

## Using Conversation as a Formative Assessment Tool During the Creative Process

This tool offers guiding questions teachers may be asking themselves about student thinking and decision making during creative exploration, and prompts to use as a way of engaging in conversation with students. The student responses will then allow teachers to assess students' skills, knowledge, and deeper understanding. The information teachers gather during these formative conversations will support their instructional planning.

When assessing through conversation, it is critical to be clear about the purpose of your assessment within the creative process. It is also important to determine how best to document what you hear so you can analyze it and respond in ways that advance creativity. The following sentence stems help construct this documentation.

- ◇ What I heard:
- ◇ What it told me:
- ◇ What I am going to do:

The following table lists assessment questions teachers may be trying to answer and conversation starters that will yield some insight into this preassessment information.

Questions Teachers May Be Trying to Answer	Conversation Starters
What skills does this student bring to the learning?	What do you already know about this topic, task, or skill?
What knowledge does this student bring to the learning?	What do you wonder?
What is our first step?	Where have you seen this before?
How do I need to shift the learning space to meet this student's needs?	What are you trying to figure out?
How might this student best approach his or her own learning?	Are there any materials you wish you had?
What processes might I use when moving learning forward?	What do you do when you feel discouraged? How might I help you with that?
	What do you think you might do first?

Possible instructional responses following the conversation (depending on what the conversation reveals) may include the following.

- ◇ Begin to co-construct criteria for success together.
- ◇ Structure a strong learning environment.
- ◇ Gather necessary materials and resources.
- ◇ Establish routines.
- ◇ Set initial goals and plan for success.
- ◇ Build additional prior knowledge or skill.
- ◇ Form groups.

The following table offers assessment questions teachers may be trying to answer to formatively assess students' work and conversation starters that will provide formative assessment information during extended exploration.

Questions Teachers May Be Trying to Answer	Conversation Starters
<p>How is this student progressing in relation to the target, outcome, or goal?</p> <p>Who is helping this learner and how?</p> <p>How might I help this learner?</p> <p>How do I need to respond to what I am seeing and hearing?</p> <p>What do I notice? What do the students need?</p> <p>How might I offer feedback?</p> <p>How might we set a goal together?</p> <p>How might I help the student understand the criteria for success?</p> <p>How does the learner see his or her own learning unfolding?</p> <p>Which processes will best move this learner forward?</p> <p>Which resources?</p>	<p>What have you done so far?</p> <p>What is working?</p> <p>What isn't working?</p> <p>What are you trying to do?</p> <p>What have you noticed?</p> <p>Where have you felt challenged? What did you do about it? Did it help?</p> <p>Where have you seen growth?</p> <p>What do you need now?</p> <p>Where are you going next? How might you get there?</p> <p>What are you still wondering?</p> <p>What do you think you are great at?</p> <p>How will you know when you are successful?</p> <p>How do you imagine this might look when it is finished?</p>

Possible instructional responses following the conversation (depending on what the conversation reveals) may include the following.

- ◇ Analyze learning in relation to criteria.
- ◇ Offer feedback.
- ◇ Structure peer feedback.
- ◇ Structure self-assessment.
- ◇ Set goals.
- ◇ Add resources to the environment.
- ◇ Seek supports outside the classroom.
- ◇ Instruct.
- ◇ Regroup.
- ◇ Move on.