How does student involvement in assessment improve learning?

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The students’ role is to strive to understand what success looks like, to use feedback from each assessment to discover where they are now in relation to where they want to be, and to determine how to do better the next time. As students become increasingly proficient, they learn to generate their own descriptive feedback and set goals for what comes next on their journey.

**Rick Stiggins, Assessment Through the Student’s Eyes**

Hearing “Nice Job!” or “Needs work!” doesn’t always cut it. Evaluative feedback like this can decrease motivation to learn, because the kids don’t know what they did wrong or right. Descriptive feedback, however, explains exactly what was done well and what still could be improved. It helps develop ownership within the student; engages the learner; and causes the student to reflect on learning and focus on future changes.

When the students start looking to the future, they start setting their own learning goals. The students know exactly what they are working towards, because they have been involved in all steps. Achieving goals is more likely to happen, because the students know and helped set the expectations. This involvement provides differentiation, because the students work towards a goal that supports their specific learning need.

When students are more involved in the classroom assessment process, they are more engaged and motivated, and they learn more.

**Anne Davies, Ahead of the Curve**

**The Process**

**Why do it?**
- To involve students in the assessment process.
- To promote ownership in the learning process.
- To motivate learners.

**What will we do?**
- Collect writing data from earlier in the year.
- Create kid friendly “I CAN” statements that correlate with the Virginia writing standards.
- Show the kids exemplars and let them critique. *Samples from various stages give the kids a clear definition of goal expectations*
- Look at the kids’ samples together. “What do you notice?”
- Co-construct learning goal(s) with the kids related to the “I CAN” statements.
- Kids will write.
- Go through “I CAN” statements checklist.
- Discuss whether or not the goal has been met or still needs some work: “Why do you think that?”
- Set a new goal or adjust a previous goal.

**What we hope to find?**
- Kids will recognize where they are and where they are going and be able to articulate WHY.
- Kids will reflect on the learning process.
- Kids will see how involvement in assessing helps set goals.
- If the kids can articulate and reflect on what they are doing and why, then we hope the students will show signs of improvement in writing.

**As the kids practice this process, we expect them to:**
- Learn to talk about and reflect on their work.
- Use the “I CAN” language independently.
- Recognize characteristics of quality work.
- Gain knowledge of how to “close the gap” between where they are and where they are going.
- Assess and set personal goals.
- Provide feedback—“Articulate what they have learned and what they still need to work on.” Davies