

How Do We Know They Know...Assessment Strategies?

March 30, 2009
Math Summit
Michigan State University

Points to Ponder....

- Think about your best assessment experience as a student
- Think about your worst assessment experience as a student

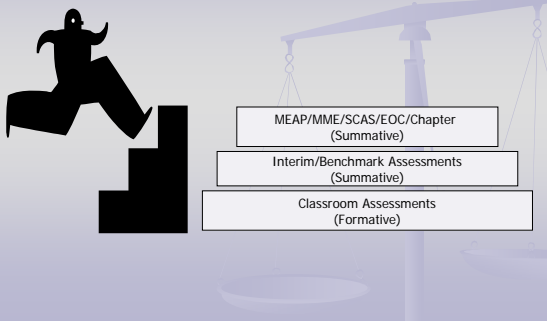


Discussion Topics

- What is a balanced assessment system?
- What purposes do they serve?
- What can it look like in practice?

Comprehensive Balanced Assessment System

Aligned to State Content Standards



Balanced Assessment System

- Honors the work in the classroom and is aligned to the state and district assessments
- Variety of approaches needed
- All assessments need to work in the same direction – a coordinated system of assessment

Today's Learning Targets

- Balance needed between assessment *for* and assessment *of* learning
- Keys to sound classroom assessment and the relationship between assessments and student motivation
- Power of learning team as a PD development strategy for assessment literacy and ideas sharing to improve student assessment skills

90/90/90

Characteristics of High Achievement Schools:

- Focus on academic achievement
- Clear curriculum choices
- **Frequent assessment of student progress and multiple opportunities for improvement**
- **Collaborative scoring of student work**
- An emphasis on nonfiction writing

Douglas Reeves

Improving a School

- Clearly defined essential outcomes for every unit
- Close, frequent monitoring of each student's learning
- Systematic plan to give students extra time and support for learning
- Teachers working in collaborative teams that focus on learning
- Frequent information to each teacher on how well his or her students are achieving essential outcomes in comparison to similar students

Rick DuFour

Improved Results

Powerful proven structures for improved results already exist. They begin when a group of teachers meet regularly as a team to:

- Identify essential and valued student learning
- Develop common assessments
- Analyze current levels of achievement
- Set achievement goals
- Share and create lessons and strategies to improve upon those levels

Mike Schmoker

School Improvement

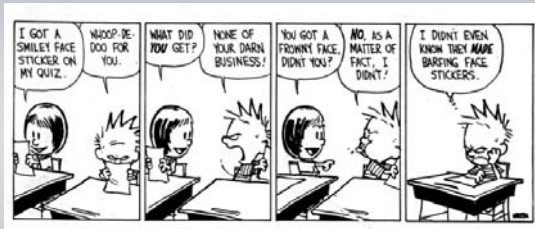
- Assessment for learning, when done well, is one of the most powerful, high-leverage strategies for improving student learning that we know of. Educators collectively become more skilled and focused at assessing, disaggregating, and using student achievement as a tool for ongoing improvement.

Michael Fullan

Student Involvement

- When students are involved in the assessment process they are required to think about their own learning, articulate what they understand and what they still need to learn and achievement improves

Black and William, 1988, Young 2000





■ As educators our goal is to create and maintain a balanced assessment system that includes high-quality assessments *of* and *for* student learning

Balanced Assessment System

■ Summative Assessments

- Assessment *of* student learning at the conclusion of a phase of learning
- Key Question: Did the student learn what they should have?
- Types: MME, MEAP, MI- Access, ELPA, unit, chapter tests, final exams

Balanced Assessment System

- Interim/Benchmark Assessments
 - Provide periodic snapshots of student achievement at the district level
 - Key Question: Are students in each school on track for proficiency?
 - Types: district-constructed, commercially-available assessments

Balanced Assessment System

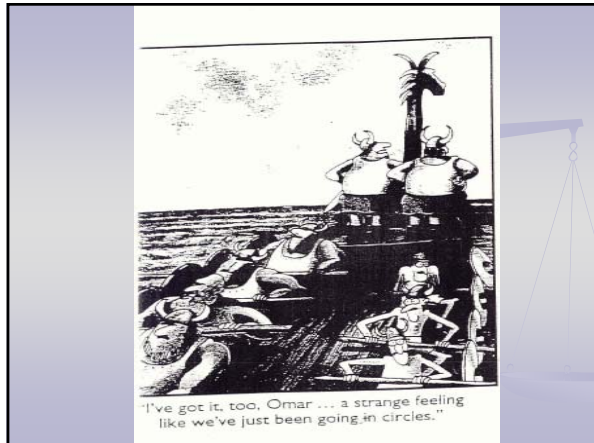
- Formative Assessment Strategies
 - Assessment *for* Learning
 - Supports on-going student learning in the classroom
 - Key question: How can we help students learn more?

The Problem

- Research has uncovered virtually no evidence that layer upon layer of large-scale summative assessment serves as a motivator for either educators or students.

Rick Stiggins, 2002

"If we wish to maximize student achievement in the U.S., we must pay greater attention to the improvement of classroom assessment. Both assessment of learning and assessment for learning are essential. But one is currently in place, and the other is not."



A Solution

- Research does show that high-quality formative assessment strategies increase student achievement when:
 - Formative assessment strategies are accurate
 - Teachers provide descriptive feedback to students, and
 - Students are actively involved

Research on Effects

Study	S.D. Gains
Bloom (1984)	1.0 to 2.0*
Black and William (1998)	.5 to 1.0**
Meisels, et al (2003)	.7 to 1.5
Rodriguez (2004)	.5 to 1.8**

* Rivals one-on-one tutorial instructional

** Largest gains for low achievers

1.0 Standard Deviation Equals

- 35 Percentile Points
- 2 – 4 Grade Equivalents
- 100 SAT Score Points
- 5 ACT Composite Score Points
- US TIMSS would move from middle to top 5

Assessment Training Institute

Summary of findings...

- Improved formative assessment practices raised student achievement levels – especially low achievers

CCSSO Draft Definition of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes.

FAST/SCASS Austin, Texas October 2006

Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics.



-W. James Popham, 2008

Formative Assessment: Assessment For Learning

- The purpose is to
 - Promote further improvement of student learning during the learning process and
 - Involve students in the ongoing assessment of their learning
- Results are used primarily by students, educators, and parents
 - Help students see and hit the target(s) and
 - Identify student needs
 - Are not graded

It's Not Formative Unless...

- Teachers have a **plan** before they walk into the classroom.
- The 'Learning Targets' are **clear** and **linked** to every part of the formative assessment process.
- Feedback *for* Learning is **actionable**.
- Teachers **analyze** student assessment evidence as a way to **revise their instruction**.

Formative Assessment


- Teachers:
 - Observing students
 - Examining and evaluating student work
 - Providing descriptive feedback to students
 - Determining instructional implications of assessments
 - Conferencing with students, other teachers and parents

Formative Assessment

- Students are actively engaged in the assessment process by:
 - Learning what is expected of them
 - Taking responsibility for their own learning
 - Actively participating in the learning process
 - Participating in how students document what they have learned and how they learned it
 - Demonstrating their learning to peers, educators and their parents

Clarifying the Purposes of Assessment	
Assessment FOR Learning (Formative)	Assessment OF Learning (Summative)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks learning to decide what to do next then provides suggestions of what to do Teaching and learning are indistinguishable from assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks what has been learned to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is designed to assist educators and student in improving learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is designed to provide information to those not directly involved in daily learning and teaching in addition to educators and students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides continual specific and descriptive feedback as formal or informal communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiles data into a single number, score, mark or comment as a formal periodic report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses ongoing assessments that focus on the full range of learner outcomes for a grade level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses fewer assessments that focus on learner outcomes of enduring importance – think of a formal snapshot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses on improvement and compares a student's current performance with his/her previous best based on the learner outcomes for a grade level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares a student's performance to the learner outcomes for a grade level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involves the student as a partner in learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not actively involve the students as a partner in learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not used for grading purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for grading purposes

- At this point examine your own thoughts and observations about assessment FOR learning and assessment OF learning:
 - How do you see your staff using assessment FOR learning (formative) in their classroom?
 - How do you see your staff using assessment OF learning (summative) in their classroom?

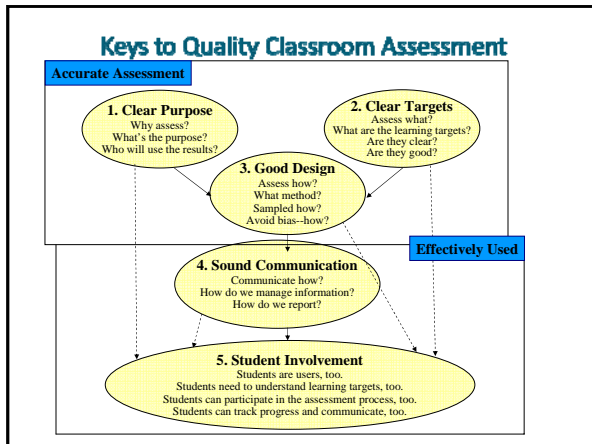


Talk with your neighbor

Teacher Role

- Master each standard
- Deconstruct each into enabling targets
- Transform into student-friendly language
- Transform into accurate classroom assessments
- Use those in collaboration with students to track growth

Rick Stiggins' Assessment Training Institute



Keys to Quality Assessment

Key 1: Clear Purpose

- Why assess?
- What's the purpose?
- Who will use the results?

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Keys to Quality Assessment

Key 2: Clear Targets

- Assess what?
- What are the learning targets?
 - I can statements
- Are they clear? Are they good?

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Where are We Going?

- Before instruction and assessment can be developed, all educators need a clear understanding of what the standards look like in student work and what measurable learning targets are required for students to achieve mastery

What are Learning Targets?

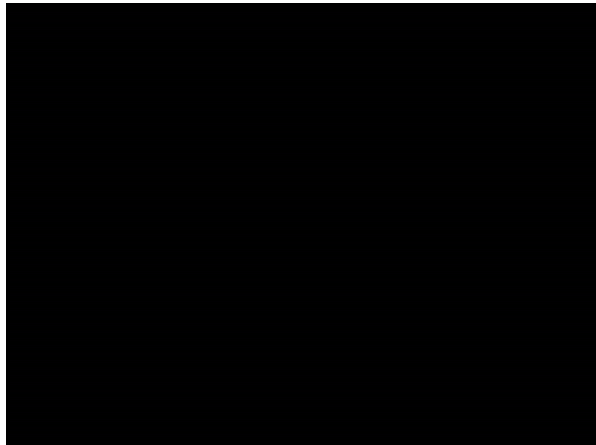
A learning target is any achievement expectation we have for students.

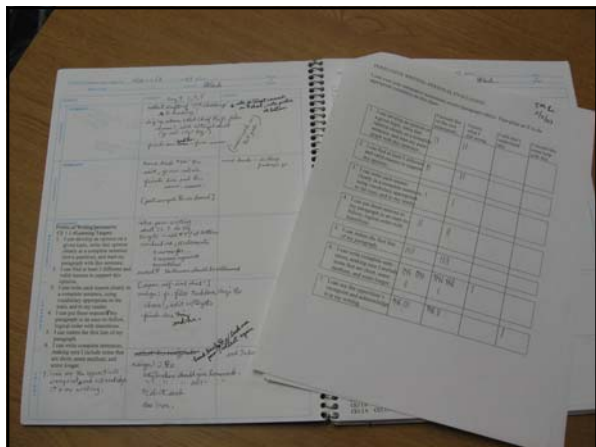
It states what we want students to learn.

Converting Learning Targets to Student-Friendly Language

- The Process
 - Identify the learning targets for an expectation
 - Identify words needing clarification (e.g., what do the verbs really mean)
 - Define the words. Use a dictionary as a starting point







Keys to Quality Assessment

Key 3: Good Design

- Assess how?
- What method?
- Sampled how?
- Avoid bias—how?

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Target-Method Match

How well does your method of assessment match your target?

Target to be Assessed	Assessment Method			
	<i>Selected Response</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>Performance Assessment</i>	<i>Personal Communication</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>				
<i>Reasoning</i>				
<i>Performance Skills</i>				
<i>Products</i>				

Target-Method Match

How well does your method of assessment match your target?

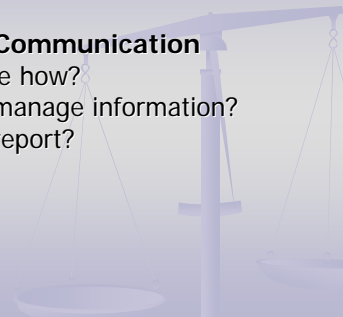
Target to be Assessed	Assessment Method			
	<i>Selected Response</i>	<i>Essay</i>	<i>Performance Assessment</i>	<i>Personal Communication</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	Good match	Good match	Not a good match	Partial match
<i>Reasoning</i>	Partial match	Good match	Good match	Good match
<i>Performance Skills</i>	Not a good match	Not a good match	Good match	Partial match
<i>Products</i>	Not a good match	Partial match	Good match	Not a good match

Keys to Quality Assessment

Key 4: Sound Communication

- Communicate how?
- How do we manage information?
- How do we report?

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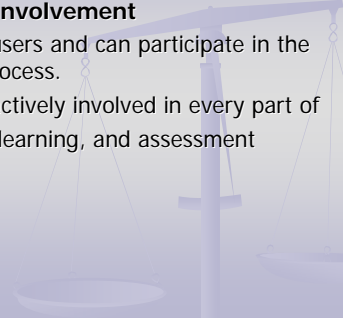


Keys to Quality Assessment

Key 5: Student Involvement

- Students are users and can participate in the assessment process.
- Students are actively involved in every part of the teaching, learning, and assessment process.

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A photograph showing two students, a young woman on the left and a young man on the right, sitting at a dark wooden table. They are both looking towards the camera. Behind them is a wall covered with several circular charts and informational posters. The background of the slide is a light purple gradient with a faint scales of justice graphic.

Assessing for Understanding

- What techniques do you see during the instructional process to determine if each of your students is learning the intended targets or goals?
- How do you use and communicate information/data to students?
- How do your students feel about or react to assessment of any kind?

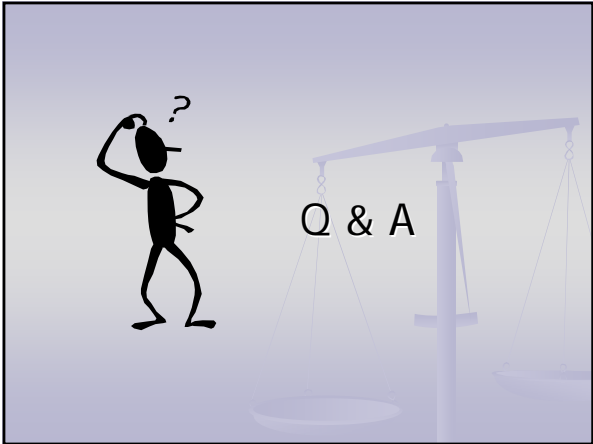
What does this look like in classrooms?

After Viewing

- How are the assessment techniques shared in this segment used formatively to adjust instruction and engage students?
- How did the student's comment reflect a change in attitude about assessment?
- How do teachers and students use feedback to communicate about learning?







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Common Concerns about Assessment FOR Learning

■ What if I don't do it right?

- Anne Davies (2002) "Constructing new learning takes time as we try things out, make mistakes, get feedback and self-assess in our pursuit...It is a messy process that is not accomplished overnight. It requires a sustained commitment to classroom assessment as a priority for learning and practice and continued support for the differentiated professional development to achieve it."

Common Concerns about Assessment FOR Learning

■ What about state achievement tests and the new curriculum standards? I have to get my students ready for those.

- Research clearly shows that assessment for learning makes a significant positive impact on students' to perform successfully...Your students will be more successful on those (tests) than if they had spent time practicing a hundred old exams (Newmann 2001)

Common Concerns about Assessment FOR Learning

■ **How will I ever have enough time?**

- The concerns about insufficient time to focus on *AfL* comes from the a paradigm where learning and teaching are separate from assessment. In *AfL*, learning and teaching are indistinguishable from assessment. Finding time is about choices and making smart ones. Take the time to identify the "learner outcomes". These will lead to a few meaningful summative assessments rather than many less significant ones.
