

ASSESSMENT

Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

THE **MARZANO COMPENDIUM** OF
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Copyright © 2016 by Marzano Research

Materials appearing here are copyrighted. With one exception, all rights are reserved. Users with a subscription to the Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies may print the pages of this folio for personal use and reproduce pages marked “Reproducible.” Otherwise, no part of this folio may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission of the publisher.

555 North Morton Street
Bloomington, IN 47404

888.849.0851
FAX: 866.801.1447

email: info@marzanoresearch.com
marzanoresearch.com

Visit marzanoresearch.com/compendium to access the Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies to view additional resources related to this element and others.

Director of Content and Resources: Julia A. Simms

Editorial Manager: Laurel Hecker

Production Editor: Ming Lee Newcomb

Editorial Assistants / Staff Writers: Elizabeth A. Bearden & Christopher Dodson

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE WHOLE CLASS.....	2
STRATEGIES.....	4
Confidence Rating Techniques	5
Voting Techniques	7
Response Boards.....	9
Unrecorded Assessments.....	11
REPRODUCIBLES	13

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Dr. Robert J. Marzano published *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*. The framework, composed of three lesson segments, ten design questions, and forty-one elements, was based on research showing that teacher quality is one of the strongest influences on student achievement—that is, an effective teacher can positively and significantly impact student learning. As such, *The Art and Science of Teaching* sought to identify specific action steps teachers could take to improve their effectiveness.

In 2015, Dr. Marzano updated *The Art and Science of Teaching* framework to reflect new insights and feedback. The Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies is based on this updated model, presenting forty-three elements of effective teaching in ten categories. Each folio in the series addresses one element and includes strategies, examples, and reproducible resources. The Compendium and its folios are designed to help teachers increase their effectiveness by focusing on professional growth. To that end, each folio includes a scoring scale teachers can use to determine their proficiency with the element, as well as numerous strategies that teachers can use to enact the element in their classrooms. Indeed, the bulk of each folio consists of these strategies and reproducibles for implementing and monitoring them, making the Compendium a practical, actionable resource for teachers, instructional coaches, teacher mentors, and administrators.

INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE WHOLE CLASS

This element involves the teacher using informal assessments of the whole class to determine the class's level of proficiency with specific content. Because informal assessments measure how well the class is doing as a whole, the teacher will not record grades for individual students. Assessments should be frequently administered and formative in nature, and should guide the teacher in providing encouraging feedback to students, giving them a clear idea of their progress, and demonstrating ways in which they can improve. The teacher should also adjust instruction based on student needs as identified during informal assessment.

Monitoring This Element

There are specific student responses that indicate this element is being effectively implemented. Before trying strategies for the element in the classroom, it is important that the teacher knows how to identify the types of student behaviors that indicate the strategy is producing the desired effects. General behaviors a teacher might look for include the following.

- Students complete informal assessments of the whole class as assigned.
- Students respond to teacher feedback about class progress toward particular learning goals.

Desired behaviors such as these are listed for each strategy in this element.

Teachers often wonder how their mastery of specific strategies relates to their mastery of the element as a whole. Successful execution of an element does not depend on the use of every strategy within that element. Rather, multiple strategies are presented within each element to provide teachers with diverse options. Each strategy can be an effective means of implementing the goals of the element. If teachers attain success using a particular strategy, it is not always necessary to master the rest of the strategies within the same element. If a particular strategy proves difficult or ineffective, however, teachers are encouraged to experiment with various strategies to find the method that works best for them.

Scoring Scale

The following scoring scale can help teachers assess and monitor their progress with this element. The scale has five levels, from Not Using (0) to Innovating (4). A teacher at the Not Using (0) level is unaware of the strategies and behaviors associated with the element or is simply not using any of

Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

the strategies. At the Beginning (1) level, a teacher attempts to address the element by trying specific strategies, but does so in an incomplete or incorrect way. When a teacher reaches the Developing (2) level, he or she implements strategies for the element correctly and completely, but does not monitor their effects. At the Applying (3) level, a teacher implements strategies for the element and monitors their effectiveness with his or her students. Finally, a teacher at the Innovating (4) level is fluent with strategies for the element and can adapt them to unique student needs and situations, creating new strategies for the element as necessary.

Scale for Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

4	3	2	1	0
Innovating	Applying	Developing	Beginning	Not Using
I adapt behaviors and create new strategies for unique student needs and situations.	I use informal assessments of the whole class to determine students' proficiency with specific content, and I monitor the extent to which students respond to assessment-guided feedback and instruction.	I use informal assessments of the whole class to determine students' proficiency with specific content, but I do not monitor the effect on students.	I use the strategies and behaviors associated with this element incorrectly or with parts missing.	I am unaware of strategies and behaviors associated with this element.

The following examples describe what each level of the scale might look like in the classroom.

Not Using (0): A teacher only uses assessment to record grades for individual students.

Beginning (1): A teacher administers informal assessments of the whole class, but those assessments are not focused on specific content important for students to learn.

Developing (2): A teacher uses informal assessments of the whole class to provide students with feedback about how they are doing but does not attempt to determine if this feedback is useful to the students.

Applying (3): A teacher uses informal assessments of the whole class to provide students with feedback about how they are doing and monitors their responses in order to adjust his classroom instruction.

Innovating (4): A teacher uses various informal assessments of the whole class to provide students with feedback about how they are doing. When she notices that some students are reluctant to indicate their confidence with the material in the whole-class setting, she has brief conversations with those students at their desks to gauge their confidence.

STRATEGIES

Each of the following strategies describes specific actions that teachers can take to enact this element in their classrooms. Strategies can be used individually or in combination with each other. Each strategy includes a description, a list of teacher actions, a list of desired student responses, and suggestions for adapting the strategy to provide extra support or extensions. Extra support and extensions relate directly to the Innovating (4) level of the scale. Extra support involves steps teachers can take to ensure they are implementing the strategy effectively for all students, including English learners, special education students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and reluctant learners. Extensions are ways that teachers can adapt the strategy for advanced students. In addition, some strategies include technology tips that detail ways teachers can use classroom technology to implement or enhance the strategy. Finally, each strategy includes further information, practical examples, or a reproducible designed to aid teachers' implementation of the strategy.

Confidence Rating Techniques

The teacher asks students to rate how confident they are in their understanding of a topic. These ratings can be signaled by hand (thumbs up, thumbs sideways, thumbs down) or through the use of technology (for example, clickers or cell phones). This immediate feedback can be used by the teacher to determine whether certain areas of the content are causing students difficulty.

Teacher Actions

- Establishing a rating system for students to rate how confident they are in their understanding of a topic
- Asking students to rate their confidence in their understanding of a topic using the rating system

Desired Student Responses

- Responding to questions about how confident they are in their understanding of a topic using a rating system

Extra Support

- Reminding students of the rating system verbally or displaying visual reminders of the rating system in the classroom

Extension

- Pairing students with low confidence in their understanding with students with high confidence in their understanding to work together to review content and correct existing errors in understanding

Tips for Confidence Rating Techniques

Direct input from students is often the best resource for determining whether a class feels confident about the material being covered. This input can be gathered in a variety of ways, each of which provides its own unique advantages. The following methods suggest ways a teacher might have students rate their confidence with specific content.

- **Hand signals:** Hand signals provide an effective means for determining students' confidence because they require little preparation. The teacher gives the class quick instruction on predetermined hand signals before a lesson begins. Students might give a thumbs up to indicate confidence with the material, a thumbs down to indicate lack of confidence, or a thumbs sideways to indicate uncertainty. It is important to note that, despite their unobtrusive nature, hand signals are best used only at specific moments during the lesson. To be effective, the teacher should pause the lesson and ask students to briefly signal their confidence. Some students may also be embarrassed to openly admit difficulty with the content in front of their peers. To remedy this, the teacher might ask the class to close their eyes while giving hand signals.

Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

- **Polling Technology:** Polling technology (clickers or mobile device applications) can be a fun and versatile means for students to rate their confidence with the material. Websites such as polleverywhere.com allow the teacher to set up confidence-rating questions and then ask students to answer them using the text function of their cell phones or by visiting a specific link and voting online. The advantage of using polling technology is twofold. Firstly, it can be used either during class or afterwards at students' leisure. Students can not only rate their confidence with the material in the moment but can also take time to reflect and rate their confidence on the lesson as a whole. Secondly, polling technology allows for a greater depth of feedback. Multiple choice questions can allow students to rate their confidence on a progressive scale or identify specific areas of content with which they might be having difficulty.
- **Color-coded cards:** Color-coded cards can be as simple as slips of colored construction paper. To use this strategy, a teacher can provide students with a system of different colored cards and have students keep them in a single stack on their desks. For example, a green card could indicate that students are confident with the material, a yellow card could indicate uncertainty, and a red card could indicate that they want the teacher to stop and re-explain a difficult point. During the lesson, students place the colored card on top of the stack which corresponds to their level of confidence with the material. The advantage of using color-coded cards is that they provide constant feedback throughout the lesson. The teacher does not have to pause to poll the class, but at any moment he or she can see at a glance how confident students are with the content.

Voting Techniques

The teacher asks students to vote on answers to specific questions or prompts. Such questions commonly have a multiple-choice or true/false format. Votes can be signaled by hand (for example, the number of fingers held up indicates a vote for a specific answer) or through the use of technology (for example, clickers or cell phones).

Teacher Actions

- Asking students a specific question that can be answered using a voting format
- Asking students to respond to the specific question using pre-established signals

Desired Student Responses

- Responding to the question using the pre-established signals

Extra Support

- Reminding students of the rating system verbally or displaying visual reminders of the pre-established signals in the classroom

Extension

- Asking students to write their own specific questions that can be answered using the pre-established signals

Tips for Voting Techniques

Having students vote on which answer they believe is correct can be useful in encouraging classroom participation and gauging classwide competence with content. Voting can also spur class discussion, as well as alleviate the anxiety some students have about giving answers individually. The following list provides effective methods for having students vote on answers in the classroom.

- **Hand signals:** Hand signals are a quick, unobtrusive means of having students vote on the correct answer to a question and are ideal for situations in which the teacher does not want to interrupt the flow of the lesson. Students can be asked to simply raise their hands to indicate which answer is correct, or they could raise a number of fingers corresponding to the correct answer. Depending on the question, the teacher might also have students briefly close their eyes while they signal their answers in order to prevent them from being swayed by the opinions of others.
- **Polling Technology:** Using polling technology, such as clickers or mobile device applications, is an effective method for assessing students' understanding of material. Many websites offer free online or mobile applications, and used cell phones can often be acquired cheaply (or through donations). These used phones need not be connected to a service provider, but can simply be connected to the school's wireless network and used as a handheld computing device. Students can also use polling technology for more than merely voting on which answer they believe is correct. The teacher can design selected-response questions that allow students to rate several answers at once or arrange answers in order from most to least accurate, providing a greater depth of feedback than other strategies.

Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

- **Tokens:** Using tokens to indicate answers can be an especially fun way for younger students to vote in the classroom. To use tokens, set up several cans or jars and provide students with a token (a coin or other small object) to be placed in the containers. Each container should be labeled with a different possible answer to a question. Students can be asked to deposit their tokens one by one, or the class as a whole might be released to deposit their tokens at the same time. For difficult questions, students may also be given multiple tokens. They can spread these tokens over several possible answers or deposit them all into a single container if they are especially confident. When all the tokens have been deposited, the teacher can then ask students to indicate which container they think has acquired the most votes.
- **Vote with your feet:** In this strategy, the teacher asks several students to provide possible answers to a difficult question. Those students are then asked to stand at different locations around the room, while the rest of the class is asked to get out of their seats and stand near the student they think gave the right answer—thus the name “vote with your feet.” Allowing two to three minutes for students to make their decision will encourage them to talk amongst themselves as they make their way around the room. This can induce impromptu class discussions and afford students the opportunity to get up and move around for a short time while staying focused on the content.

Response Boards

The teacher asks students to write their responses to a question or prompt on an erasable response board or response card. The teacher then scans the responses to obtain a sense of the proportion of students who understand the topic. Response boards not only provide in-depth feedback about students' understanding of the topic as a whole but can also reveal specific areas of difficulty.

Teacher Actions

- Providing erasable response boards or response cards to a class
- Asking a question that students respond to by writing their responses on erasable response boards or response cards
- Scanning responses to obtain a sense of the proportion of students who understand the topic

Desired Student Responses

- Responding to the question by writing their responses on erasable response boards or response cards

Extra Support

- Asking students questions with limited responses, such as multiple choice or true/false questions, rather than open-ended questions or prompts

Extension

- Asking students to write their responses to questions or prompts as complete sentences

Tips for Assessing Response Boards

When reviewing response boards or cards in class, there will not always be time to give each answer an in-depth assessment. It is important, therefore, that the teacher is able to accurately scan responses for indicators of students' competency with the material. The following strategies suggest things to look for when scanning student responses.

- **Missing information:** The absence of types of information can reveal as much as their presence. The answers to many questions can be phrased in a variety of ways, and when students are unsure about particular concepts they tend to avoid using those concepts in their answers. Pay special attention to whether students are avoiding using certain ideas in their answers, as this can be a hidden indicator that they are having difficulty with those concepts.
- **Key words:** Proper use of relevant vocabulary is a necessary step to greater understanding of a topic. Looking for the presence of key words in students' answers can be a quick way of assessing whether they have a basic grasp of the content. Pay attention to how students use key words, as the misuse of certain words or phrases can indicate that students are struggling with the material.

Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

- **Procedural clues:** For answers involving several steps or components, look for words that indicate order or progression. Words and phrases like “before,” “then,” “next,” or “in addition” can indicate that students are grasping the procedural nature of certain skills or are beginning to understand the relationships between different concepts. Of course, check to make sure that the procedures and associations are being described correctly.
- **Justifications:** One way to assess students’ level of competency is to check for justifications in their answers. The use of words and phrases like “because” or “resulting in” show that students are beginning to understand the *why* and *how* of an answer and not just the *what*. Correct justifications for answers indicate that students are forming a more comprehensive understanding of the material.
- **Extrapolation:** A major indicator that students are mastering a content area is that they are able to apply the principles of the content to hypothetical situations. In other words, they not only know the correct answer to the specific question posed, but they can employ that knowledge to answer other similar questions. Look for if-then statements to assess whether students are understanding the concepts underlying the material.

Unrecorded Assessments

The teacher administers an assessment and immediately has students score their own tests. Unrecorded assessments are useful in providing students direct, immediate feedback about their progress. Individual student's scores are not recorded in a grade book, but the data are used to keep track of how well the class as a whole is doing.

Teacher Actions

- Creating and administering a brief assessment to students
- Reviewing the answers to the assessment with the class and asking students to score their own tests
- Recording class scores, but not individual student scores, to keep track of how the class as a whole is doing

Desired Student Responses

- Completing and immediately scoring their own assessments to the best of their abilities

Extra Support

- Creating and administering assessments to groups of students and having each group work together to complete the assessment

Extension

- Including open-ended questions or prompts on the assessment that require students to expand their answers

Student Assessment Scoring Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic: _____

Section 1 score: _____ / _____

Section 2 score: _____ / _____

Section 3 score: _____ / _____

Overall score: _____ / _____

In which areas do you think you did well?

In which areas do you think you need improvement?

Are there any areas or questions that you completely did not understand?

REPRODUCIBLES

Teachers can use the following reproducibles to monitor their implementation of this element. The reproducible titled Tracking Progress Over Time helps teachers set goals related to their proficiency with this element and track their progress toward these goals over the course of a unit, semester, or year. Tracking Teacher Actions and Tracking Student Responses allow observers in classrooms to monitor specific teacher and student behavior related to this element. Teachers themselves can also use the Tracking Student Responses reproducible to document instances of student behaviors during class. The Strategy Reflection Log provides teachers a space to write down their thoughts and reflect on the implementation process for specific strategies related to this element. Finally, this section provides both a student survey and a teacher survey, the results of which provide feedback about teachers' proficiency with this element.

Tracking Progress Over Time

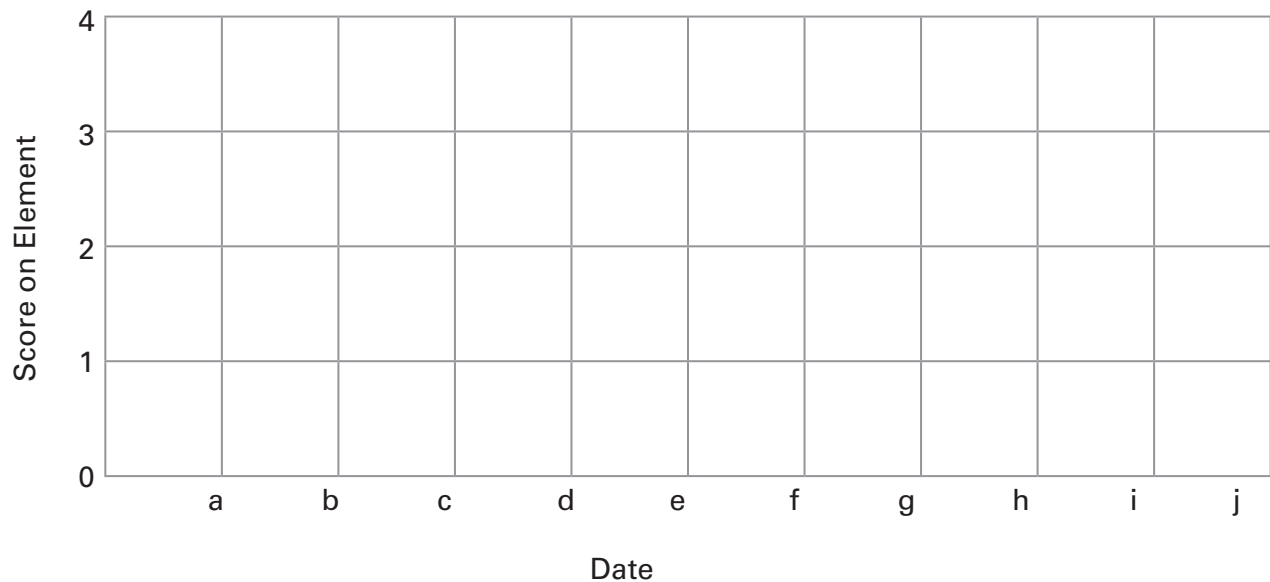
Use this worksheet to set a goal for your use of this element, make a plan for increasing your mastery, and chart your progress toward your goal.

Element: _____

Initial Score: _____

Goal Score: _____ by _____ (date)

Specific things I am going to do to improve: _____



a. _____

f. _____

b. _____

g. _____

c. _____

h. _____

d. _____

i. _____

e. _____

j. _____

Tracking Teacher Actions

During an observation, the observer can use this form to record the teacher's usage of strategies related to the element of informal assessments of the whole class.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Check Strategies You Intend to Use	Strategies	Description of What Was Observed
	Confidence Rating Techniques	
	Voting Techniques	
	Response Boards	
	Unrecorded Assessments	
	Other:	
	Other:	

Tracking Student Responses

A teacher or observer can use this worksheet to record instances of student behavior to inform planning and implementation of strategies associated with informal assessments of the whole class. Any item followed by an asterisk is an example of undesirable behavior related to the element; the teacher should look for a decrease in the number of instances of these items.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Behavior	Number of Instances
Completing informal assessments	
Using a rating system to indicate their confidence with material	
Participating in class votes	
Using response boards or cards to answer questions or respond to prompts	
Completing an assessment of their own work and reporting the score to the teacher	
Other:	
Other:	

Strategy Reflection Log

Use this worksheet to select a strategy, set a goal, and reflect on your use of that strategy.

Element: _____

Strategy: _____

Goal: _____

Date	How did it go?

Student Survey for Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

1. My teacher frequently asks questions of the whole class.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

2. My teacher frequently gives the whole class quizzes and tests that are not for a grade.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

3. My teacher reviews the answers to quizzes and tests.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

4. My teacher frequently gives the whole class feedback about how we are doing.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

5. My teacher frequently asks the class to rate how confident we feel about our understanding of the material.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

6. My teacher adjusts his or her lessons when the class is having trouble understanding a topic.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

Teacher Survey for Informal Assessments of the Whole Class

1. I frequently administer informal assessments of the whole class.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

2. I use informal assessments of the whole class to provide feedback to the class about its progress toward particular learning goals.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

3. I use informal assessments to gauge students' level of confidence with the material.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

4. I use informal assessments of the whole class to obtain a sense of the proportion of students who understand the topic.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

5. I do not record informal assessments of the whole class in the grade book, but I do keep track of how the class as a whole is doing.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

6. I use informal assessments of the whole class to inform the direction of classroom instruction.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know