Exit Ticket Strategy

The Exit Ticket Strategy is a commonly used strategy for getting a dipstick measure of where students' understanding is at the conclusion of a lesson. Exit tickets can provide a wealth of information in a short period of class time. While they are quick and easy to implement, making careful choices about how to focus the exit ticket can improve the value of the information a teacher gathers.

Particular Advantages

- Quick and easy to implement; can be adapted to many of the questions you want to ask
- Can be a valuable way to elicit evidence of the conceptual learning in the lesson
- Easily provides information both on individual students or for the class as a whole

How Does the Strategy Work?

1. The teacher selects a key question to pose to students at the end of a chunk of instruction and prepares it on a handout for students to write individual responses.

2. During the final 5 minutes of class time, students are given time to write their response, and they turn in the exit ticket as they are leaving class.

How Does the Strategy Support Formative Assessment?

Eliciting and interpreting evidence

- Teachers can gather very targeted information about a particular success criterion or some element of the learning intention. Exit tickets can be particularly useful in gathering evidence of students' understanding of the concepts in the lesson.

Learning intentions and success criteria

- The exit ticket highlights a selected success criterion or some part of the learning intention and can thus reiterate for students in another way what the important learning is for the lesson.

Student ownership and involvement

- With regular use, students grow accustomed to articulating and sharing their mathematical thinking and see the exit ticket as a way to share information with the teacher that will influence subsequent instruction.

What Are Some Considerations for Using the Strategy?

When using the exit ticket strategy, be sure to provide ample time for students to respond to the prompt. If students feel rushed, especially if they learn to expect this, they will no longer take time to clearly articulate their thinking.

How Do You Decide What to Ask in an Exit Ticket?—Some Suggested Guidelines

- **Focus on conceptual understanding that was important in the lesson.** You can check skills easily in a variety of ways (often characterized in success criteria that ask students to demonstrate a skill), but it's harder to get an individual read on how each student is reasoning about the big understandings (often characterized in success criteria that ask students to explain or describe). Make the best of your exit ticket opportunity!
- **Don't try to assess everything from the lesson in one exit ticket**. The exit ticket is not intended as a quiz on the entire lesson. Keeping your prompt brief and focused on one piece of evidence you want to gather can provide plenty of information to help you plan your subsequent instruction.
- **Consider what would help you make a decision about the appropriate focus for the next lesson.** An important purpose of an exit ticket can be to help shed light on *how students are making sense* of the instruction they received. Focus your exit ticket prompt on something that helps you to learn about where students are relative to the lesson's success criteria or to think about the learning intention and success criteria for upcoming lessons.
- **Vary the kinds of prompts you use**. For example, exit tickets can

  - focus on a particular concept that you want to know about:
  - Explain in your own words why we need common denominators when adding fractions.
  - provide information more broadly about what students are taking away from the lesson:
  - List what you think are the three most important ideas that we talked about today, in your own words.
  - invite students to respond to sample student work:
  - *Look at the example of student work shown here. Do you agree with the student's response and reasoning? Why or why not? Show or explain your reasons*.

Related FACTs (Formative Assessment Classroom Techniques)[1]

- 29: *Look Back* (p. 121)
- 33: *Muddiest Point* (p. 132)
- 43: *Point of Most Significance* (p. 155)
- 56: *Ten-Two* (p. 183)
- 57: *Thinking Log* (p. 185)
- 62: *3-2-1* (p. 194)
- 67: *Two-Minute Paper* (p. 204)

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[1]From *Mathematics Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction and Learning* (2011) by Keeley and Tobey

Wrapping-Up Strategy: Reflect-Aloud

(See Teacher Summary Card)

The **Reflect-Aloud Strategy** is a way for teachers to model for students how to reflect on their learning in relation to the learning intention (LI) and success criteria (SC). In this strategy, the teacher represents a sample typical student in the class when she reflects aloud about her understanding of the LI and SC, modeling for students the kind of internal dialogue that goes on in a self-assessment reflection. The reflection can sometimes serve the dual purpose of also reviewing some of the key ideas of the lesson. It can also segué into an opportunity for the teacher to give whole-class feedback on the success criteria.

Particular Advantages

- Can be particularly effective at a midway point in a lesson as well as at the end of a lesson
- Helps develop students' ability to articulate their own self-assessments of their learning by modeling a sample internal dialogue
- Can be paired very effectively with the Taking Stock strategy

How Does the Strategy Work?

Use the following steps for this strategy. An example is provided at each step, using the following sample learning intention and success criteria for a lesson:

LI: By the end of the lesson, you will understand why the area of any triangle is $\frac{1}{2}bh$.

SC: I can relate the shape of a triangle to the shape of a rectangle with the same base and height.

SC: I can explain why the area of a triangle is half the area of a rectangle with the same base and height, for right triangles, acute triangles, and obtuse triangles.

1. Review one of the success criteria, and reflect aloud how to rephrase the success criteria into your own words.	A teacher might say: *Let's see . . . the first success criterion says that I can relate the shape of a triangle to the shape of a rectangle with the same base and height. So that means when I've got these two shapes, and they have the same base and height, I need to be able to relate the way the triangle looks—or relates to—the way the rectangle looks.*
2. Describe a self-assessment of your ability to meet the success criteria, representing what you consider to be the majority of the class. Your description of what you can do (that is, what you expect most of your students can do) also serves as a summary of some key ideas of the lesson.	*I'm pretty sure I can do that. I can see that sometimes the shape of the triangle fits in half of the rectangle. For other triangles* (points to diagrams on the board of acute triangles), *I can see that if I cut up the triangle and rearrange the pieces, I can make a triangle that's still half a rectangle.* *But I'm really not very sure yet what to do with these kinds of triangles* (points to obtuse triangles drawn on the board for which the height is outside the interior of the triangle) *because I'm not sure how to cut them to rearrange the pieces in the same way, and I'm not sure what the height is.*

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3. Check your dialogue with your students to see who feels the dialogue represents them reasonably accurately.	*Who feels like that's what they could say about themselves for that success criterion?* (A number of hands go up.) *For others who didn't feel like that dialogue fit them, what would be different for you?* (Students offer comments, and teacher rephrases as needed to model language of self-assessment.)
4. Repeats steps 1 through 3 with the remaining success criteria.	
5. Summarize a self-assessment of the learning intention.	*I feel like I'm meeting the first and second success criteria for many triangles, but there are certain triangles for which I'm still unsure what to do. In terms of the learning intention, I think I'm understanding why the area is $\frac{1}{2}$ base times height some of the time. But for some other examples, I'm still figuring out why this works*

How Does the Strategy Support Formative Assessment?

Student ownership and involvement

- Use of this strategy can help develop students' ability to articulate their own self-assessment of their learning by modeling a sample internal dialogue.

Learning intentions and success criteria

- This strategy focuses students' attention on the use of success criteria as a basis for evaluating their own learning.

Environment

- This strategy promotes a classroom culture in which pausing to consolidate your learning is considered an important and worthwhile learning activity.

How Might You Modify the Strategy, and Why?

As students become familiar with the strategy, you might call on students to do the reflect-aloud.

What Are Some Considerations for Using the Strategy?

As with other strategies, there is a risk of overusing this strategy so that it becomes tedious for students to listen to. Think about ways to gradually release responsibility to students. You could model one success criterion and ask students to reflect-aloud as partners for the second success criteria.

Wrapping-Up Strategy: X-Marks-the-Spot

(See Teacher Summary Card, Student Summary Card)

The **X-Marks-the-Spot Strategy** provides a structured way for students to self-assess their learning against each of the success criteria for a lesson. Initially, as students are learning to use this strategy, they may need some guidance on identifying evidence; possible prompts for doing so are provided below.

Particular Advantages

- Easily provides information both on individual students or for the class as a whole
- Helps underscore for students how to use the success criteria for themselves
- Can become a process that students internalize and use independently

How Does the Strategy Work?

1. Prior to handing out the X-Marks-the-Spot Reflection Template, the teacher fills in the success criteria for the lesson, one in each row of the template. A sample row is shown below.

Success Criteria	Self Assessment			Evidence
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	⟵————————————————————⟶			

2. The teacher distributes the template to each student. Students place an X on the line to indicate where they feel they fall with each success criterion.

3. If students have indicated that they understand, they write a brief explanation in the Evidence column to support their claim. To help students know what to write in the Evidence column, a teacher might use one of the following prompts or something similar:

- *Give an example from your work that shows you understand.*
- *What's one thing you did in your work that best shows your understanding? (e.g., "I wrote a clear explanation of the idea.")*
- *What could you do to show me you understand? (e.g., "I could explain two different ways to solve the problem" or "I could explain how ___ and ___ are related.")*

4. The teacher collects the students' templates and reviews them after class to inform the next day's instruction.

How Does the Strategy Support Formative Assessment?

Student ownership and involvement

- This strategy gives students an opportunity to practice self-assessing their learning, with a structure that they can eventually internalize.

Learning intentions and success criteria

- This strategy focuses students' attention on the use of success criteria as a basis for evaluating their own learning.

Eliciting and interpreting evidence

- This strategy underscores the importance of having evidence of your learning to support any self-assessment you make.

Environment

- This strategy promotes a classroom culture in which pausing to evaluate your learning is considered an important and worthwhile learning activity.

How Might You Modify the Strategy, and Why?

- **Act it out** (no template needed): You might choose to have students physically act out their placement on the line, in order to have a whole-class discussion about what the class currently understands and what they need next. After students have completed their individual reflection template, designate a line (real or imaginary) along the floor that represents the self-assessment line on the template. For each success criterion, one at a time, ask students to stand along the line where they marked themselves. Have a brief whole-class discussion about where people are falling along the line and what is being most confusing at this point.
- **Use the strategy as a mid-unit or end-of-unit self-evaluation:** You might choose to use the Whole-Unit part of the X-Marks-the-Spot Template to have students reflect on the collective success criteria for the unit to evaluate where they currently are or to compare their assessment of how well they can meet the success criteria now compared to when they first encountered them.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

X-Marks-the-Spot Lesson Template

Success Criteria	Self-Assessment			Evidence
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence. ⟵⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⟶	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence. ⟵⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⟶	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence. ⟵⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⟶	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence. ⟵⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⟶	

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

X-Marks-the-Spot Whole-Unit Template

Success Criteria	Self-Assessment			Evidence
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	

Success Criteria	Self-Assessment			Evidence
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	
	I need help. I can't get started.	I'm getting there.	I understand and have evidence.	