

Table 14: Challenges and strengths

Method	Challenges	Strengths
Self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can place too much emphasis on what children make or do without looking at why. ■ Children need time to develop skills to think about their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps children develop an understanding of themselves as learners. ■ Encourages children to feel a sense of pride and achievement in themselves. ■ Enables children to take greater responsibility for their learning. ■ Makes learning more enjoyable and motivating.
Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children’s developing ability to communicate influences what information they can share and how. ■ The adult needs to listen carefully to how and what children communicate. ■ The adult requires time to develop skills to encourage and enable children to share insights on their learning and development through talking. ■ Can be time-consuming. ■ Can be difficult to do with a large group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gives children opportunities to talk about their work, experiences, family, likes, and dislikes. ■ Provides information about why children reacted in a particular way, about what they did and said, or how they made things.
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planned observations and especially target child observations require time. ■ The adult requires time to develop skills in recording key pieces of information. ■ The adult needs to be aware of what information he/she is looking for, and to be mindful of how that influences the observations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be spontaneous or planned, and can be carried out in a few seconds or minutes. ■ Provides information about the context in which children’s learning and development takes place. ■ Gives immediate information about how and what children are learning and experiencing.
Setting tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Often requires particular resources. ■ The adult needs time to observe children taking part in the tasks, and where helpful, to talk to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can provide samples of children’s work as evidence of their learning and development. ■ Provides information about children’s learning in activities which interest them.
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test scores can be unreliable. ■ Tasks and questions can lack meaning and relevance for children and may be culturally inappropriate. ■ Can be time-consuming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Helps to identify children who may have learning difficulties. ■ Indicates specific learning difficulties.

Conclusion

Children, like adults, are natural assessors of their own progress and achievements. The adult can enrich and extend children’s learning through assessment by identifying learning and development, feeding information back to children, celebrating their progress and achievement with them, and adapting practice and planning for further learning. In this way, assessment helps the adult create portraits which show the richness of children’s learning and development. In doing this, assessment also guides the journeys children make as they go.