

Formative Assessment Reference List

Dear Colleagues,

In an era of education judged by “standardized accountability” that can often feel misaligned with our pedagogical underpinnings of *guiding* the growth of the *individual* child through head, heart, and hands, we offer our gratitude and support of your daily work in meeting this challenge. Public Waldorf schools across the nation are at the forefront of defining themselves as exemplary educational models that value measurement of growth in *meaningful, developmental, and authentic* ways.

In an effort to support you in developing, enhancing, or re-imagining the assessment practices at your school, the Pedagogical Committee, on behalf of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, has created the following annotated list of resources for your reference. For further clarification on assessment terminology refer to the formative assessment document, entitled, Education Towards Freedom, found under the resources tab on our website. We will continue to develop further offerings in the area of assessment as part of our service to our members.

Sincerely,

Your Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Gottgens, Else (2011). *Waldorf Education in Practice: Exploring how children learn in the lower grades*. Outskirts Press, Denver CO.

Although this is not a conventional “assessment book,” this little book will be helpful to individual teachers or faculty groups working on questions of formative assessment and realistic benchmarks or progression of learning: a framework for formative assessment. Out of a wealth of experience in a wide range of classrooms, Else provides concrete examples of classroom activities in subjects including movement, reading, writing, and math. Excellent reminders of the importance of observation (and how to conduct it), record keeping and tracking, appropriate levels of challenge for skills and capacities, the review process, plus a wealth of practical activities.

Ciborski, Sara and Helen-Ann Ireland (2015). *Assessment for Learning in Waldorf Classrooms: How Waldorf teachers measure student progress toward lifelong learning goals*. Academia Press, Palo Alto CA.

Based on case study research in Waldorf classrooms, this book explores a range of approaches to setting learning goals and conducting assessments of student progress. The appendices include comprehensive suggested grade-by-grade curriculum standards (including language arts, math, motor skills, social/emotional skills, general skills), and samples of reports.

Avison, K. and Martyn Rawson (2014). *The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum*. Floris Books, Edinburgh, UK.

In addition to a comprehensive horizontal (subject by subject) and vertical (progression through the grades) description of a typical Waldorf curriculum, Avison and Rawson, offer sections on standards, evaluation, and assessment. The chapter on evaluation and assessment includes practical discussion of record keeping, monitoring, reporting, and child and class studies.

This revised edition of Rawson's "yellow book" (*The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*) is an invaluable resource for the topic of formative assessment.

Embedded Formative Assessment by Dylan Wiliam. Solution Tree Press, 2011.

This short book provides an excellent overview of formative assessment. Topics include 1) clear definitions of formative assessment and the research that supports its use by teachers to enhance student learning in the classroom, 2) how to elicit and evaluate evidence of student learning and growth, 3) providing timely and effective feedback to students, 4) and methods to engage students in ongoing efforts to improve their own learning. (182 pages)

Formative Assessment in Practice: A Process of Inquiry and Action by Margaret Heritage. Harvard Education Press, 2013.

In this volume, Margaret Heritage focuses on the role of the teacher in the formative assessment process. She emphasizes the importance of the classroom teacher actively gathering evidence of ongoing student learning to 1) inform her understanding of the current state of student learning, and 2) to identify those actions and activities that will foster ongoing student growth. Dr. Heritage emphasizes the use of formative assessment to identify individual student progress and to address identified student needs in a timely way. (151 pages)

Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey. ASCD, 2007.

After a short summary of the value of formative assessment in the classroom, Fisher and Frey describe specific formative techniques for use by classroom teachers—and how to make best use of what is learned to foster ongoing student learning.

These formative assessment techniques include the effective use of oral language, questioning, writing, projects, performances, quizzes, tests, and common interim assessments—all used to make student progress in learning visible (where they are now) and to foster informed teacher decision-making about what students need next. (140 pages)

Assessment *for* Learning: Putting It Into Practice by Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, Wiliam. Open University Press, 2003.

This book describes a two-year practical research process into the use of a variety of forms of assessment in support of teaching and learning in the classroom--and the lessons learned from it by a partnership of educational researchers and classroom teachers. The distinction between the integrated use of assessment in the classroom during the ongoing learning process (assessment *for* learning) is contrasted with the use of assessment for a variety of summary purposes (assessment *of* learning). (135 pages)

Visible Learning For Teachers: Maximizing Impact On Learning by John Hattie. Routledge, 2012.

This resource serves two important functions:

- 1) it describes the research that supports the impact and power of assessment in the classroom to make student learning visible as a means of guiding the classroom teacher's instructional decision-making, and
 - 2) it provides detailed examples of the key components of effective teaching within lessons and classroom learning activities—that foster ongoing student growth.
- (286 pages)