

## Advice From Colleagues: Assessment

### How can I use particular components of Everyday Mathematics to assess students' progress?

- Remember that the program philosophy emphasizes assessing regularly and within the context of daily mathematics activities. The Recognizing Student Achievement notes provide indicators for where recording assessment information is reasonable. Many lesson activities lend themselves to collecting assessment information though, so do not hesitate to decide what you think it is fair to collect from your students.
- Don't go crazy trying to grade everything! Remember the difference between assessment and grading. Sometimes, upper elementary teachers are grading (ABCDF) every Math Box. This is counter-productive! Focus on the learning goals. Find the parts of the unit that address the learning goals. These are spelled out in the 3rd edition. Try to assess each learning goal more than once. Progress toward all goals should be monitored.
- The Assessment Handbook and checklists were very helpful. The notes on the side of each lesson on how to help children who are struggling also was very helpful!
- It is important to read the Assessment Handbook which seems like a no-brainer, but when teachers are scrambling to prepare for the lessons, organize manipulatives and keep on top of the content, you can possibly understand how teachers might miss this important detail.
- Part A of the Progress Check should be used to assess grade specific content. Part B should be used to identify misconceptions, strengths and weaknesses for future skills. It should be used for planning and differentiated instruction. A grading system should be developed school-wide so that everyone is using the same system to grade to promote validity.
- The most important task that a teacher can use for assessment is the Recognizing Student Achievement. This daily progress monitoring will assist in driving instruction as well as interventions. To make this task easier, only mark those students who are not meeting progress. Our district uses standards based report cards, not letter grades. By tracking progress with RSA and the Progress Check, we were easily able to track how students did on each goal (standard).

### What type of record-keeping strategies can I use to keep track of student progress?

- We used the checklists that came with the program and kept them on a clipboard that is always handy. The checklists are found in the masters section at the end of the Assessment Handbook.



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- I found the class checklists in the Assessment Handbook really helpful. Fill out all the names first then make a bunch of copies. Keep a binder of the Individual Profiles of Progress and the class checklists. Have it within arm's reach when working with kids. The checklists are all in the masters section at the end of the handbook.
- I keep a clipboard with students name and I write comments and grades during lessons.
- One way to keep track of student progress is to make a spiral notebook and have a page for each grade-level goal. When you are working on an activity and you observe something that you want to make a note of, record the student's name (or number), the date, and the information on a post-it note and stick it to the appropriate goal page. When you revisit the goal in future activities, you can refer to this page when planning the lesson. As notes become obsolete, you can easily remove them. When I remove them from the notebook, I like to put the dated notes with any updates in the student's folder. (I have a folder for every student.) That way, when it is time to complete our report cards, I can go back and look at all of the notes I wrote about the student.
- For anecdotal records, I created a one-page sheet with student names down the left column. The page was a spreadsheet format only without the boxes opposite the names. I just had a line opposite each name. I would title the page by what skill I was observing and then as I circulated during a game or activity, I would record comments next to students' names. If I had no concern or if the student was doing exceptionally well, I would mark a \* or checkmark by their name to denote adequate progress.
- I track their progress using EM Games online. (Your school must have a subscription.)

### How can I use grades (or the process of grading) as feedback that supports the learning process for students?

- Graph the data. It paints a much clearer picture.
- One of the keys to using grades as feedback, is to be sure that students understand how to improve. One possibility it to have students correct their errors by relying on friends and peers, the reference books, or by figuring out what questions to ask. Once they have corrected their errors, grade the corrected page accordingly. Students can then think through their mistakes in a meaningful context, and in the process, they may engage in a discussion about mathematics!
- The checklists really give much better feedback than just a score. By sharing the checklists with the students, they get a better idea of why they received a given grade.





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- Portfolios provide another way for grading to support learning. Save student work for about 3 weeks. When 10 or 12 assignments have accumulated, have them choose 2 or 3 they want to save. The selections can be made according to criteria that you provide—for example, choose an assignment that shows you have improved, or choose an assignment that was difficult at first but that you understand pretty well now. Have them write a couple of sentences to describe why they have chosen each piece.

### Other comments or suggestions about assessment...

- Our leadership team is working hard at getting the message across to teachers that students should be able to revise their work, that zeros are not a productive grading practice, and that homework often should not be a determining factor in grading.
- There are two ways to use assessment—as a guide for instruction (formative) and as proof of knowledge (summative). Teachers should be sure to use both types.
- The Assessment Handbook has unit-specific suggestions for modifying the written assessment and for implementing and adjusting the difficulty of the Open Response problems.

