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## Spotlight On... Formative Assessment: Activating Students as Owners of Their Own Learning

*“The test of a successful education is not the amount of knowledge that a pupil takes away from school, but his appetite to know and his capacity to learn. If the school sends out children with a desire for knowledge and some idea of how to acquire and use it, it will have done its work.”*

Sir Richard Livingstone (1941, p. 28)

Learning how to learn is an essential life and workplace skill. In a culture that is constantly updating itself, where transformative technology becomes obsolete in a matter of months, understanding how to ask questions and evaluate credible responses is critical. Activating students as owners of their own learning involves metacognition, the ability to reflect on one’s own cognitive process. In *Embedding Formative Assessment: Practical Techniques for K-12 Classrooms*, authors Dylan Wiliam and Siobhan Leahy support the development of a growth mindset that helps students reflect on their own learning, foster independence, and create the conditions to demonstrate learning transfer to a new context (169 – 200).

### Growth Mindset

Fostering a growth mindset encourages learners to strive for continuous improvement. Author Carol Dweck states that “students who believed their intelligence could be developed (a growth mindset) outperformed those who believed their intelligence was fixed (fixed mindset).” ([Edweek, September 2015](#)) When students have a clear understanding of the learning goal and criteria for meeting the goal, they are better able to recognize their progress toward that goal.

### Self-Reporting

Asking students to evaluate and report on their own progress toward learning goals is one way to support the development of metacognition. In [Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement](#), author John Hattie found that the biggest effect size of learning strategies

“The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.”

-Robert M. Hutchins



“An education isn’t how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It’s being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don’t.”

-Anatole France

with a positive influence on student learning is self-reporting grades. When students adopt a growth mindset and evaluate their progress during growth, they are more personally connected to their learning. Linking learning goals to personal goals also helps to inspire a growth mindset and ownership of learning.

### **Demonstrating Growth to Others**

William and Leahy suggest student lead parent conferences. Students who can explain and demonstrate what they have learned as well as what they intend to learn, are more invested in successfully achieving their goals (169-200). The authors also offer a few cautions when implementing a formative assessment process:

- Don't rely on self-assessment. While it is a helpful instructional strategy, students may not know what they don't know so teacher scoring of student work is still necessary.
- Don't, however, feel that everything needs to be scored. Some experiences inform the work without being a source of a grade.
- With self-reporting, it is helpful to have students identify needed changes, but don't have students make the changes right away. Make sure there is an opportunity to collaborate and confirm a course of action before students take that action.

When students own their own learning, all the parts of the formative assessment process fall into place. Students are engaged and involved in setting goals and monitoring progress.

### **Works Cited:**

- Dweck, Carol. (September 22, 2015). *Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset.'* Education Week; Accessed May 9, 2016.
- Hattie, John. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analysis Relating to Achievement.* Routledge: New York, NY.
- William, D. & Leahy, S. (2015). *Embedding Formative Assessment: Practical Techniques for K-12 Classrooms.* Learning Sciences International: West Palm Beach, FL.

## **Digital Resources**

### [Promoting Student Self-Assessment](#)

This strategy guide from ReadWriteThink provides several specific methods to promote self-assessment. Another resource from ReadWriteThink related to self-assessment is

“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

-Walt Disney



“It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings.”

-Ann Landers

this strategy guide focused on the use of [Exit Tickets](#).

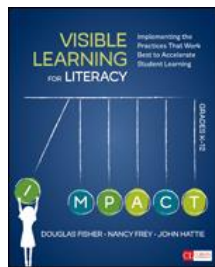
### [Strategies to Enhance Student Self-Assessment](#)

The authors of *Assessment for Learning* offer several resources including reflective prompts for younger and for older students; models for student-led conferences; rubrics and more.

### [Why the Growth Mindset?](#)

Develop a stronger understanding of the growth mindset for parents, teachers, and students with these resources from Mindset Works.

## Professional Texts



### **Visible Learning for Literacy: Implementing the Practices That Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning**

Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016

Veteran literacy teachers and researchers Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey join renowned education researcher John Hattie to expand on the Hattie concept of visible learning. The team presents specific instructional moves to address student learning needs and link to the research that identifies the move as an effective practice.

## Literature for Children and Adolescents

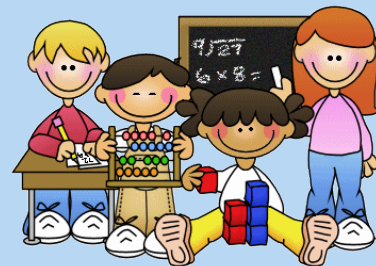
Summer is a terrific time to catch up on new literature for children and adolescents. Check out the titles that won Maine's student book awards in 2016.

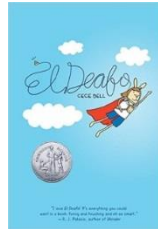
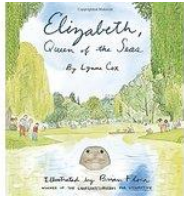
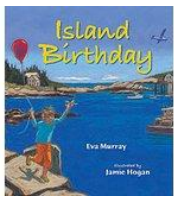


## Maine DOE Summer Literacy Institute: [High Impact Instructional Routines and Strategies](#)

To explore potential training sessions that may be of interest, be sure to check our extensive list of professional development offerings at

[www.maine.gov/doe/calendar/](http://www.maine.gov/doe/calendar/)





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### Lupine Awards

Picture Book Winner - *Island Birthday* by Eva Murray

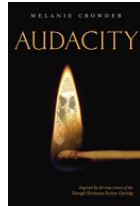
Juvenile/Young Adult Winner - *Paper Things* by Jennifer Richard Jacobson

### Chickadee Award

*Elizabeth, Queen of the Seas* by Lynn Cox

### Maine Student Book Award

*El Deafo* by Cece Bell



For additional hot summer reads, consider the [2016 Best Fiction for Young Adults](#) from the Young Adult Library Services Associations (YALSA). One of the top 10 titles is *Audacity* by Melanie Crowder. This novel written in verse (a current trend) presents a fictionalized account of the 1909 Shirtwaist Factory strike from the perspective of an immigrant teenager struggling to adapt to her new home.

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