

Critical Learning

- Hearing and listening differ in meaning.
- Strategies and skills for active listening and listening for understanding can help us listen effectively for a variety of purposes.
- Active listening and listening comprehension can be improved through self-assessment, practising strategies, and constructive feedback.

Curriculum Expectations

Listening to Understand: listen in order to understand and respond appropriately in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes

1.1 identify the purpose(s) of a few different listening tasks

1.2 identify and use a few different active listening strategies when participating in classroom interactions

1.3 identify and use a few different listening comprehension strategies before, during, and after listening to understand simple oral texts

Reflecting on Oral Communication Skills and Strategies: Reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in oral communication situations.

3.1 describe a few different strategies they used before, during, and after listening and explain which ones were most helpful

Learning Goals (Unpacked Expectations)

- Students are able to:
- explain why active listening is important in classroom activities such as listening to an oral text, class discussion, or group work
 - name or describe and practise strategies for active listening
 - explain how listening comprehension strategies can help improve listening for understanding
 - practise before, during and after listening comprehension strategies with a short, high-interest narrative oral text

Planning with the End in Mind

Criteria for Level 3 Performance (Achievement Chart Category)

This lesson is preparing students to successfully meet the following criteria from the summative evaluation that follows this series of lessons:

- Describes critical features of active listening strategies (Knowledge and Understanding)
- Explains why active listening strategies are essential (Knowledge and Understanding)
- Retells/restates key ideas, i.e. analyzes, makes inferences, draws conclusions, summarizes, evaluates and asks questions with considerable thoughtfulness and accuracy (Thinking)
- Interprets using critical analysis with considerable effectiveness to identify perspectives, beliefs, and values present in a text (Thinking)
- Uses analysis with considerable effectiveness to identify strengths, needs, next steps, and reasons for selecting particular strategies for active listening and listening comprehension (Thinking)

Evaluation

Tasks

- Responses based on watching a dialogue in a film to analyse how listening strategies are evident in a clip
- Reflections comparing the listening used by the character to their own strengths as listeners
- Description of a time when students felt they were not listened to, and the impact this experience had on them
- Responses to a listening task (e.g., listening to a podcast), including critical analysis to identify perspectives, beliefs and values
- Reflections comparing their before, during, and after strategies; and identifying strengths, needs, next steps for active listening and listening comprehension

Tools

The **rubric** should be shared and/or collaboratively developed with students early in the instructional trajectory.

Instructional Components and Context

<p>Readiness Students need to have previous experience with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think/Pair/Share • Three-Step Interview • Reading comprehension strategies 	<p>Literacy Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think-aloud • Role Play • Think/Pair/Share • T-chart • Three-Step Interview 	<p>Assessment Tools and Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment checklist • Interview templates • Learning portfolio or journal • Informal visual self-assessment • Circulate, observe, provide feedback
<p>Terminology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive, active • Active listening • Skills, strategies • Strategic 	<p>Collaborative Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equal voice by taking turns • Fulfill a specific group role • Use active listening strategies • Take individual accountability 	<p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note-making during listening task • Application to a short, high-interest narrative text

Guiding Questions

- Hearing and Listening: Which is more essential to success? Why?

Minds On...

Approximate time: 40 minutes

Whole Class → Conceptual Understanding

Students **role-play** or describe passive listening and active listening. Use a prompt to focus students' thinking, e.g., "Call to mind someone you consider an active listener. What does this person do when listening?"

In a **Think/Pair/Share**, students individually record what they see and hear when this individual actively listens, share these points with a partner, and then with the class.

In whole-class discussion, create an **Active Listening T-chart**.

Students **self-assess** their skills and strategies in listening.

Small Groups → Three-Step Interview

Students interview classmates about their active listening skills and strategies to gain insight into others' perspectives on listening and to practise active listening strategies.

Form groups of three, e.g., using **Numbered Heads**. Assign **Three-Step Interview** roles, e.g., using **Lettered Heads**.

Students create, revise, and select their interview questions, e.g., by modelling and building on **sample questions**.

Review and cue students to the collaborative learning skills embedded in the Three-Step Interview.

Students record observations and interviewee's answers on a group template. Cue students to rotate roles.

Whole Class → Debriefing the Interview

Debrief, using prompts that focus on answers to the interview questions; on the active listening skills and strategies observed; and on the challenges of interviewing and observing and note-making.

Brainstorm a list of classroom situations in which active listening strategies would be helpful both for listeners and for the speaker.

Discuss why these strategies are important. Listening and speaking **etiquette** and cultural sensitivity could be part of this discussion.

Collect completed interview templates for diagnostic information on students' use of listening strategies and note-taking skills.

Students each select one active listening strategy to practise during the remainder of the class; they write their choice on a sticky note and display it where it can be easily seen.

Action!

Approximate time: 20 minutes

Whole Class → Modelling

Share the learning goals and collaboratively make a summary note on **active listening skills and strategies**. Provide an explicit explanation of purposes for using active listening skills and strategies, e.g., to focus attention and build understanding. Cue students regularly throughout this part of the lesson to practise the active listening strategy selected in **Minds On**.

Create a chart with labels "Reading Comprehension Strategies" and "Listening Comprehension Strategies." Using a short text that students read in class, review reading strategies they used or could use, and write these into the chart, organizing into Before, During, and After categories.

Suggest that reading and listening both require comprehension strategies. Ask which reading strategies could be used for listening comprehension, before, during and after. Add these to the chart, along with additional **listening comprehension strategies**.

Select a **text** appropriate for listening, e.g., news broadcast, public service announcement, children's story, song and do a **think-aloud to model** before, during, or after listening comprehension strategies. Limit the modeling to three strategies, pausing the recording/reading, as necessary.

Students select the same or a different listening comprehension strategy. Play/read the text a second time, pausing occasionally to temper the pace.

Consolidation

Approximate time: 15 minutes

Whole Class → Guided Practice

Play/read a new text of a similar genre, length, and complexity level. Students practise the before, during, and after listening comprehension strategy and self-assess their success.

Clarify what it means to be "strategic" and what kinds of occasions warrant being strategic.

Students **reflect** on their listening skills and strategies in their **Learning Portfolio** or journal.

Home or Next Lesson Connection

For next day, bring a narrative text you think that others would like to listen to.

Pause and Ponder

Materials

3 brief, high-interest narrative oral texts or selection for controlled choice
Learning Portfolio

Connections Menu

Rubric

Connecting Practice and Research:

- Critical Literacy Guide
- Strategy Implementation Continuum

A^{as}L Active Listening Self-Assessment Checklist

A^{for}L Circulate during the interviews to cue and provide feedback on students' practice of collaborative learning skills.

? **Strategy Instruction**

? **Funds of Knowledge**

A^{for}L Informal observation

DI

A^{for}L Informally check for understanding of think-aloud modelling, e.g., using a traffic light or thumbs up strategy.

think aloud link?

?

A^{as}L Students self-assess using thumbs up - middle - down.

To set up examples for the next lesson, provide students with a definition of **note-taking** and **note-making**.

Connections Menu

Rubric

[Connecting Practice and Research: Listening Guide](#)

[Strategy Implementation Continuum](#)

Minds On ...

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Consolidate ...

[? Reflect](#)

LISTENING RUBRIC

	Level 4 Advanced	Level 3 Proficient	Level 2 Developing	Level 1 Beginning
Knowledge and Understanding				
Knowledge of listening comprehension strategies (connecting, visualizing, questioning, monitoring, summarizing, inferring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoroughly describes critical features of active listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes critical features of active listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes some critical features of active listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes a couple of critical features of active listening
Understanding of active listening strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoroughly explains why active listening strategies are essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains why active listening strategies are essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains why active listening strategies are important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives a reason why active listening strategies are important
Thinking				
Use of processing skills to make meaning of oral text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retells/restates key ideas, i.e., analyzes, makes inferences, draws conclusions, summarizes, evaluates and asks questions with a high degree of insight and thoroughness uses analysis with a high degree of effectiveness to identify strengths, needs, next steps, and reasons for selecting particular strategies for active listening strategies and listening comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retells/restates key ideas and asks questions with considerable thoughtfulness and accuracy interprets, using critical analysis with considerable effectiveness, to identify perspectives, beliefs and values present in a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retells/restates key ideas and asks questions with some accuracy interprets, using critical analysis with some effectiveness, to identify perspectives, beliefs and values present in a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retells/restates key ideas and asks questions with limited accuracy interprets, using critical analysis with limited effectiveness, to identify perspectives, beliefs and values present in a text
Use of self-reflective thinking process of metacognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses analysis with a high degree of effectiveness to identify strengths, needs, next steps, and reasons for selecting particular strategies for active listening strategies and listening comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses analysis with considerable effectiveness to identify strengths, needs, next steps, and reasons for selecting particular strategies for active listening strategies and listening comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses analysis with some effectiveness to identify strengths, needs, next steps, and reasons for selecting particular strategies for active listening strategies and listening comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses limited analysis to identify some strengths, needs, next steps, and reasons for selecting particular strategies for active listening strategies and listening comprehension

Minds On...

 Strategy Instruction

- To be effective, strategies must be used, not as algorithms, but rather as *heuristics*. In other words, they are guidelines that contribute to but do not guarantee learning. How can teachers use the **Three-Step Interview** as a structure that provides opportunities for productive talk, interaction, co-construction of meaning, scaffolding learning, collaborative skills development, explicit teaching opportunities, guided practice, and so on?
- Alexander & Jetton (2003) identify six attributes of effective strategy use – it is procedural, purposeful, effortful, willful, essential, and facilitative. What do each of these attributes mean? How is each attribute relevant to the **Three-Step Interview** strategy?
- Motivation is inextricably bound with the cognitive aspects of learning. Garner & Alexander (1991) refer to this as *skill, will, and thrill*. The RAND report defines engagement as the use of cognitive strategies, intrinsic motivation, use of background knowledge, and social interchanges. How does the **Three-Step Interview** involve each of these aspects of engagement? How can you address each of *skill, will* and *thrill* when using this strategy?

Pearson and Gallagher (1983) developed the gradual release of responsibility model or framework. The model emphasizes a controlled shift of the balance of joint responsibility between teacher and students. Rather than linear and sequential, the model outlines a negotiated, iterative, and recursive process of shifting. It is possible to begin—as many literacy strategies do—with open-ended, generative questions about the topic of new learning in order to assess students’ readiness, and provide authentic opportunities for formulating inquiry and engaging in problem solving.

Knowledge can be classified as: factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive. Although a strategy is “a specialized instance of *procedural knowledge*”, teachers’ and students’ understanding of literacy strategies needs to embrace all four kinds of knowledge. They should explore when and why strategies are appropriate, how to use them effectively, how to select among strategies for their own purposes, and how to recognize similar and dissimilar occasions to use them. See Alexander, Patricia A., and Jetton, Tamara L. (2000).

Questions:

Teachers may wish to take advantage of this teaching opportunity to focus on the importance and art of questioning, discussing:

- the character dispositions of curiosity and wonder
- ways of building on question words for variety in questions, e.g. using a question matrix
- the difference between closed and open questions
- the need for clarifying or probing questions.

Resources

<link to EDU GAINS video on Mike Hardt Question Structure: A Four-Step Strategy <http://www.edugains.ca> >

Koechlin, Carol, and Swaan, Sandi (2006). *Q-Tasks*. Markham, ON: Pembroke.

Think Literacy video Developing Thinking Skills Through Higher-Level Questioning**Questions for Thinking about Strategy Instruction**

- How do I effectively use learning strategies to develop literacy skills and conceptual understanding?
- How do I match the choice of literacy strategy to the learning goals, subject content, and particular students?
- What knowledge, skills, and dispositions must students develop prior to using the strategy?
- What literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions are students practising when engaged in this strategy?
- How can I teach students to apply strategies to other learning situations?
- What conceptual understandings are these strategies building?
- Does the strategy or structure inherently support differentiated instruction? If so, how?
- How might the literacy strategy itself be differentiated, e.g., scaffolded to respond to a range of readiness levels?
- How can I combine strategy instruction with ongoing assessment?
- How do we “build our teaching [of language and literacy] around difference?”¹

¹ Pahl, K. & Rowsell, J. (2005). *Literacy and education: understanding the new literacy studies in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, California: Paul Chapman (SAGE). p. 6.

SAMPLE ACTIVE LISTENING CHART

Looks Like	Sounds Like
<p>The person who is actively listening...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stops doing something else• directs attention to the speaker• keeps an appropriate distance from the speaker• maintains comfortable position with respect to the speaker• assumes an alert posture• uses gestures and facial expression to indicate interest and to encourage the speaker to continue	<p>The person who is actively listening...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lets the speaker know if the listener isn't understanding; doesn't fake listening or understanding• makes statements such as "uh-uh," "I understand," and "I see what you mean" to show understanding• repeats phrases or rephrases key points to confirm what the person is saying• uses questions to indicate interest and maintain understanding• avoids interrupting

Minds On...

 Funds of Knowledge

Funds of Knowledge, from the work of Luis Moll, refers to the cultural heritage and concepts learners bring with them to school. Moje (2000) argues that as much as possible teachers make efforts to go beyond strategies like K-W-L in order to build a “third space” that connects out-of-school and in-school contexts and recognizes students’ identities and out-of-school literacy practices (42). Wade and Moje (2003) quote Vacca’s (1998) comment in *Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents’ Lives*: “Although we know more today about text and instructional variables from a psychological perspective, we know very little about what counts as literacy from adolescent perspectives or the literacies that adolescents engage in outside of an academic context” (623). We might consider these questions:

- What does literacy mean to an adolescent?
- Why should literacy be important to an adolescent?
- How is adolescent literacy different from early literacy?
- What are the challenges for teachers and adolescents in literacy being “a malleable repertoire of practices, not an unchanging or universal set of skills” (Luke, in Pahl and Rowsell, 2005, xi)

Moje’s work also reminds us that the power of effective literacy instruction depends on effective and continual assessment for learning. The research consensus is that “strategies make a difference in learning” (Alexander & Jetton, 2000). Strategies also “allow integration of **dynamic assessment** with teaching”. In other words, effective assessment results from engaging in “on-line” and “on the spot” support (Pressley & Woloshyn (in Goldman & Rakestraw, 2003).

Debriefing Prompts

- Which active listening strategies did you use when you were the listener?
- Which strategies could you have used to improve your role as active listener?
- Which active listening strategies did you observe?
- What additional strategies might have been used?
- To what extent were you convinced that your listener was listening when you were the speaker? What evidence led you to this conclusion?

Etiquette

Discussion Etiquette, **Think Literacy Cross-Curricular Approaches**, pp. 176-181

Minds On...

THREE-STEP INTERVIEW

A—Interviewer, B—Interviewee, C—Observer and Recorder

1. Select 3 or 4 questions to guide your interview.
2. Ask clarifying and probing questions as necessary.
3. Rotate roles after each interview.

Interview 1

Interviewee's Name:	Interview Notes:
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Interview 2

Interviewee's Name:	Interview Notes:
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Interview 3

Interviewee's Name:	Interview Notes:
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Interview 4

Interviewee's Name:	Interview Notes:
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SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: ACTIVE LISTENING***You as listener:***

- What kind of technologies do you use to listen outside of school? E.g., the radio, an iPod or MP3, other? Why do you listen to them?
- What kinds of activities involve listening in a typical day?
- When and where do you listen most effectively? Why?
- How do you let a speaker know that you're listening carefully to him or her?
- How can the speaker probably tell that you're not listening well?
- What are some of the things that stop you from being a good listener?
- What do you do when you realize that you haven't been listening?
- Are you usually aware when you tune out of a discussion or conversation? If so, what do you do then? If not, what could you do to increase your awareness?
- What would help you to be a better listener?
- What do you do to help yourself listen in class and pay attention or remember?

You as speaker:

- How can you tell when someone is listening to you?
- How can you tell when someone isn't listening to you?
- What body language suggests that someone is not listening?
- What kinds of things do people say to show that they're listening?
- Who do you know that is a good listener?
- What makes that person a good listener?

Students in classrooms:

- How can students help themselves pay attention and listen when they are not interested?
- Why do you think some students don't listen in class?
- Is it always important to listen in class?
- What methods, besides listening, are there for getting important information?
- Why do people choose to listen carefully?
- What do you think a good student listener does?

Minds On...

SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST: ACTIVE LISTENING			
	✓ A strength	★ Area for improvement	? Unsure
I make a conscious effort not to let my own feelings get in the way, e.g. I focus on understanding the speaker's perspective.			
I watch for a speaker's body language and use this information to understand what I'm hearing.			
I work at not being distracted by a speaker's personal habits, such as clearing the throat.			
I make adjustments when distractions interfere with effective listening, e.g., move closer to the speaker.			
I anticipate what I will be hearing about and set a purpose for listening, e.g., listening to enjoy, listening to understand another point of view, or listening for specific information.			
I check understanding, e.g. by checking what I hear against my predictions and adjusting my predictions if necessary.			
I concentrate on what's being said and on not letting my mind wander.			
I consciously choose to pay attention to what is being spoken in the classroom, whether it's a discussion or a reading aloud.			
I ask that information be repeated or written on the board when I miss something.			
I listen to empathize and make connections with others.			
I listen to analyze what the person is saying.			
I ask for clarification when I don't understand.			
I regularly summarize mentally what I'm hearing.			
I am able to make effective notes from an oral presentation.			
I make use of outlines or graphic organizers to identify important information.			
I evaluate what a person says and how that person says it.			
I am able to identify the main idea or gist of what a person says.			
I recognize and recall main and supporting ideas in presentations.			

Action

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES	
Why?	<p>Good listeners actively use strategies in order to encourage clear and complete communication between themselves and the speaker.</p> <p>These strategies turn hearing into listening and help them understand what they're listening to.</p> <p>These strategies have the bonus of being good listening etiquette.</p>
How?	<p>Non-Verbal Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gesture, such as nodding to communicate attention • Use appropriate body language, such as sitting forward rather than leaning back • Focus on the person speaking; minimize distractions for both speaker and listener. <p>Verbal Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrase what you have heard: <i>So, what I'm hearing is ...</i> • Empathize: I hear what you are saying. <i>Do you mean that...?</i> • Clarify: I'm not sure I have this straight. <i>I understand that...</i> • Summarize: <i>Okay, may I summarize what I've heard...?</i> <p>Key Reminders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before: If necessary, change locations to minimize distraction and give the speaker your full attention. • During: Use posture and facial expressions to promote communication. A speaker will catch on if you "fake" it. • After: When the speaker has finished, ask questions, restate what you have heard, or request clarification to make sure that you understood what was said.

Action

LISTENING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES AND QUESTION PROMPTS			
Strategies	Before (Preparing to understand)	During (Staying engaged)	After (Consolidating learning)
Setting a purpose for listening	Why am I listening to this text?	Is what I'm hearing meeting my purpose for listening?	Did I achieve my purpose? If not, why didn't I?
Focusing and maintaining attention	What will I do to stay focused? How will I minimize distractions?	What is preventing me from paying attention? What more can I do to make sure my attention doesn't wander?	How well did I stay focused? What more could I have done to keep my attention on what I was listening to?
Monitoring understanding	What do I already know about this topic that prepares me to understand? Does the title remind me anything I have heard about before?	Does what I'm hearing fit with what I already know or think about this issue? What is not making sense?	Now that I've finished listening, what is the text about? What am I unsure about? Did all parts of the text make sense?
Visualizing	What images come to mind when I think about this topic?	What am I 'seeing' in my mind's eye? What sketches would capture what I am hearing?	What image, literal or symbolic, captures the most important information in or feelings about this text?
Making Connections	Based on the title or other information, what do I know that could be relevant to this text?	What does this remind me of? How does this information connect to others texts, my own experiences or events and experiences beyond my classroom?	Now that I've heard the whole text, with what events, texts, experiences, or knowledge do I group this text?
Questioning	Based on the title, what are three things I want to know? The questions could begin with <i>who, what, when, where, how, why, how much, which.</i>	What questions does what I'm hearing answer? What new questions does what I'm hearing raise?	What do I still want to know about what I've heard?
Summarizing	What kind of text am I going to hear, e.g., a story, an explanation, a description, a set of instructions? How will the information likely be organized? What graphic organizer will help me to summarize as I'm listening?	What are the main ideas so far? Is the text organized as I anticipated? Do I need to reorganize my note-taking plan?	What is the gist of what I've heard? What is the most important idea and three supporting details? How can I be sure I have the main idea? How can I be sure I've understood?
Inferring	When I consider the topic, the title and the speaker, what do I predict this text will be about?	What clues, in the text and in the speaker, are suggesting that there's more to this than literal information? How does this oral text fit with my predictions? What predictions do I need to adjust?	What knowledge not in the text did I need to use to make sense of this?
Organizing the Information Graphically	What are the labels on the graphic organizer? Is information presented in the graphic organizer the same way it will be in what I'll hear? Or is the information reorganized in the graphic organizer?	Is there a space on the organizer for what I'm hearing? Am I hearing something I think is important that's not on the organizer?	How do my notes compare with my partner's? Does the organizer capture all the important relationships between information?

Action

SAMPLE THINK-ALLOUD PROMPTS FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES	
Strategies	The Invisible Thinking Inside My Head
Setting a purpose for listening	I'm going to listening to this text/speaker because.... I need to know.... I'm going to use what I hear to....
Focusing and maintaining attention	I need to filter out.... If I'm going to focus my attention I need to.... To make sure I get the whole thing, I'll
Monitoring understanding	I'm trying to keep up with this text, but it's going too fast for me to get all the ideas. I'll.... I just noticed that I lost track as I was trying to record the point I just heard.... Should I raise my hand, interrupt politely and ask the speaker to repeat the point?.... Hold on a second! I was too busy relating my own experience to what the speaker was saying and started listening to my "distracting voice" rather than my "interacting voice".
Visualizing	I can see this happening in my mind when I ... When I doodle it helps me to see what I'm listening to ...
Making connections to my personal experience, other texts, the world	This reminds me of ... This is similar to ... This is different from ...
Questioning	I wonder why...? Why would the speaker/ song writer choose to...? What did the song writer mean by the lyrics...?
Summarizing	Overall, the gist of what I heard is So, the main idea of the text is At first,...then, and finally
Inferring	So, the main idea of the text is

Action

Text Selection

Select text of the type being studied so that students are working with familiar text structures. Discuss how knowledge of text structure can increase comprehension and how note-making organizers that reflects the deep structure of the text are more effective as note-making organizers and scaffolds.

Consolidate

The Importance of Explicit Instruction in Reflecting

Students' ability to reflect cannot be taken for granted (Israel, 33). Students may need modeling of language and analytical process. Sentence starters and question prompts are effective generative strategies for suggesting what information is required in a response. Likert scales and other graphic strategies can also prompt reflection. Portfolios or journals need to be *used* by students in subsequent lessons, e.g., for students to monitor their progress, to assess success in reaching goals, set new goals, and use the portfolio as evidence during a teacher-student conference.