

# Plan and Strategically Position Evidence-Gathering Opportunities

Transcript for the online video from CSAI – Section 3

Welcome back to the module on Gathering Evidence of Student Learning. Recall that the four main ideas of this module are:

- Think of “Evidence” Broadly
- Gather Evidence Aligned to Learning Goals and Success Criteria
- Plan and Strategically Position Evidence-Gathering Opportunities
- Capture a Range of Student Responses

This video is focused on the third idea, *Plan and Strategically Position Evidence-Gathering Opportunities*.

Gathering evidence at multiple points throughout a lesson allows teachers to make sure that teaching and learning are in sync. Lessons that proceed without regular evidence gathering can be compared to pre-recorded video: push “play” at the start of the lesson, push “stop” and the end of the lesson, and hope that the students learned something in between.

To be responsive to real-time student learning, teachers must pre-plan strategic opportunities for evidence gathering. In designing a lesson, teachers ask, “At what points during this lesson am I going to need evidence to keep teaching and learning in sync?”

Here are some questions to consider:

- When will evidence be needed?
- Will it be needed before or at the start of the lesson, to determine how best to begin and frame the lesson content?
- Will it be needed a few moments into the lesson, before building on introductory content?
- Will evidence be needed part way through the lesson, to decide among different instructional routes to the Learning Goal?
- At a key point during the lesson to know if students are ready to move on?
- And/or, at the end of the lesson, to help plan the next lesson or other next steps?

It can be helpful to have Success Criteria articulated for each of these stages, in the lesson for you and your students, to gauge the progress of learning.

Of course, teachers need to gather and act on evidence of learning from all students. However, it may be that teachers do not need to gather evidence from all students during every lesson. During some lessons, teachers may want to target particular groups or individuals, perhaps to see how they have used feedback, or because they appear to be struggling to grasp a new concept and the teacher feels that it is important to keep a close watch on how their learning is evolving. Next, we'll talk about leveraging spontaneous opportunities.

Opportunities to see how student learning is taking shape often arrive spontaneously during the lesson, and good teachers know how to capitalize on the evidence afforded by these moments. However, the role of evidence in the formative assessment process is too critical to leave to chance.

Teachers place evidence-gathering opportunities strategically throughout the lesson to make sure that they have the most relevant and up-to-date information about student learning. Next, we'll talk about strategically planning, not scripting.

There is an important distinction between planning and scripting evidence-gathering opportunities – the first facilitates the formative assessment process, but the second stifles it. When teachers design or select a strategy to elicit evidence of student learning, they are not trying to micromanage how teaching and learning will unfold or unduly limit interactions among students and the teacher.

Yes, it is important to think in a detailed way about how you expect learning to develop and what evidence you will need, but it is counterproductive to try to predict the intricacies of what eventually will occur in the moment.

Next we'll go over the idea of planning to anticipate. For example, when teachers intend to gather evidence through student questioning, it is important for them to have thought about which questions they will ask, and at which points during the lesson. Teachers prepare questions that are purposefully built into the flow of the lesson, are well worded, and aligned to the Learning Goals and Success Criteria. They anticipate possible student responses and prepare appropriate pedagogical moves based on these responses.

Notice that this is very different from inflexibly scripting or micromanaging every classroom interaction. Teachers are not limiting student responses or stifling spontaneity. Rather, they are making sure they have all the resources necessary to best respond to the inevitable unpredictability of learning.

Next, we'll pause and reflect.

You've now completed the suite of videos for Gathering Evidence. Please answer the following exit questions to complete this module.

- Why is evidence gathering an important part of the formative assessment process?
- How does evidence gathering occur in your classroom?
- In what ways can you improve evidence gathering in your classroom?
- At what points in a lesson do you typically gather evidence of student learning? How do you decide when to gather evidence of student learning?
- Think of a Learning Goal from a recent lesson and two key questions from that lesson. At what point would the evidence from these questions be most useful?

Thank you! You have now completed the module on Gathering Evidence of Student Learning.

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