

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 segue 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.

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| 1. Review one of the success criteria, and reflect aloud how to rephrase the success criteria into your own words. | A teacher might say: <i>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.</i> |
| 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>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.</i> |

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| 3. Check your dialogue with your students to see who feels the dialogue represents them reasonably accurately. | <i>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.)</i> |
| 4. Repeats steps 1 through 3 with the remaining success criteria. | |
| 5. Summarize a self-assessment of the learning intention. | <i>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</i> |

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.