone or in groups, and the assistant teacher moved among them. In the next room children's voices rang out amidst the banging of blocks and toys.

L. and A. sat down at a table to discuss A.'s reasons for coming to school. A. spoke quietly to her new teacher, conscious of her accent and carefully choosing her words. She was searching for response in her new teacher and considering her new environment. L. spoke softly too, making a lot of eye contact and trying to make A. feel comfortable. After talking for a few minutes, L. suggested they do a formal oral language assessment as a way to better understand A.'s needs. Afterwards, L. went over the results of the assessment. A. began to speak more freely about her difficulties with language and what she hoped to accomplish. L. listened carefully and made suggestions about activities to pursue. At the end of the meeting L. gave A. a book to start working on. A. smiled and thanked her new teacher.

After class, L. wrote up this initial interview:

"Speaks very well. There are some pronunciation difficulties which are being corrected with hearing and reading the word. A. has taught herself to speak English and does very well. She is concerned that,

when faced with a crisis situation such as son in the hospital cut foot she can't express herself in English at all. We will work on this with vocab role playing.

"A. will try to find the time after and during her busy day caring for her family to practice writing. Write notes to her son who will respond with another written note for her to read etc. She will make shopping lists, lists of chores. Practice writing cursive. Read labels. Read children's books to Rosanna with practicing reading the story ahead of time for understanding pronunciation, then to interject excitement. She will get a pocket dictionary of any sort to use.

"Practice math skills mult div.

"Review the folder of work completed by copying and reading."

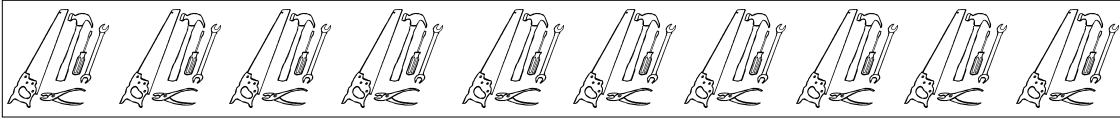
I reprint this episode in full because I believe it exemplifies much of what alternative assessment can be. The whole experience has been one of getting to know each other. The student has been thoroughly assessing her new surroundings as the teacher similarly assessed the student's needs. The comfort of the interaction has set the tone for the work to come. A. is shown that her needs are important and that the teacher is creating activities specific to these needs.

We learn in the record not only the teacher's point of view but also A.'s own concern about speaking in a crisis situation. The teacher has also guided A. through an extensive list of learning activities that A. can do in school or at

by
Paul Trunnell



Harborside Community
Center
East Boston



home. All these can be touched on at a later assessment date. Improvement can be clearly defined in terms of personal goals, not disconnected skill attainment. Finally the narrative is translatable to the next teacher walking in the room—in this case, me.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT. I've read and spoken about it in very definitive and appreciative language. Why then is the practice so problematic—while simultaneously rich?

At a day devoted to teacher inquiry, Dulaney Alexander of Operation Bootstrap in Chelsea discussed the progress her program has made in the past year of alternative assessment. To paraphrase, she said, "Well, we don't use those forms anymore. But the philosophy behind them has become much more rooted in our practice."

I remember her comment because it is true for me. A year ago I submitted an article to this journal in which I discussed self assessment tools and methods I was using in my class and at our program. Many of the forms were minimal. Some had only existed for a few months. Well, here it is, a year later, and those forms are nowhere to be found in my class or this program. But I am continuing my efforts to better understand my process as a teacher in exploring and developing alternative assessment. In this article, I look at the ways I have experimented and the choices I have made along the way.

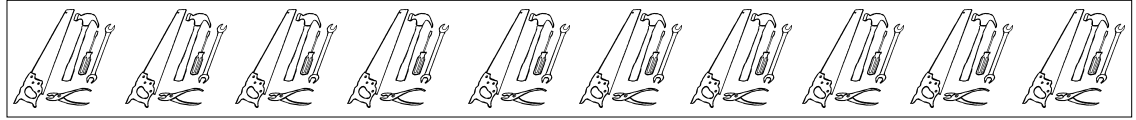
When I sat down to write this, I realized I had a lot more questions than answers. In fact I am going to be revealing a lot of (gulp) mistakes, which lord knows teachers don't really make.

I'VE BEEN TEACHING FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS at the Harborside Community Center in East Boston. I've worked mostly with an ABE/Pre-GED population of diverse personal and ethnic backgrounds. My academic focus has generally included fractions, complete sentences, the food chain, the Conquest of Early America and the presidential race. I have worked in classes varying in size from five to 15 students with a wide range of skill and ability levels. The students' goals have similarly ranged from GED acquisition as a road to increased employment; to increased self-esteem; to basic language improvement for the sake of day to day communication.

In the class I teach now, each student has something similar to a progress portfolio. The portfolio includes initial registration and assessment tools: writing samples, a math survey, a learning and goals questionnaire, and a reading analysis, all of which are recorded onto math and grammar checklists and an initial learning contract. These documents are updated — ideally — about six weeks into the cycle and then again at the end of the cycle. In addition, students keep learning journals in which I respond; I keep a teaching journal of anecdotal information; and the class participates in a beginning planning session and a final class evaluation that provide the foundation for the curriculum.

The learning contracts and evaluations are very dialogue-oriented. I meet with students to discuss their progress and plan their goals and document what's been said. To this end, even the writing, math and reading samples and

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These tools are valuable, in some way, to me, the teacher, but not necessarily to the student. If you asked them about these tools, they would likely have much different responses

checklists form the conversation-starters, as it were. I find the meat of what we plan comes through the process.

Perhaps a useful way to proceed is to sit down with A.'s and M.'s folders, looking through the contents, and being guided by the use of the materials within: learning contracts, checklists, work samples, self-assessments, and teacher journal entries. I have used these tools most consistently and they should bear the weight of analysis.

I have chosen these students because the dialogue between us has been extensive and clearly illustrates to me, and I hope for the reader, many of the uses and purposes I have in assessment.

Though I relate the educational activities of two students, the focus is not on their learning or my teaching, but on the use and effectiveness of the assessment tools and activities. Also, these tools are valuable, in some way, to me, the teacher, but not necessarily to the student. If you asked them about these tools, they would likely have much different responses (and potentially much different assumptions about what should be assessed and what indicators they need).

STUDENT A:

A.'s folder is more incomplete than some. Her initial intake assessment is missing; some learning questionnaires are not filled out. Checklists stare out like rock face carved by some prehistoric gathering, in some incomprehensible language. A. sees her folder only once every six weeks or even fourteen weeks, if the middle of the cycle seems too hectic to slow down for a period of assessment.

Nevertheless, A.'s progress is clearly revealed in the teacher's log and the writing samples discussed below. The other tools were not as successful.

LEARNING CONTRACTS — The Problems. A.'s folder contains only two learning contracts for a one-year period. The first is the narrative that I reprinted at the beginning of this article. The second is dated April 27 — eight months after the first one.

How was the first one used? Actually, not at all by me. I began fresh in September when I started teaching the class. I gave all the students an incoming assessment and held initial interviews with them. The info in the learning narrative is basically the same info that I got from A. in the fall.

Was that info recorded? Yes, on notebook paper that was never transferred to a learning contract. At that time I had not been using these tools for some time; they had posed more problems than solutions: too time consuming, not readily valuable, etc. Valuable though was the discussion. As I said, A. told me all of what was in her previous learning narrative. This discussion, in a teacher-student fashion, formed the basis of an oral learning contract which we talked about over the cycle. Also A. was placed in math and reading activities based on her initial assessment.

In December the class conducted our next major assessment. Once again, A. and I discussed the next moves and I recorded the interview on notebook paper (that unfortunately disappeared under the piles on my desk).

The April learning contract (Figure 1)

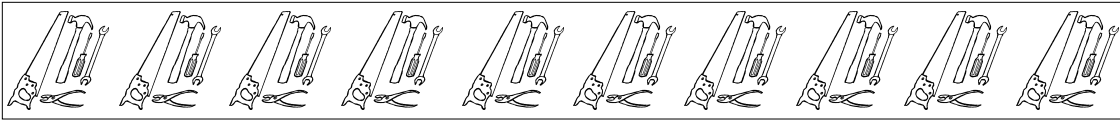


FIGURE 1

LEARNING CONTRACT

name: ~~_____~~ A. _____

date: 4-27-93 _____

contract ends on: 6-15-93 _____

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

HOW?

MATH ^{more interested in Reading} "Always I hate math" writing
 Because you have no choice, we'll continue on fractions
 Adding & Subtracting fractions
 * * * * * Words & Reading - Math

With the class

in class
 special homework

Spelling List is Great!

* WRITING - write when your kids get bigger - or to friends
 Editing List

One thing a week

Once a week: copy a story - practice
 or short piece of a long story for spelling

* GRAMMAR & SPELLING

Spelling Rules

use spelling book - one chapter a week
 1 x 6 = 6

Grammar - Nouns - singular & Plural

Basic English Grammar book - work w/ Lorenzo & Sarah

* READING SKILLS

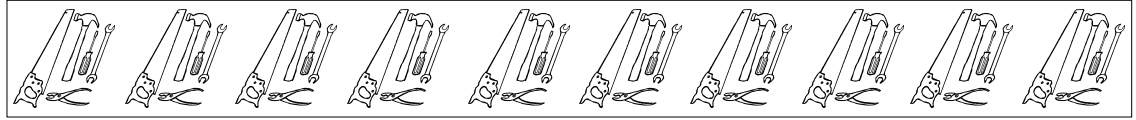
Learn basic words better

Copying stories - once a week (one-two pgs/wk)

PERSONAL/CAREER

To write letters to friends and family
 Work in General
~~Business~~
 GED or diploma

Harborside Community Center Adult Learning Program



At this point I felt I was coming to understand the purpose and use of these tools again. I wanted to have some sort of record of our discussions.

is reprinted here. Much more structured than the learning narrative, it specifies academic categories and a “personal/career” category. Why did the April contract survive? At this point I felt I was coming to understand the purpose and use of these tools again. I wanted to have some sort of record of our discussions.

A. and I sat down with her notebooks and discussed what had been good and what had been difficult. This contract focused heavily on strategies and tasks that A. could work on independently. Again, the curriculum itself would be structured, as much as possible, to address the variety of student needs in the class. The activities this time focused heavily on reading (science) and writing. Math was eliminated because Anna and other students felt that they were having difficulty focusing on too many subjects at once.

A.’s progress is noted only in the comment, “Spelling List is Great!”

Was this independent work completed? No. Why not? A. never got to it. In class she continued writing and reading science—very high level for her ESL abilities. She and other ESL level students focused periodically on grammar and spelling.

So this makes learning contracts sound awful (or at least my use of them). Can I say anything in my defense? Yes. They were not the only source of assessment for A.

TEACHER’S LOG—Success. Based on our discussion in December, A. and I focused on her writing. Our process in this endeavor is shown most clearly in the teacher’s log that I keep daily. Here

are the entries I penned for A. that Spring. These show her progress from being a frustrated writer to having a much better attitude and much better success.

1/20 — “Writing is daunting.”

1/27 — “Her writings were very good, did not question her spelling or grammar, took her some time to complete 1 1/2 hours.”

2/1 — “... took 2 1/2 hours to do the MLK writing assignment. ‘I don’t like to write.’”

2/3 — wrote a whole page—got started on her own, we talked it out two or three times and then picked the very first thing, then the second, and so on. Did very well. Worked on spelling afterwards. Rules and sight words.”

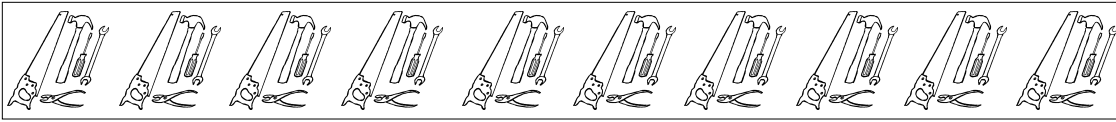
2/4 — “A. to practice spelling is copying the story Little Italy—decided to do it on own. She enjoys story and said that spelling words that we went over she saw in the story. Making connections. Is self-motivated.”

2/10 — “Writing, spelling, copied, seems more confident. Grammar scrambles. Checked her own spelling first. Got about half. Had Lorenzo [a fellow student] help and then I helped. Used her spelling list.”

3/10 — “A. once again — ‘I’m learning a lot.’”

4/7 — “Finished newspaper stories—her spelling is getting very good... she also made a ‘hide-a-word’ for the skills page...”

4/13 — “A.’s writing is getting longer, more comfortable. We went over past tense verbs in a story she wrote last night.”



The log records a clear sense of progress. This record can be made available to the student to show her the progress she has made.

Though some of the entries are not backed up with details or reasons, many entries explain the strategies and activities that she is using to succeed: her personal spelling list, having her peers assist her, ignoring grammar and spelling errors to encourage her work on content, having process conversations with her. Also some comments cause me to reflect on assignments that were ill-fitted for Anna, for example, a writing on Martin Luther King Day when she was not fully aware of who he was.

The entries have emerged when she and I would discuss her progress, in the form of encouragement—"remember when you...". In this way it served as a reminder for me.

When A. looked at this record (I gave it to her as I was preparing this article) she recalled all I had written and was proud of the progress she had made.

CHECKLISTS. Checklists (Figure 2) proved problematic with A. We had a grammar and a basic math skills checklist. The math checklist was too broad and did not represent the advances A. was making — advances that were small, skill-wise, but were very noticeable regarding strategies. She was successful working on math if she had the opportunity to work on it for several days at a time — not just one period. She understood better in a class format than independently. She was very good with the use of manipulatives. She worked well cooperatively. If we had a checklist for this, or at least a strategies list, then

her progress would be much more apparent.

Though there is no record, the class structure regarding math was re-shaped as a result of students like A. Students were taken off an independently-paced workbook diet and fed group tasks, often with manipulatives and a lot of repetition. Perhaps to the credit of this structural response, A. seemed to become much more confident and self-aware in pursuing her math work. She went from thinking she could not do it to realizing she just hated it. She and other students proposed a structural change because of their frustration in pursuing math on a one-day-a-week schedule. The result was to focus on one subject at a time, for a whole week or weeks. This to me is a clear advance in learning self-awareness and empowerment—though it is nowhere recorded.

These conclusions have made me return to the checklists and consider how to revise them to better suit the needs of the class and the students. The revision will include more strategies and learning behaviors and also be broken into smaller, more measurable steps.

WRITING SAMPLES. The writing samples contained in A.'s progress folder are good indications of how we focused on process together, with three drafts of a writing included (see Figures 3A-D). Importantly, this was the one thing in the folder that A. could look at and clearly sense her progress. The first sample we have, from last fall, shows a short corrected piece that still contains some grammar and writing and spelling mistakes. The second sample are all three drafts of a piece she had worked

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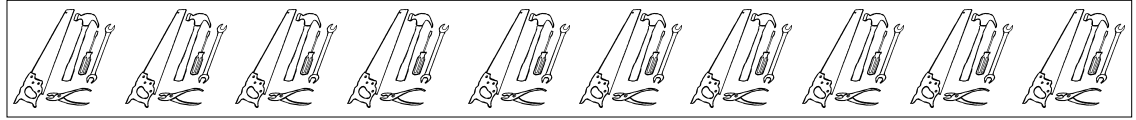
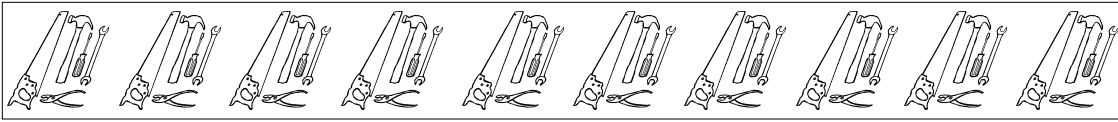


FIGURE 2

BASIC MATH MASTER CHECK LIST

COMPETENCY	Mastery Date:	COMPLETION GOAL
1. Adding Whole Numbers & Money	✓	
2. Subtracting Whole Numbers & Money	✓	
3. Multiplying Whole Numbers & Money	✓	
4. Dividing Whole Numbers & Money		
5. Miscellaneous Topics: <u>Whole Numbers & Money</u>	half/half?	
6. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF WHOLE NUMBERS & MONEY		
7. Units of Measure		
8. Meaning of Fractions COMPARING, REDUCING, RAISING UNDERSTANDING?	✓ 12-17-92	
9. Adding/Subtracting Fractions (Like Denominators)		
10. Adding/Subtracting Fractions (Different Denominators)		
11. Multiplying Fractions		
12. Dividing Fractions		
13. Fraction Applications		
14. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF FRACTIONS		
15. Meaning of Decimals		
16. Adding & Subtracting Decimals		
17. Multiplying Decimals		
18. Dividing Decimals		
19. Decimal Applications		
20. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF DECIMALS		
21. Introduction to Equations		
22. Ratio/Proportion		
23. Meaning of Percent		
24. Percentage Problems		
25. Tables and Graphs		
26. Perimeter , Area, Volume (Rectangles, Rectangular Solids)		
27. BASIC MATH REVIEW		



on in the Spring. She looked at this during our April conference and pointed out to me the progress she had made: better spelling, a longer piece, clearer writing. She could also see her process, that her first draft did not have to be perfect but that she would have several passes to improve it. She was very proud of her progress.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS. A.'s December self-evaluation is the only one I have on file. Her comments are the comments of many different students—broad and feeling-based.

“We learned alte about America and Indian... I don't understand math divicion... I wish to learned more about riding and writing...”

These comments are too broad to indicate much progress. The strength of this tool is more in the process. We do it as a class. The class discussion focuses on the curriculum, what has been valuable, and what we want to focus on in the future. When we do these, students seem very involved in answering the questions, too, which I think is an indication that taking the time to reflect is valuable, even if the record is so general.

STUDENT M.

M.'s folder resembles a “textbook” progress portfolio. There is a more complete array of contracts and checklists. Like A.'s folder, there are writing samples that M. chose to include in this folder, as well as assessment tools. In M.'s case these include a grammar pretest from one of the workbooks we use in the class. Also there are filled out

reading and writing behavior checklists, adapted or borrowed from the Read / Write Now program in Springfield, MA.

M. is more familiar with her folder, too. She has paged carefully through the contents at different occasions.

LEARNING CONTRACTS—a useful tool. M.'s learning contract (see Figure 4) focuses her toward the External Diploma Program, a high school diploma program run by the Boston Public Schools. This specific, external goal provides helpful direction for both of us. Her January list offers independent activities for her completion. Goals also include specific competencies to achieve.

Reading Goal — to understand bigger words.

Make a list of words and go over these
Read bigger words in class
Use a vocabulary book to build your understanding

Writing —
Continue the good work
Practice for EDP
Work on editing list

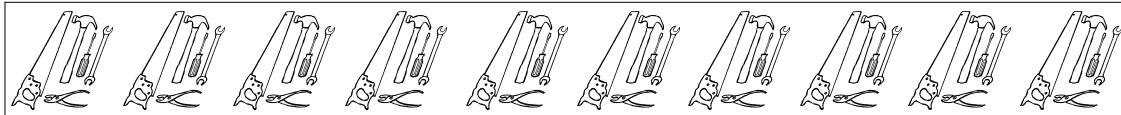
Grammar —
Complex sentences
Punctuation—Commas

Math —
Units of Measure
Fractions

Other —EDP or GED
take EDP pretests or plan to take GED at the end of March

This contract has been a more effec-

The class discussion focuses on the curriculum, what has been valuable, and what we want to focus on in the future. When we do these, students seem very involved in answering the questions, too, which I think is an indication that taking the time to reflect is valuable



FIGURES 3A-B

~~Dear~~ I remember wen my son
was bon & wy was the ~~happy~~ Happi
porsson ~~the~~ the word my ~~sister~~ sister in law
she was in the Asporo wuth my Haspend
and want my son was bon they wor
giampen ~~up~~ up and down ~~for~~ FOR
Happenis and after my son was bon
we ghivom a biutiful PARRY and the
PARRY was at Sogna PLAZZIE the wor
~~at~~ all people then my daughter after
4 year my daughter was bon and
we deed the semeting

It sounds like you and your family were very happy.
It was it scary to have a child? Were you nervous?
I like your story. I can understand it very well. Is it
getting easier to write without stopping? You have spelled
some words wrong, but your guesses were smart and I
can understand them. Underline the words that look
wrong and I or Diane will help you spell them.

A. M. P. 4-12-93

Yesterday my and my children we
went to the church, & a was
very good the messe. Then we
went home, I started to cook
dinner we ate, then I wash the
~~dishes~~ and we got went over
my & sisters we have a
nice eve coffe thighter and
I got a nice basket to my
I had ~~the~~ child be ~~before~~ before I
went to my sisters house I gave
the basket to my children and
day was so happy.

Easter Basket

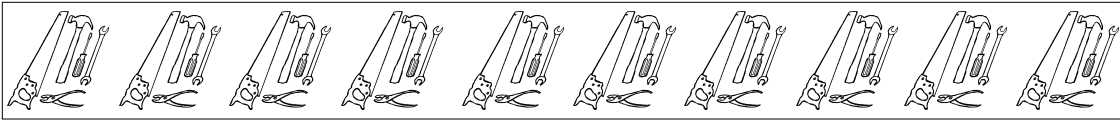


FIGURE 3C

where

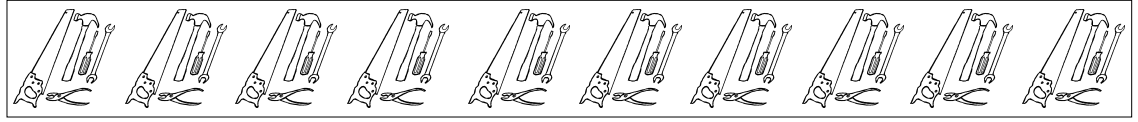
1. Good verb finding

they

A.M.R.S. 4-12-93

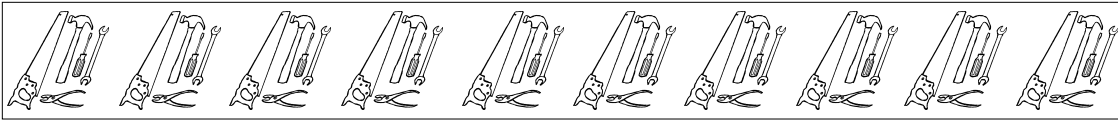
Yesterday me and my children ~~we~~
went to the church, ^{it} was very
good (the mess). Then we went
home, I started to cook dinner
we ate then I washed the dishes
& then I gave the basket to
my children & ^{they} ~~they~~ ^{were} were so happy.
A. then we went over my sisters
house and we had a nice
cappuccino ^{together} ~~together~~ and I gave
a easter basket to my good child.

Both the holiday forms it the
^{seem} seem lack the rest ~~of~~ the ^{other} other day
I ^{tried} try to do my best for my children
to see ~~with~~ what it Easter.



FIGURES 3D

last writing sample



tive tool with M. than with A., evident in the checks and comments that were placed on it during our April conference. It was used much more as intended, as a contract, and advances were noted and commended.

The April contract is more bare. The Reading section suggests again to understand bigger words (her stated goal) with weekly work in a vocabulary book as a suggested independent activity. The Grammar section is blank, and the Writing section suggests only an edit list. The Math section lists specific math activities (“adding with different denominators... whole numbers/mixed numbers/improper fractions”) as well as an asterisk next to the goal “Become more Independent.”

What became important in April, however, was a checklist made for her by the EDP program assessor. M. had taken the pretests and needed to master some math and writing skills before she could enroll in the program. A copy of this list was included in the progress portfolio and also in M.’s notebook. This provided her with a lot of self-direction and was referred to almost daily throughout the cycle.

This contract or checklist was a list on a sheet of notebook paper. Yet M. held on to it for three months while she worked towards completing those goals. As such, it shows that forms don’t have to be carefully typeset or formatted to be effective.

In our June conference, M. announced that she was almost complete with her work toward the EDP. (The checklist had provided her with an exceptional tool for keeping herself on target). Moreover, her new contract

reads very successfully. Notice the switch between her and my voice:

MATH: a lot better; didn’t know to much about fractions and decimals and measurements [before]; [I now know more about] stores and how much things are going to cost—and also paying bills.

(Working more independently-checking yourself and re-doing your problems if necessary.)

“I like to do math now—seems to be a lot easier.

(If you come to a problem you don’t understand, you’ll come back to it later, try to figure out what would make sense, go to a new page and come back to figure it out.)

Notice that the comments focus on strategies rather than skills acquisition. Also, the recording relies heavily on self-report. Also, it is not a “contract” in the formal sense. It is halfway between an evaluation and a goals list. It does not require a signature, but it is an oral agreement. It is very effective as a record of strategies tried and true, or abandoned.

M.’s 5 week summer plan focuses her heavily on the EDP skills she has yet to master.

TEACHER’S LOG—how difficult it really was. I had an ongoing struggle with M. regarding independence. I say this only to give some background to help explain the sometimes emotional recordings in the teacher’s log regarding M.’s progress. The reader should understand the tool’s ability to record how

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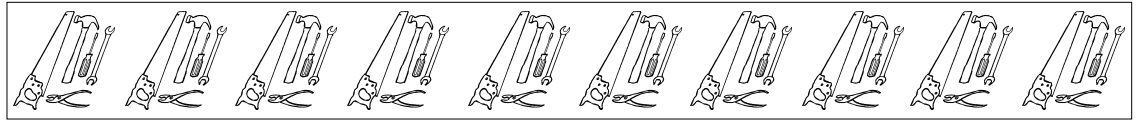


FIGURE 4

GOALS

MATH

✓ Units of Measure } still more
 ✓ Fractions

READING

UNDERSTANDING BIGGER WORDS

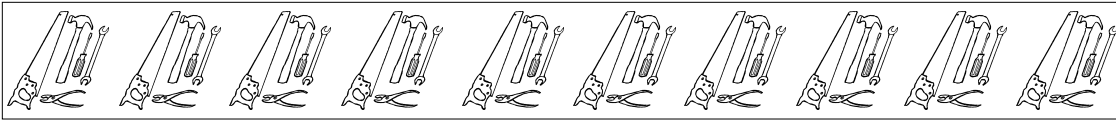
- ① Make a list of words + go over these
- ② Read bigger words in class - Strategies
- ③ Use a vocabulary book to build your understanding.

Goal - A list of words
 A couple strategies

WRITING - Continue the good work ✓
 Practice for EOPV ✓
 work on Editing List

GRAMMAR - Complex sentences - good understanding
 Punctuation - Commas - more

OTHER - EDP or GED - take EDP pretests
 or plan to take
 GED at the end of
 March.



difficult learning can really be, a process that does not show up on a checklist or in a grade or even a learning contract.

2/1—"she doesn't retain well..."

2/3—"M.—up to page 44 (some difficulty with directions)"

2/8—"she said, 'I feel like I'm doing better than before'... she has to be coaxed through reducing..."

2/9—"worked on math—addition of unlike denominators, whole numbers, reducing, and simplifying—I had her work with paper manipulatives. She said it helps a little to use paper. She was having trouble with simplifying for ex: $11/8 = 1\ 3/8$. The division step keeps confusing her. I tried to get her to do it without division step—just do it in her head. But that was still a challenge—she doesn't believe she can do it."

2/10—Grammar stuff confused her—directions, pg. 37. Has she worked on this? I think so. Have her check her papers. She feels comfortable paired with someone, but she wants [my] okay. Safety and security is very important to her.

3/30—she successfully ploughed through 2 digit division—still wanted help, but was able to solve many problems on her own

4/13—worked on fractions—again id'd problems when directed, but needed a lot of support to get there. I gave less than usual. When she worked on another segment, she said she didn't understand. I said read the directions. She gave up in a second. I told her to take five minutes. She started crying and I held my ground and said i will help you in 5 minutes—try to figure it

out—she complained that the directions were short. She was right. I showed her the lengthy example and explanations that were on the same page. She hadn't realized. She apologized for crying. I told her I want her to work independently. She held on and got work done. Good for her.

5/10—focus on one subject at a time...

5/17—checked her own math work—got many of them right...

Very emotional but clearly a showing of what learning is—an emotional and highly complicated task that does not only include skill acquisition. This is recorded in detail here. Note—mostly very spare, not a lot of details. The detailed entry of 2/9 is helpful, I am sure, for the reader to understand better the difficulty. But remember, this is not designed for an outside reader.

This process has been discussed by M. and me since. She agrees she is working more independently. Again, she has not seen these notes. Would I share these with her the way I would share the notes with A.? Yes. I think it is respectful of a student to be up front about your teaching assumptions—if done in a sensitive manner.

Another obvious value of these notes is for my own improvement. What strategies have I used? What has worked? What hasn't? This example, for me, is one of the most powerful of my teaching beliefs. Perhaps there is a way that it can be used too, in teacher sharing at my center, or in a teacher self-evaluation.

CHECKLISTS. M. benefited more from checklists than A. This was most cer-

Another obvious value of these notes is for my own improvement. What strategies have I used? What has worked? What hasn't?

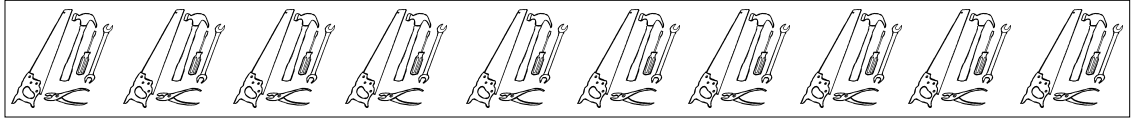
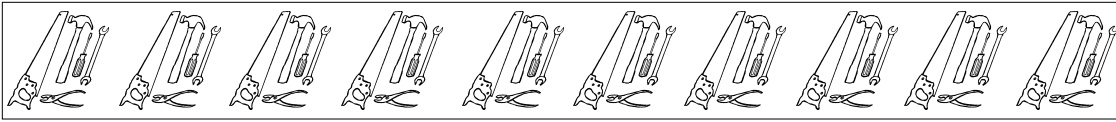


FIGURE 5

Basic Grammar Checklist



tainly true of the highly motivating EDP checklist that she was using. A., as an upper level ESL student, was out of range of the checklists that were in our class for higher level ABE math and grammar skills.

Over time, M. made clear progress on the math checklist (Figure 5), though again, her actual progress in self-motivation and learning strategies were still not listed on a checklist. Her progress on a grammar checklist was more ill-defined. Her initial ability was measured on a workbook pretest. The checklist, which is patterned after the competencies that were worked on in the workbook, does not record much of M.'s progress because M.'s work in the book was sporadic. The checklist needed to better reflect the actual work she was doing in order to indicate progress.

WRITING SAMPLES. M.'s writing samples are much less instructive than A.'s. Why? She has three different samples from over the year that she included when asked to choose something. They do not reflect the process reflected in A.'s. They, to my eye, look very similar in terms of style and ability. Why? When she came into the class, M. was already a competent writer. She has the ability to write long, personal narrative pieces. Her spelling is very good. Our focus only recently has been on critical, non-narrative writing. When these samples are included in her folder, they will indicate the culmination of a lot of work. For the meantime, the work reflects M.'s competence but not her advance.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS. M.'s December self-assessment (Figure 6) reports "we learned about Columbus discovering a new Continent" and that the most meaningful of what we'd studied was math and science. Her concerns about the class include that many people come to class late and this seems frustrating to her. Also, a cooperative project frustrated her because "we could not make up our minds for a long while."

This is vague in terms of acquired skills; but valuable in terms of learning attitudes. It could be concluded that M. did not at the time of this recording enjoy cooperative projects. Also, she gave me a cue as a teacher that the class could be more structured—or at least she would prefer her learning experience to be as such.

Her May self-assessment includes a lot of self-praise and awareness of learning. "What I am most proud of is knowing what and who I am." "My biggest breakthrough was figuring things out that I was not sure of before." "My favorite class was science because I learned things I never knew before." "The goals I did not achieve are learning bigger words because I do not understand them."

The difference in these comments is in part controlled by the tools: different questions were used on different occasions. The latter occasion seems to have been much more effective in revealing learning attitudes and encouraging self-assessment. Though her descriptions are still a little vague, I think this is because self-assessment is a challenge.

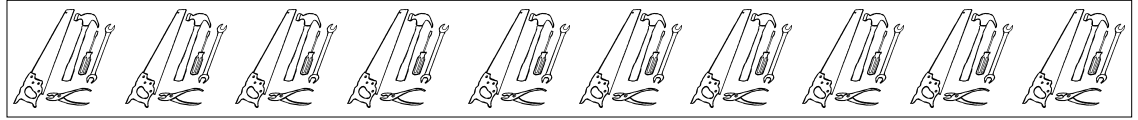


FIGURE 6

Name:

Date: 12/16/92

END OF CYCLE SELF-EVALUATION

1. Write 2-3 words that describe the class this cycle.

fun - Educational - Exciting

2. Look in your folder and use the work you see there as your guide. What have you learned? Be specific.

① *We learned about Columbus discovering a new continent.*

② *We learned writing samples.*

③ *We learned Practice Exercises*
cap. 11, 12, 13.

3. What was the most meaningful or useful part of class for you? What was the least meaningful or useful? Why?

most meaningful *learning + studying - math + science -*

least meaningful *Partners 4* *Because we could not make up our minds for a long while.*

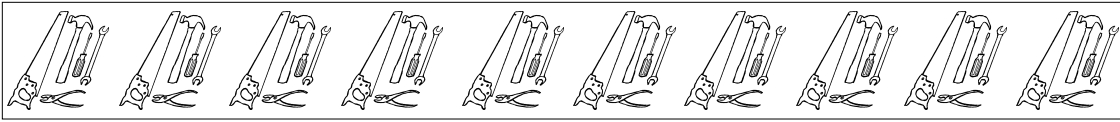
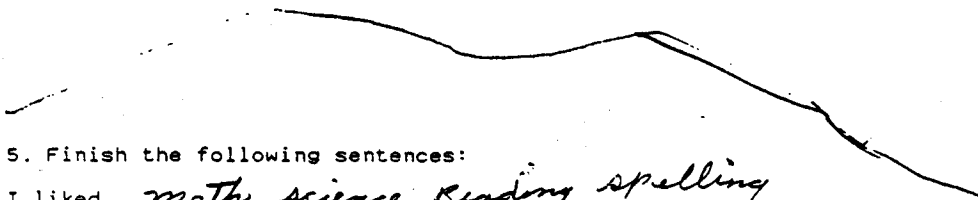


FIGURE 6 (CONTINUED)

4. Graph your energy and enthusiasm this cycle below:

start early middle late end



5. Finish the following sentences:

I liked... *math science Reading spelling*

I didn't like... *not having breaks on time*

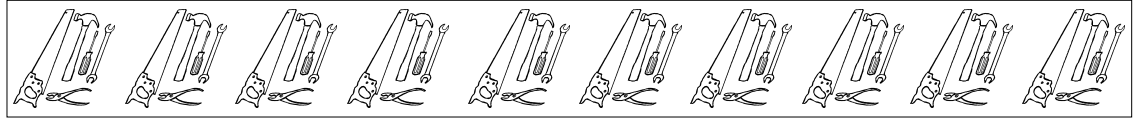
I don't understand... *most of science + history*

I am frustrated by... *People borrowing money and not paying back*

Next cycle, I wish... *we could learn more than now.*

6. What changes should ^{we} make in class for next cycle?

*Every one showing up on time
try to be here every wk unless its something
important or you are sick.*



REFLECTIONS ON MY EXPLORATION INTO ASSESSMENT

WHAT do I think I am assessing?

Clearly I am not assessing for skill acquisition alone. I am looking for increases in confidence, independence, learning self-awareness, ability to take new challenges. I am trying to understand people's different learning styles: whether they work well cooperatively or independently; whether structure is essential for self-motivation. I want to understand the student's process. I want to see—and I want the student to see—the complicated reality of learning.

Am I REALLY assessing it?

The checklists that I use are skills-based, not strategy-based, and thus do not record all the information I want. Though I may speak to the students of their advances in these affective areas, the forms we use do not necessarily speak the same language. The teacher's log and the learning contracts do record the strategies and attitudes, as do the self assessments. The writing samples can show process as well as product.

Activities need to be ROUTINE to show progress

Though it is a valuable process, to sit down with students and discuss their goals, the learning contract itself is useful mostly when it is used periodically, and updated. Independent activities are effective if they are narrowly targeted toward the completion of a goal such as entrance into the EDP program. And I think independent activities need to be constantly reinforced—perhaps a weekly check-in time

with a student; or time slotted in class for independent work (neither of which my class had).

Checklists need to reflect the work that is being conducted in the classroom. The competencies need to be specific and attainable. If possible, checklists could be made for strategies and learning attitudes and not just skills. They need to be referred to often enough so that they are seen as a tool and not an artifact from an archeological dig.

All this is fine. But what is helpful FOR THE STUDENT?

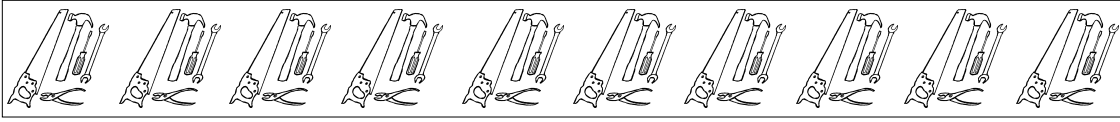
I have told you what is valuable to me. But only a few of these tools and activities seem to have been genuinely appreciated by the students. The Writing Sample was the only thing A. used to report her own progress. The EDP checklist was the one device that M. seemed to "own." A powerful trait of alternative assessment is that it has the possibility to become the property of the students.

Teaching logs are valuable for me, the teacher. And valuable to show process—the complicatedness of the learning negotiations. If the students get to see it, then it will be helpful for them too.

If the tools are supposed to empower the students, then the materials need to be in the possession of the students. Teacher's logs need to be provided and discussed. The checklists and contracts need to be possessed by the students. The class needs to have time and structure to accommodate reflecting and utilizing these tools.

It is important for teachers to discuss the use of these tools. They are alterna-

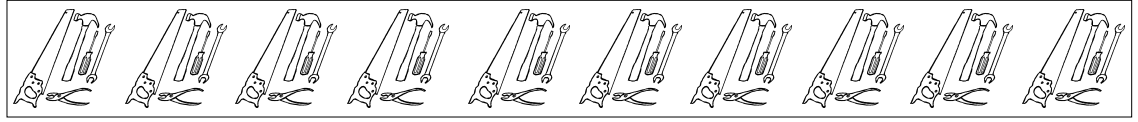
I am trying to understand people's different learning styles: whether they work well cooperatively or independently; whether structure is essential for self-motivation. I want to understand the student's process. I want to see—and I want the student to see—the complicated reality of learning.

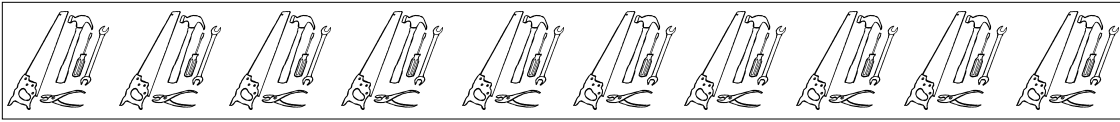


tive, which means that, potentially, each class is using different forms and procedures. In a sense, we are all involved in exploring the backroads. Some of us with compasses in hand, carefully mapping our road; but probably more of us taking the sudden turn off and trying to remember which road led where.

The GOALS project has allowed many of us the resources to carefully map our route, and to compare our travels. I hope the “Atlas” we have compiled in our Toolkit will help others explore other roads and paths, and that we will all have the opportunity to share, revise, and learn from each other.







From EGAP to Beyond

Adapting Tools to New Programs

Prior to my involvement in Component 3 of the GOALS Project, the use of alternative assessment in Community Action, Inc.'s education programs was confined primarily to one program, Adult Education for the Homeless. It was also slowly being developed for the adult basic education and English as a Second Language program.

As in many programs, the funding source tended to overly influence the type of assessment done. There had always been a distinction between what happened in the DOE-funded programs and the Job Training and Partnership Administration (JTPA)-funded programs. DOE-funded programs encouraged the development of new materials and alternative means of assessing student progress. But the requirements of JTPA-funded programs often limited how far one could go beyond traditional testing and the use of competency-based materials.

The staff had begun experimenting how to integrate more alternative assessment techniques into the JTPA curriculum while still meeting contractual obligations. Participation in Component 3 provided a mechanism to reflect on how to do this better, what the considerations were, and how to continue adapting materials to other programs.

As noted above, Community Action, Inc. has been using an alternative assessment tool in its Adult Education for the

Homeless Program for three years. The tool, the Educational Goals Assessment Package (EGAP) (see Germanowski, *Adventures in Assessment*, Volume I) was originally developed for a DOE-funded adult program serving new readers to those ready for the GED. Despite its original focus for DOE-funded programs, CAI has been modifying EGAP for quite a different use, namely its Entry Employment Experience Program, a GED program for youth who have dropped out of school. The EEE program is a JTPA-funded youth program serving learners at a pre-GED and GED level. These differences influenced the modifications that were made. I will briefly describe the EGAP, and then discuss how and why it was adapted for use in the EEE program.

EGAP ALREADY MODIFIED FOR ADULT ED PROGRAM

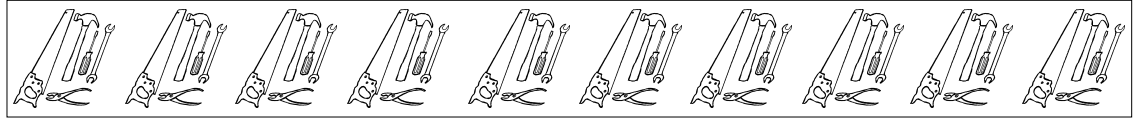
The EGAP contains initial assessment and goal setting tools, as well as a means for tracking on-going learner progress. CAI made several revisions to the EGAP for the Adult Education for the Homeless Program. One revision was in format. The teacher found that learners were not filling in the goal for the next day on their daily logs. The teacher increased the space dedicated to this to emphasize its importance.

Another revision was the addition of a checklist for reading to give the teacher a better idea of what people

by
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have read and to see what they are interested in reading to facilitate planning instruction and to understand motivations.

The goals of the EEE program are to assist youths to attain a GED and to increase their reading by two grade levels and then one of three other options: to transfer to a skills training program, enter higher education, or get a job. The program serves 30 youths each year.

The funding source conducts an initial educational assessment using the ABLE. Learners must score at a minimum 4th grade level in reading and math to be referred. If accepted, learners are in the program for an average of six months.

Meeting contractual outcomes is imperative to re-funding. Learners enrolled are reassessed by the EEE teacher in reading and math using a modified SRA math assessment and a teacher-developed reading test.

NEEDED BETTER ASSESSMENT TOOL TO FOCUS ON STRENGTHS, NOT WEAKNESSES

Missing from the assessment array was a means for the teacher to identify learners' strengths and to more quickly engage them in the learning process. The teacher wanted learners to be more reflective of and to take more responsibility for their learning. The short-term nature of the program and its required outcomes made it important for the learners to make a strong commitment to following through on their educational goals. The pattern had been that learners dropped out or did not complete if they were not committed or did

not assume responsibility for what happened to themselves in the program.

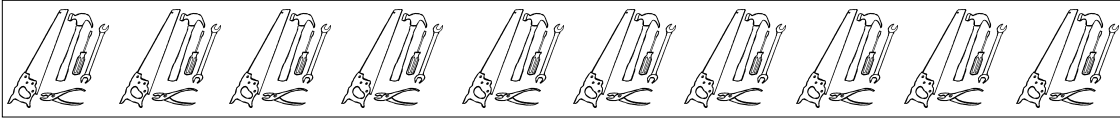
The initial assessment performed by the funding source tends to focus more on identifying learner weaknesses and how to address those than on identifying learner strengths. The teacher wanted a more positive means for engaging with learners to demonstrate that she was there not to "fix" the learner, but to help the learner build on his/her strengths.

The EEE teacher used the checklist from the EGAP for this purpose for a year, but found this did not work well for the learners. Many of the youths are at a GED level and felt some of the lists were silly and not relevant. The teacher also decided that the EGAP lists were too formulaic for the youths. They did not see the meaning of it, and saw the EGAP as something the teacher was making them do.

The teacher also wanted more extended answers than the "yes," "no," or other one-word answers she was receiving to questions. The teacher felt the format was too confusing to learners. Youths would check topics just because they thought they needed to for test purposes. When asked why they had checked a particular topic, the youths could not explain their choices. The teacher wanted to get the learners thinking more and coming up with new ideas of what they wanted to do.

In amending the EGAP, the teacher made two major changes. First, the teacher identified which topics the learners had consistently checked off from the EGAP lists and then wrote an open-ended question which related to the topic. The teacher kept the EGAP list

The teacher wanted learners to be more reflective of and to take more responsibility for their learning. The short-term nature of the program and its required outcomes made it important for the learners to make a strong commitment to following through on their educational goals.



for types of reading done by the student, but added a section for the learner to list what they had read in each category.

Second, the teacher revised the daily log. The EEE teacher used the EGAP's daily log for a year, but found that learners were not consistent in filling out the log daily. They either forgot or did not know what to write. The teacher modified it to a twice-weekly log. Learners do a weekly plan on Mondays and — if they want — can comment on their progress throughout the week in a space provided. On Fridays, each learner writes about the week, what worked for her and what she will do differently the following week. The teacher will be using this form in the fall. Because the program is time limited, the teacher felt it important to set

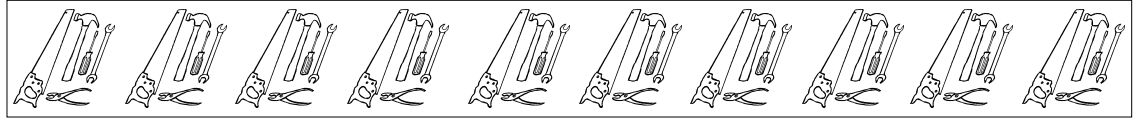
specific weekly goals.

At the same time, the teacher was adapting the EGAP for use in the classroom, she was also working on revising the curriculum. The changes in the curriculum included incorporating the use of math manipulatives and hands-on science lessons. The revisions in the EGAP to better engage learners in their own learning were also being addressed in the curriculum.

Though the two assessment forms are different in format — and to some extent content — the ultimate purpose of both the EGAP and the EEE Initial Interview and Weekly Plan are the same: to assist learners in taking responsibility for their learning and to give teachers information for developing individualized instruction.



On Fridays, each learner writes about the week, what worked for her and what she will do differently the following week. Because the program is time limited, the teacher felt it important to set specific weekly goals.



ENTRY EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAM
EDUCATION COMPONENT: INITIAL INTERVIEW

Name: _____ Date: _____ Age: _____

First Language: _____

Educational background: _____

Last school attended: _____

Last grade attended: _____ Last grade completed: _____

Date last attended: _____

Self-Rating

My reading skills are: Excellent Good Fair Need Work

Explain your rating: _____

My math skills are: Excellent Good Fair Need Work

Explain your rating: _____

My writing skills are: Excellent Good Fair Need Work

Explain your rating: _____

The following questionnaire is designed to provide you with an opportunity to communicate with the education instructor about what you'd like to learn and how you learn best. The best learning takes place in a supportive environment where people are able to discuss ideas and problems as they arise. Communication is the mutual responsibility of all involved in the learning process and this questionnaire will begin that communication process.

Career/Work Goals

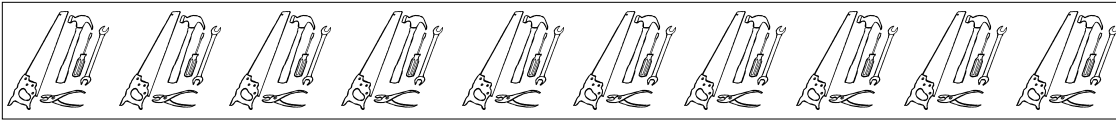
I would like to...

attend college to study _____

attend a training program for _____

get a job as a _____

The thing I need to work hardest on to achieve my career and educational goals is



Personal Goals

The following questions give you an opportunity to describe other things about yourself besides your educational and career goals. Please complete all statements and give as much information and explanation as possible.

In my free time, I like to

Some of my characteristics which I like are

Some obstacles that keep me from doing things I'd like to do are

Other things I would like to learn (please describe any experience with the following)

managing money effectively _____

understanding pricing, discounts, etc. _____

registering to vote _____

getting a library card _____

learning to use the library _____

getting involved in community activities _____

learning about careers such as _____

protecting my health effectively _____

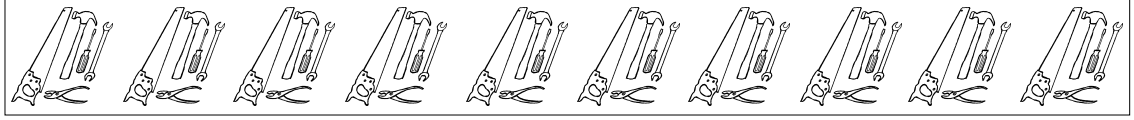
managing time effectively _____

Please add at least one other thing you would like to learn _____

Please list at least one thing which you can teach others _____

Do you learn better working with others or alone? Please explain. _____

Do you learn best by watching someone else, by reading about something, by listening to someone or by doing something yourself? Explain, and if possible, give an example of something you learned well and how you learned it. _____

**Interests**

There are no right or wrong answers for the following questions. The purpose is to identify possible interests and learning styles for each person.

My favorite subject in school was _____ because

The most memorable thing I ever learned in school was

I've always wanted to learn or do

Name at least two things you've seen or heard about and would like to understand better

Would you rather read a good story or a news magazine? Why?

Would you rather listen to an older relative talk about your family history or listen to the news? Why?

Would you rather discuss personal and social values and how they fit into your life or how the body works? Why?

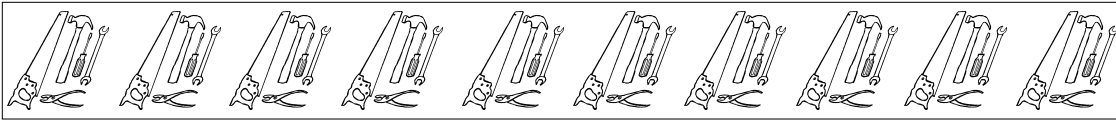
Name at least two other things you enjoy reading about or discussing (some examples might be hobbies, places you've lived, sports, current events or news you're concerned about, health, movies, music, etc.)

Life Skills

Describe a situation where you were able to help yourself or someone else accomplish something (some examples may include resolving a conflict, doing a budget, doing something positive for your health, etc.)

Have you ever been unable to do something you really wanted to do because you didn't have the necessary skills or information? Please describe

Are there forms, labels, documents, reference books, maps, etc. which you would like to learn more about?



Personal Reading and Writing

I would like to read for enjoyment (please list anything you've read recently in any category)

adventure _____	mystery _____	romance _____
history _____	sports _____	music _____
poetry _____	religion _____	horror _____
TV & movies _____	true-life stories _____	self-help _____
how-to _____	hobbies _____	parenting _____
science fiction _____	magazines _____	newspapers _____

I have written or would like to write:

poems _____	songs _____	stories _____
journal/diary _____	essays _____	school papers _____
news articles _____	letters _____	advice to others _____

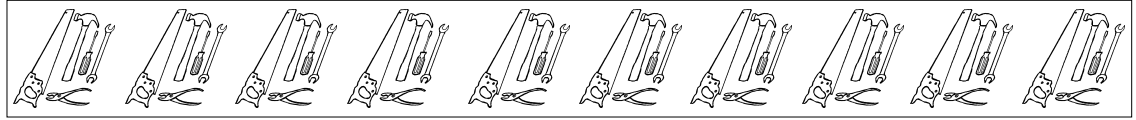
Other reading or writing skills you have or would like to have:

The best thing I ever read was _____

The best movie or TV program I ever saw was _____

I also enjoy:

cartooning _____	painting _____	drawing _____
singing _____	other _____	



EDUCATIONAL GOALS PLAN

Name: _____ Date: _____

What do you want to accomplish in our class? _____

These are my educational goals. I'll work on them every day in class:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

WEEKLY PLAN

Name: _____ Date: _____

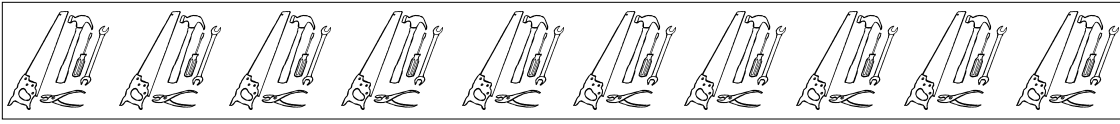
My goals for this week are (include page numbers, specific tests, writing, as well as understanding concepts and ideas, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Please feel free to make changes in your goals during the week and voice any concerns, questions, etc. in the space below.

Day	Your Comments
_____	_____
_____	_____

Friday: How did your week go? What strategies were helpful and what will you do differently next week?



The Learner's Log

Evolution of An Assessment Tool

International Language Institute (ILI) has always been extremely interested in alternative assessment. Since the program began in 1984, students have been asked to evaluate their progress and their classes through ongoing oral feedback in the classroom, individual conferences with students, and written mid-term and final evaluations. Through in-house workshops and attendance at state-wide and national conferences, ILI staff have focused on assessment and over the years have added daily dialogue journals, student writings, taped recordings of the students, and — the subject of this article — learner logs as a way of looking at student's progress through portfolio assessment.

Being involved in Component #3 has been rewarding because it has allowed ILI to study alternative assessment in-depth through intense discussions about assessment with other Component #3 participants and the chance to examine tools that other programs are using in the field.

Meeting with participants of Component #3 over the last year and a half has made it quite apparent that alternative assessment is an ongoing process; tools that ILI used last year are not used now, the weekly evaluation tool has changed many times, new tools have been adopted as a result of sharing tools from other programs, and we still feel that more tools need to be developed for our

low-level ESL and ESL Literacy classes.

ILI's involvement with Component #3 helped us to refine our Learner's Log, and the purpose of this paper is to discuss the evolution of the Learner's Log as an assessment tool.

THE LEARNER'S LOG

At ILI, portfolio assessment is used to measure progress by both the student and the teacher. Each student has a folder that is kept in their classroom. In the folder are the student's learner log — a series of assessment tools that are stapled together (filled out on a weekly basis) and writings that the students have placed in their folder. The student tapes are kept in the classroom, and the students keep their dialogue journals during the course. At the end of the course, everything in the portfolio is kept in the student's file.

The original components in the first Learner's Log (Winter 1992) contained an assessment tool which students filled out on a weekly basis. Students responded to the following statements:

- ♣ Some things I have learned
- ♣ Some things I didn't understand
- ♣ Some things I liked
- ♣ Some things I didn't like
- ♣ Some things I want to do next week

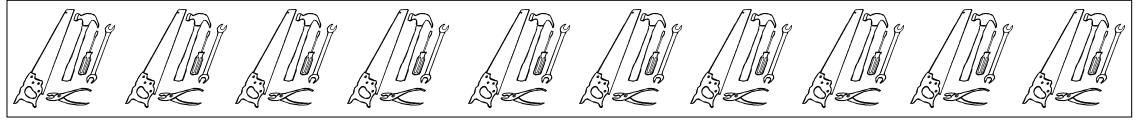
(adapted from the Read/Write/Now ongoing assessment tool, called "A Learning Log," Janet Kelly, Adventures in Assessment, Volume 2.)

The students seemed to be intrigued

by
Caroline Gear



International Language
Institute (ILI) of
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Northampton



It quickly became apparent that you can't hand out this neat little booklet and expect your students to respond to the statements in the detail desired by the teacher. Most importantly, students need to know why the instructor is taking class time to discuss progress and self-assessment.

by the collection and were receptive to writing their thoughts about the course at the end of each week. Also included in the Learner's Log was a learning styles instrument from the Center for Innovative Teaching Experiences. This tool asked students to respond to statements about their learning styles. (ILI only used this tool in the Spring 1992 program, as it met mixed reviews by the students. Instructors are looking into other tools that help students determine their individual learning styles.)

It quickly became apparent that you can't hand out this neat little booklet and expect your students to respond to the statements in the detail desired by the teacher. Most importantly, students need to know why the instructor is taking class time to discuss progress and self-assessment. Students need to understand the importance of looking at their progress weekly.

As we read the responses in the Learners' Logs ILI came back to the same questions: How can we get students to look at their learning? How can we help them see their learning as a process and evaluation of their progress as part of the process? How can we get the students to measure their own progress rather than relying solely on the instructor? How can we get our students to answer the weekly evaluation questions with more than one sentence? How can we get our students to critique the classes and know it isn't going to be taken as an insult to the instructor?

At the end of the Winter 1992 program, ILI asked the students if they felt that the Learner's Log was useful. Most students felt it was valuable, and we

decided to continue with it and add some additional pieces. The Spring 1992 Learner's Log was presented to the students on the first day of class rather than at the end of the first week. Some additional pieces required students to fill out and understand the pieces on the first day of class. Included in the Spring Program's Learner's Log were the following:

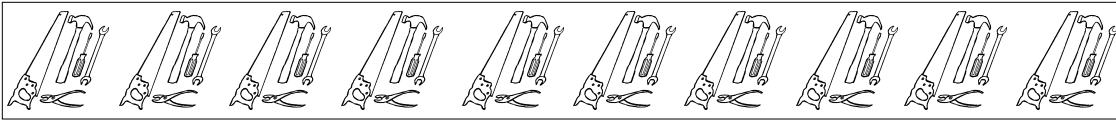
- ♣ a page that listed general course information
- ♣ a program entry writing sample
- ♣ a page divided into four sections of expectations, goals, fears, and self-help for the program that students responded to
- ♣ reading and viewing logs.

In the latter, students keep a running list of what they have read and what they have seen on TV, with comments.

The Learner's Log also took on more of a professional appearance with a colored cover and end page.

At the end of the Spring Program students were asked for feedback on the Learner's Log. Students still felt it was valuable for them to fill out, but they didn't like filling out the same assessment tool week after week. The instructors also found lower level learners had difficulty responding to the statements; very often the statement of "Some things I like" was answered, "I like everything." The instructors decided that the weekly assessment was working, but the tools needed to be changed.

In the Summer 1992 program, the original weekly assessment tool was exchanged for two assessment tools that alternated weekly. One assessment tool asked each student to list the week's activities and to rate them for both their



enjoyment and value. The teacher writes these activities on the board; the students record the specific activities in the Learner's Log and rate them. The tool also asks the students to answer the following questions:

- ♣ Which activities were the most helpful? Why?
- ♣ Which activities were the least helpful? Why?

The other assessment tool that was used was developed at the Community Learning Center.¹ This tool divides the assessment into two sections: in class and out of class:

In Class:

1. Now I understand.....
2. In class, I need help with.....

Outside of Class:

3. This week I spoke English.....
4. I listened to.....
5. I read English.....
6. I wrote English.....

The Summer 1992 students all seemed to write more on the weekly evaluation that asked them to list the activities and rate them. It appeared that the process of listing all the activities first and then evaluating them was much more effective than having the students respond to statements about what they had learned/done in class. The students still expressed the desire to have different weekly assessment tools. In the Fall 1992 program the Learner's Log looked similar to the Summer 1992 Learner's

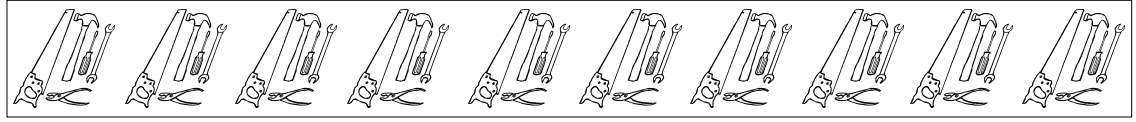
Log, but in the 12 week course the weekly evaluations alternated between three assessment tools instead of two. The instructors also came up with an additional final evaluation that contained the following questions:

- ♣ Has your English improved since you started this course?
- ♣ Do you use more English now outside of the classroom? Where? With whom?
- ♣ What were your goals when you began the class, and are you closer to achieving them?
- ♣ Was this class different from what you expected? How?
- ♣ Was the style of teaching comfortable for you? Effective for you?
- ♣ What activities did you like to do outside of class?
- ♣ What did you learn about yourself?
- ♣ Did the class make you feel good about yourself?
- ♣ If you were the instructor, what would you do differently?
- ♣ Would you like more interaction with other ILI students?
- ♣ Additional comments

The instructors were very pleased with this final evaluation as it sparked a lot of discussion first, and students wrote quite a bit in their answers. The students were still responding more to the assessment tool that had students list the activities. It was decided the Winter 1993 Learner's Log would only use that assessment tool for the weekly assessment.

The process of listing all the activities first and then evaluating them was much more effective than having the students respond to statements about what they had learned/done in class.

¹ See Appendix 7 in "Three by Three by Four: Ongoing Assessment at the Community Learning Center" by Karen Ebbitt, Priscilla Lee, Pam Nelson, and Joann Wheeler in *Adventures in Assessment Volume 2: Ongoing*.



It is safe to say that the Learner's Log will never be a finished product. Our ongoing evaluation of our Learner's Log is not just within the parameters of a given program. Plans are already being made to create weekly assessment tools for the beginning ESL learner to develop a tool for students of all levels that would help them look at how they learn.

THE SECOND YEAR

Throughout the program, students meet individually with the instructor to discuss progress. In the Winter 1993 Program, ILI began documenting the individual exit interview with the instructor. The instructor wrote down what the student and teacher discussed during the interview. The exit interview is kept in the Learner's Log. The student interview record included the following areas:

- ♣ Goals met
- ♣ Goals not met
- ♣ Recommendations
- ♣ Plans for future action

The Spring 1993 Learner's Log brought back the alternating assessment tools, but this time allowed students to choose their weekly assessment tool. Students still preferred the assessment tool that listed the activities first, but the instructors were still not satisfied with the tool. At the end of the Spring 1993 Program Tim Rees and Pat Sandoval developed a two-page weekly assess-

ment tool that is being used in the Summer 1993 Program (See Figure 1). The instructors have been using the tool for three weeks and are very pleased with the results.

The instructors also developed a new final student evaluation (Figure 2) which will be evaluated by both students and instructors at the end of the Summer 1993 Program.

During the Learner's Log evolution, ILI has realized the importance of continually reevaluating the tools and how teachers and students alike must understand that assessment is a necessary process. It is safe to say that the Learner's Log will never be a finished product. Our ongoing evaluation of our Learner's Log is not just within the parameters of a given program. Plans are already being made to create weekly assessment tools for the beginning ESL learner to develop a tool for students of all levels that would help them look at how they learn. Stay tuned for the next installment!



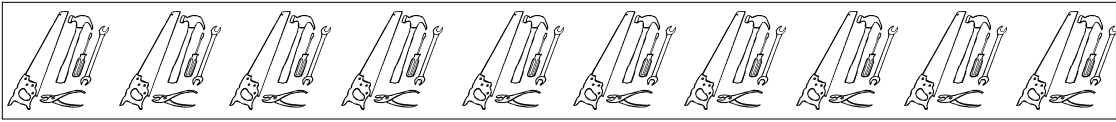


FIGURE 1

WEEKLY EVALUATION OF CLASS ACTIVITIES

Date: _____

Please rate the week's activities for both their enjoyment and value. "1" is extremely low and "5" is extremely high. For example, you might feel that a particular activity was a lot of fun, but you don't think that it helped you learn anything new. In this case you may rate it "4" or "5" in enjoyment and "1" or "2" in value.

Enjoyment	Value	Name of activity
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Which activities were the most helpful? Why?

Which activities were the least helpful? Why?

Hours in class: _____
Homework assignments given: _____
Homework assignments completed: _____

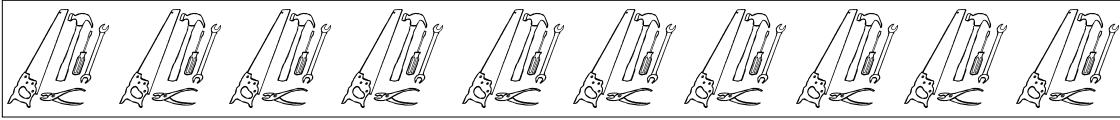


FIGURE 2

FINAL STUDENT EVALUATION

Teacher's name _____

Dear Student: We are very happy that you have been a participant in this program. We hope that you have enjoyed your time with us, and that you have learned a lot of English. To help us evaluate this program and plan for future programs, we ask you to complete this form. We appreciate your opinions and feedback, so please try to be specific. Thank you!

1. Expectations:

When you came to I.L.I., what did you expect to learn?

Did you do what you wanted? Please comment.

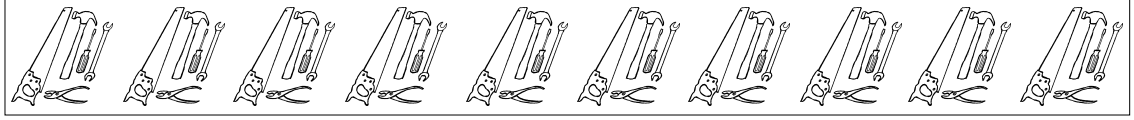
2. Motivation:

Did you speak in class when you needed to?	YES	NO	SOME
Did you do the assigned homework?	YES	NO	SOME
Did you try to use what you learned in class when you were not in school?	YES	NO	SOME
Were you on time for class?	YES	NO	SOME
How often were you absent from class?	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER

What else did you do to help yourself?

3. Your instructor:

Did you understand your teacher when he/she spoke?	YES	NO	SOME
Did you understand why your teacher chose classroom activities?	YES	NO	SOME
Could you talk with your teacher about problems or concerns you had?	YES	NO	SOME



4. Class atmosphere:

Did you enjoy spending time with other students? YES NO SOME

How much time did you spend speaking your first language? NONE SOME LOTS

Please comment on the class atmosphere in general?

5. Class:

A How much improvement have you made?

B What were the most useful activities that helped you?

A Grammar: LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

A Vocabulary: LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

A Pronunciation LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

A Speaking ability: LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

A Listening: LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

A Reading: LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

A Writing: LITTLE SOME LOTS

B _____

6. Culture:

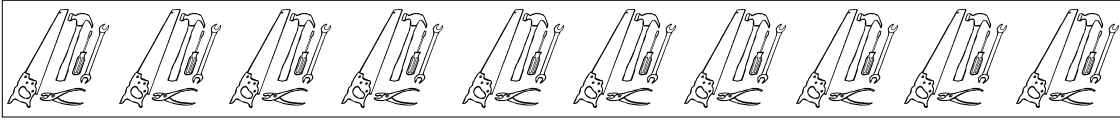
Did you learn more about American culture? What helped you?

Did you learn more about the cultures of students in the class? YES NO A LITTLE

What helped you? _____

7. Last comments:

What do you think about the program in general?



Reflecting on the Links Between Literacy Practices and Community Development

Learning to work collaboratively with shared visions and goals is at the heart of people building better futures for themselves and their communities. Adult learning centers can foster the skills, awareness, knowledge, and experiences of working together effectively. Through group classes, management committees, potlucks, and community activities, learners may have the opportunity to problem solve, offer their opinions, make decisions, advocate, and listen to others of different backgrounds. As individuals experience being listeners and being heard, they become more willing and able to advocate on their own behalf outside the four walls of the classroom, be it with spouses, landlords, employers, teachers, neighbors, or politicians.

Many assessment tools used in literacy programs, even those which educators call alternative, usually focus on how to assess where students are in terms of their goals. Checklists and portfolios aim to give feedback to students and teachers about how students' reading, writing, and numeracy skills have improved. While we have found these helpful, both of us have recognized that these accomplishments are not what make us feel passionately about our work.

We get our energy for continuing as practitioners in the field when we see Mary take the initiative to make coffee for everyone when just months before

she was so shut down that she did not speak unless a teacher directly asked her a question. She began huddled within herself; now she gives us a hard time for not writing in our own journals. Or we look at Fred who started our program saying nervously that he hoped he could get a private tutor; now he participates on the long range planning committee. And Diane responds that the most valuable thing she learned from the other students in our creative writing class is that "it's our differences that make it exciting and our similarities that make it safe."

Or we might take some excerpts from Annette's essay. It has virtually nothing to do with how much better her writing is. Rather it has everything to do with what she has learned about herself and others:

"There are two kinds of people. The ones that go out and read and write. Have the ability to handle anything that comes their way. Not afraid to do it. They have the confidence they need.

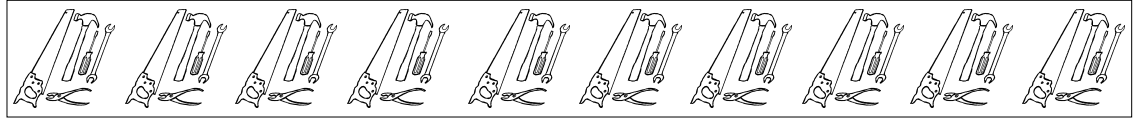
"There are also people that stay back in a closet. That can't come out or are afraid to. But sometimes we see a little light in the dark. We are looking for more light. When we do we find it very interesting. We found out that we too have a very good mind and feelings about things.

"I found out there are many intelligent people in the dark closet after all. Have the same confidence. We need to come out of that dark closet. The light we see feels so good."

by
**Judy Hofer
and Pat Larson**



The Literacy Project:
Ware Adult Education
Center
North Quabbin Adult
Education Center



Many participants in adult education come to us feeling they are failures, and that we the experts will fill up their empty minds with what they need. We want to set forth right from the start that people coming to an adult education program must take an active role in their own learning, and that working within a group will enhance that process.

We need more of it. It's like being blind and you can see.

We lack indicators to measure this type of growth. In fact, these measures of an awareness that working class people also create knowledge, of increased confidence, feeling greater control over one's life, participating in groups and taking on leadership roles are actually trivialized because we measure our students' progress in terms of narrowly-defined goals. Many participants in adult education come to us feeling they are failures, and that we the experts will fill up their empty minds with what they need. We want to set forth right from the start that people coming to an adult education program must take an active role in their own learning, and that working within a group will enhance that process.

COMING TOGETHER AS A GROUP

Very few of our participants have experienced being part of a group that shared a sense of purpose. In rural, dying mill towns of Massachusetts, with virtually no public transportation, few jobs, no community centers, and limited access to social services, getting a GED and improving reading and writing skills barely scratch the surface of what is needed for people to get out of poverty and exercise more control over their lives.

What is desperately needed is to provide participants with the opportunities, knowledge and skills to work together cooperatively, imaginatively, with critical analyses and tools for problem-solving. Recognition of the value of this type of group building is growing in the business world, with

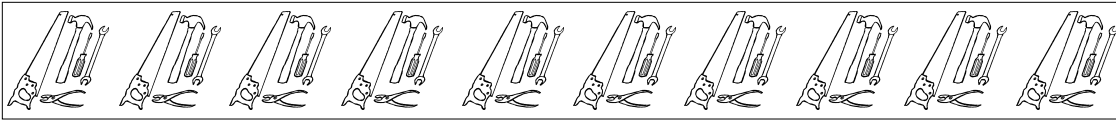
quality circles, leadership development, and the valuing of being a "team player." Yet where does it enter adult learning centers? And even if these goals are explicit in our mission, how do we articulate these to participants, influence their own goals for themselves, assess progress in these areas, and move forward to then bring the larger community into the classroom and the classroom out to the larger community?

As we work with Component 3, we are attempting to develop language to "look back" and not only assess individual progress but also to assess what people do as a group/community — part of the continuum of literacy development for a community. This is one reason why it seems important to discuss how to assess not only what people do as individuals but also with groups.

CREATING TOOLS TO MEASURE COMMUNITY, TOO

Although literacy practices and community development may be difficult to measure in the traditional sense of assessment and testing, there may be indicators which show how an adult education center views community development and collaborative group efforts. The way we began this reflection was to frame the discussion in terms of such general questions as:

1. How can we develop alternative assessment tools which look beyond the "deficit model" of what should an individual be doing differently to one which looks at a person's place in their community, whether the classroom, the adult education center, their family, their neighborhood, or their town?



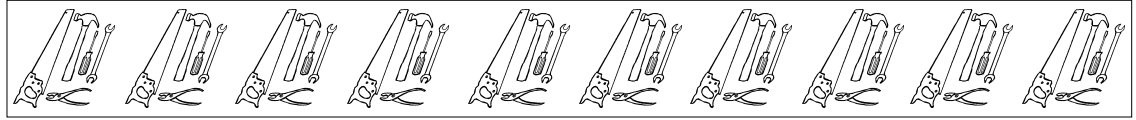
2. How do we assess improvement and change as a continuous process not only for the individual but for the community of individuals?
3. How does a program establish a strong link between the community, its program, and the participants in a program?
4. How does a program meet participants' personal goals while considering the needs of a community? How can we assess the value of both of these coming together so that a program achieves more "of its goals more often and more efficiently"? (Stein)
5. How do we assess if there is movement or change on a continuum in terms of community development by people participating in programs and by the program? (Stein)
6. How do we assess people's movement from individual goals to group goals and collective activity? What has to happen to allow for such movement?
7. How do we bridge looking at how individuals function in a group and develop along a continuum to the idea of community development and collective action?
8. In order to assess community development, how do we define leadership development? (Fingeret)
9. How do we assess collective activity of a group with the group rather than just assessment with individuals?
10. How do we develop a language of assessment which takes into account the development of community and collaborative efforts at adult education centers which also speaks to the needs of funders?

Answering all the above questions is beyond the scope of this discussion paper. And some of the possible answers may be found only through what Janet Isserlis describes as "the interactive, dynamic, dialogic roles of both teachers and learners" in the on-going assessment of daily classroom activities and other center and community activities" (*Adventures in Assessment, Vol. 2*).

In the *Framework for Assessing Program Quality* compiled by Sondra Stein for the Association for Community-Based Education, Stein points out a growing need to assess the ways we work in groups in terms of problem-solving. Team problem-solving is growing in a number of jobs to replace the model of workers being individual cogs in a wheel. Thus, participants in adult education programs may need and want experiences in "team efforts". Stein says, "Instead of looking solely at learners and trying to figure out what they need to do differently if we are unhappy with program results, we should also look at the conditions and processes that lead to those results and try to figure out what the program needs to do differently."

By experiencing and participating in groups, people may come together around group projects such as community forums and other activities. For example, Tawny, who came to The Literacy Project at the end of 1990 and earned her GED in a few months, returned to the Center in October, 1991 to begin volunteering as a tutor. Recently Tawny said that when she first came to the Center she only wanted to work alone and focus on getting her GED. "Now look at me. I am helping organize workshops, coordinating a newsletter for

By experiencing and participating in groups, people may come together around group projects such as community forums and other activities.



Other community projects such as organizing SHARE (a food buying program), publishing a community magazine, and starting a legal literacy program all grew out of discussions and dialogue which began in the classroom.

the Center, and getting the local selectperson to come to some of our NEXT STEPS meetings.”

Other community projects such as organizing SHARE (a food buying program), publishing a community magazine, and starting a legal literacy program all grew out of discussions and dialogue which began in the classroom. The seed for the Legal Literacy and Advocacy Project which grew out of several different discussions during a nine month period, according to one of the advocates: “Somebody’s welfare was cut off — an elderly student. There was no explanation. Welfare just said, ‘That’s it.’ It was illegal, but she wasn’t aware that it was. We decided to go about helping her.”

After six months of asking questions and talking with Legal Service lawyers, two people started a legal literacy and advocacy project for people in the community. The group of four people who developed this project learned about keeping records and about dealing with various agencies. They also kept a journal of their activities through which they talked to each other about their experiences. One participant said she learned how carrying out a community project using teamwork is very different from the factory work she has experienced.

The stops and starts for such community projects illustrate that progress is not always linear, and that it takes time. For many people it may be recursive and cyclical with movement in and out of the private and public realms (Fingeret). For example, as we see Donna begin to speak in a group at the Center and break through the silence on an individual

level, we also see the discussions in her class move toward community issues such as lack of jobs and lack of public transportation. In time, Donna wrote a letter to the local newspaper about the need for public transportation. At first it appeared that this was an isolated writing activity. But months later when nothing happened, Donna talked about the issue in a group again and began writing letters to public officials. She eventually organized a group meeting with the person directing the regional transit authority. Thus, there is movement and change both on the individual level and the collective level as a group comes together to speak out in the larger community. All this takes time.

For now, our challenge as educators and facilitators is to negotiate linking literacy practices to community development so that students — and staff — can benefit from a common sense of purpose.

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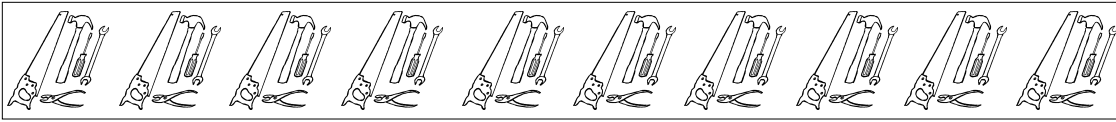


FIGURE 1

WARE ADULT EDUCATION CENTER
END OF CYCLE EVALUATION FOR WRITING GROUP

WHAT: This assessment tool is used to assess the individual's progress in group participation, learning from others in groups, and the mechanics and process of writing as well as to provide the teacher with feedback for the class.

HOW: At the end of the three-month writing group, each participant filled out this assessment form in our last class. First I read through the entire evaluation to clarify and answer questions. To respond to question #1, as a group, we brainstormed the qualities we felt were most important to us as a whole. From that list, individuals chose their own qualities to reflect upon further. After completing the form, we shared our responses with each other.

WHY: We used this form to assess ourselves, provide each other with feedback, and make recommendations for future groups.

WHEN: This is to be used as a summative assessment at the last class.

POPULATION: This tool is used in a mixed group with very beginning writers and others who are going on to community colleges.

1. List four qualities that you think are particularly important to participating in a group class.

2. Do you feel you have improved in these areas since being in this class?

3. What did you learn from the other students in the class?

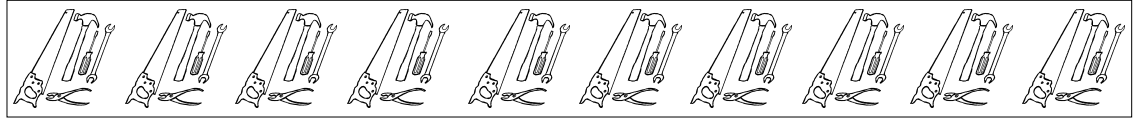
4. Assess yourself in the following areas:

	Improvement			
	Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a bit	A lot
Mechanics of Writing				
1. Punctuation				
2. Spelling				
3. Grammar				
4. Organization: main idea, paragraphs, sentences				

Writing Process

1. Ability to write creatively
2. Writing becomes a part of my life
3. Writing helps me understand myself better
4. Care of writing
5. Can express what I want to say in writing
6. Willingness to share writing
7. Enjoyment of writing
8. Fluidity of writing

5. What other areas do you feel you've improved in? Expand on these and the above checklist.



6. Fill out the following paragraph:

Next time I'm in a class or group like this, I hope I...

7. What was your favorite part(s) of this class? Or what do you think was best about this class?

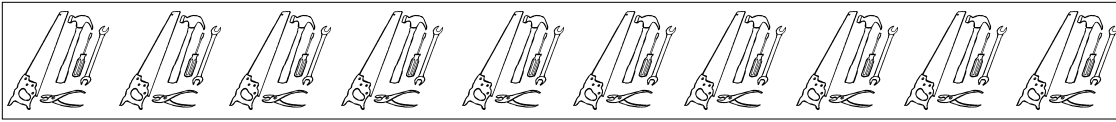
8. Fill out this paragraph, beginning:

Judy, the next time you offer this course, you should...

9. Please describe this course as if you were talking to a friend. Would you tell him/her to take it? Why or why not?

10. Any other comments, suggestions, thoughts?

11. Are you continuing into the next cycle? If yes, what would you like to see happen?



Analyzing Self Evaluation Checklists: A Starting Point for Dialogue

The Workplace Education Project of the Labor Education Center offers ESL, Pre-GED and GED classes in New Bedford and Fall River. Our students are primarily Portuguese, although some are Cape Verdean or Polish. About half our students are employed as stitchers or machine operators. Some work for small businesses and the number of unemployed students is rising.

Our program worked on alternative assessment in the GOALS Accountability Project, focusing on different options to document progress through portfolio assessment. In this process we revised our old assessment tools, and adapted and created new ones. We field-tested these tools and then discussed their usefulness for our particular group of learners and our project.

One of the tools in our portfolio is a progress checklist which we adapted from Janet Kelly's forms. (*Ed. note: see new mother Kelly's article on "blank blank," on page xx.*) To make the checklist suitable for second language learners, we based the items on our students' goals, as expressed over the last few years. The form asks learners to reflect on the frequency of their use of speaking, reading, and writing skills in various settings. Students can choose from "not yet", "a little", "sometimes", and "usually".

The progress checklist is two pages long and initially takes a long time to fill out. As students become more familiar

with it, however, the process becomes quicker. Our program has multi-level classes and therefore the advanced students can usually help the beginners. Students complete this checklist every two to three months. We thought that this interval would make it more likely that learners would have made progress and that they would have noticed it themselves.

We expected this self-evaluation tool to show the students their improvements in English. This kind of self-assessment usually helps students think about their own progress and is also a step in taking responsibility for their learning. We expected to see general movement toward increasing use of English in most of the skill areas in most settings. This was not always the case, as the following example illustrates.

One student, Maria, completed the form on November 9, 1992. On all but the last skill Maria checked "a little". She felt that she didn't understand and couldn't use the conditional tense yet (Figure 1, next page).

Maria completed this form again on January 25, 1993. Usually students don't see their initial form before they complete a new one. This way they have to think about how they feel about their progress at that particular time (and not just replicate what they checked off last time). If we compare the responses from November to January, however, we see

by
Andrea Mueller



Workplace Education
Project
Labor Education Center
UMass Dartmouth

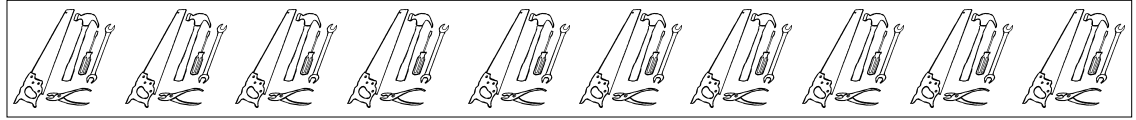


FIGURE 1

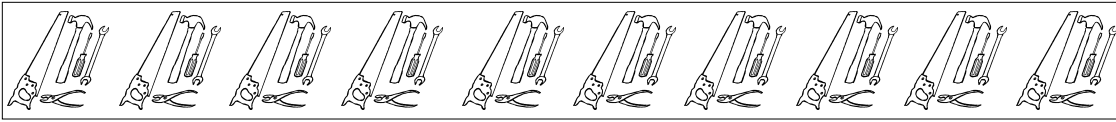
Name: Maria	Date: 11-9-92	Usually	Sometimes	A Little	Not Yet
I read my writing to others.				✓	
I write answers after reading.				✓	
I understand when someone talks to me in English.				✓	
I can talk about what is happening now (present).				✓	
I can talk about what happened before (past).				✓	
I can talk about what will happen (future).				✓	
I can talk about what might happen (conditional).					✓

Name: Maria	Date: 1-25-93	Usually	Sometimes	A Little	Not Yet
I read my writing to others.			✓		
I write answers after reading.			✓		
I understand when someone talks to me in English.				✓	
I can talk about what is happening now (present).			✓		
I can talk about what happened before (past).			✓		
I can talk about what will happen (future).			✓		
I can talk about what might happen (conditional).				✓	

FIGURE 2

Name: Carlotta	Date: 11-9-92	Usually	Sometimes	A Little	Not Yet
I speak English with my friends at work.				✓	
I speak English with my supervisor.					✓
I speak with my union representative in English.					✓
I speak English with my family.				✓	
I speak English at the store.			✓		
I speak English at the doctor's office.					✓
I speak English with my neighbors.					

Name: Carlotta	Date: 1-25-93	Usually	Sometimes	A Little	Not Yet
I speak English with my friends at work.					✓
I speak English with my supervisor.					✓
I speak with my union representative in English.					✓
I speak English with my family.			✓		
I speak English at the store.				✓	
I speak English at the doctor's office.			✓		
I speak English with my neighbors.			✓		



Maria felt that she made progress in all but one category. Looking at grammar, she now feels she uses the tenses “sometimes” rather than “a little”. For the conditional tense, she feels she is now using it “a little” as opposed to not at all. She doesn’t feel that she understands English any better.

After completing the form in January, Maria looked at her form from November to realize she felt she was making progress. Maria’s progress checklists confirmed our expectations. Half the class displayed response patterns similar to Maria’s.

The responses of the other half of the class, however, didn’t change with time in the anticipated way and puzzled us. Carlota is one example from this group (Figure 2). Her form from November 9, 1992 shows that she speaks with her friends at work “a little” but not with her supervisor or her union representative. She also speaks “a little” with her family in English but only “sometimes” at the store and never at the doctor’s. She didn’t check off at all how frequently she talks to her neighbors.

Carlota filled out this form again at the end of January. Most of her ratings stayed the same. For example, she still doesn’t speak to her supervisor or her union representative. She moved from “a little” to “not yet” concerning speaking with friends at work. However, this time she says she speaks with both her neighbors and the doctor “sometimes”. She also feels she is speaking English more with her family.

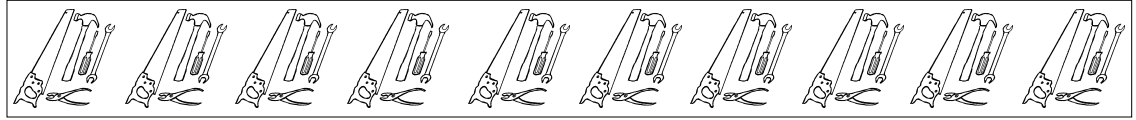
FORCING US TO RECONSIDER

Examining the inconsistent results, my colleagues and I reconsidered the

value of this tool. Our dissatisfaction stemmed from the differing response patterns we saw in some students’ forms and that we had difficulty in interpreting. Our main question was: Is it important that students move in a linear progression in their language acquisition or English usage? If we are going to use a subjective tool, shouldn’t we accept all subjective responses? What could we learn from students’ self-perceptions of their progress? Our conversation reinforced and strengthened our conviction that we valued knowing how the learner felt about his or her progress. We decided, however, that we also needed to probe deeper into the reasons for the responses that indicated a lack of progress.

Going back to the classroom, I talked to Carlota about her form and this conversation clarified some of her responses. Her increase in talking to the doctor from “not yet” to “sometimes” was a reflection of the changed family situation. One of her family members had some serious health problems and she had to accompany him to the doctor’s office often. If I had known this, I could have introduced more health-related material into the class or could have had her work on it individually. Carlota doesn’t speak to her supervisor or union representative in English because they are Portuguese. Her job in a predominantly Portuguese-speaking workplace makes it harder for her to use English in that setting. In retrospect, she and I could then have reflected on how she feels about this situation. If she had preferred to speak more English at work, we could have thought about some strategies to do so. We could also

Our main question was: Is it important that students move in a linear progression in their language acquisition or English usage?



Knowing how learners feel about their progress enables us to find a meaningful starting point for dialogue. If big gaps exist between their perceptions of their abilities and ours, then it is important to “dig deeper” into the “why.”

have concentrated on how she could practice her English in other settings.

Knowing how learners feel about their progress enables us to find a meaningful starting point for dialogue. If big gaps exist between their perceptions of their abilities and ours, then it is important to “dig deeper” into the “why.” For example, the most advanced student in my ESL class consistently rates herself very low. I hope it is helpful for her to compare her subjective ratings with other more objective measures to see that she is progressing. Knowing how she feels about her language development, I can make sure that I point out to her specifically and often the gains she is making. More importantly, I need to involve her more consciously in identifying progress in her reading and writing since these are her strongest skill areas. Ultimately, only she can convince herself of her progress but I hope that these dialogues about our different perceptions could contribute to a better self-image of herself as a learner.

In contrast to the above student, I had another learner in my class who rated himself consistently high with this tool, even from the beginning of the class. He checked off “usually” for most of the settings and skill areas. Although

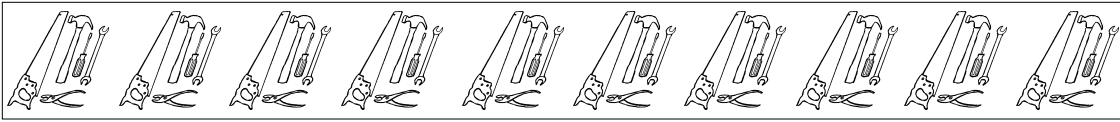
his spoken English was rather fluent, my assessment of his reading and writing skills did not show the same skill level he felt he had. So far, I have not figured out how to discuss our different perceptions. I know this will be necessary for him to adequately understand where and how he needs to work on reading and writing.

IS PROGRESS ALWAYS LINEAR?

Initially, we assumed that progress would be a linear movement from lower to higher English usage in all skill areas and in all settings. Now we see that progress is not linear but rather moves in jumps and starts and is based on the contextual conditions. For example, you can’t expect an increase in speaking English with your supervisor if your supervisor speaks the same language you do. You can expect a change in speaking English at the doctor’s if there is an increased need to do so.

We need more experience using this checklist, especially involving students, to develop its potential. But it is clear that to interpret the results of this tool, additional dialogue with students is required. In fact, the dialogue which emerges from this process is probably the most important outcome of this tool.





Reflections on On-going Assessment: Documenting Self-Esteem and More

*...To have good dreams when everyone has the same chance to grow, to learn, and to love...
To have good dreams that instead of just giving people material things, we also teach them to
help themselves...To have these good dreams but most of all to see all these good dreams come
true for all.*

Pat L.F., Sharing Our Thoughts

In the summer of 1991, Pat came to class. She was a very timid, anxious woman who told me she had recently been laid off and wanted a GED to help improve her chances of finding work. She asked if she could meet with an individual tutor since groups made her nervous. I explained that our program could not provide this service but invited her to observe a class. Although she was hesitant, she did sit in the back of the room and watch.

Pat came to the next class and joined us at the table. She listened intently and at times seemed as though she wanted to speak. After a few more sessions, Pat began to participate in classes. Within a few months, she was an active member of the group and was encouraging others in their efforts to learn. Since that evening two years ago, Pat has moved from the Pre-GED to the GED class, has had three pieces published in *Sharing Our Thoughts*, the SABES southeast learner-generated magazine, has worked with a group of five learners to write and produce a book about environmental issues, and has presented her work to a group of learners and teachers who were interested in doing similar

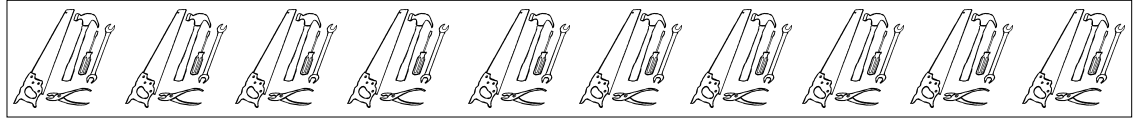
projects. Most recently, Pat attended a Student Advisory Board meeting to make decisions about the classes and the project.

While Pat's development of self-esteem and sense of community are apparent from her accomplishments and conversations we have had, I am troubled by the fact that the assessment tools and procedures used in our program do not reflect these achievements adequately back to the learner. This concern was highlighted for me when Pat recently experienced personal problems which prompted her to consider leaving class. As she struggled with family issues and missed quite a bit of class, I tried to convince her that she had come too far to give up on her goal of passing the GED test. As I turned to her reading and writing folders and journals, I felt that I did not have enough tools to reflect her progress and to encourage her to persist. I became disillusioned with the assessment tools and procedures we had been using and began to question whether the tools were truly providing information which is important. I wondered how they could be revised to offer more pertinent

by
**Eileen Barry
and Pat F.**



Workplace Education
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I suspected Pat would value this tool because she is a prolific writer and uses the folder faithfully to store work and to order drafts. She confirmed this by noting that the writing folder “is a good idea. It lets the teacher know how much we can do and understand.”

data or even whether they should be discarded.

Fortunately, Pat did return to class after working out some of her problems. I was determined to discuss this matter of assessment with Pat and the other members of class to learn how they feel about the various tools we use to assess progress. In particular, I wanted to know if the folders and journals demonstrate progress towards reaching individual goals. I wanted to learn how we could use these folders and journals more effectively or if we should use them at all. I also hoped to learn if Pat and the others felt they were making progress and how they knew when they were progressing. Finally, I hoped to measure the development of a community in the class and to discover ways to record increased self-esteem.

ASSESSING OUR ASSESSMENT TOOLS

In this article, I focus on Pat’s experience to represent my general dissatisfaction with the assessment procedures we use.

In the pre-GED and GED classes, teachers and learners periodically set learning goals and assess progress. Presently, this on-going assessment involves four components.

Writing Folder:

♠ Topics to Write About

♠ Writing Skills

Reading Folder:

♠ Reading Progress Checklist

♠ Reading Log

Student Journal

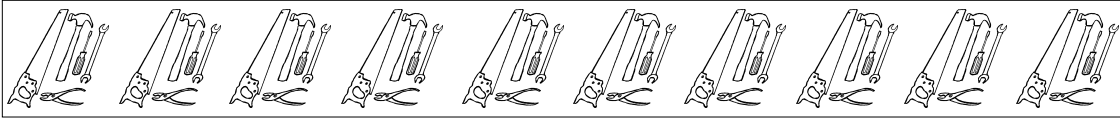
Teacher Log

Writing Folders. Each student in the

class keeps his or her writing in a writing folder. *Topics to Write About* and *Writing Skills* forms are also included. I attempt to meet with each learner monthly to discuss the contents of the form. In reality, our conferences usually occur every other month.

During the conference, the student and I review his or her self-assigned writing goals. Students’ goals are often to master specific writing skills such as revising after writing a first draft or editing run-on sentences. Sometimes the goals are more personal such as writing a letter to a friend. Together we determine whether the goals were met or if more work is required. If the goals were accomplished, new writing goals are set. During this meeting, we also look at samples of the learner’s writing.

I suspected Pat would value this tool because she is a prolific writer and uses the folder faithfully to store work and to order drafts. She confirmed this by noting that the writing folder “is a good idea. It lets the teacher know how much we can do and understand.” This answer was surprising for I had always intended the folders to be used by learners to track their own progress. When I mentioned this to Pat, she said that “the folders do let us know how far along we’re getting. It lets me know I’m making progress because I am doing more skills.” She added that looking at all of the drafts in the folder reminded her that “I did get to write quite a bit.” She then added that she enjoys reading my individualized responses to her work, which include compliments, questions, and suggestions for revision. She said that she likes to know what she is doing well and the areas that she



personally needs to address.

From our discussion, I realized the value of reviewing the contents of the folder regularly and became determined to have writing conferences on a more consistent, monthly basis. I found that I had a good sense of the progress the learners were making because I reviewed and responded to much of their writing. It is necessary to have more conferences however, so the students become more comfortable with using the writing folder as a tool to help them measure their own progress. During the conferences, they will have more time to review their old writing and compare it to newer work. This will allow them to better observe their own progress and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. It became clear to me that the folders can serve a useful purpose, but adequate time for review is essential.

Reading Folders. *Reading Progress Checklists* and *Reading Logs* are included in the Reading Folder. Again, learners are supposed to meet on a monthly basis with me to review progress and to discuss their reading experiences. Reading goals are reviewed and if the learner has met his or her goals, new ones are established. The checklist we use was adapted from one developed by Janet Kelly from *Read/Write/Now* (see *Adventures in Assessment*, Volume 1). Learners may also record material they read in or out of class which is of particular interest or importance to them.

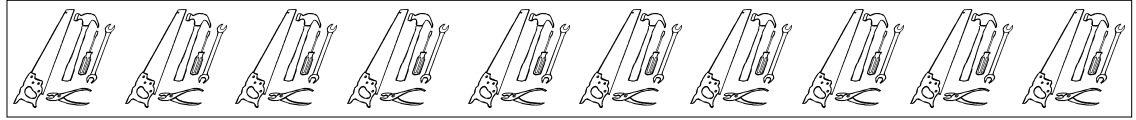
When meeting with Pat, I asked why she had not used this folder as regularly as the writing folder. Pat responded that she still couldn't do all the reading strategies and that some were confusing.

Listening to Pat, I was reminded of a comment Susan Lytle made at a workshop I had recently attended. She asked, "Where did these objectives come from on the checklists?" I realized that I had determined that these reading strategies were important for comprehension and I emphasize them in instruction. I had not asked the learners to develop this list of strategies with me, however, and therefore risked asking them to measure themselves against objectives which may not be realistic goals for them or which simply may not be their goals.

In the future, I will introduce a new reading comprehension strategy and ask learners to experiment with it for a couple of weeks. I will then ask them to reflect on whether the strategy is useful for them and to determine whether this strategy should be included in their personal checklists. It is also my intention to work with learners to reflect more on what helps them to comprehend what they read and to develop more individualized reading goals.

When I asked Pat if this folder was at all useful, she said that "It's good to have these charts. It lets the instructor see what's going on and how far they're going." Again, I was struck by the fact that she viewed the reading folder as a tool to be used by the teacher. She did not seem to realize that she could gain useful information from reviewing it as well. When we reviewed two progress checklists, one from January and one from March, she observed that "I can see I'm making progress. These folders are good if students get to check back on old papers." This comment highlighted a major concern I have had when using the reading folder. Because I believed

I found that I had a good sense of the progress the learners were making because I reviewed and responded to much of their writing. It is necessary to have more conferences however, so the students become more comfortable with using the writing folder as a tool to help them measure their own progress.



I gain valuable information from reading journal entries. I learn when materials or learning methods were useful and when students feel they need more review. I also get insight into the personal lives of the students so that I better understand their goals, interests, and difficulties.

that the students should keep the folders with them to review their own progress, I asked them to use the folders at home and to bring them to class. Frequently when it was time for reading conferences, however, students would have left their folders at home. They would complete a new *Progress Checklist* but would not have past data with which to compare their answers. I would remind them to review the folder at home or to bring it to the next class, but this did not always happen. As in the case of Pat, I realized I had not adequately assisted her in reviewing the data which demonstrated her progress and became determined to allot more time for this analysis. After discussing this issue with my colleagues during a staff meeting, I have decided to keep all folders in class so that when we have conferences, the students and I can review all important information. I will explain to them that they have access to the folders at all other class times during the month. (If we had a copier on site, I could duplicate all forms so students could keep one and I could file one.)

Student Journals/Logs

I just thought I would look into this program to what it was all about. I don't know what will come of this...to learn for me has always been hard...

Pat (journal entry, 7/91)

Students write about a wide range of topics in their journals. Some write about personal issues while others reflect on their learning experiences in class. They write about what they understood and what they need to

practice. They also comment on learning strategies that were useful and those they didn't like. Students write with the understanding that I will respond to the entry but will not correct it. They write in their journals at the end of every class for approximately five to ten minutes.

Pat is now working on her fourth journal. She said that her journal provides "good (writing) practice and keeps communication open. Students can let teachers know about the night's class and what was interesting or hard."

I agree with Pat's assessment of the strengths of journals. I gain valuable information from reading journal entries. I learn when materials or learning methods were useful and when students feel they need more review. I also get insight into the personal lives of the students so that I better understand their goals, interests, and difficulties.

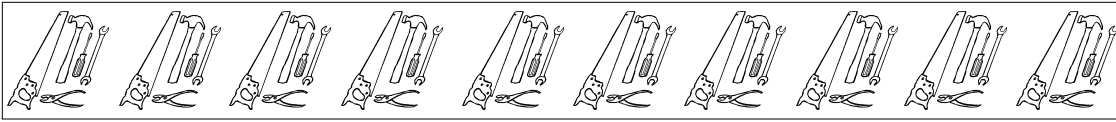
I enjoyed it when the class works together... I think in this way we get the help we need...It was nice to see my writing again... I hope others enjoy them as I did putting them down on paper...

Pat (journal entry, 5/11/92)

Teacher Log/anecdotal reporting

We reviewed writing folders today and once again I was troubled by their use...some use them to organize and set goals...others have not been using them to organize their drafts. I have to take some of the blame because we have not reviewed them for a while...As I write this, everyone is consulting each other for spelling and word usage for their own journals. This group helps each other and relies on each other more than they ask me for help.

Eileen (teacher log, 5/24/93)



For the past five months, I have been keeping a teacher log. I make my entries while the rest of the class write in their journals. In the log, I describe the day-to-day events of the class. I record GED test scores, breakthroughs in understanding, and comments and suggestions students make about the class. I also try to record anything students tell me that reflects on their progress or difficulties.

When I asked Pat whether she thought she was progressing, she responded, "Sometimes. I need confidence. When I look at folders I feel confident but it's different going for the test." She is very concerned she will not have enough time to complete the exam. She did feel that she could see progress when she looked at the papers she does in class and when she corrects them. She added, "I still have a hard time with those maps and charts!"

Pat reflected on specific times that she knew she was learning. When remembering the time spent collaborating with others to write the environmental book, she said, "It was nice to work as a group with my fellow students. We shared ideas and were enthusiastic." When I asked her how it felt to offer a workshop to other teachers and students, she said, "That was different! If we were able to explain to others and get our message across, it means we all learned together." She described having her work published in *Sharing Our Thoughts* as "...a miracle! I couldn't get over it. Seeing it in a book, I must have made some progress!"

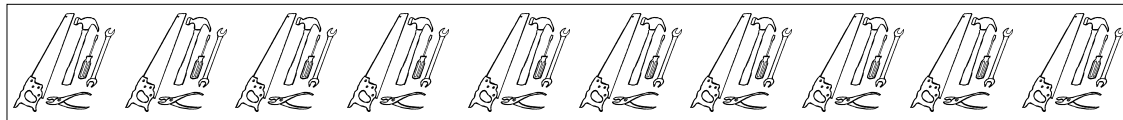
The importance of recording these types of comments is obvious to me. This is the data which reflects develop-

ment of self-esteem while also noting hesitations and self-doubt. It is my hope that by recording segments of conversations with students, over time, I will gather a true reflection of their views of themselves as learners. I recently learned of a teacher who leaves her log on her desk for students to read. Learners get to know what observations the teacher thinks are important and receive reinforcement about their progress and work in class. I plan to make my log available so that, just as with the other assessment tools, the log is not a device for a teacher to measure a student's progress, but a method through which learners can assess their own growth.

Community Development

When examining the assessment tools for this article with Pat, I asked her how we could measure community development. She became highly animated and said, "You have to have more (than studying GED subjects). Young kids just don't go to class to study but to talk to each other, express opinions, and have a laugh or two...a lot have left but originally we had a community and friendship. I was going through some old papers the other day and thinking of those I knew who left and felt so blue and really empty inside. We formed some kind of friendship with people we never knew. We shared times trying to learn. We said our opinions. When something was new or hard we taught each other. Sometimes we laughed together and sometimes we got upset with each other, but that's how it was. We shared good and bad times...It's hard that the group is moving on but it made me think that I should try again."

I asked Pat how we could measure community development. She became highly animated and said, "You have to have more (than studying GED subjects). Young kids just don't go to class to study but to talk to each other, express opinions, and have a laugh or two...a lot have left but originally we had a community and friendship."



Pat highlighted the value of teaching and learning from each other, supporting each other, and developing a sense of responsibility towards each other. Her sadness at students leaving and the inspiration she gained from their success reinforced my belief in the importance of learners returning to the class as tutors to remain part of the community and to serve as inspiration to others.

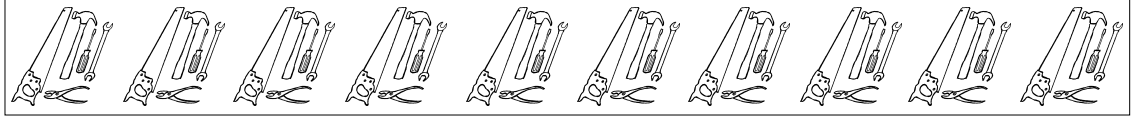
Pat's views confirmed my belief in the importance of developing community. She highlighted the value of teaching and learning from each other, supporting each other, and developing a sense of responsibility towards each other. Her sadness at students leaving and the inspiration she gained from their success reinforced my belief in the importance of learners returning to the class as tutors to remain part of the community and to serve as inspiration to others. I also realized that Pat uses language that expresses a sense of commitment to the groups and the project such as "fellow students" and "taught each other." In the future, it will be important to record this language and to trace, over time, how and when learners use it. Mostly, however, I still feel frustrated by my limited attempts to measure what I believe is the key to learning. I will continue to look to learners and other colleagues for ways in which to measure this progress.

I am grateful to Pat for agreeing to discuss these issues with me and to collaborate on this piece. I am in the process of discussing similar questions

with the rest of the group. What I learned from our discussions is that we need to talk about and reflect more on assessment in class. We need to have more frequent conversations about learning moments and more time together to analyze the data gained from these checklists. The danger of using only teacher-generated checklists has become more clear to me. I am still uncertain about the best ways to document the development of self-esteem and community, but I do feel that my teacher log will play an important part. Most importantly, I will ask learners for feedback about the tools we use. Their insights help me to realize just who this information is for and for what purposes.

When I asked Pat if there was anything I could do to motivate her to continue to come to class and to feel confident enough to take the GED tests, she said, pointing to her heart, "No, it has to come from in here." I believe this most eloquently expresses the need for learners to be in charge of assessing themselves and monitoring their own progress.





READING PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Reader: _____

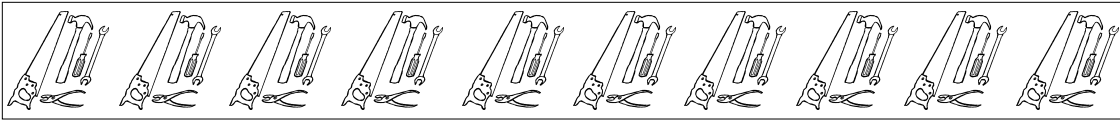
Date: _____

Usually Sometimes Rarely Not Yet

-
1. I understand what I read in class
 2. I understand what I read outside class.
 3. I talk about what I read in class.
 4. I think about what I already know before I read.
 5. I think about what I already know as I read.
 6. I ask myself questions as I read.
 7. In my own mind, I say what I read in my own words
 8. If I don't know a word, I use the words around it to guess what it means.
 9. If I don't know a word, I think about how the letters sound and "sound it out."
 10. I slow down if the reading is hard or speeded up if the reading is easy.
 11. After I read, I think about what I read and think if I agree or disagree.

How has your reading improved?

What do you need to work on?



READING PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Reader: *P. J. F.*

Date: *6-30-93*

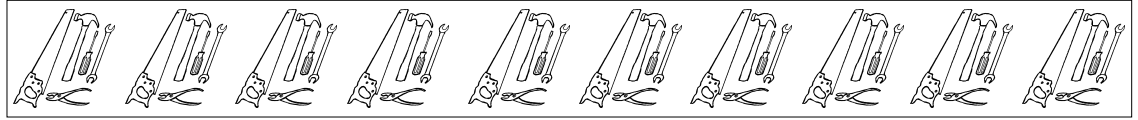
	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Not Yet
1. I understand what I read in class	✓			
2. I understand what I read outside class.		✓		
3. I talk about what I read in class.	✓			
4. I think about what I already know before I read.	✓			
5. I think about what I already know as I read.	✓			✓
6. I ask myself questions as I read.				
7. In my own mind, I say what I read in my own words		✓		
8. If I don't know a word, I use the words around it to guess what it means.		✓		
9. If I don't know a word, I think about how the letters sound and "sound it out."			✓	
10. I slow down if the reading is hard or speeded up if the reading is easy.	✓			
11. After I read, I think about what I read and think if I agree or disagree.		✓		

How has your reading improved?

Hope some what better

What do you need to work on?

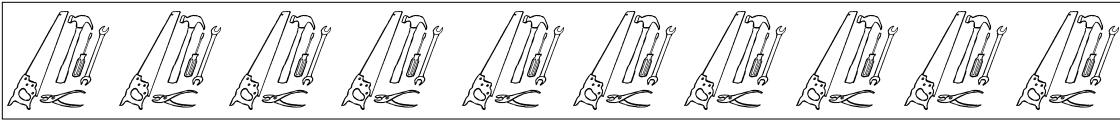
(everything)



WRITING SKILLS

SKILLS

1. Sensitivity
2. Wanting to know how to arrange sentences with words in right order and
3. trying to keep each idea and sentence somewhat separate.
4. Where to put the period and other marks on sentences
5. How to rewrite a phrase
6. When to start a new paragraph 4-6-92 5-16-92 still unclear
7. When to place commas 5-18-92
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____



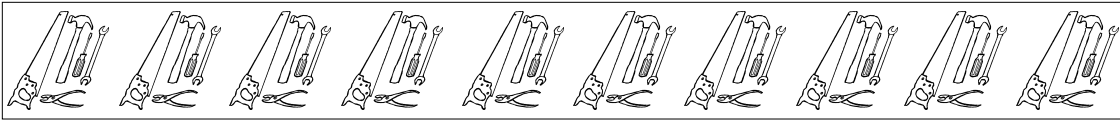
READING PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Reader: Leticia L. Jr. Date: 1-4-92

	usually	some- times	carely	not yet	<i>Partly</i>
1. I understand what I read in class.					✓
2. I understand what I read outside of class.		✓			
3. I talk about what I read in <u>class</u> .	✓				
4. I think about what I already know before I read.		✓			
5. I think about what I already know as I read.		✓			
6. I ask myself questions as I read.					✓
7. In my mind, I say what I read in my own words.					✓
8. If I don't know a word, I use the words around it to guess what it means.					
9. If I don't know a word, I think about how the letters sound and "sound it out."				✓	
10. I slow down if the reading is hard or speed up if the reading is easy.	✓				
11. After I read, I think about what I read and think if I agree or disagree.	✓				

How has your reading improved?

What do you need to work on?



Book Review

It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs

It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs, by Hanna Arlene Fingeret

For educators at all levels who are dissatisfied with standardized tests as the primary or sole means of student evaluation, and who are exploring various paths in what's come to be called "alternative assessment," the use of portfolios and portfolio assessment is one of the major options. Yet the concept of portfolios is not always clearly understood, and many practitioners who are interested may have questions about how to implement this approach.

Hanna Arlene Fingeret, a well-known adult educator who works with the Literacy South organization in Durham, North Carolina, was recently commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct a study of portfolio assessment in the world of adult literacy. *It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs*, the result of this study, is "designed to introduce adult literacy educators to the concept of portfolio assessment, and to provide some guidance about how you can incorporate portfolio assessment into your work in adult literacy education." It provides a clear, succinct, and very useful introduction.

Fingeret conducted both an extensive literature review and a wide-ranging series of interviews with more than 50

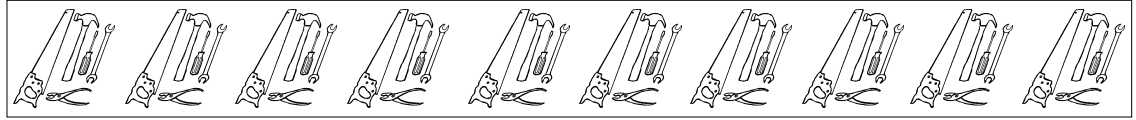
students, teachers, administrators, staff developers, and other practitioners across the country who are using portfolios in their adult literacy teaching and learning. Quotations from these interviews pop up throughout the text and constitute an important feature of this guide—important because so much of the literature on portfolios has emerged from the K-12 or college contexts, while these quotes present voices from the field of adult literacy; important, too, because they ground the discussion in reality in ways that no summary of findings by an author can ever really do; and important because, while acknowledging the difficulties of implementing portfolio assessment, these practitioners and learners clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm for the use of portfolios and their words will encourage others to move forward into this area as well.

It Belongs to Me begins with a brief discussion of what is meant by the term "portfolio assessment." A portfolio is defined here as a selection of various materials that have been chosen from other, larger, on-going collections of materials related to a student's work and achievement, both inside and outside the classroom. All sorts of items could be included in portfolios—pieces of writing, written responses to reading, reading logs, daily work, checklists, special projects, to name a few of the possibilities. The distinction between the portfolio itself and the folders or other

by
Steve Reuys



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Resource Institute/
SABES Boston
Regional Center



The process by which students review their work, select certain items for inclusion in the portfolio, and then assess this collection is probably the crucial aspect of the whole approach as Fingeret describes it.

“containers” from which materials are chosen for the portfolio is an important one and is not merely a matter of semantics or simply an issue of quantity. The process by which students review their work, select certain items for inclusion in the portfolio, and then assess this collection is probably the crucial aspect of the whole approach as Fingeret describes it. The value of using portfolio assessment lies not just in its passive product—the collection of items representing various aspects of a student’s work and achievement—but also in its active process, as a student gains valuable understanding of his/her own learning and accomplishments through selecting material for his/her portfolio and then assessing this portfolio collection itself. As writers Zessoules and Gardner note in an article on alternative assessment quoted by Fingeret, “No longer a weapon for rooting out and combating students’ weaknesses, assessment becomes an additional occasion for learning.”

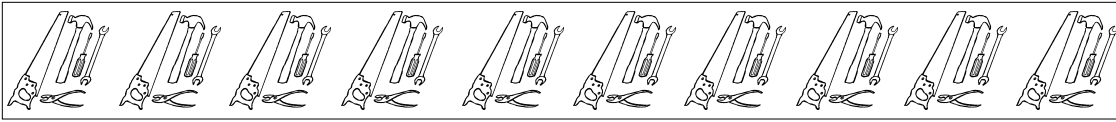
Having looked at what portfolio assessment is (and isn’t), Fingeret then takes readers through a cyclical, four-stage implementation process organized under the headings of 1) choosing, 2) planning, 3) implementing, and 4) evaluating and revising portfolio assessment. Stage One asks teachers who are thinking of trying portfolio assessment to begin by deciding whether portfolio assessment is consistent with their views of literacy, instruction, and assessment. Fingeret reviews the various ways in which literacy is seen in the U.S. at this time, the different approaches to adult literacy instruction that exist within the field, and the current issues surrounding

the use of standardized tests vs. various types of alternative assessment in adult literacy. She notes that “portfolio assessment is compatible with instruction that approaches literacy as a process of constructing meaning, in a learner-centered way,” but that “if you find that you support a more skills-based view of literacy, or that you see assessment as dependent on standardized test scores and the judgments of outside experts, then portfolio assessment will not be appropriate for your classroom or program.”

Teachers who elect to embark on a voyage of portfolio assessment are then shown in Stage Two a five-step planning process in which they begin to make decisions about and start to develop:

- ♣ the focus for the portfolio assessment process (for example, writing, reading, math, everything) and how pertinent materials will be collected in an ongoing way in folders or other containers;
- ♣ the schedule by which students will review the material in their folders and develop their portfolios;
- ♣ the criteria to be used by students in selecting material for the portfolios;
- ♣ the process students will use in making choices and moving materials from folder to portfolio; and
- ♣ the criteria and process for assessing the contents of the portfolios on a periodic basis. Teachers are urged to work with and get support from other teachers while involved in this planning process (as well as during the other stages of portfolio assessment).

As one teacher says, “The fact that I met with four other staff members on a regular basis was extremely helpful. It kept us motivated and kept the momen-



tum going of the pilot project.... Support is really important when you're piloting portfolio assessment." You can make this exploration a solo flight, but it's better to go with others.

Stage Three focuses on implementing portfolio assessment by following through on all the planning that was done in Stage Two. First, introduce the concept of portfolio assessment to students and encourage them to begin to think of portfolios as "an integral part of instruction." Students then continue on with this process—creating folders to collect materials, developing criteria for choosing materials to move from the folders to their portfolios, actually reviewing materials and making selections, and assessing the portfolios of assembled materials. Though usually based on the general guidelines developed by the teacher during the planning stage, the specifics of the portfolio assessment process will emerge out of a (probably on-going) process of reflection, negotiation, and decision-making by the students themselves, both individually and as a class.

Stage Four calls for teachers to evaluate the portfolio assessment process they have tried out and to make changes as needed. Since there is no perfect recipe for carrying out portfolio assessment and since it is seen as a cyclical process of reflection, planning, implementation, and evaluation, teachers may want to circle back to any of the previous stages before continuing on.

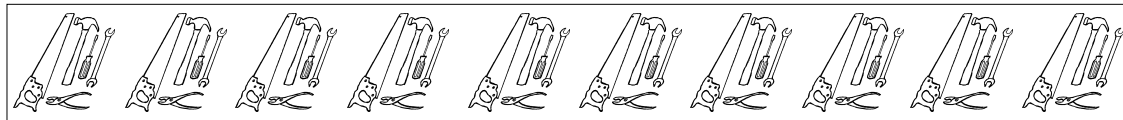
It Belongs to Me ends by stepping back to look at the impact of portfolio assessment on students and teachers, at the process of implementing portfolio assessment at the program level, and at

what steps are needed to support the continued growth of portfolio assessment in adult literacy. There are also an appendix containing a few sample documents used by some programs in their portfolio assessment process and an annotated bibliography of materials dealing with portfolio assessment.

Part of the on-going message of this guide is that doing portfolio assessment isn't easy. It's usually not something that either teachers or students are accustomed to doing, and getting comfortable with the process can take some time. Gathering materials for folders is much easier in some areas (such as writing) than in others (such as oral language use). Various cultures may vary in how they regard the idea of individuals highlighting their own achievements. Reporting the results of portfolio assessment to funders, evaluators, and policy makers is not a simple process. Working conditions in the field are often not conducive to doing portfolio assessment, which requires sufficient time (for staff development, planning, and preparation) and sufficient space (for secure storage of folders and portfolios). Fingeret and her "commentators" do address all these issues. Yet, without minimizing the difficulties, they also make clear that doing portfolio assessment is worth it.

Summing up its impact, Fingeret says, "Portfolio assessment is practical and useful, according to the practitioners and students who participated in this project. It redefines the scope of assessment, and provides a way to look at personal development as well as academic skill growth as reflected in new literacy practices. It facilitates a

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deeper level of reflection for students, and a deeper level of communication between students and teachers. It also promotes professional development and practitioner inquiry.”

Here are a few brief quotes from some of the teachers, administrators, and staff developers who contributed to this project:

In all my experiences, students are really excited about portfolio assessment and they feel, ‘This makes sense.’

It’s empowering to students, and that’s what I emphasize, how a portfolio helps students become independent learners and take responsibility for assessing their own work.

Portfolio assessment has minimized student attrition, and it seemed to keep staff better too. Portfolios help adults see where they’re at and therefore they stay.... Portfolios value teacher judgment; by giving multiple choice standardized tests, the message is that nobody’s judgment counts except for the test publisher.

When we did the share last year and people shared their portfolios there was a lot of pride.... With the portfolio the students saw exactly where they improved, they saw the kind of gain. People still talk to me about that.... They definitely want to continue with portfolio assessment.

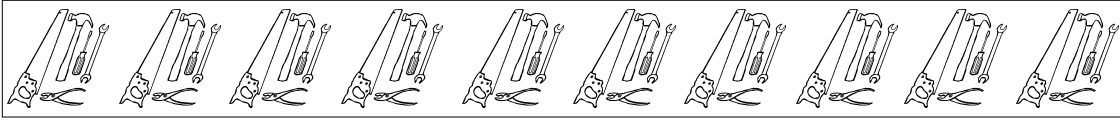
With the portfolio the students saw exactly where they improved, they saw the kind of gain. People still talk to me about that.... They definitely want to continue with portfolio assessment.

Students, too, had positive things to say about the process. Lorna Irizarry, for example, is a student in New York, and it is from her words that the title for this report was taken. She says, “What I learned from my portfolio is that I’ve achieved what I wanted. I feel relaxed. It belongs to me. It’s for me to know,” and “Seeing my progress in the portfolio makes me know I can do the work.”

There is, of course, no “one size fits all” set of specific instructions for how to set up and do portfolio assessment. How it works out for one program, one teacher, one group of students will vary a great deal from what happens in other places, at other times, with other people. And it’s also important to remember that portfolio assessment isn’t the only possible approach to take when embarking upon alternative assessment; many other ideas have been presented here in the various issues of *Adventures in Assessment* and elsewhere. Fingeret’s guide, however, should provide a very helpful framework for teachers interested in trying out this particular approach.

Copies of *It Belongs to Me* can be obtained free of charge by writing to the Clearinghouse, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-7240; FAX (202) 205-8973.)





Letter from the Field

The Case for Pre-Goal Setting

Goal setting is a linear, future-oriented, individualistic, Western phenomenon which is not always transferable to English as a Second Language (ESL) learners from non-Western cultures and other domestic cultural contexts

Yet many educators in our field propose goal setting as the panacea to all learners' problems. Goal setting as an *activity* has been used in programs for a long time yet retention rates are still low. In this paper I propose a "pre-goal-setting" *strategy* as a panacea to some of the ills that goal setting activities do not address.

GOAL SETTING AS A MIDDLE CLASS PHENOMENON

I spent a number of years working overseas as an educator and also working as an educator with rural immigrants, refugees and Adult Literacy/Adult Basic Education (AL/ABE) learners in the United States.

I was born in a housing project, spent most of my life in the United States living in the inner city and avoided schooling as much as possible up to the age of sixteen. Based on those "growing experiences" (not negative experiences, as so often perceived and referred to by some adult education professionals) and from that perspective, I view goal setting as an strategy for motivating learning that is embedded with middle class values.

On its own, goal setting may not work well with many ESL learners who are economically disadvantaged, nor with individuals who grew up in an environment where it was not part of their value system. Goal setting is often taken out of context and transferred to individuals who may never have seen any concrete rewards for their own individual efforts or the efforts of groups to which they belong.

As a Western, middle-class activity, it works in that context primarily because there are numerous visible rewards. When people without positive role models, mentors or solidarity in a group (gang) do set goals, it is easier for them to "fall short" than to follow through with the necessary steps needed to achieve them.

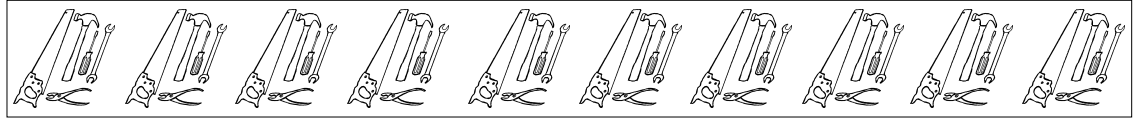
"Success" in Adult Literacy/Adult Basic Education (AL/ABE) doesn't necessarily start with adults walking into a program and setting goals. Nor does it start with teachers expecting adult learners to be able to immediately be successful at using goal-setting.

Teachers should not assume that people with very different life experiences will proceed through classes as they themselves probably proceeded and succeeded through schooling and life.

by
Don Robishaw



Evaluation and
Research Consultant
SABES Central
Resources Center



A CASE FOR “PRE-GOAL-SETTING” AS PART OF A SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING STRATEGY

Adults in their everyday lives are motivated to learn many things. Some day it will become necessary for them to learn on their own in class. Learning on their own is important because many learners fear they cannot learn without the aid of a teacher or, even worse, that they can not learn at all. They must overcome this anxiety and develop self-confidence. Responsible adults need to take control of their own learning.

At the Read/Write/Now Program in Springfield Janet Kelly uses goal-setting as a small group learning strategy for learners with similar goals, such as obtaining a driver’s license. These goals are identified from the student’s goals list.

I agree that goal setting as a *strategy* can help some learners take control of their own learning and become motivated. But “pre-goal-setting” strategies must be designed and implemented to better help adults develop confidence in their own ability to use goal setting as a strategy for learning. (It is important to remember that these are strategies rather than activities, because the teachers must continue to pay close attention to the learners’ important emotional and psychological processes as well as intellectual processes.)

Many learners need to participate in a “process” in order to find goal setting acceptable. Later I will recommend a strategy that may increase the chances of goal setting being more effective. But first it is important to understand that goal setting, as a strategy, is just a small step in one part of a whole Adult Educa-

tion philosophy which is self-directed learning.

Self-directed learning can be divided into external and internal processes. Malcolm Knowles is perhaps best known for his understanding of the external processes:

...a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (Knowles, M. 1975, p. 18).

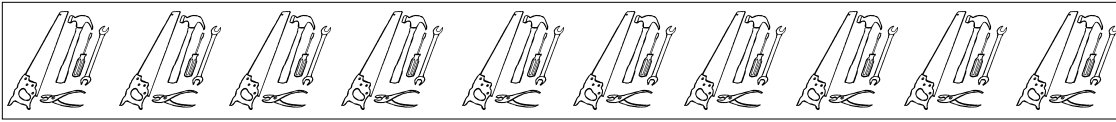
The criteria assume that a learner need only have the ability to learn on his/her own and to manage instructional activities. Educators who try to instill these skills in their learners may be assuming that the learners are aware and consciously prepared to accept them.

Another piece has often been either neglected or assumed in AL/ABE. This other side involves the *internal* changes needed to become, as Brookfield would point out, fully self-directed.

...self-directed learning is concerned much more with an internal change of consciousness than with the external management of instructional events. This consciousness involves an appreciation of the contextuality of knowledge and an awareness of the culturally constructed form of value frameworks, belief systems and moral codes that influence behavior and the creation of social structures. (Brookfield, S., 1985, p. 15)

Adult learners need to reflect on their past life history and to sort through their experiences in order to see beyond their own formal schooling experiences in

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order to better develop, persist and continue with learning.

Some adult learners need to channel their former resistance to schooling into the persistence needed to become self-directed learners. A strategy might be to allow learners to reflect on how formal schooling made it more difficult for them as youths to accept the dominant cultural value system because of their lack of dominant “cultural capital” (assets) that their more well-off schoolmates had developed prior to beginning school. Rather than ameliorating this problem, schools did much to perpetuate the differences. Many learners resisted the dominant value system advocated by the schools.

After developing persistence they may then be able to make the behavioral changes necessary to accept goal setting strategies and even more important, self-directed learning. Learners need to discover alternatives through a “dialogical process” with their peers.

ACTIVITIES VS. STRATEGIES

This is one strategy in addition to other strategies mentioned in *Group Goal Setting Activities: An Approach from Youth Services Corps*, an article that appeared in the previous edition of *Adventures in Assessment*. The Youth Services Corps first suggested “activity” is a participatory group process that allows learners opportunities to self-reflect and to share their experiences through a dialogical pedagogy that respects learners as having valuable prior life experiences. Their first suggested “activity” is called “Thinking about Learning”.

Their process begins with participation. I know little about the organization

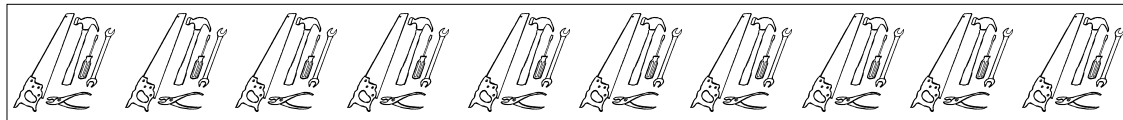
nor their retention rates. Although their “activities” may not be designed exclusively to prevent dropouts, I am curious to know if these suggested “activities” at all contribute to reducing their drop out rates.

My only problem is they refer to what they do as activities rather than strategies. There is a difference between goals, which should be addressed through a strategy and competencies, such as found on some reading skills and life skills checklists, which should be addressed through activities. (See *Janet Kelly’s article in the first issue of Adventures in Assessment*.) Maybe this is only a semantics issue, but I hope in the future that they choose to call the wonderful things they do strategies rather than activities. Activities are fine for addressing competencies but it is better to choose strategies to address goals.

BEGINNING WITH THE INTERNAL PIECE

I also suggest a small group dialogical strategy to allow learners the opportunity to self-reflect and to share their reflections and experiences with their own cohorts. Dialogical pedagogy is participatory and respects the learners as adults with numerous valuable life experiences or, as Shor points out: “A participatory class begins with participation. A critical and empowering class begins by examining its subject matter from the students point of view and by helping students see themselves as knowledgeable people (Shor, I., 1992, p. 37). The facilitator creates an environment that respects the learners and allows the learners the freedom and

Some adult learners need to channel their former resistance to schooling into the persistence needed to become self-directed learners.



opportunity to grow and develop.

But what is often neglected by facilitators who use a dialogical pedagogy with AL/ ABE learners is the need to first set and establish the ideal conditions for discourse before entering into a group discussion.

Another important aspect often neglected is the need for solidarity building between the participants and the facilitator. At the Read/Write/Now program,

“It is all part of the activities early in the class cycle. We usually have a group lesson/discussion on goal setting. We have also used readings from learners-written publications or oral histories which touch on educational experiences and life experiences that many learners can identify with as a starting place for analysis and discussion about where we have been, where we want to go, and how we can get there” (Kelly, J. 1991, P. 24).

Janet does a lot more at the Read/Write/Now Program in this area than most programs and I applaud her work and the same goes for the Youth Service Corps Program in Philadelphia.

Yet when it comes to developing solidarity it is very important that the facilitator has had similar life experiences and experiences with formal schooling as the learners. I can read, study and talk to a lot of people about breast cancer, battered women, alcoholism... but that doesn't qualify me to facilitate a discussion group made up of these victims. It is no different with Adult Literacy and Adult Basic Education learners.

CONCLUSION

Adult learners can benefit from programs which center on pedagogy that focuses on **participation, dialogue, and self-reflection** prior to engaging in goal-setting strategies or other aspects of external self-directed learning. In addition to increasing the chances that goal setting will work, the process will also help empower both learners and facilitators. Self-reflection is an important piece in Adult Education and teachers will also learn much about themselves and their practice through self-reflection.

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AN INVITATION TO WRITE

Adventures in Assessment accepts articles regarding any of the three components of assessment: *Getting Started*, *Ongoing*, and *Looking Back*, or our other departments: *What Counts?*, *Voices from the Field*, and *Publication Reviews*.

If you would like to submit an article to ***Adventures in Assessment***, please contact us at:

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The next issue of ***Adventures in Assessment*** will also feature readers' responses to the articles in this and earlier volumes.

Perhaps one of the articles reminded you of a classroom assessment problem you faced and/or solved. Maybe you have questions or additional information about the tools and procedures you read about. Or perhaps you just feel like conversing with other practitioners who are looking at issues of alternative assessment.

We welcome your input and feedback. To be included in the Fall ***Adventures in Assessment***, please send your letters no later than BLANK, BLANK to Loren McGrail at the above address.