Pedagogical Documentation: Module 1
Facilitator Guide

Purpose and Scope

Module 1 introduces Pedagogical Documentation, a practice that has been embedded in the world of childcare for many years and is an integral part of the pedagogy of Early Childhood Educators. As educators embrace the pedagogy of play- and inquiry-based learning, the practice of pedagogical documentation has become increasingly important. The implication of this is that early primary educators look at teaching through a constructivist lens, where they negotiate curriculum with students, co-construct the learning environment with students, and document learning throughout the flow of the day to meet the needs and interests of the children.

Pedagogical documentation, also referred to as pedagogical narration, is a way for educators to inquire into the relationship between the learner and the teacher. The practice of pedagogical documentation is moving assessment beyond the attainment of curriculum expectations or outcomes, to a place where educators are using their classrooms as centres of research, observing and studying their learners in ways that transform their teaching practice.

In the practice of pedagogical documentation, the image of the child as a creator of knowledge, rather than a consumer of knowledge, is essential. In this module, educators will have an opportunity to reflect on the beliefs and assumptions that inform their image of the child. In order to observe students with the purpose of changing our practice, researching our theories, and collaboratively building new knowledge, educators must believe that children can teach us something valuable. We must believe that children are capable of complex thinking and that their decisions and actions have thought and purpose behind them.

This module provides an opportunity for educators to critically reflect upon their own practice and share what they are currently doing to document and understand student learning. Many educators are observing, conferencing, surveying, collecting artifacts, and the like, and have a purpose for collecting these kinds of documentation.

Key Elements of Pedagogical Documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTNERS IN LEARNING</th>
<th>VALUE OF PROCESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and students are equal partners in learning and researching.</td>
<td>Pedagogical documentation values the process of learning. Observing students’ process of learning helps reveal students’ ideas, theories, thoughts, and feelings.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD IS CENTRAL</th>
<th>ROLE OF OBSERVATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child is central to the process of learning.</td>
<td>The role of observation is central to the practice of pedagogical documentation.</td>
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This module provides a space for a discussion around current practices in assessment. Through these discussions individual educators will come to understand that pedagogical documentation demands a shift not only in thinking but also in teaching practice. As educators consider the videos, questions, and prompts presented, they will develop a common understanding of the practice of pedagogical documentation. By participating in carefully planned activities and discussions, educators will be able to articulate the benefits of engaging in pedagogical documentation in their own classrooms.

At the end of the module, educators will be challenged to begin observing and listening to a student, or group of students, with the intention of researching and studying an aspect of learning and teaching.

**Specific Goals**

Educators will

- define the terms associated with pedagogical documentation
- understand what we mean by pedagogical documentation
- appreciate the value of pedagogical documentation as a method to improve learning and teaching

**Role of Facilitator**

Facilitators of the module take the stance of provocateur rather than expert. As creators of this professional learning resource, we recognize that everyone involved in teaching has expertise to share. We hope that the module will provide an opportunity for all participants to share their expertise, respectfully question and challenge ideas, use research (both academic and classroom) to support their discussions, and engage in collective knowledge building.

We also hope that educators will test the theories presented, discuss the videos and research presented, and share their thinking with their peers. Thus, we have designed the module so that groups can decide how much time they want to spend on any particular segment. Our intention is to provide a resource that is responsive to the learning needs and interests of the learners. The seat, video, and activity times suggested onscreen are a guide for individuals only. Groups are meant to stop and discuss the content throughout the module. Facilitators should allow time for this, responding to the group’s interests and interactions as well as any sticking points or questions that emerge. Facilitators may wish to preview the module and the Facilitator’s Road Map in this guide to get a sense of how much time might be needed to work through the module at a comfortable pace that allows for deep discussion and reflection.
Facilitators are observer-participants in the module. Ensuring that everyone has a voice at the table requires the facilitator to participate with a non-dominant voice. Careful listening and observation of the group dynamics will allow for thought-provoking questions to emerge and stimulate reflection. The language at the table should be that of inquiry and research:

- I am wondering ...
- I’ve been thinking about ...
- I’m not sure, but ...
- I think I heard this ... am I right?
- What are you thinking and wondering?
- Do we need to ...?
- ... might this be what we’re thinking?

**eJournal**

The eJournal is a modifiable Microsoft Word document of the module content, including the quotes, questions, and activities presented onscreen. These notes allow educators to concentrate on the content without having to take notes. The eJournal also provides space for educators to work on the suggested activities, record their own thoughts and reflections, and jot down ideas. Educators may customize the eJournal and add pages to capture the group’s thinking, record points that emerge in discussion, and so on.
## Module at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical Documentation: Module 1</th>
<th>Videos and Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Segment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Educators</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• define personal learning goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• consider documenting practices and pedagogical documentation terminology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• consider their own beliefs and assumptions that form their image of the child</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• view an online documentation tool</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• consider types of evidence of children’s learning (observation, conversations, product)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• reflect on current assessment practices</td>
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<td>• discuss and develop a shared understanding of pedagogical documentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• discuss and reflect upon their role as “teacher-researcher”</td>
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<td>• consider this work within their own context</td>
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</table>
### Module TOC: Screens 20–28

- create a mind map capturing their thinking

### Benefits of Pedagogical Documentation, On Beginning Pedagogical Documentation

#### Video
- Documentation: Transforming Our Perspective
- Teacher Debbie Halls on Beginning Pedagogical Documentation

#### Recommended Resources
- The Teacher as Researcher by Carlina Rinaldi
- The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom by Hilary Seitz

### Between Modules

**Time: 3 weeks**

### Module TOC: Screen 29

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<th>Educators</th>
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| • observe an individual or group of students to research and study an aspect of learning and teaching  
• revisit and reflect on the articles and videos presented in the module  
• share and connect with other participants to discuss new questions, thinking, and wonderings |

### eJournal
- Between Modules: Some Activities, Check Your Understanding

#### Recommended Resources
- Visible Learners: Promoting Reggio-Inspired Approaches in All Schools by Mara Krechevsky, Ben Mardell, Melissa Rivard, and Daniel Wilson

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As you work through the online segments, use the Facilitator’s Road Map that follows to pause and/or guide the suggested reflections, discussions, and activities.

The articles and videos listed as Recommended Resources are available online. Please note that some articles require purchase. Instructions for finding these resources are included in the Facilitator’s Road Map.

NOTE: The TOC in the online module indicates the time length for each screen. The time for the Accessibility audio file is included in the total time of the last screen in the module. There is also a running time count at the bottom at the TOC. The total time includes the audio file.

If the online module freezes at any point, please select the TOC button, select a different screen, and then select the one you were viewing. Or, close the module, reopen it, open the TOC, and select the screen you were viewing.
Questions and Provocations

We each have our own set of assumptions and beliefs that drive our practice. (Screen 2)

• Have participants reflect on some of the assumptions about teaching practice, student learning, and family participation that we value. Then list or share their ideas. Use the following provocations if needed:
  - We often "teach what we believe children need" instead of or in addition to the prescribed curriculum.
  - What are some of those beliefs that may drive our practice?
  - What is the source of many of our assumptions and beliefs?

“We view children …” (Screen 3)

• As educators reflect on the onscreen quote, have them consider the statement: It applies to teachers as well as learners. Provoke discussion as needed by asking,
  - What might this mean?
  - Can you cite examples and non-examples where this statement might apply in your experience?
  - Can the quote on the screen apply to parents?

• Consider using one of the following provocations to take conversation deeper:
  - How does your image of the child influence your practice?
  - How do your actions and interactions make your image of the child visible to others?
  - What might a classroom look like, sound like, and feel like if educators have the image of the child described in the onscreen quote?
  - What are some beliefs about children (images of the child) that may get in the way of their learning?

Examples might include:
  - Children come to us with limited knowledge and experience. We need to “fill” them up with knowledge.
  - Children are fragile. We don’t want them to take risks in case they get hurt physically or emotionally.
  - The child needs to develop self-regulation and has little self-awareness. We manage and plan to ensure rules are followed.
  - The child is unable to solve problems on his own and is easily frustrated. We create tasks that are not challenging.
  - How can we continue to reframe our image of the child?
  - How can we think differently about our relationship with our students? Our families?
When I use the term “documentation” what comes to your mind? (Screens 4–5)

• Have participants share their responses to the narrator’s question in a popcorn-style, or collectively create a statement:
  Documentation is …

• Spark a discussion about the various ways educators gather information about their students:
  - How are you currently capturing evidence of student learning?
  - How are you documenting learning?
  - What does the phrase “assessment for learning” mean to you?

• If you are working in a group, have participants think-pair-share about the above questions, then discuss their thoughts with their partner or the group. Make a distinction between tools (e.g., rubrics, checklists, anecdotal notes, running records) and methods (e.g., observations, student writing, surveys, products, classroom assessments, conferencing, listening).

Observation, Conversations, Product (Screens 6–7)

• Use the onscreen triangulation of data graphic (i.e., Observation, Conversations, Product) to discuss the following questions:
  - How does the triangulation of data support assessment as and for learning?
  - What sources are you currently using to gather evidence of student learning?
  - Why might educators tend to value assessment of product, rather than spending time on observing and listening to students?
  - What factors are we considering when we make intentional decisions for planning next steps in student learning?
  - How does each part of the triangle inform the other pieces? For instance, how would observing students at work, and discussing their work with them, inform the assessment of the final product?
  - If we focus our assessment in only one part of the triangle, what information are we missing?
  - How might we engage in assessment practices that keep the triangle “balanced”?

• Project or hand out the quote from Growing Success and the assessment pyramids from Rethinking Classroom Assessment (provided on page 15 of this guide) to support the conversation around the paradigm shift that is necessary to engage in Assessment for and as learning. Take time to deconstruct and discuss the assessment pyramids. Consider the relationship between triangulation of data, the quote about assessment for and as learning, and the assessment pyramids.

• To personalize the learning on Assessment for and as learning, you might pose the following prompt: Consider a recent learning experience in your classroom. Reflect on it and, perhaps, record
Online Module

your responses to the following questions: What would the assessment look like if your pedagogy reflected the traditional assessment pyramid? What would the assessment look like if your pedagogy reflected the reconfigured assessment pyramid?

• To deepen the conversation, you might choose to discuss several of the following questions:
  - What kinds of documentation would support assessment as learning?
  - How does sharing documentation with students support assessment as learning? What kinds of documentation might you share with students in order to have them reflect upon their learning process?
  - How does emphasis on assessment as learning support improved student learning?
  - How is the shift in the roles of the teacher and the student captured in this graphic?
  - How does the reconfigured assessment pyramid support the image of the child that was introduced at the beginning of the module?
  - How do these assessment pyramids connect to the messages in the quote from Growing Success?
  - What do you see as the primary point of resistance in your own school experience?
  - What are some of the ways that you have met and overcome these challenges?

The Terminology of Pedagogical Documentation (Screens 8–9)

• Take some time to unpack some of the terms on the screen. Ask: Which ones are you familiar with? Which terms are new to you?

• If you are working in pairs or a group, have participants share descriptions. Ask:
  - Are we all saying the same thing?
  - Do we have a common understanding of the meaning and intention of the terms?
  - How might these terms be connected?

eJournal

• Have participants write a brief description of each term that is familiar to them.

Facilitating Notes

• At the end of the module, educators will revisit their initial descriptions of the terms of pedagogical documentation.
Segment 2

Question 1: What is pedagogical documentation?

Questions and Provocations

“Stand aside for a while . . .” (Screens 10–12)

- Take a few minutes to unpack some of the key words in the two onscreen quotes. Read the quotes aloud, giving special inflection to important words or phrases. Alternatively, highlight the important words or phrases. Discuss why you selected these words and phrases and what this might mean in practice.

- Have educators use the onscreen quotes about pedagogical documentation to deepen understanding of the term. Individuals can read the quotes and record key words and phrases. Pairs or a small group can choose and discuss key words and phrases that “speak” to them. Think about the words that reoccur in the quotes. List and discuss these words.

- Next, have educators read the Ontario Ministry of Education’s definition of pedagogical documentation on page 11 of the eJournal. Ask:
  - What is present in this definition that is missing from the 2004 definition by Rinaldi?
  - What might this look like with older students?

You may also have educators consider the words and phrases in this quote the same way they did with the other two quotes.

- After the above activity, consider or discuss:
  - How has your understanding of pedagogical documentation changed?
  - What are you thinking now?
  - What stance, beliefs, and practices underpin the practice of pedagogical documentation?

Article: Making Learning Visible (Screen 13)

- Pause for educators to read the article by Dr. Carol Anne Wien. Educators may wish to highlight any areas they are wondering about or questioning, as they connect the content to their current practice. Or they may wish to record questions and wonderings as they read. Ask educators to share their questions and wonderings with a partner or group.

- Alternatively, use the statements below (mentioned earlier in the module) to initiate discussion about the article:
  - Teachers and students as equal partners in learning
  - Teachers and students as researchers
  - The value of coming to understand the learning process
  - The role of observation

- For further exploration, educators can view and discuss the Think, Feel, and Act videos listed in Recommended Resources.

Recommended Resources


eJournal

- If you are working individually, record your questions and wonderings about the article in your eJournal for future reflection.
We become keen observers of learning and see ourselves as “kid watchers.” (Screen 14)

- After participants think about the onscreen questions, consider posing the following questions for reflection on their own classrooms:
  - What is it that you are struggling to understand?
  - Which child is a mystery to you?
  - Which child do you want to understand differently? Why?

- Share or elicit that observation beyond the lens of assessment of learning can move us into observation to learn more about our learners. We can observe through the lens of curiosity and/or through the lens of research to find out more about our learners and our teaching. We might be observing to see how a group of children respond to our teaching, in order to adapt and become more responsive to our learners. We may have many reasons for choosing to watch a particular student or students. Ask:
  - As a teacher-researcher, what is it that you want to learn more about? What assumptions might you be making?

Four Elements of Observation (Screens 15—16)

- Share or elicit that as we become keen observers and avoid interrupting students, our observations lead us to questions and uncertainty rather than answers—questions that lead to collaborative investigation.

Video: Karyn Callaghan, The Teacher as Reflective Practitioner (Screens 17–18)

- After watching the video, consider posing the following questions for reflection:
  - What does the artist view as his role in the relationship?
  - How do the questions we ask impact on the thinking of our students? On the questions they ask?
  - How can we make learning and thinking visible in our classrooms?
  - How did the sharing of this documentation impact on your thinking?
  - What are you wondering about your own practice?
  - Where and when might you engage in this kind of interaction within your classroom?
  - Why might you document this encounter?

Classroom Practice Questions (Screen 19)

- Use the following questions to have educators reflect on their own classroom practice as it currently stands:
  - What kinds of questions do you ask?
  - Think about your interactions with individuals or small groups. Do the questions you ask allow your students to make their thinking visible?
  - Are you asking successive questions that take students
Online Module

- Are you asking questions that cause students to question their own thinking and want to inquire more?
- What kinds of learning opportunities do you provide?
- How do you know that the learning opportunity is "just right" for the student?
- How do you adapt tasks for different learners in your class?
- Do your learning opportunities promote conversation and inquiry?
- Are there many possible ways to approach the learning or solve the problem?
- What are your students telling you? Are you co-construction and negotiating learning trajectories or paths with your students?
- How is the image of the child influencing the decisions you make? What you value? What you assume?

• Convey that all of these questions might provide a window, or focus, for pedagogical documentation that educators are wondering about and might want to study through observation and analysis of student evidence. Suggest educators jot down ideas to come back to at the end of the module.

will begin to understand that they don’t have to respond “correctly” to questions).

Facilitating Notes

• Facilitators might decide to spend time on one of the classroom practice questions that particularly interests the group and return to others at a later date.
• As a result of these classroom practice questions, educators may already be beginning to articulate changes in thinking (e.g., I used to think _______ and now I am beginning to think ________). These could be recorded on a chart for further investigation as teams delve into pedagogical documentation.
## Segment 3

### Question 2: Why engage in pedagogical documentation?

#### Questions and Provocations

**Video: Documentation: Transforming Our Perspective (Screens 20–22)**

- Educators may want to debrief and discuss the video, using questions or wonderings beyond those onscreen:
  - How can documentation benefit students and teachers as co-learners?
  - How might pedagogical documentation transform a parent’s image of their child?
  - How might pedagogical documentation enable creating a community of learners—parents, educators, and students— who all have equal ownership of the learning?
  - Describe how the classroom environment can provide opportunities for students to make their thinking visible. What would such an environment look like, sound like, and feel like from a student’s perspective? From an educator’s perspective?

**Studying Documentation in Concert with Others (Screen 23)**

- Facilitators may want to discuss why pedagogical documentation is studied in concert with others. Share the following:
  - We all bring our own bias and assumptions to the table and look at learning through our own point of view. Sometimes this narrows our focus and prevents us from asking different questions.
  - By sharing our documentation with others, we bring multiple perspectives to the table, get different points of view, and begin to see learning and teaching in a different way.
  - This is what transforms our practice. We often find that others see things we had not seen or view a child’s learning, or learning encounter, quite differently than we do as participant-observers in our own classrooms.

**Reflecting on Our Practice (Screen 24)**

- As educators dig into the onscreen questions, convey that engaging in this work is a learning process. Share the following points:
  - Some educators may need to practice observation, and setting aside time to observe can be challenging.
  - It is important to recognize that this process is messy and the journey is iterative.
  - We may think we have learned something through our observations, only to find out that we have more questions than answers and we need to collect more evidence to better understand our learner or our practice.

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Module TOC: Screens 20–28

**Facilitating Notes**

- You may want to introduce the video as an example of pedagogical documentation from an early childhood perspective, telling participants that it contains many references to how pedagogical documentation benefits older students and gives voice to students as they engage in self-assessment and understanding themselves as learners.

**Recommended Resources**

- The Teacher as Researcher by Carlina Rinaldi, Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange, 10(2), Spring 2003, 1–4.
Online Module

- With participants, brainstorm a variety of foci for observation, besides attainment of curriculum expectations or outcomes. Use provocations as needed:
  - If we are trying to remove our assessment lens and broaden our thinking to include other lenses, what might those be?
  - We have many theories about learning, child development, environment, learning styles, and social relationships that we could use as we observe students.
  - If we think of particular students within our own classrooms, we may choose to observe them to see if we can understand how they problem-solve or negotiate meaning.

Create a Mind Map (Screens 25–26)

- Provide the following suggestions as needed:
  - As you begin to brainstorm your mind map, recall the terms introduced at the beginning of the module: assessment for learning, teacher as researcher, responsive pedagogy, inquiry, knowing the learner, reflective practice, and pedagogy.
  - Think about how the practice of pedagogical documentation might impact on your teaching, the relationship between you and your learners, the colleagues you work with, and the collaboration with family and community.

Video: Teacher Debbie Halls on Beginning Pedagogical Documentation (Screens 27–28)

- Debbie Halls speaks about how she began her documentation journey by displaying photos that invited children to recount or retell a learning experience. Have the group reflect upon the experience she shares and take the opportunity to discuss one or more of the following questions:
  - When did Debbie’s documentation practice become “pedagogical documentation”?
  - How important are the “others” who participate in studying the documentation? How do perspectives of the child, parents, and colleagues help to “open the lenses” for looking at pedagogical documentation?
  - How is inquiry and play-based learning supported by the practice of pedagogical documentation?
  - How does Debbie demonstrate the stance of teacher-researcher?
  - How does she view her students as learners?
  - What are you wondering about after viewing this video?

Facilitators might record and keep a copy of the questions educators still wonder about to revisit a later date.

- Educators might like to revisit the mind map to add some of the benefits of pedagogical documentation (e.g., consider educator practice, student learning, parent engagement, and understanding of learning).

- Participants can read the article The Power of Documentation by Hilary Seitz to support this discussion and take it further.

Recommended Resources

- The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom by Hilary Seitz, Young Children, March 2008, National Association for the Education of Young Children (go to the NAEYC website in the link above ⟶ Publications ⟶ Young Children ⟶ Search for Articles and Authors ⟶ article title or author name)
Activities (Screen 29)

- As educators consider the activities onscreen, you may wish to summarize, elicit, or list the following as best practices of pedagogical documentation:
  - Observe without judgement.
  - Record only what the child is saying and doing.
  - In group work, focus on one child only.

- Convey the need to look over our observations and remove any assumptions, interpretations, and evaluative language. Share the following example of an assumption:
  - “He was listening carefully…” Was he? We don’t know that. That is an assumption. A description would be: “His eyes were focused on the teacher. He nodded his head and smiled during a humourous part of the story.”

- As educators begin observing their chosen student or group, have them share description notes with a colleague. Colleagues can consider: Have you removed any assumptions, judgements, or interpretations? Is this pure description?

- Have participants look back at their initial descriptions of the pedagogical terms in their eJournal. Ask: Has your understanding of the terms shifted? Grown? Changed? Which terms do you need to learn more about? Individuals can reflect on these questions in the eJournal. Pairs or small groups may wish to discuss them.

- Encourage educators to revisit the videos and research articles presented in this module and to connect and share their thoughts with each other before beginning work on the next module.

- Between modules, educators may wish to record new questions, thinking, and wonderings in a journal to critically reflect on their process of beginning pedagogical documentation.

- Between modules, facilitators are encouraged to check in with participants to determine any areas that may be benefit from further exploration and/or discussion before beginning the next module.

Option

- Interested educators may want to conduct a book study of Visible Learners: Promoting Reggio-Inspired Approaches in All Schools by Mara Krechevsky, Ben Mardell, Melissa Rivard, and Daniel Wilson, 2013, Jossey-Bass.

eJournal

- Participants may wish to complete Check Your Understanding as a self-check of the module’s content.
Using Assessment to Support Student Learning

Explore the relationship between the quote about using assessment and the assessment pyramids shown below.

“The use of assessment to improve student learning and to help students become independent learners requires teachers and students to acknowledge and enact a fundamental shift in how they perceive their roles in the learning process. In a traditional assessment paradigm, the teacher is perceived as the active agent in the process, determining goals and criteria for successful achievement, delivering instruction, and evaluating student achievement at the end of a period of learning. The use of assessment for the purpose of improving learning and helping students become independent learners requires a culture in which student and teacher learn together in a collaborative relationship, each playing an active role in setting learning goals, developing success criteria, giving and receiving feedback, monitoring progress, and adjusting learning strategies. The teacher acts as a ‘lead learner,’ providing support while gradually releasing more and more responsibility to the student, as the student develops the knowledge and skills needed to become an independent learner.

The vast body of literature on assessment uses a variety of terms to describe the purposes of assessment, the nature of assessment for different purposes, and the uses of information gathered through assessment. In the present document, the term assessment is used to mean a set of actions undertaken by the teacher and student to gather information about student learning.”