

Routes to literacy – Writing for information Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Routes for Learning (RfL) routemap

Summary statement
Learners are interested in sensory activities including those with tactile and visual elements. They may enjoy the sensations of mark-making but do not necessarily guide their marks visually or focus on the 'product' of their actions (Assessment activities and teaching strategies for items in this column can be found in the <i>Routes for Learning</i> materials.)

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Next steps A

Summary statement
Learners' visual attention is now directed towards what they are doing (hand-eye coordination). They show some interest in the final 'product' which consists mostly of lines and/or 'dots' overlaying each other.

Respond (by looking at/acknowledging their 'drawing') when an adult talks about what they have done	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
During messy play, in a sand tray or when on the beach, draw the learner's attention to marks they are making/prints they have made in the sand.	The learner looks at the marks they have made with some degree of interest (<i>e.g. wipes painty fingers on paper and notices the mark they have made by pointing to, looking at or repeating mark-making when an adult draws their attention to it</i>).

Persist in mark-making to produce a result (which appears random)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide a wide range of opportunities to make marks in different media, <i>e.g. wet sand, foam or paint on paper or glass</i> . Use paint of differing consistencies and paper of differing colours. Make brushes, sponges, rollers, crayons, etc. available to them.	The learner independently makes repeated dabbing, sweeping or scrubbing movements to produce dots, lines and/or areas of colour before losing interest.

Touch a picture or symbol to obtain a visual or auditory reward on a pc or a tablet computer (can focus on picture as a 'target' but may not distinguish representation)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
On a pc with a touchscreen or on a touch-sensitive tablet computer, choose a piece of software (<i>e.g. Peeping Musicians</i>) which presents a target item in random positions on the screen and animates when the learner touches the target with some degree of accuracy.	The learner is able to visually locate a target in a specific position on the screen and touch it to activate the programme and obtain a reward.

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Experiment with mark-making using body parts (e.g. hands and feet)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide a wide range of opportunities to make marks in different media, <i>e.g. wet sand, foam or paint on paper or glass with paint of differing consistencies and paper of differing colours</i> . In sand tray or on beach, make footprints in the sand.	The learner uses several strategies to make marks, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses both hands or arms • uses at least two distinct parts/areas of hand or arm • uses at least two distinct movements of same body part.

Grasp items and begin to use fingers to make marks, e.g. in wet sand, foam, etc., progressing to scribbling on paper	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Make a range of ‘tools’ available that can be used to make marks, <i>e.g. chubby crayons, thick pencils, rollers, sponges, brushes, printing stamps, potatoes, etc.</i> Model using them while the learner is watching.	The learner makes marks using a finger as a tool. The learner makes marks, including a few using a tool that they hold.

‘Place’ scribble in defined space (within boundaries of page or particular area of paper) demonstrating increasing visual control	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with a range of differing ‘canvas’ sizes (<i>e.g. roll of wallpaper, or paper of A2, A3, A4 size</i>).	The learner makes marks within the paper boundaries in a specific area or in specific areas of the canvas – as though placed there deliberately.

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Next steps B

Summary statement
The learner approaches mark-making with intent to represent an object or communicate a simple idea. Shapes (<i>e.g. ovals or circles</i>) begin to appear in their drawings. They can use a familiar symbol to record a simple response.

Share their 'drawing' in interactions with an adult	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Ask the learner to show you their drawing.	The learner can pick out their own drawing from among drawings by several others (<i>e.g. when just completed and grouped with others, or later when they are displayed together</i>).
Take the drawing and draw their attention to different aspects of it.	The learner looks at the drawing and different elements within it as an adult points to them. The learner makes a response of some kind in an interaction around the drawing, <i>e.g. vocalises, points or smiles appropriately</i> .

Select a single symbol or picture to describe something that has just happened	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
In a range of activities across the curriculum, provide the learner with an array of three or four symbols by which they can record a response, <i>e.g. provide symbols in music for (very different) instruments they will (see)/hear being played</i> .	The learner chooses appropriate symbol. The learner chooses symbol for instrument they have just heard.

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Scribble to produce their own ‘drawing’ and begin to attribute meaning to it	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Provide the learner with a range of materials for drawing. Listen to their talk as they draw.</p> <p>Comment on what they are doing and encourage them to speak about their work as they do it and after they have finished.</p>	<p>The learner makes a comment of some kind in the context of drawing. For example, they comment about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their actions as they draw • the tools or techniques they use • the marks they have produced • the colours they have chosen • what the drawing, or an element of the drawing, represents for them.
Teaching strategies (to move the learner to this step)	
<p>Try to comment positively and specifically, e.g. <i>‘I like the way you’ve drawn this long line here. Do you like it?’</i>, rather than just <i>‘That’s a good drawing’</i>.</p>	

Select a picture or symbol (from two or more) to convey a message in speaking symbol software on pc or a tablet computer	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>In a range of activities across the curriculum, make an array of relevant pictures or symbols available to the learner to enable them to record a response relevant to the activity.</p> <p>For example, for Knowledge and Understanding of the World, learners might record their ‘favourite places in school’ (e.g. <i>swings, soft-play room, pool, library, fish tank, etc.</i>) by selecting a picture or symbol to place on a chart next to their photo (and name).</p>	<p>The learner looks at symbols and selects one to record their response – as appropriate to the context.</p>
Teaching strategies (to move the learner to this step)	
<p>Symbols may be printed out with Boardmaker or Matrix Maker Plus software and used as an overlay in a communication device such as Go-Talk or cut up to make individual symbol cards. These can also be collected in a PECS book. Alternatively they may access symbols through software on a pc or a tablet computer.</p>	

Routes to literacy – Writing for information
Assessment activities/things to try

Use their preferred hand more consistently when mark-making, sometimes using an (adapted) instrument	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Observe the way in which the learner approaches mark-making.</p> <p>Provide the learner with chunky crayons, thick pens or pencils with handwriting grips.</p>	<p>The learner usually picks up items with a particular (dominant) hand, or transfers them to it. The learner generally uses this hand for drawing and mark-making activities.</p> <p>The learner will make a variety of marks while holding a writing instrument.</p>

Close some lines in their scribble (producing apparent shapes)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Continue to provide a wide range of opportunities for the learner to use different media and tools for mark-making.</p>	<p>The learner makes some 'circular' actions when drawing producing enclosed areas of space.</p> <p>The learner's drawing begins to contain some elements and more recognisable as shapes.</p>

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Column: Next steps C

Summary statement
Learners may include strings of letters in their drawings. They attempt to represent words, but these may be unrecognisable and their attempts to read them back may be inconsistent.

Say something about their drawing or news that an adult can write down	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>In circle time, discuss what everyone has done over the weekend. Write down what they have said, then get them to illustrate it in a drawing.</p> <p>When the learner has completed a drawing, ask them about it, e.g. <i>'What's this?'</i>, and record their response as a caption for their drawing.</p>	<p>The learner can provide a short phrase about their drawing or news (e.g. <i>'me kick football'</i>) or a (prompted) list of elements (e.g. <i>'me, mum, dad, shop'</i>).</p> <p>The learner watches the adult as the phrase is written down.</p>

Select two or more symbols in succession to convey 'what happened first . . . next' and use to give information to an adult	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
<p>Where learners have left the classroom/group for an activity, ask them to report back what they have done.</p> <p>Have cards with pictures or symbols of the activities available, and ask the learners to 'record' what they have done on board or card using pictures.</p>	<p>The learner uses symbols to report what they have done (e.g. <i>'Went swimming', 'on bus', 'undress', 'I swim'</i>).</p> <p>The learner must place (at least) two pictures/symbols without prompting.</p>

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Point to ‘writing’ and ‘picture’ in a book when asked	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
In a variety of books and texts with a mixture of writing and pictures, ask the learner ‘Show me the/(a) picture’ and ‘Show me the writing’.	The learner correctly identifies ‘picture’ and ‘writing’.
Point to each in turn and ask ‘Do I read this bit? Or this bit?’.	The learner points to ‘writing’.
Teaching strategies (to move the learner to this step)	
Whenever reading, point at the words in the text as you read. At strategic points say ‘Now, let’s look at the ‘picture’’. Practice matching pictures to ‘pictures’ in the text and words to ‘writing’ in the text. At first, always ask the learner to find the ‘picture’ before finding the ‘writing’. When they are doing this consistently, vary the order of the requests.	

Show interest when an adult writes down/reads back their news/story; confirm it is what they want to say	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
After recording the learner’s news (see above), point to the words and read back to them. Now encourage them to read the message to you.	The learner looks at the text and listens as it is read to them, then makes an attempt to read it themselves.
For example, ask ‘Is that right?’ or ‘Do you want to say anything else?’.	The learner nods, vocalises or otherwise shows that they are happy with the text that has been recorded.

Include some letter-like shapes, or word-like forms (with gaps between) when drawing	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Continue to provide a wide range of opportunities for the learner to use different media and tools for mark-making and for recording.	The learner produces some shapes that resemble letters (possibly as in their own name) or strings of letters resembling lines of writing.
	They may begin to separate these into groups which look like words.

Use mark(s) to label their own work	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
After completing a drawing, encourage the learner to write, trace or copy their own name (or initial letter) on it.	The learner uses crayon, pen or pencil to label drawing with letter(s) from their own name. They may not be in the right order.

Routes to literacy – Writing for information

Assessment activities/things to try

Select pictures or symbols to compose a short phrase using speaking symbol software on a pc or a tablet computer	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with appropriate assistive technology, <i>e.g. software such as SymWriter on pc or Proloquo2Go on a tablet computer.</i>	The learner selects two symbols in the correct order to create a simple phrase, <i>e.g. 'I want drink'</i> , and activates the software to speak the phrase.

Try out a variety of instruments to make marks and shapes on paper or other appropriate material	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with paper and a crayon, pencil or pen (with suitable grip, if necessary).	The learner can produce dots, lines, loops and rudimentary letters and shapes with a suitable crayon, pencil or pen.
Provide the learner with a suitable drawing/writing programme on an interactive whiteboard.	The learner uses an interactive whiteboard pen to create results (as above).

Draw some recognisable representations (e.g. person or animal)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Talk to the learner about their drawings.	The learner refers to elements of their drawing as representations, <i>e.g. of people or animals (or the sun, a house or a tree)</i> . Although rudimentary, they are more or less recognisable as such.

Make an attempt at tracing over large shapes and letter forms	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Provide the learner with a model to trace on paper, touchscreen or tablet computer where the shapes/letters have broad outlines for them to follow.	The learner's tracing does not depart radically from the outline when tracing a circle or square.
Shapes/letters should be simple and fairly large.	They are reasonably accurate when tracing over simpler letters (<i>e.g. C, I, L, O, S</i>).

Routes to literacy – Writing for information
Assessment activities/things to try

Write some letters of own name (may be unconventional in form)	
Assessment activities/things to try	Things to look for
Continue to provide a wide range of opportunities for the learner to use different media and tools for mark-making and for recording.	When asked to write their name, the learner produces some shapes from memory that resemble the letters of their own name.