



Louisiana's Innovative Assessment Program



The Need for Innovative Assessment

Let's Read

“Harry Potter was speeding toward the ground when the crowd saw him clap his hand to his mouth as though he was about to be sick - he hit the field on all fours- coughed- and something gold fell into his hand.

‘I’ve got the Snitch!’ He shouted, waving it above his head, and the game ended in complete confusion.”

Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 2000.

Question: Who won the game? How do you know?

Requirements of Reading

- Reading requires skill.
- Reading requires background knowledge.
- [Effect of Prior Knowledge on Good and Poor Readers' Memory of Text](#)



Instructions and Assessments: The Current State

What Happens on our Current Assessments

Assessments are designed to be content agnostic, while focusing on grade-level standards.

Instructional Response to Assessments

Instructional practice is focused on teaching an isolated set of skills such as finding the main idea, citing evidence, and summarizing instead of helping students make meaning of the texts.

How Do We Change Student Work and Teacher Practice?

Currently, we are implicitly measuring knowledge.

If we want students to study books and texts deeply, **our assessments must begin to explicitly measure knowledge.**

This will encourage teachers to focus on knowledge building and ensure that students have the background knowledge required for their assessments.



Louisiana's Solution

Louisiana's Theory of Action and Strategy

Louisiana believes in aligning and integrating what matters most.

- Adopted higher standards to increase accountability (Louisiana Student Standards)
- Created and scaled quality, text- and -content rich curriculum (ELA Guidebooks)
- Built assessments with a focus on quality (LEAP 2025)
- Supported implementation of quality curriculum with aligned PD
- Reduced testing through development and implementation of comprehensive assessment system
- Design and develop innovative assessments

Louisiana's Innovative Assessment Pilot

Louisiana submitted a proposal for the pilot in April 2018 in response to a provision in ESSA which allowed selected states to develop and pilot new high-quality assessment formats in lieu of their existing statewide achievement tests.

Louisiana's proposal to pilot an innovative English assessment was the first to be [approved by the U.S. Department of Education](#).

Louisiana now has five years to develop, pilot and expand the innovative assessment.

The Content

The instructional materials reviews available from [Louisiana](#) and [EdReports](#) have made it easier for school systems and states across America to adopt high quality instructional materials.

[ELA Guidebooks](#), available for free nationally through the [Louisiana Curriculum Hub](#), has been adopted in approximately 75 percent of Louisiana school systems. This provides a unique opportunity to connect curriculum and assessment.

Pilot Highlights

Louisiana's Innovative Assessment will provide the following:

- **Integration:** Several brief assessments are administered throughout the year to measure students' deep knowledge of books or passages that they have studied in class.
- **Focus:** Teachers can focus instruction on background knowledge and making meaning of full texts.
- **Equity:** All students have the opportunity to develop background knowledge together so that no student is at a disadvantage due to a lack of life experiences.
- **Preserves local control:** School systems continue to decide which books are used during instruction and which assessments students take.

Grades 6-8 Assessment Design

End-of-Unit Assessments (3)

- Session One (selected response and constructed response)
 - Unit Texts (“hot reads”)
 - Unit-Related Texts (“warm reads”)
- Session Two (essay)
 - Knowledge from Unit Texts

End-of-Year Essay

- An essay in response to a broad question that asks students to draw upon the most memorable and impactful texts they have studied. Students have the opportunity to show that they can synthesize knowledge across multiple texts.

Partnerships

Louisiana partnered with national experts and school systems to build and pilot an innovative assessment that ensures all students have an equal opportunity to succeed on the test while reducing testing time.

- NWEA, Odell Education, Johns Hopkins University, The Center for Assessment, MZ Development, and Strategic Measurement and Evaluation

As Louisiana continues to build and pilot innovative assessments, new opportunities for partnerships have emerged.

- Great Minds

Timeline: 2018-2019

2018-2019

- **February 2019**- Students tested out items for two of the five Grade 7 unit assessments.
- **May 2019**- Students tested out items for the three remaining Grade 7 unit assessments, and the end-of-year essay.

Five school systems (4 traditional and one charter), including 2,289 students, participated.

Timeline: 2019-2020

- **October 2019-** Operational Grade 7, Field Testing Grades 6-8
- **February 2020-** Operational Grade 7, Field Testing Grades 6-8
- **Window 3-** Cancelled

6,356 students participated in Windows 1 and 2 of the assessment in grade 7. This marks a **278% increase** over participation in the field test.

Timeline: 2020-2022

2020-2021

- Developing Grades 3-5
 - ELA Guidebooks
 - *Wit & Wisdom*®

2021-2022

- **October 2021-** Operational Grade 7, Pilot and Field Test Grades 5-8
- **February 2022-** Operational Grade 7, Pilot and Field Test Grades 5-8
- **April 2022-** Operational Grade 7, Pilot and Field Test Grades 5-8

Early Findings

Teachers, administrators, and students have provided positive feedback on Louisiana's innovative assessment.

- Many students reported that it more closely matched their instruction and they felt less anxious while testing.
- Based on post-test survey data, **77%** of teachers who responded identified the innovative assessment as a better measure of student performance than the traditional LEAP ELA assessment.

Early Findings

The innovative assessment differentiated between students, as a range of points were earned across the assessment (students scored at the low, middle, and high ends of the range).

Assessment results illustrated that while students are doing a good job of answering questions focused on individual texts, they are struggling to 1) make connections between texts studied in class and related texts (“warm reads”) and 2) analyze and synthesize concepts presented across texts on the essay test.

Early Findings

The Louisiana innovative assessment appears to increase student test engagement and provide a more equitable testing experience for students.

Preliminary analysis of early data indicates that at least a portion of what has historically been described as an achievement gap amongst socioeconomic groups may be partly attributed to an “opportunity gap.”

Initial data also indicates that, compared to a typical Louisiana state accountability test, the new innovative assessment design has improved student engagement.

[Louisiana and NWEA: Creating innovative assessments to foster equity and deeper learning](#)



Please contact assessment@la.gov with
any questions.

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