

Assessments: Beyond the Claims

Reidy Interactive Lecture Series

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Use of Assessments: District & Schools

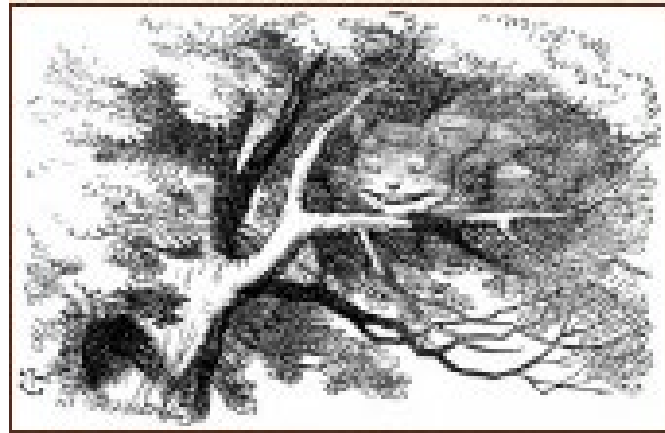
Claims have been made...

Assessments are being considered by the
District...

Now what?

Use of Assessments: District & Schools

“If you don’t know where you are going, any road will take you there,” observed the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland



Use of Assessments: District & Schools

Decisions about which assessment to select will depend on its purpose and the audience of the data, including:

- The interplay of summative, interim, and formative assessments for curricular and instructional decisions.
- Clear understanding of the alignment to the knowledge and skills and their range of complexity as required by the standards or expectations.
- Use of information gained from the assessments and where they are used within the curriculum.

What do educators need?

✓ Assessment types



✓ Knowledge and understanding of the information provided by the assessment data



✓ Flexibility within the curriculum to use assessment data





- **Formative Assessment:** *A process that teachers and students use to gather information during, as opposed to after, the learning process and to make adjustments accordingly. **Assessment for Learning***
- **Interim Assessments:** *Assessments administered during instruction that are designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of goals to inform decisions in the classroom and beyond. **Assessment of Learning***
- **Summative Assessments:** *Formal assessments that are given at the end of a unit, term, course, or academic year. **Assessment of Learning***

Formative Assessments

Purpose	Instructional
Implementation	Driven by moment-to-moment decisions; generated or selected by teacher; individualized
Timing	During instruction High frequency
Scope	Narrow; one or very few learning objectives at a time
Audience	Classroom (i.e., students, teachers, and parents)
Feedback	Student \longleftrightarrow teacher Descriptive/narrative

Interim Assessments

Purpose	Most designed for decisions outside of the classroom (e.g., curriculum, program) Some designed for instructional uses
Implementation	Regulated by a set of rules developed in or out of the classroom; teacher-generated or externally generated
Timing	After instruction or during a break in instructional flow Moderate frequency
Scope	Moderate; a manageable number of objectives
Audience	Administration and/or Classroom teacher
Feedback	School System → audiences Mostly evaluative

Summative Assessments

Purpose	Most designed for decisions outside of the classroom (e.g., curriculum, program) Providing a grade in the classroom
Implementation	Regulated by a set of rules developed in or out of the classroom; teacher-generated or externally generated
Timing	After instruction Low frequency
Scope	Broad; comprehensive set of objectives
Audience	Public Administration (principal, curriculum director, etc.) Classroom
Feedback	School System → audiences Mostly evaluative

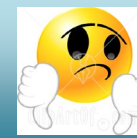
Assessments Uses and Audience

Students	... see these assessments as fair measures of their understanding of important learning goals and can use the results to monitor their own performance.
Teachers	... see the assessments as a measure of how well they have taught the concepts and skills, a means of establishing the quality of the assessment, identifying the areas of need for students, and determining what needs to be re-taught.
Principals	...see the assessments as providing data across the school to determine personnel strengths and needs, support teachers, consider scheduling decisions, create classroom rosters, and identify programmatic needs.
District Personnel (curriculum director, assistant superintendent)	... see the assessments as providing data across the district to determine personnel strengths and needs, support principals, make fiscal decision based on programmatic needs, and inform strategic improvement strategies.



When considering the selection of assessments for classroom progress monitoring, consider these five key questions:

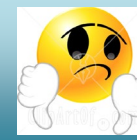
1. What are the best types of assessments to select for measuring the learning?
2. Are the assessment items and/or expectations aligned to the standards? Consider whether the assessment will actually measure what it is supposed to measure.
3. Are the assessment items and/or expectations appropriately rigorous (DOK levels aligned to standards) and have an appropriate level of difficulty?
4. Are there multiple opportunities throughout the quarter, semester, and year to assess students on the same concepts, using different types of assessments?
5. Are the directions and vocabulary clear, ensuring that they don't detract from what students know and are able to demonstrate?



What's driving the assessment use??

Issues from the Field: Assessment(s) administered, but...

- no professional development provided for teachers to analyze the data
- no opportunity (common planning time, PLCs, data meetings) for teachers to review the data
- scope and sequence requires teachers to continue moving forward – no time to reteach
- curricular programs do not provide additional resources for reteaching
- teachers are not sure where/how to obtain resources that are aligned to the content – district does not provide and teachers cannot purchase



So... what happens to progress monitoring
and adjusting instruction based on the
assessments?

Nothing

Formative assessment...

can lead to significant learning gains (Black & William, 1998; Herman et al., 2006).

Frequent monitoring of student progress...
results in higher achievement for students
(Stecker et al., 2005).

Using Data for Instructional Decisions

Interim assessment data...

concepts students have learned

the potential to provide follow-up with struggling students

provide feedback to students

allow for the re-teaching of necessary foundational skills or
concepts

differentiating instruction,

rethinking the way in which a concept was taught

provide a structured and systematic strategy for examining
overall achievement

Summative assessment...

can serve both as a guide to teaching methods

aids in improving and planning curriculum to better
match the needs of the students

allows for program evaluation

Using Data for Instructional Decisions

Putting it all Together: A Case Study...

If a school's performance on a state assessment indicates high percentages of students who do not meet standards in writing, then the school could collect more information on its writing curricula, student writing performance (through portfolios or other classroom work), and professional development needs for its teachers. After collecting such information, the school may then review and adopt new writing curricula as well as provide professional development to its teachers in order to support stronger student achievement in writing.

Ongoing evaluation of the writing program would be conducted through the use of formative and summative assessment. In this manner, when assessments are aligned, they can inform the instructional process and support both the daily instructional practices of teachers as well as the longer-term planning of curricula and instruction.

Comprehensive Assessment System

entails a collection of procedures that can inform the learning process.

Formative, interim, and summative assessments each have a place in the larger system of assessment, instruction, and curriculum.

Assessments can only serve this purpose, however, when teachers are supported to make appropriate adjustments in their instruction (Herman et al., 2006; Marsh, 2007).

For more information:

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