

Next Generation Assessment Systems

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Measured Progress

Balanced Assessment Systems

- Background – see BAS graphic (attached)
- What's not right about assessment systems as implemented?
 - Policy makers ignore what we know about the instructional impact of large-scale accountability tests and about school reform.
 - Low levels of assessment literacy make local educators unwise, vulnerable consumers.
 - In too many places, the different BAS components all look alike.
 - Teachers are seeing actual student work less and less.
 - Reporting practices lead to unjustified conclusions and ineffective actions.
 - Local grading practices inhibit learning.
 - There is a mismatch between school environments and good assessment.

The Promise and Pitfalls of Technology-Based Assessment

- Innovative item types have the potential to do more or not do more than traditional types.
- In the area of assessment, computers have been used primarily for delivery of traditional tests – statewide and local.
- Far greater use could be made of technology for curriculum-embedded performance assessments – project-based or stand-alone tasks.

Postmortem on Performance Assessment of the 1990s

- Ideological differences and politics were major contributors to the downfall.
- Measurement quality issues and perceived measurement quality issues contributed.
- The measurement community did not fully support performance assessment.
- Late '90s cracking down on Title 1 requirements was the lid and NCLB the nail in the coffin.

What Should Be

- Teachers are proficient formative assessors.
- Teachers' grading practices reflect student achievement and are not designed primarily to keep students in line or make them do their work.
- Classroom assessment, formative and summative, makes minimal use of multiple-choice items.

- The teacher's role is not to serve as the source of all information for student learning, but rather as a facilitator and monitor of learning, a process in which the students play active roles.
- Core knowledge and skills are not ignored, but rather applied through the use of short- and long-term projects and performance assessments that tap 21st century skills.
- Communities of learning provide regular opportunities for teachers to review and discuss student work and subsequent instruction, thereby enabling newer teachers to benefit from the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of more experienced teachers.
- Principals are instructional leaders and leaders of reform efforts, where needed. Teachers cannot independently change grading practices, time allocations, etc.
- Principals make good decisions regarding choice of interim assessments and use of data from interim assessments and accountability testing. They do not succumb to 'quick fixes.'
- Principals get help, perhaps in the form of coaches or consultants, who know how to "phase in" changes over time, so that they do not overwhelm teachers. Educator development becomes a sustained, continuous process involving both internal and external resources.
- State assessments include multiple-choice and constructed-response components, as well as curriculum-embedded performance assessments with local scoring and centralized audit procedures. They model good assessment practice. Federal laws and their implementation are changed to enable and encourage good practice at the state and local levels.