

Unpacking the Critical Attributes of Student Growth through Kristin's Story (ELA)

This story is excerpted from [Culturally Responsive Formative Assessment: ELA and Math Examples](#), one of the resources provided on Slide #23 of [SGG Module 6: Formative and Summative Assessment](#). Kristin's story is also presented in video format as two SGG conversations embedded in SGG Module 6 (Formative and Summative Assessment) on slides #21-22: [Student Growth Goal Conversation #1 Before the Unit](#); and [Student Growth Goal Conversation #2 After the Unit](#).

Introduction

In "Understanding Kristin's Resistance," ELA teacher Maja Wilson uses [culturally responsive formative assessment](#) to design new learning experiences for all students after a conversation with Kristin.

The chart below demonstrates how this story could meet all the critical attributes of the revised student growth goal process and: knowledge of students; an essential standard; cognitive and emotional engagement; formative and summative assessment; student engagement in assessment; and feedback from students on their experience of the learning. Detailed descriptions of these critical attributes can be found in the revised [Student Growth Goal Rubrics](#).

NOTE: This example was chosen to illustrate the possibilities embedded in the revised [Student Growth Goal Rubrics](#). For example, the forms of assessment involved in this story are rigorous and fit the student growth goal, but the summative assessment does not involve scores of any kind. This is based on an expanded definition of summative assessment included in [SGG Module 6: Formative and Summative Assessment](#) on slide #9. Not all teachers need to conceive of summative assessment in this way, but it is possible in the revised student growth goal process.

Student Growth Goal	Students will grow in their ability to understand and articulate their intentions for their writing – and use their intentions to evaluate the feedback they receive from their peers and the teacher.
Knowledge of Students	The student growth goal takes shape when Maja gets to know Kristin's identity as a writer, her relationship with writing, and some of the experiences that contributed to them. Maja uses this knowledge of Kristin to reflect on other students throughout the years who have resisted feedback to their writing.
Essential Standard	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11.12.5)



Emotional and Cognitive Engagement

Emotional Engagement: Kristin’s experiences with feedback have created a negative emotional reaction to revision. She associates feedback with losing control over something she loves (writing). As a result, she doesn’t engage in feedback or revision at all. Maja designs new learning experiences to put students in control of rejecting or accepting feedback based on how the feedback helps them accomplish their own intentions. This acknowledges students’ emotional reactions and offers them a way to engage in the process by putting them in control.

Cognitive Engagement: Emotional and cognitive engagement are connected. Putting Kristin (and all students) in control of what they incorporate feedback allows them to feel more ownership over their writing and the revision process. This emotional engagement paves the way for increased cognitive engagement. The new way of considering feedback is a cognitively engaging decision-making process rather than a mindless exercise in following someone else’s suggestions or corrections (including the teacher’s!).

<p>Formative and Summative Assessment</p>	<p>Formative Assessment: Formative assessment was built into Maja’s writing classroom even before her conversation with Kristin: she gives students multiple chances to revise based on feedback from herself and peers. She restructures these opportunities in the new learning activities to put more focus on writers’ intentions. For example, instead of offering written feedback, she gives her own feedback conversationally after hearing the students talk about their intentions.</p> <p>Culturally Responsive Formative Assessment: Culturally responsive formative assessment seeks to understand the experiential basis of learning, including the relationships that students have formed with the skill. When Kristin reveals she doesn’t listen to feedback or revise, Maja asks questions to understand Kristin’s relationship with writing, revision, and feedback. This allows her to she gain insight about an important experience that has left Kristin leery of feedback and revision. Maja realizes that the same dynamic may affect many writers. As a result, she changes the way she engages students in the parts of the writing process that involve feedback and revision.</p> <p>Summative Assessment: Maja’s summative assessment is not the grade that students earn on their final drafts. That’s because the growth goal Maja has written involves a decision-making process: using your intentions as a writer to reject or accept feedback. To summatively assess this decision-making process, Maja gathers evidence of the decisions students are making and their rationales for it. This evidence includes draft notes (like Craig’s) in which students describe a piece of feedback they rejected and use their intentions to explain why. It also includes Maja’s observations of the discussions that happen during peer revision along with evidence she gathers from her conversations with writers about their early drafts. Maja presents this qualitative evidence to her principal as she describes how students have grown in their ability to make decisions about using or rejecting feedback.</p> <p>This might not sound like a conventional definition of summative assessment, but the student growth goal process defines summative assessment as <i>summing up</i> – or <i>describing</i> – the learning. While summative assessments are typically associated with end-of-unit tests, projects, or essays, summative assessment doesn’t need to involve scores at all. In fact, a score is a limited, uni-dimensional description of student learning. Summative assessment can also refer to: descriptions of students’ learning based on artifacts, conversations, reflections, and observations over time. By this definition, Maja’s description of her students’ growth in their decision-making process as they consider feedback (and the evidence she presents) qualifies as summative assessment.</p>
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<p>Student Engagement in Assessment</p>	<p>1. Students understand the learning goal and may have been involved in determining the criteria to be used for evaluating it.</p> <p>Kristin’s initial conversation with Maja was never framed by the phrase “learning goal,” but Kristin’s willingness to explain why she hates feedback and revision is absolutely essential to the creation of the student growth goal and the four new learning experiences that Maja designs. These four learning experiences are designed to help students understand the learning goal: that they will use their intentions as writers to evaluate the feedback they receive on their writing.</p> <p>Of course, to use their intentions to evaluate feedback, students need to <i>have</i> their own intentions rather than just trying to satisfy the assignment. Every time Maja talks with students about their early drafts, she asks them questions about their intentions. They aren’t used to being asked this; they’re used to thinking about whether they are following the requirements. At this point, Maja is able to assure them that they won’t be penalized for pursuing their intentions, and she’s able to ask questions that help bring their own interests and curiosities related to the assignment to the forefront. In this way, she ensures that each student has and understands their own intentions – and can later use them to evaluate feedback they receive.</p> <p>2. Students have an opportunity to assess their own work and/or that of peers using these criteria.</p> <p>The reflective draft note asks students to describe their decision-making process for rejecting or accepting feedback. In this way, they are assessing their own performance on the growth goal. While they are never asked to “score” or otherwise quantify their performance, students’ reflections are part of the descriptive and narrative assessments that fit so well in a writing class. (Of course, all students in all subjects benefit from descriptive and narrative assessments. But writing itself is both descriptive and narrative, so it’s particularly fitting that writing assessment should be narrative and descriptive as well!)</p> <p>3. Students monitor their process on the learning goal.</p> <p>“Monitoring progress” is often interpreted to mean that students track their scores on a proficiency scale. While this is a valid interpretation, a different interpretation involves reflection rather than scores. So, students in Maja’s class do not chart decision-making scores, but they do reflect at multiple points on their decision-making process: first through conversations with Maja when they discuss their intentions, and lastly through their draft notes when they use their intentions to explain why they rejected or accepted feedback. This approach to “monitoring progress” is not only equally valid, but also fitting for a writing class.</p>
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<p>Feedback from Student on their Experience of the Learning</p>	<p>Feedback from students on their experience of the learning can be collected and acted on at any time. If collected at the end of a lesson, unit, or class, the teacher cannot act on it until the following lesson, unit, or class. If the feedback is collected throughout the learning experiences, the teacher can make adjustments that affect the learning experience.</p> <p>In Kristin’s story, feedback on student experience occurs throughout the learning. Therefore, Maja can use it to shape the learning experience as it unfolds. At the beginning of the unit, Kristin shares her experience of feedback and revision. As a result, Maja creates a new lesson, changes peer revision protocols, and shifts from written feedback on drafts to conversations. These conversations allow her to collect more feedback about students’ experiences as she asks students about their intentions and what they need to fully invest their intentions in their writing. This allows her to personalize adjustments to the learning experiences; in some cases, she changes the assignment itself for individual students. This approach requires curricular and instructional flexibility – not just when it comes to Maja’s personal willingness to make changes, but also when it comes to administrative support for teachers to make such changes if they benefit students.</p>
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Note: Some of Maja’s practices qualify as evidence for multiple critical attributes. For example, the conversation in which Kristin describes her relationship with feedback and revision is mentioned as evidence of every critical attribute except for *essential standard*. While this won’t happen for every teacher, it isn’t a problem if it makes sense. In other words, Maja wouldn’t need “find something else” for the critical attribute of *formative and summative assessment* simply because she’d already offered it as evidence that she’d fulfilled the requirements for *knowledge of students*.