

# Sparkle Sleuth

Watch for small actions that add up to Elements

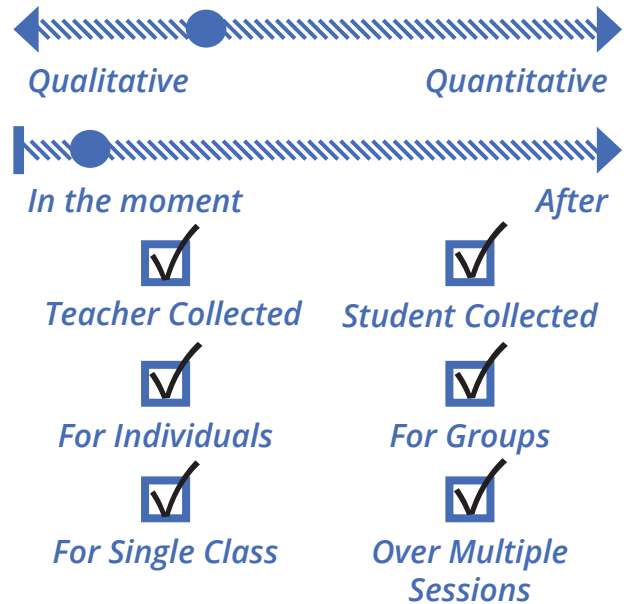


## Overview

Sparkle Sleuth is a strategy for careful observation and documentation using paper slips called Sparkle Slips that teachers (or peers) capture and document moments of sparkles—the moments of “aha,” “oh no,” or other notable times when a Maker Element is demonstrated. During project time, teachers watch for instances of particular maker elements and take quick notes about them. This provides immediate but unobtrusive feedback to the students or groups, and by collecting the slips and saving them over time, teachers can put together a picture of how students’ skills have changed and grown, and how the skills are being applied on an individual level and a class level.



## Evidence Collection



## Well Suited For

- Teacher is circulating, giving advice and feedback, but has bandwidth to observe students’ actions too.
- Activities that are not too prescriptive, where students are demonstrating their skills in many different ways.

## Before Class

- Preparation Time: 15 minutes
  - Materials: Printed Sparkle Slips, Clipboards to hold slips while writing.
1. Decide on which 2-3 Maker Elements you would like to focus on for the session.
  2. Print out Sparkle Slips to distribute.
  3. If students will be handing out Sparkle Slips, create a clipboard with slips for each student who will be “sleuthing.”

## During Class

1. Introduce how to use the tool at the beginning of class when using for the first time. Here are some tips to get you started:
  - Explain to the class that in order to celebrate our maker skills or superpowers (if you have previously done the Superpower Hour activity) we need to start noticing them.
  - Tell them how you are going to be walking around writing things you notice on little slips. They can read them but don't need to do anything with them if they're not interested. At the end of the class we'll be collecting them so we can review them later on.
2. Circulate around the room as you usually do. Keep an eye out for examples of the maker elements. For example, a great instance of partners collaborating, or a moment when a student was systematically troubleshooting a problem.
3. On a corresponding Sparkle Slip, briefly write down what you observed the student(s) doing.
4. Put the slip down on the table in front of the student, or in an envelope or box that each student keeps on the table.
5. If you feel it was an especially high level or exceptional demonstration of the skill, you can add a star sticker (or other indicator) to the slip.
6. Continue circulating and adding notes of observations, with an effort to distribute notes

to all students evenly. It's ok if the notes aren't for the same skills or at the same level of the skill, as long as everyone eventually has some of their actions documented.

## Extend, Adapt, Remix!

This guide is just the start! We encourage you to adapt the tool to your context: use your own assessment constructs, adapt for your classroom routines and procedures, or co-design new versions with your students!

Here are a couple of ideas we've seen to get you thinking:

- Have students do the sleuthing to observe and document the Maker Elements in their peers. Provide sentence starters or other scaffolds to help students provide good feedback.
- Explore different ways of organizing the slips— one student at a time, one project at a time, one Maker Element at a time. As you rearrange the slips, make notes about what you notice about trends across your class.
- Work with students to set goals based on the feedback they have received. What is something they want to work on for the project, week, or semester based on the feedback?

## We want to hear from you!

The Beyond Rubrics tools are a work in progress that we want to improve. If you try out a tool and you love it, please let us know! If you try it out and you find it frustrating, design a better version, or have specific feedback, let us know that, too!

For more information, visit our website or reach out!

Project Website: [makered.org/beyondrubrics](http://makered.org/beyondrubrics)

On Twitter: @MakerEdOrg & @playfulMIT