

# Revisiting Strategy: Gathering Evidence

(See Teacher Summary Card)

**T**he **Gathering Evidence Strategy** is a way for teachers to gauge the extent to which students are on track to meet the learning intention (LI) and success criteria (SC), and it provides opportunities for students to assess their learning in relation to the LI and SC. In this strategy, teachers revisit the success criteria after the completion of a task or activity and gather evidence on students' confidence or performance.

## Particular Advantages

- Flexible, by allowing multiple techniques for gathering evidence, many of which are quick and easy to implement
- Can help develop students' ability to articulate their own self-assessments of their learning as they respond to the elicitation prompt

## How Does the Strategy Work?

1. Decide what you are gathering evidence of:
  - student mastery of particular content (often characterized in SC that ask students to demonstrate a skill);
  - depth and breadth of student's conceptual understanding (often characterized in SC that ask students to explain, describe, or justify); or
  - degree of student's (self-reported) confidence about their understanding.
2. Choose an elicitation technique that allows you to gather evidence aligned to the type of information or evidence desired. Examples of elicitation techniques are listed in the Considerations section below.
3. Create a prompt to use with the technique. The prompt can take a variety of forms depending on the targeted skill or understanding and the technique chosen (e.g. series of problems, questions with selected responses, open ended questions, *etc.*).
4. Call students' attention to the LI and SC, and connect the gathered evidence to them to ensure that the students see the connection.
5. Use the prompt to elicit evidence.
6. Interpret the evidence to choose an appropriate responsive action. Explain why you've chosen the particular responsive action, so the connection between the gathered evidence and the responsive action is also explicit to the students.

## How Does the Strategy Support Formative Assessment?

- Gathering of evidence that is specifically related to the success criteria allows both teachers and students to assess progress in moving students' understanding and skills toward meeting the learning intention.

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## What Are Some Considerations for Using the Strategy?

- Across a unit of instruction, use a wide range of assessment techniques to gather data from individuals as well as different sized groups. A range of assessment techniques is not expected with every lesson.
- When using a technique that focuses on answers, probe student thinking further, including when a student provides a correct response.
- Ask yourself the following questions when choosing or creating an appropriate strategy. Included with each question are some sample strategies from the Elicitation and Wrapping-Up Strategies and techniques included in the Formative Assessment Classroom Techniques (FACTs)<sup>1</sup>.

*What am I gathering evidence of?*

- Student mastery of particular content (Error Analysis, Elicitation Strategies and Agree and Disagree Statements, FACT #1, p. 52)
- Depth and breadth of students' conceptual understanding (Flip the Question, Elicitation Strategies and Concept Attainment Cards, FACT #8, p. 71)
- Students' understanding of the statement of the learning goal (What Are You Doing and Why, FACT #73, p. 217)
- Degree of student's (self-reported) confidence about their understanding (See Self-Assessment FACTs and Self-Assessment Templates Resources)
- Student assessment of needs (Muddiest Point, FACT #33, p. 132)

*Whom do I need evidence from?*

- Some techniques are useful for getting a sense of the class as a whole (Exit Tickets, Wrapping-Up Strategies; Agreement Circles, FACT #2, p. 54; and Whiteboarding, FACT #74, p. 218).
- Some techniques easily provide individual information about students (Odd One Out, FACT #35, p.137).

*How general or specific do I need the evidence to be?*

- Some techniques provide broader, nonspecific evidence that allows students to show you what they're thinking (e.g. asking an open-ended question about how students' thinking has changed) (I Used to Think . . . But Now I Know, FACT #24, p.109).
- Some techniques target the evidence to a specific idea (Always, Sometimes, or Never True, FACT #3, p. 57).

*How will I gather the evidence?*

- Some techniques are based on a teacher circulating and listening in on what's happening in small group work (Partner Speaks, FACT #38, p. 143).
- Some techniques yield individual, written evidence that you can analyze in various ways (Justified True-Or-False Statements, FACT #26, p.113).

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<sup>1</sup>From *Mathematics Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction and Learning* (2011) by Keeley and Tobey