



THE BRAIN ACADEME'S

Teach to the Brain and the Heart Will Follow™

Personal & Professional Learning Series

A Presence of Safety - Volume 1, Issue 3 Good Assessment is Reflecting (not Testing)

By Mary C. and Jon D. Appleget

A Presence of Safety and the Brain *Research and Reflection*

Welcome to issue #3, and thank you for your continued support and interest in *Teach to the Brain and the Heart Will Follow, Personal and Professional Learning Series™*. We're grateful for all of your kind and encouraging words. You are the forward motion we need to effectively apply and master *brain responsive* strategies that grow genius minds. In this issue you will learn about the reflective capacity of the mind and the importance of integrating strategies that encourage and focus on strengths. In addition, you will receive specific strategies that require the learners to reflect and to assess their own efforts and learning.

The reflective faculty of the mind engages memory and retention. David Sousa teaches us in his book, *How the Brain Learns*, "it takes less than 50 milliseconds to retrieve an item from working memory. Retrieving an item from long-term memory, however, can be complicated and comparatively time-consuming."

As we engage the reflective faculty of the mind, we're helping the learner retrieve information from both *working memory* and the *long-term* memory sites. Sousa states, "Whenever we retrieve something from long term storage into working memory, we *relearn* it." Therefore, engaging the reflective faculty of the mind during the learning process will force the student to *relearn* the information. The brain retrieves information from long term storage sites using one or both of two methods, *recognition* and *recall*.

Recognition sees an outside stimuli that it "recognizes" or *matches* to information already stored. For example, multiple choice exams offer the brain the knowledge that at

least one of the answers is correct. Assuming the learner has already stored that information, the retrieval will be fast and easy. This explains why most learners prefer to see multiple choice questions on tests as opposed to essay or short answer.

Recall is more time consuming as the brain must utilize cues or hints that are sent to long term memory, followed by the brain scanning or searching long term memory for a match, then decoding it back into working memory and formulating an answer. (*relearning*)

When the brain engages in self-reflection and is given the chance to revise any work or product, then it senses safety and freedom knowing that the pressure to perfect the final outcome has lessened while the *relearning* is taking place. When the learner stops to evaluate and revise, their brain is engaged with the content, as well as, how it is being presented and how it relates to their previous knowledge. Thus, the *transfer* begins and the learning *process* is engaged.

Retrieval in the learning process is complicated in part because there are factors that impact the process both positively and negatively. Consider the following questions regarding the learner: Were the *cues* adequate and appropriate? What was the *mood* of the learner at the time? What was the *context* of the moment of retrieval? Was it similar to that of the *moment of learning*? What *system of storage* did the learner use when they first engaged with the information? How can we engage the student or learner in the reflective process so that they produce better results?

These questions help the mentor or facilitator to evaluate the way they are presenting information to the students.

Brain Academe's
Vision
Teach to the Brain
and the Heart Will
Follow™

Mission
By leveraging the
power of the
worldwide web,
the Brain
Academe™ will
reach the hearts
and minds of
teachers, parents,
coaches and
leaders interested
in strategies that
grow genius
brains.

RUBRIC FOR THE THREE Cs

COMPLETE, CORRECT AND COMPREHENSIVE

	Expert Learner	Proficient Learner	Developing Learner	Beginning Learner
Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> followed timeline sequence the entire time <input type="checkbox"/> met deadlines all the time <input type="checkbox"/> tasks reflect awesome pride <input type="checkbox"/> all ____ parts of the plan complete	<input type="checkbox"/> followed timeline sequence most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> met deadlines most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> tasks reflect great pride <input type="checkbox"/> ____ parts of the plan complete	<input type="checkbox"/> followed timeline sequence some of the time. <input type="checkbox"/> met deadlines some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> tasks reflect adequate pride <input type="checkbox"/> ____ parts of the plan complete	<input type="checkbox"/> follow timeline sequence a little. <input type="checkbox"/> met deadlines a little <input type="checkbox"/> tasks reflect some pride <input type="checkbox"/> ____ parts of the plan complete
Correct	<input type="checkbox"/> all ____ parts of the plan are correct <input type="checkbox"/> directions were followed the entire time <input type="checkbox"/> info recorded in journal with 0-2 errors <input type="checkbox"/> rechecking for accuracy is obviously evident	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ parts of the plan are correct <input type="checkbox"/> directions were followed most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> info recorded in journal with 3-5 errors <input type="checkbox"/> rechecking for accuracy is evident	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ parts of the plan are correct <input type="checkbox"/> directions were followed some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> info recorded in journal with 6-8 errors <input type="checkbox"/> rechecking for accuracy is somewhat evident	<input type="checkbox"/> ____ parts of the plan are correct <input type="checkbox"/> directions were followed a little <input type="checkbox"/> info recorded in journal with 9 or more errors <input type="checkbox"/> rechecking for accuracy is a little evident
Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/> evidence much time was spent -the plan was thoroughly implemented <input type="checkbox"/> success work demonstrates a clear understanding of the plan <input type="checkbox"/> reflection of plan and goals extensively detailed	<input type="checkbox"/> evidence a lot of time was spent implementing the plan <input type="checkbox"/> success work demonstrates a lot of understanding of the plan <input type="checkbox"/> reflection of plan and goals clearly detailed	<input type="checkbox"/> evidence some time was spent implementing the plan <input type="checkbox"/> success work demonstrates some understanding of the plan <input type="checkbox"/> reflection of plan and goals somewhat detailed	<input type="checkbox"/> evidence little time was spent implementing the plan <input type="checkbox"/> success work demonstrates little understanding of the plan <input type="checkbox"/> reflection of plan and goals has little details. Some cases little plans, little goals

This issue recommends using “The Three Cs” as coined by Susan Kovalik, in her book, *Integrated Thematic Instruction*. Whether it’s daily work, success assignments or a project with a due date, teach the learners to stop and consider the three Cs:

- 1) **Complete**-Did I follow all of the directions? Are there any steps left incomplete?
- 2) **Correct**- Is the information accurate & right?
- 3) **Comprehensive**- Do I know how or why this project or assignment is relevant to me?

For example, with a simple daily math assignment the *Three Cs* might

help a learner realize they’d forgotten a problem or get them to double check their accuracy and simply polish the end result. This strategy *empowers*; allows one to act on their own behalf. In this case with self-assessment and reflection. This strategy allows the learners themselves, to reflect and adjust the work before any other individual decides upon the grade. A powerful way for students to improve within a *presence of safety*.

The second way to use the Three Cs is to apply them to larger assignments or projects as a way to maintain progress and to improve the quality of work.

A Rubric for the Three Cs has been provided to let you start applying the reflective process today!

The rubric provides a template which you can manipulate to suit your own specific parameters. The rubric can be used as a way to check on progress while working on a long term project and as a student’s self-assessment prior to handing in work.

Remember, students *not* already in a habit of reflecting and revising will need to see the tools in use by the teacher or trainer multiple times before they will adopt the practice themselves.

Neither comprehension nor learning can take place in an atmosphere of anxiety.

-Rose Kennedy

When learning is centered around the memorization of facts followed by quizzes and tests and the frequent repetition of that process, long-term memory and recall are *not* effectively or readily engaged and available. Long-term memory is enhanced by the act of *reflection*. The brain is constantly integrating its cognitive and emotional faculties with its reflective sense of what has happened in the past. It is crucial that the learning brain be encouraged to utilize such reflective techniques as accuracy checks, evaluation of finished parts, rewrites, edits and rough drafts so as to reinforce desired information and to discard and move on from the rest.

When the Three Cs are used to generate a grade at the end of a project or larger assignment, we call that summative assessment. Assessment meant to address the *summation of learning*. When used as a quick check of a daily assignments or to examine progress of a larger project we say it is part of formative assessment. Formative assessment occurs during the learning process. It is *for* learning and *for* assessing whether or not the content is being learned, applied and mastered.

“The important thing to take away from the three Cs is the emphasis on the positive and powerful effect that reflection has on increasing achievement.”

Jon Appeget, CEO-Teach to the Brain™

How Do You See Yourself?

An effective way to get learners thinking and to gain valuable information regarding their perceptions is to utilize an assessment tool which lets them assess their own strengths. We know that top achievers focus on their strengths, build on those strengths and tend to have an optimistic view of challenges that come their way. (See Appendix 1.1 for handout.)

- Decide which side of the checklist fits you the best.
- Identifying with 8-10 on the left side shows that you are a *positive, growing learner*.
- Identifying with 5-7 on the left side shows that you are a *growing learner some of the time*, yet there is room for improvement of your perception of yourself as a learner.
- Identifying with 2-4 on the left side shows that you are *growing slow as a learner* and need to change your perception of who you are as a learner.

How Do You See Yourself?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use time wisely | <input type="checkbox"/> Often waste time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Gives up easily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't feel capable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates well | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finish what I start | <input type="checkbox"/> Leave tasks incomplete |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> Low expectations for self |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Lazy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Often say 'I can' | <input type="checkbox"/> Often say 'I can't' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Pessimistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plan and set goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Accepts whatever |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to do better | <input type="checkbox"/> Content to just get by |

The brain responds to positive messages, focused goals of achievement and imagination that sees success by creating and generating feel good chemicals that are the foundation for hope and achievement. Teachers, parents, coaches and leaders can guide learners through the reflective process focusing on talents and strengths.

WINStreak™ App Helps Your Brain Chemistry

We suggest the following free app: WinStreak™: A Simple tool to focus on the “WINS” of the day, developed by Dan Sullivan and his team at www.StrategicCoach.com.

This app allows you to record, regardless of what happened, your biggest ‘wins’ of the day. In addition, it allows you to plan and record what your biggest wins will be for tomorrow. This will keep you focused on your intentions and goals for the future, again laying the foundation needed for success.

Recognizing and celebrating your achievements, or wins, along the way establishes the foundation of hope, maximizes your productivity and kick-starts your motivation to succeed.

The beauty of these three reflective strategies: *The Three Cs, How Do You See Yourself?* and the *WINStreak App* is that while they all create a presence of safety, they also allow the learners to grow in the idea that the learners, themselves, are in control and understand that perception is a framework of mind that can change and grow. It's empowering as it lets one accurately and comfortably assess themselves.

“You're either growing or you're dying”

- T. Harv Eker

“I think I'll be growing...”

- Mary Appeget

Bibliography

1. Kovalik S. and Olson, K., ITI: The Model, Integrated Thematic Instruction, Susan Kovalik and Associates, 1994.
2. Sousa, David A., How the Brain Learns, Third Edition, Corwin Press A sage Publication Company, Thousand Oaks, California, 2006, pgs. 106-107.
3. Sullivan, Dan, WINStreak™ App by The Strategic Coach™ at www.StrategicCoach.com. App also available for free at the App Store.

How Do You See Yourself?

Use this scale to assess your strengths and weaknesses. Mark on each line to indicate where you think you realistically stand on each characteristic or behavior.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------------|
| 1. use time wisely | _____ | _____ | often waste time |
| 2. persistent | _____ | _____ | give up easily |
| 3. self-confident | _____ | _____ | don't feel capable |
| 4. communicate well | _____ | _____ | have trouble communicating |
| 5. finish what I start | _____ | _____ | leave tasks incomplete |
| 6. creative thinker | _____ | _____ | not creative |
| 7. always take risks | _____ | _____ | never take risks |
| 8. ambitious | _____ | _____ | low expectations for self |
| 9. competitive | _____ | _____ | non-competitive |
| 10. get started easily | _____ | _____ | always procrastinating |
| 11. hard worker | _____ | _____ | do what I need to get by |
| 12. often say, "I can" | _____ | _____ | often say "I can't" |
| 13. set own goals | _____ | _____ | do what others want |
| 14. optimistic | _____ | _____ | pessimistic |
| 15. realistic | _____ | _____ | idealistic |
| 16. plan things out ahead of time | _____ | _____ | accept whatever happens |
| 17. responsible for own actions | _____ | _____ | blame problems on others |
| 18. want to do better | _____ | _____ | content to just get by |
| 19. use skills & talents | _____ | _____ | do not use of abilities |
| 20. think about & plan for future | _____ | _____ | concerned only about today |