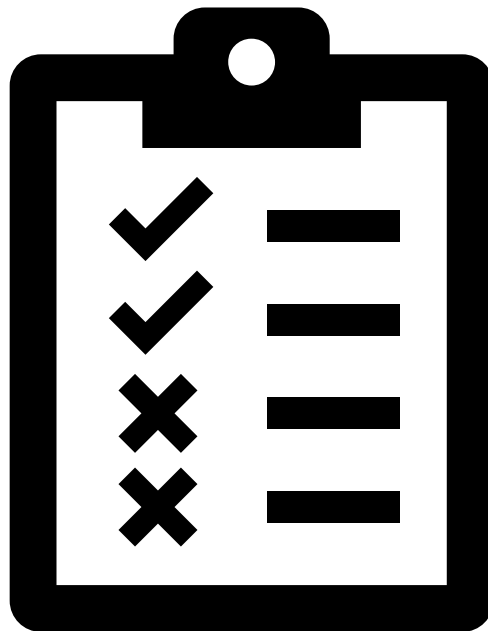

Will this be on the test?



*Why Assessment Literacy Is Important
for School Leaders*

Curriculum and Instructional Resources

Prepared by
The Nebraska Association of Professors of School Leadership

Foreword

Educators have a crisis of confidence regarding assessment *for* student learning and school accountability. Many educators have grown up in an environment of high-stakes testing and may not know there is a better and more effective way to assess what students have learned. More seasoned professionals may know there is a better way but have been led to focus on raising test scores rather than gathering and utilizing valuable evidence of student learning, ultimately raising test scores.

As accountability of student learning has shifted from the classroom to the federal government, educators have been good soldiers, complying with federally required state testing regulations. Obviously, we are required to do so; however, by being good soldiers, we have not been effective leaders in the assessment *for* student learning. The primary reason for this lack of leadership is the absence of assessment literacy within the ranks.

Assessment for student learning has always been the Achilles heel of our profession. When we look at the advancement of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, we have made great strides in curriculum and instruction. We have made little to no progress in assessment for student learning...and may have moved backward. In fact, as one of my graduate students so aptly shared, “We have outsourced this responsibility to the testing companies.”

Please understand, I am not blaming federal or state officials for this current situation, but rather the absence of leadership within our profession.

In October 2020, a group of like-minded Nebraska professors of educational leadership, with assistance from the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, organized with the vision of bridging the gap between PK-12 education and post-secondary educational leadership preparation programs. From this vision, the Nebraska Association of Professors of School Leadership (NAPSL) was formed.

In January of 2021, a phone conversation between myself and Dr. Doug Christensen from Doane University focused on the assessment literacy challenge our profession faces. He said, “We need to develop an assessment literacy curriculum, and this sounds like a great project for NAPSL.”

In the Spring of 2021, NAPSL formed a working subcommittee to focus on assessment literacy that included Dr. Sue Anderson, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Dr. Keith Rohwer, Nebraska Council of School Administrators; Dr. Jessica Jonson, Buros Center for Testing; Dr.

Shavonna Holman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Dr. Mike Teahon and Dr. Chelsea Feusner, University of Nebraska at Kearney; Dr. Cindy Gray, Doane University; Doug and myself. Our initial intent was to develop an assessment literacy curriculum that could be accessed and utilized by college and university professors of education preparation programs as a 3-hour course, 1-hour course, or supplement to an existing course. This material can also be used by K-12 directors of professional development, teachers, principals, superintendents, and others interested in advancing an assessment literacy vision for school leaders.

Our work is divided into three parts. Part I focuses on the “What,” the “Why,” and the “How” of our work as educators in assessment. We also describe the fundamental differences between accountability and assessment. In Part II, we share a Balanced Assessment Overview for Leaders interested in implementing this work. Part III includes a series of assessment literacy learning modules. A special thank you goes to Dr. Doug Christensen, Dr. Cindy Gray, and Dr. Sue Anderson for their astute leadership on this project and specifically in the development of Parts I, II, and III, respectively.

I have often said publicly, “Educators are the best people on the planet.” I truly believe this. I also believe we can and will correct the absence of assessment leadership by becoming an assessment-literate profession. Successful implementation of this work can help us achieve such a status.

We have the following hopes for the use of this resource – that it will strengthen professional educators’ understanding of sound assessment practices as they conduct their important work in schools and classrooms; that users will help to expand its content and application as they build on their assessment literacy; and that assessment-literate educators will lead the next wave of assessment and accountability measures for our schools and, most importantly, our students.

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Introduction

This assessment literacy curriculum resource was designed for post-graduate educational leadership programs for course development or to supplement an existing course. School districts and K-12 personnel, and other educational entities can also easily utilize this curriculum for professional development programs and activities.

The information in this resource draws upon the work of many experts and practitioners in educational assessment, as well as the lived experiences in school assessment and accountability at the local, state, and national levels by members of the project's writing team. Organized into three parts, the materials are research-based, and users can be assured that they reflect the critical role of assessment in improving teaching and student learning.

Part I provides a comprehensive narrative about past and current assessment practices – those that are effective and those that aren't. Topics addressed in this part include *testing vs. assessment, assessment and the goals of accountability, a historical perspective on assessment, the role of standards in assessment, assessment re-visioned, and the role and use of assessment data.*

Part II provides a *Balanced Assessment Overview for Leaders* – presented in a convenient summary chart - based on the work of Dr. Richard DuFour, a noted educational researcher and practitioner, and answers these key assessment questions:

- What do we want students to learn?
- How will we know if they've learned it?
- What will we do if they haven't learned it?
- What will we do if they already know?

Part III is a series of four learning modules - *Why Assessment Literacy is Important, A Balanced Approach to Assessment, Keys to Quality Assessment, and Assessment's Role in Teaching, Learning, and Leading.* Each module identifies key topics and provides recommended learning resources and example learning activities. The modules may be used in any order and are presented in a way that users may easily adapt to their purposes.

Part I:

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Almost everyone feels they have the right to criticize our schools openly and with increasing voice and volume. For various reasons, criticisms of our schools are aimed at both the school leaders and the policy leadership at the local and state levels.

For those who want change, especially substantive change, the failure to energize “real” change at the local and even the state levels have caused the locus of change to come down from the “top.” In other words, when efforts to change schools reached blockages or were failures, advocacy groups, and individuals turned to federal policymakers to resolve the problems or to create policy avenues for alternatives to public education and public schools. The intrusion of the federal government into education at the state and local levels surprised few and was lamented by many; most states shifted quickly to a compliance mode and did what the federal policymakers wanted.

While the federal policy could not put into action what they really wanted to do, i.e., create alternatives to public education, they invented an accountability system that would expose the failures of public education, especially in educating those at the margins and especially those at the bottom of the economic and social pools, those who have difficulty with the English language, those who have food or housing insecurity, and any others who have challenges that impact what they are able to learn in their classrooms.

The federal policymakers decided that without pouring loads of money into the schools to create new capacities, they would demand change. Through statutes and compliance regulations, they would demand accountability for the results of the changes counting on public scrutiny to energize the changes and support change, even radical changes that included alternatives to public education.

The core of the accountability emphasis was testing. The reasoning behind the initiatives of accountability was that testing of student achievement seemed reasonable to demand, and if states would not demand it, the federal government could easily demand with the expansive investment they already were making in federal programs such as Title I, the

Education for All Handicapped (Special Education) and a host of other federally-funded programs that send money to states for specific educational programs.

It seemed reasonable to many people, including policymakers, that testing what students know and can do, should be the basis for determining that schools are doing the job they were intended and designed to do. Each state was required under the 1994 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to implement and report the testing results publicly for all to see and for the federal government to rank or label the state based on the testing results. All states, except for two, complied. One state was Iowa, which claimed they were already in compliance because of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills required in all Iowa schools. And the schools in Iowa were state-controlled via their constitution and, due to claiming local control, should be allowed to do what they were doing.

Nebraska was the other state that did not have a test given statewide to all public schools. In response to NCLB mandates, the state launched an initiative to comply with NCLB but not by using a statewide or standardized test. The state decided to build a local assessment system at the school or classroom level and report the results upward from the classroom and school to the district, the state, and the federal government. The effect of top-down requirements for a single statewide test have impacts that have changed schools in ways that make it hard for teachers to teach subjects and topics to the depth and breadth required for building an understanding of student learning and the ability to apply what they have learned to adjust instruction and meet the needs of individual student learners.

Chapter 1

Will This Be On The Test?

This writing is about assessment, a topic that is not on the tip of every tongue or the topic of many social gatherings. However, it is a topic of deep interest in schools, given the impact that assessment has on schools as we know them. Most people, in and out of the profession, refer to it as “testing.” And it is not likely that our schools will change much as long as they are in a “straight jacket” of testing, especially those tests that come from the outside or the “top” that are forced down onto schools and eventually impact classroom instruction.

Any teacher who has ever taught an activity, unit, or chapter of a subject knows to expect that students will invariably ask, “Will this be on the test?” The students ask the questions to focus their preparation on only those things that will be on the test and not worry about the other stuff that is not. The same is true for classrooms, schools, and districts. They figure out what is on the state test and make sure they cover those topics and let the other stuff go or only address it if they have time. So, classroom instruction, school-level curriculum, and district-level standards are narrowed by default to what is on the test.

There is a better way to run schools and teach in classrooms than rigidly following the prescriptions of the state test. There must be a better outcome of our teaching and learning than to cram into the instruction the content of the state test expecting the students to remember it long enough to do well on the test only to find out some don’t do well, and many forget the content by test time. It doesn’t take long before content is no longer remembered, and it tends to decay quickly the longer the time between instruction, reviewing, and testing. Content decays rapidly, especially when it is not connected to some performance or part of meaningful use of the content.

We aim to help anyone who will read and/or listen and wants to learn about assessment. We can show how dramatically different assessment and testing are. We believe this distinction is critical to changing our schools and the future of what schools will look like, will be like, and what they will do as their core work.

Testing is about an event, the “taking of a test,” turning it in, and earning a score. What does the score inform you or anyone else about what or how much you have learned? What does a 95% or an “A” mean regarding how much you learned? Did you learn 95% of the material? Did you learn 100% or 95% of it? Did you learn some of it at 100% and other parts of it at a lesser percentage? Does an “A” mean anything different? What score within the range for an “A” did you receive? At the top of the range? At the bottom of the range? In the middle of the range? Does an “A” mean that you know it now, will know it in a week, or will you know it in the future?

Assessment, on the other hand, is not an event; it is a process. It is a process of capturing what is being learned multiple times and over multiple learning expectations. Both the teacher and learner are informed by the student's responses, which may include observations, self-assessments, feedback from peers and teachers, and a narrative about what the student has learned and what has not been learned. Both the student and teacher use the results to plan the next steps in closing any gaps or missing pieces of the expectations for learning. This is not the case with testing.

First, let us make it clear why we are doing this and what our hopes and expectations are for the users of this work. Second, we will delve into the actual sound assessment practices and processes to be used by teachers and coached/guided by colleagues and other educational leaders.

We want to build the capacity of educators to be leaders in assessment as the foundation for the practices we hope are part of every classroom and the foundation for the classroom experience of the students. We believe that effective teachers are accomplished by using multiple measures of student work and the results of those measures to inform their judgments about the student's work and progress. This is *assessment*.

The formula for appropriate use of assessment is simple, but it's not easy to plan instruction to address each step of the assessment process. An instructional planning model

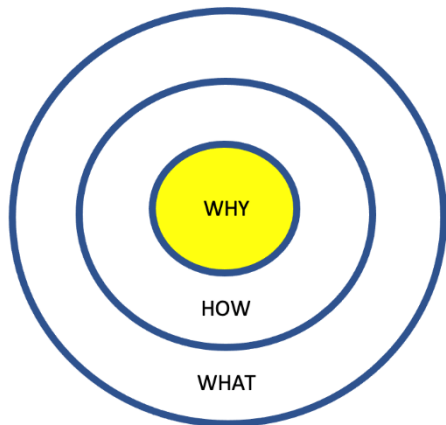
would look something like this:

Content	Skill/Understanding	Disposition	Application	Demonstration
↓	↓	↓	↙ ↘	↓
Formative Assessments			Summative Assessments	

A Mental Model for Design and Use of Assessments in Classrooms

Why?

Understanding the “why” of assessment is critical. Everyone wants to know why, especially when they are being asked to do something they have never done or with which they have little experience. *Why* is especially important when it involves changes in current practices, especially those practices that have been embedded in the culture of the school or those resulting from mandates by external agencies. Sometimes we are asked to do things for which we have limited or no experience, and sometimes little or no expertise is available. And, when the new “thing” is not easy to do and requires thinking and creating, the desire to know *why* can become a barrier to even trying the new thing or idea.



Simon Sinek (2009) has convinced us that people must know why. They will buy or adopt based on *why* and not on the product's glitter, the promise of new capacities, or the demonstration of easier ways of doing things. People will put in time and energy and work hard for those things that they “buy into” and believe in. Believing in the *why* of an action, topic, or goal is the most motivating thing we can do for those we wish will follow what we have determined to do, where to go, or what

other actions to take.

Using Sinek’s model and being clear about our *why* is essential in explaining this concept and work to others and critical to engaging others in this work. Professional educators committed to appropriate *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* have a clear picture of why (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2004).

How?

Redefining “how” assessment is the critical element of effective classrooms. It is important to keep in mind that effective classroom-based learning resulting from formative assessments can also inform accountability reports – summative descriptions of assessment results – that accurately reflect the kind and quality of learning based on:

- Reliability, validity, and fairness of the assessments
- Alignment of the assessments to the curriculum that is taught.
- Instructional strategies used to teach the curriculum.
- Assessment types

Judgments based on an assessment process that includes these types and levels of information are not solely dependent on summative test scores but rather are composed as a narrative over time and over multiple activities designed for the students to demonstrate their learning.

Designing and using assessments in these ways is the kind of work we should expect teachers to be able to do. Therefore, we need to support their capacity to do this work by providing guidance and feedback as they learn and perfect the assessment dimension of their “craft.” To support teachers in this work means we must:

- Unite the education profession around a core of common language and commonly held beliefs and practices of assessments *of* and *for* learning.
- Place teachers in the best positions possible to judge and evaluate the achievement of their students.
- Develop assessments that are done *for* the students, not *to* the students.
- Restore classrooms as places where students learn and are taught how to learn.
 - Teach students how to judge the quality of their work and assess their academic progress, using a variety of strategies.
 - Students who can judge the quality of their work from classroom-based assessments for learning will ultimately:
 - Become independent learners.
 - Build strong content knowledge.
 - Develop more sophisticated learning skills.
 - Make practical learning applications.
 - Demonstrate dispositions of understanding that characterize successful learning.
- Replace the current numerical-based rating and ranking systems for schools and districts with narratives that inform the outcomes of classroom teaching and learning.

What?

Using the “what” of the assessment process to improve teaching and learning. If we succeed in implementing these “how” strategies (mentioned above) to improve the assessment process, teachers will be able to gather and report accurate information that answers:

- 1) What are students are?

- 2) Who is learning; who is not learning?
- 3) Which groups of students are not learning?
- 4) What strategies will be implemented to address learning deficits and gaps?
- 5) What strategies are implemented when students demonstrate successful learning?

Analyzing and understanding these “*what*” aspects of the assessment process can assist teachers in making decisions about planning and instruction and will ultimately achieve the goal of assessment for learning – to improve student achievement and the effectiveness of teacher practice.

Chapter 2

Assessment and Accountability

Assessment *of* learning relies on summative measures, usually administered at learning endpoints. State tests, administered yearly or at grade-level benchmarks, are summative and designed to provide evidence of school accountability for student achievement. The challenge for effective school leaders is to balance efforts to support assessment *for* learning with the demands of assessment *of* learning that are inherent in state and federal accountability requirements. Building knowledge and consensus about the role of assessment in accountability among school and district personnel is a key step in achieving responsible assessment processes and a balanced assessment system.

Developing a Mission and Vision for Assessment and Accountability

Advancing assessment literacy – understanding the *why, how, and what* of the assessment process - is a critical practice for teachers and school leaders and will help ensure schools achieve a mission and vision for assessment that aims to ensure all students are successful learners. Following are examples of mission and vision statements for school assessment and accountability.

- **The Mission of Assessment and Accountability in Our Schools**

- (Example) *“Students will learn in classrooms with quality classroom-based assessments and an accountability system that includes all students, each of whom has an equal opportunity to learn the formal and informal expectations set by the system.”*
- **The Vision of Assessment and Accountability in Our Schools:**
 - (Example) *“Each student thrives in a setting where assessment is used to provide feedback to the teacher and the student so that both the teacher and the student can articulate what they have achieved and need to work on.”*
- **How will we achieve our mission and vision for assessment and accountability?**
 - Of all the things we need to do to achieve a mission of quality assessment processes and successful learning for each student, we need to:
 - Create frameworks that inform instructional decisions by teachers and students.
 - Enable the design and implementation of continuous school improvement practices.
 - Build the capacity for instructional decision-making by assessment-literate professionals in classrooms.

Developing Leadership for Assessment and Accountability

The following principles can guide the development of **assessment leadership** among teachers and building leaders to achieve a mission and vision for assessment.

1. School leaders will remain clear and true to a set of core values of an accountability system.
2. School leaders will begin redeveloping assessment and accountability processes from the ground up.
3. Judgments about the quality of the outcomes of instruction will be based on the equity of resources and opportunities to learn provided to each student - keys to successful learning for each student.
4. The types and quality of opportunities to learn should be aligned to the learning needs and capacity of each student.

5. Assessment is a school-based activity and should reflect valid and evidence-based professional practices and expectations.
6. The quality of assessments will determine the ability to trust and effectively use the results.

The Need for Professional Accountability

Can you think of a profession that does not have or has not designed an accountability system? Accountability is critical to any profession, and education is no exception. All occupations deemed “professions” have a code of ethics or set of principles that guide the work of individuals in the profession. In fact, in the last 25 years, some work has come to be considered “professional” because of adopting a code of ethics and a set of operating principles. A **profession** is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards. This group possesses special knowledge and skills in a widely recognized body of learning derived from research, education, and training at a high level, and is recognized by the public as such. A profession is also prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others (Professional Standards Council, 2015).

Education may be the only profession that does not have professional status. This is because most of the principles of work and accountability are determined from outside or by external entities. Yes, the profession has a code of ethics, but the public is relatively unaware of it and rarely sees sanctions placed on the profession or individuals within the profession who violate the code of ethics.

Standards of accountability are an essential part of professional status, and every profession has them written/stated in terms of outcomes for those the profession serves. Doctors, lawyers, veterinarians, dentists, counselors, psychologists, and others have a set of principles that describe what is expected of those they serve. Education does not have these stated standards of accountability. Our profession lacks accountability based upon clear statements of outcomes for those we serve - our students.

Establishing academic content standards was supposed to have been part of our professional accountability as educators, but we all know what a mess the standards movement

has caused. It has resulted in fragmented expectations for teachers and students and often contradictory expectations for both.

Accountability System Principles

The following principles can guide the development of an effective accountability system.

1. Accountability must be internal to the educational system, not external or supplemental.
2. The system of assessment and accountability must be educational in practice and not compliance driven.
3. The system of assessment and accountability is built from the ground up, not from the top down (statehouse to schoolhouse).
4. We must mitigate the damage to the social and cultural structure of our schools due to the current externally imposed assessment and accountability systems.
5. Assessment reporting should include a narrative that tells a comprehensive story of student learning and achievement.
 - a. It may or may not include numerical data.
 - b. It is never based on numerical data or ranking alone.
 - c. Numerical data can be helpful if embedded in the narrative and explained in terms of what they mean and how the system uses them.
6. The products of accountability are not our students.
 - a. We serve students; we do not produce them.
 - b. Accountability products are the curriculum we design, the curriculum-based instruction we provide, and the learning our students demonstrate.

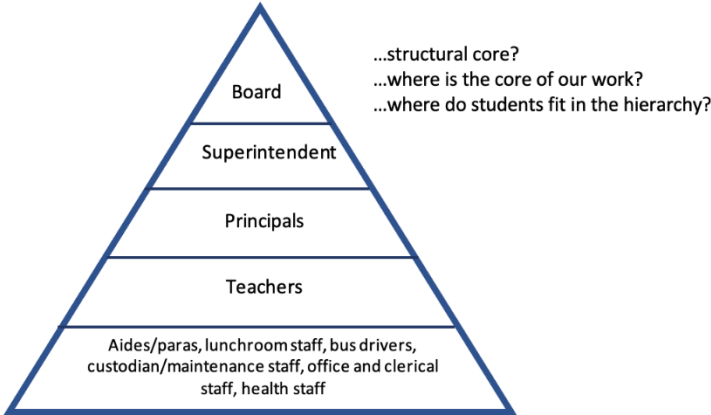
A critical question needs to be answered by those who wish to see our schools demonstrate higher levels of learning for all students – *How different would our schools be if all our efforts and resource – human and material - were allocated toward the work of the classroom?* Supporting the work of teachers and students in the classroom is the only way we can elevate practice and improve student learning outcomes.

Re-examining our Mindset About How Schools Are Organized

Mindsets are important, and our behavior is typically in alignment with our mindsets. If that is true, then the only way we can change anything we do is to change our mindsets. For the most part, schools are structured in ways that don't usually support the creative efforts of educators. Unfortunately, the limiting organizational structure of schools has existed in America for well over a century. Thus, when faced with organizational limitations and failures within the system of a school, we continue to ask questions like: Why does this system not work? Did it ever work? Can we make it work?

The Design of the Local Education System

The pyramid figure below may initially appear to represent aspects of a school system; it contains easily recognizable aspects of how schools are typically organized. However, this depiction does NOT represent a system. Rather it represents a HIERARCHY.



Our current hierarchy of education was designed to educate the “elite” of society, preparing the children of the upper class to go to college and become professionals (e.g., lawyers, doctors, money managers). Over time this hierarchical organization of schools has continued to do this very well, preparing the top third of our society to enter higher education, professions, and other gainful pursuits.

Chapter 3

A Historical Perspective

During and after the Great Depression, our society decided to send more kids to school; laws were passed requiring mandatory attendance until the age of 16. This was done not because society needed an educated public or had a burning desire to educate more kids. Instead, society needed the cheap labor jobs held by the kids. It needed to get the kids out of the workforce so that adults could take those jobs to feed and support their families.

During this time, schools discovered what they were perfectly positioned to do well – prepare students for employment and careers upon completing compulsory school attendance. Many students went to school through the eighth or ninth grade or until they were 16 and left to join the workforce. Others remained until the completion of their required education and graduated, even though they were not part of the “upper” social class.

Today our schools still work well for the top third of our students, and the evidence indicates that they are doing better than previous generations and the top students in the world to which we are often compared. However, that is about all we can say about how well our students are doing.

The next one-third of our students are achieving at lower levels every year (Nebraska Department of Education School Information, 2008). Why? This organizational hierarchy of school was not designed to provide learning opportunities for children who come to school without capacity in the English language, with learning deficiencies from lack of school or poor schooling, with basic nutritional needs, and other health issues that prevent their learning. Students in the upper levels of this middle group graduate and go on to college. But many in this middle one-third group do not; they enter the workforce right after high school.

The bottom one-third of our students have always performed poorly on achievement measures. This is the group of students who face many of the barriers present for the middle one-third of students. But in addition, they often experience generational poverty issues, poor and unsafe housing, lack of adequate parenting, violence, and other traumas. For these

students, especially, our schools are not currently equipped to handle or effectively educate these students.

System vs. Hierarchy: Understanding the Difference

Why can't our schools effectively address the needs of all children as they come into the classroom? Why can't we educate any child who comes through our doors, regardless of what issues they bring with them? Can't we effectively educate all the children if we work smarter and harder? These are legitimate questions for which there are no easy answers. But we can begin by understanding the difference between school as a hierarchy and school as a system.

As stated earlier, our educational structure is not a system; it is a hierarchy. A system has a center-defining core work usually done at or near its center. A hierarchy has no center. There is no clear definition of core work in a hierarchy. The work is whatever the top of the hierarchy determines it should be, and its expectations cascade from the top down. Systems, on the other hand, are connected at all levels, with one part impacting every other part. In a hierarchy, there is no connection from one level to the next except by power or position.

Considering the growing number of challenges schools face today in meeting the needs of students, we should recognize that this hierarchical structure is ineffective in meeting the needs of ever-growing numbers of students with special and specific needs. We should discontinue our persistent and longstanding attempts to make our current model of schooling work by simply adding more time, more staff, more resources, and more programs to an organizational structure that was never designed to address those needs.

The agenda for student achievement has changed. In addition to meeting the academic needs of students, we are also now expected to raise the achievement of all students, including those with special learning needs. It should be noted that in this hierarchical model, there is no mention of students. Shouldn't they be considered part of the school enterprise? If the school were a system, students would be central to the system. But in a hierarchy, they almost appear to be an afterthought with little consideration of where they fit.

How can an organizational structure like our current hierarchy claim that its core or primary work is important when students and their learning needs appear at or near the bottom of the structure? How do we ensure support for the classroom when it is at or near the

bottom of our organizational structure? Do we pay more attention and give more resources to boards, superintendents, and/or principals who may or may not do the work that most significantly impacts classrooms? Often, we do. In any hierarchy, not just in education, money, time, and other supports are difficult to filter down to the level where the critical work is done.

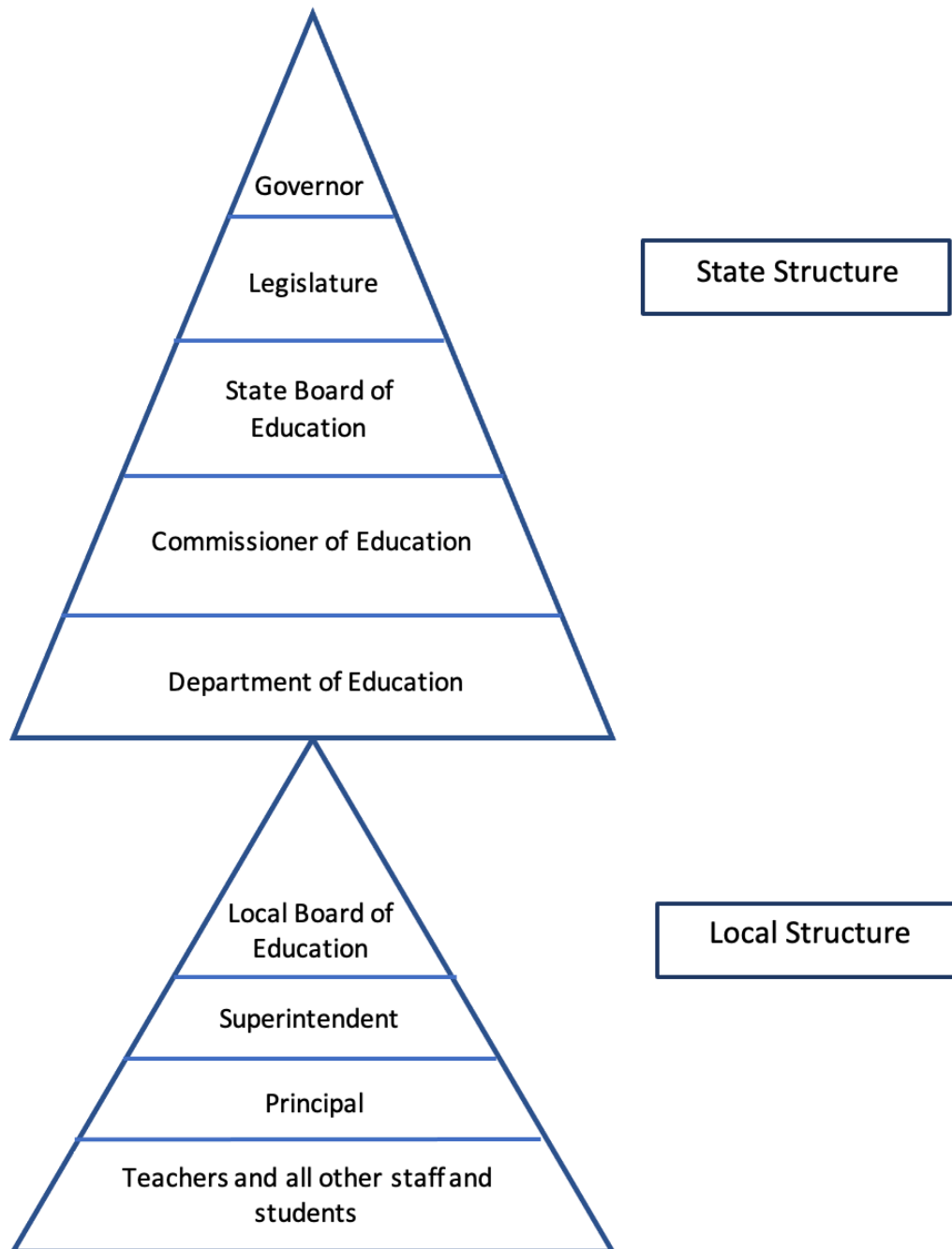
The State's Role in the Hierarchy of Education

Everyone knows that public education is a function of the state. The state has delegated most of that function to the local governance, especially where the lion's share of the public support from taxes comes from local property taxes. However, states recently have been more vigorous in directing local education and the resources to fund it. The renewed interest of the state is often in response to the heavy hand of the federal government demanding accountability. Many states reach deep into local education as education is one of the largest expenditures, and people want to know what they are getting for their money.

The Relationship of State and Local Education Systems

In a hierarchical structure, the classroom and the student are further displaced when the state is added to the alleged "system," making it even less of a system. Why? Because, again, there is no center when the state and local hierarchies are placed together.

The model below illustrates that the state role in many states has grown larger than the local role. While local citizens may pay the largest portion of their taxes to support the schools, the state has seen fit to feel obligated to direct how much local money can be spent, and in some cases, what it can be spent for. Much of state control has resulted from the catalysts of growing resentment about taxes, growing resentment about education from a population without children in schools, a growing disenfranchisement of parents desiring private schooling for their children, and an increasingly biased media in opposition to public education.

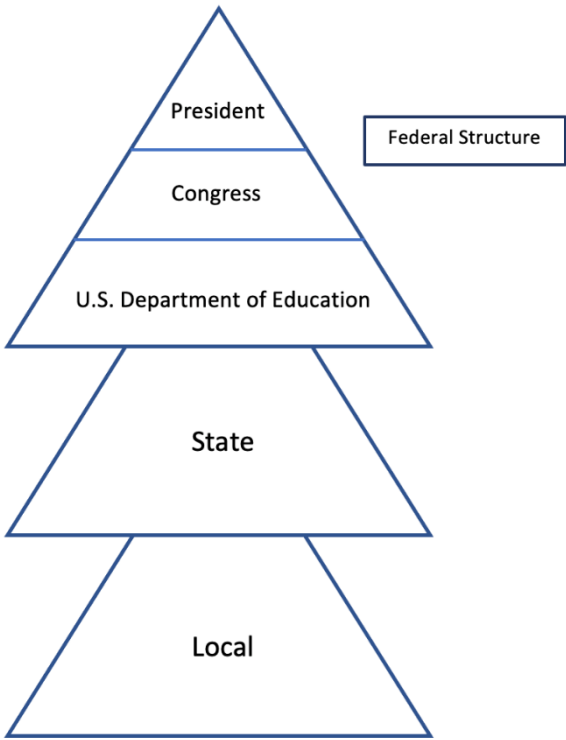


The coupling of the state and local function of education does not create a system either. There still is no center, no core work. The core or center of the education system cannot be located in State Departments of Education or the Legislatures or Governor's offices. The layers of the state and local hierarchies push the main function of teaching and learning and the work of teachers and students further to the bottom of the hierarchy. The expansion

of the state's role in education has resulted in diminishing the role of the local structure so that fewer and fewer decisions are being made at the local level. For the work of many educators, this has resulted in diminished options and choices, reducing their roles to largely complying with laws or following rules. Discretion at the local level is almost absent.

The Federal Government in the Hierarchy of Education

If we add the federal structure on top of the state structure, we get an even more diminished view of local education. The federal government has always played two distinct roles in state and local education.



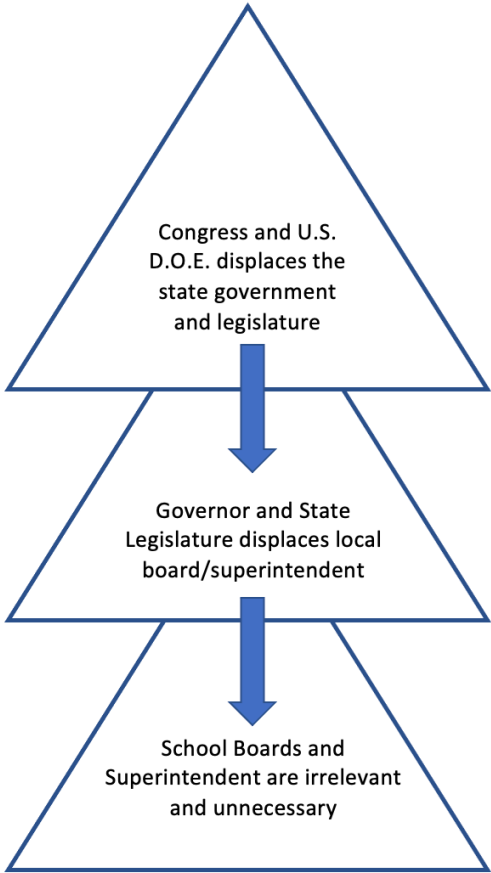
First, the federal government has financially supported those programs that have a national public interest, like driver’s education, vocational education, and technology instruction and equipment. In each case, there is a public interest or benefit to be derived, such as fewer teenage driver accidents and deaths, greater expansion of programs to support rural and agricultural communities, family and consumer sciences, health education, and others.

Secondly and more recently, the federal government has expanded its role beyond an impact to benefit individual students to also ensure equity for specific groups of individuals – a role that has spawned programs like Title I (1964), Title IX (1972), and the Education for All Handicapped Act (1974), programs for children living in poverty and others. While the funds provided by the federal government allow schools to provide services to specific groups, they have rarely provided sufficient funding to match the total cost to the State or to the local school districts. As a result, federal mandates

have resulted in more rules to follow and have removed more discretion from both the State and the local school district.

The advent of the federal No Child Left Behind Act and its descendants, Race to The Top, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), has compounded the impact of regulations from a distance, leaving the policymakers to demand accountability, primarily through school and district-based test scores.

The effect of.....[NCLB](#), RTT, and ESSA, etc.



of education. It simply compounds the effects of the state and local hierarchies. To this expanded hierarchy, there is still no center core work. What should be the core work - teaching and learning - still resides at the bottom of the hierarchy.

The impact of State and Federal mandates and intervention into previously local decision-making has all but driven out discretion by local school boards, local superintendents of schools, and building principals. It is not hard to imagine what

discretion is left for the teacher when the decisions routinely cascade downward in the hierarchy, with each level claiming its rightful amount of discretion and need for control. Those at the bottom of any hierarchy - especially in education - become disillusioned, report low rates of job satisfaction, and are poised to leave their job or profession because of low morale. We

are currently seeing this play out with thousands of teachers leaving the profession because they feel they are not being adequately supported to do their jobs – teach and meet the needs of their students.

Chapter 4

How Should We Think About Standards?

Where do standards fit into all this implementation of assessment and accountability? Clearly, we want education leaders to have a mindset that will ensure classroom purposes and practices will maximize opportunities for all students to learn what is meaningful and expected – not just “what’s on the test.”

Effective classrooms must be “standards informed” and should be:

- Reflected in the expectations of the classroom
- Grade-level and content appropriate
- Clearly understood by teachers and students
- Be accessible to students

Without standards for the classroom, both teachers and students may drift - not teaching and learning what is expected. The importance of standards is clear. **When used as the framework for teaching and learning, standards should change everything.** At least, they are supposed to! Standards should define what students are to know and be able to do. Standards should be the target we hold visible, high, and constant to guide teaching and learning. Standards should inform our attention to the process and the outcomes of schooling.

How Standards Should Be Developed

We should use standards to build curriculum, design instruction, and deliver instruction that supports students in meeting appropriate expectations for learning –intended learning targets. There are no perfect models or processes for adopting/adapting standards.

However, informed decisions about standards, their development, and implementation are possible. Standards developed through a bottom-up process may be slower and more

deliberate, but the process may also produce higher levels of specificity, clarity, and rigor than a top-down process, which can result in problems with fragmentation and lack of clarity. Standards that are not understood are useless and tend to distort the work of the classroom.

By bottom-up, we mean processes that are integrative and include conversations throughout the entire community of education – parents, the public, educators, and policymakers. Through processes that engage stakeholders at all levels, the standards are not “defined,” they are “derived” from research, promising practices, the consensus from community-informed thought, and models that create coherence and encourage creativity.

Standards must be connected to something in the world into which the learner will go. Learning throughout life, earning a living wage in a satisfying job/career, living in a democratic world, and continuing post-graduation education are key connections to which standards should be linked.

Standards must be clear enough to guide policy, specific enough to determine appropriate practice, and rigorous enough to motivate the best performance. Further, standards should be the basis for aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Thus, assessments - *for* learning (formative) and *of* learning (summative) - must accurately reflect the standards they measure.

Standards-based assessment at the classroom level is the foundation of a valid accountability system; external tests should not be the only measures of student learning to judge the quality of education in schools. It is essential to validate classroom assessment and provide benchmarks for evaluating the results of classroom assessments. Understanding the relationship between standards, assessment, and accountability in this way will go a long way in understanding that assessment is about much more than “what’s on the test.”

Leading With Standards and Documenting Achievement

It’s not possible to lead or manage the achievement of standards. Meeting the expectations of standards relies on effective teaching and learning at the classroom level. However, it is possible and desirable to lead and manage the process of improving instruction, thereby moving students toward meeting the standards. Achieving the standards should be

observable by the student and the teacher resulting in a visible behavior or change in behavior that indicates the students have made progress or have achieved the expectation identified in the standard.

How teachers and students document the behavior intended as evidence of the achievement of the standards requires the professional judgment of a teacher. And the evidence used as achievement benchmarks should be decided by the teacher and the student in advance of their learning.

Standards, Teaching, Learning, and Assessment: Bringing Them Together

Ensuring that schools successfully meet the needs and learning expectations of all students requires bringing together the successful implementation of standards, teaching, learning, and assessment. In practice, we would expect to see:

- Standards-based classrooms with clearly defined structures and functions:
 - Standards define what is to be achieved by the learner.
 - Classroom instruction is planned around and focused on specific outcomes.
- Course subject content is never an outcome; it is a vehicle to reach an outcome.
 - Desired outcomes exist in a hierarchy of content, skill, concept, and application.
- Assessment is seldom an event; it is a process.
 - Assessment is embedded in and integrated with instruction and is designed before instruction.
 - Assessment is used by teachers to plan instruction and to engage students in a shared understanding of the intended results of instructional activities.
 - Assessment serves both the formative and summative functions.
- Student self-assessment is an important component of the assessment process.
 - Self-assessment must be taught/ learned.
 - Students will know “how good is good enough.”
 - Students can determine what and how well they are learning.
 - Students can take responsibility for their learning.

- Self-assessment is key to developing motivated, independent, and maturing learners.
- The school integrates individual classrooms into school-wide/collaborative dialogues for the articulation of standards and for evaluating group performance both horizontally and vertically.
 - The school engages all its partners in helping all students achieve high expectations.
- Schools that have created standards-based classrooms develop supportive and complementary assessments and accountability systems. The following changes would begin to emerge that indicate that system changes and changes to culture are taking root.
 - Standards become the framework for conversations – teacher to student, student to parent, parent to teacher, teacher to teacher, and teacher to administrator.
 - Equity of opportunity (to learn) drives instruction.
- Whole class instruction and individual student progress in meeting a standard is informed and judged by the assessment of achievement (formal and informal).
- Instruction and instructional strategies vary according to individual student needs.
- Instruction is adjusted based on whole-class progress and differentiated for individual student progress toward standards or benchmarks.
- Student progress in the curriculum is determined by demonstrating that the specifications for what is to be learned have been demonstrated and met.
 - Equity of outcomes is the measure of success.
- All students learn to higher levels than previously.
- The achievement of subgroups mirrors the achievement of the whole group.

Chapter 5

Assessment Re-visioned

We've established that assessment is a process instead of a testing event. Let's imagine what a meaningful classroom assessment experience might look like between teacher and student. The meaning of "assessment" comes from the Greek words meaning "to sit beside" - they say nothing about testing. Picture a teacher and student sitting side-by-side, conversing about what is being taught and what the student has learned. If the student can tell the teacher what they have learned, can we trust that they, in fact, have learned? Can we agree that there is evidence of learning in the student's telling? We think so.

Accepting such a vision of assessment - teacher and student sitting side by side - it becomes reasonable to question the wisdom of having the student then take a "test" as the test will likely reveal little evidence of learning. Getting the right answers on a paper-and-pencil or computerized test is not the same as demonstrating or conversing about what has been learned.

Working toward this type of authentic classroom-based assessment requires all teachers to learn the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of using assessments to document the learning of their students in the classroom. It's also our vision that teacher-leaders have experience and expertise in working with students at a range of achievement levels and who make progress in meeting appropriate learning standards. For teachers lacking this experience or expertise, school leaders should provide collegial learning opportunities with other professionals to assist and confirm their work or to consult with them about changes to make.

Ensuring The Quality of Assessments

While every assessment does not need to undergo a collegial review, it is advised and encouraged to submit a sample of assessments, or a systematically collected portfolio of assessments, for a "moderation" review - a process intended to provide feedback to teachers and the educational system about the overall quality of their assessments by noting strengths as well as areas that need improvement.

Conducted by experienced professionals trained in the moderation review process, the review ensures the quality of assessments, including their validity, reliability, and fairness. The results of the moderation review can provide the foundation for improving teaching and learning for individual students as well as groups of students by identifying showing learning gaps or deficits.

Anytime an assessment or assessment system is rated by experienced professionals using the principles and criteria for quality assessments from the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), 2014), the results can be trusted to provide a foundation for improving instructional programs, classroom teaching, and learning for individual students, groups, or grade and school levels showing learning gaps or deficits. Measurement experts defined these guidelines, and using them as a framework for quality assessment, assessments that meet these criteria can be administered with confidence that they:

- Are aligned to the learning standards that have been taught.
- Are aligned to the curriculum that is/has been taught.
- Are fair and free of bias in the item content and procedures.
- Are developmentally appropriate.
- Demonstrate scoring consistency.
- Identify mastery levels.

The listing of these criteria is not rank ordered in terms of importance; all are equally important. However, it is important to note that the first four (i.e., standards alignment, curriculum alignment, fairness, and developmentally appropriate) address issues of the assessment items/content. The last two (i.e., scoring consistency and mastery levels) speak to the reliability of the scoring process and how to assign meaning to performance levels. Assessments that meet these criteria are judged to be valid, fair, and reliable measures. They can be trusted and used for reporting and decision-making. The following is a more detailed description of these assessment quality criteria.

Alignment to standards is critical to ensure an assessment is measuring the defined learning standards. There is a two-pronged process to determine how well an assessment is aligned with the learning standards. The first prong of the process is an activity known as “unpacking,” in which the language of each standard purported to be assessed is carefully examined to understand the content and the expectation of what is to be learned. The second prong is an item-by-item analysis to determine if what is being asked is consistent with the content and expectation of the learning standard(s). Strong levels of alignment between the learning standards and the assessment will produce an accurate measure of learning.

Alignment to the curriculum is equally important because it ensures students have had an opportunity to learn the content *before* the assessment occurs; this aspect of alignment is complimentary and supportive of ensuring the assessment is well-aligned with the learning standard. It basically comes down to ensuring that what is taught aligns with the standards and what is taught is what is measured.

Fairness as a criterion for assessment quality means the assessment items and procedures are free of bias and do not hinder students from exhibiting what they have learned. In other words, students are not at a disadvantage – are not “tripped up” – due to a lack of understanding because the language or references in the items do not align with the student's status, experience, culture, and context.

For example, an inner-city student may never have seen a yacht and has no mental image of one. If there are questions on a math assessment about a yacht, there will be students who cannot relate to the context of the questions and, therefore, may be unable to answer correctly.

Creating fair assessments can be difficult. The more diverse the population to be assessed, the greater the challenge to ensure all items and procedures are fair.

Developmentally appropriate assessments are best described as follows:

- written in a way that the student understands.
- reflect what is considered their expected level(s) of achievement, especially in reading.
- appropriate for the level of their intellectual capacity.

It takes great care and expertise to create assessment items that are developmentally appropriate for an individual student and even more so for a group or subgroup of students. A benefit of having classroom teachers create developmentally appropriate assessments is that they understand the capacities of individual students in the grade levels they teach, as well as the characteristics of individual learners.

Scoring consistency refers to the ability of the assessment takers to score at expected levels, score the same over multiple measures, and score at the same level over time. There are formulas that can be implemented to judge scoring consistency, and they are recommended for the purpose of ensuring assessment validity.

Mastery levels on the assessment describe levels of learning students have demonstrated. These levels are typically set by professionals and are intended to be benchmarks of achievement that place students at a specific level of achievement on the assessment. Mastery-level data can guide strategies for instructional decision-making and improvement of learning over time.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Classroom-based and Large-Scale Assessments

When assessments are administered on a large scale, it is more difficult to ensure that the interpretation and use of scores from those assessments are fair and developmentally appropriate for the local student population, comprehensively represent the local curriculum, are based on appropriate mastery levels or consistently contribute to a narrative about student learning over time. However, with classroom-based assessments, the alignment of the assessment not only with curriculum and instruction but also for the local student population and context increases the validity and fairness of these assessments and consistent and comprehensive interpretation and use of the assessment results.

The following charts illustrate the loss of assessment quality between classroom-based assessments and large-scale assessments. Even if the rating of the classroom-based

As illustrated in the charts below, quality ratings for classroom and school/district-based assessments dip into the “very good” or “good” levels, but the validity and reliability remain

sufficient to trust the results. In such cases, multiple measures should be used to compare the results across various instruments and settings.

Using the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014) criteria for quality assessments, the following charts illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of classroom-based and larger-scale assessments and their potential assessment quality ratings.

Quality Rating for Classroom-Based Assessments

		<i>Quality Criteria</i>					
		Alignment to Standards	Alignment to Curriculum	Bias Free	Developmentally Appropriate	Scoring Consistency	Mastery Levels
Quality Rating	Exemplary	←→		←→			
	Very Good						
	Good						
	Acceptable						
	Unacceptable						

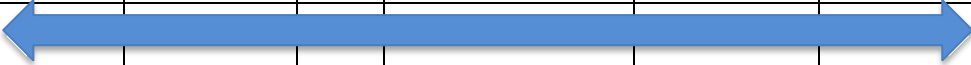
Quality Rating for Large-Scale Assessments

		<i>Quality Criteria</i>						
		Alignment to Standards	Alignment to Curriculum	Bias Free	Developmentally Appropriate	Scoring Consistency	Mastery Levels	
Quality Rating	Exemplary			←→			←→	
	Very Good	←→						
	Good							
	Acceptable							
	Unacceptable							

Quality Rating for School/District Assessments

It is more difficult to achieve high-quality rankings when assessments are used across groups, and the more the groups vary from each other, the more the first three quality criteria are impacted (i.e., alignment to standards, alignment to curriculum, and fairness). However, if assessments maintain a “very good” or “good” rating, the results can be trusted and used to plan school, classroom, or individual improvement.

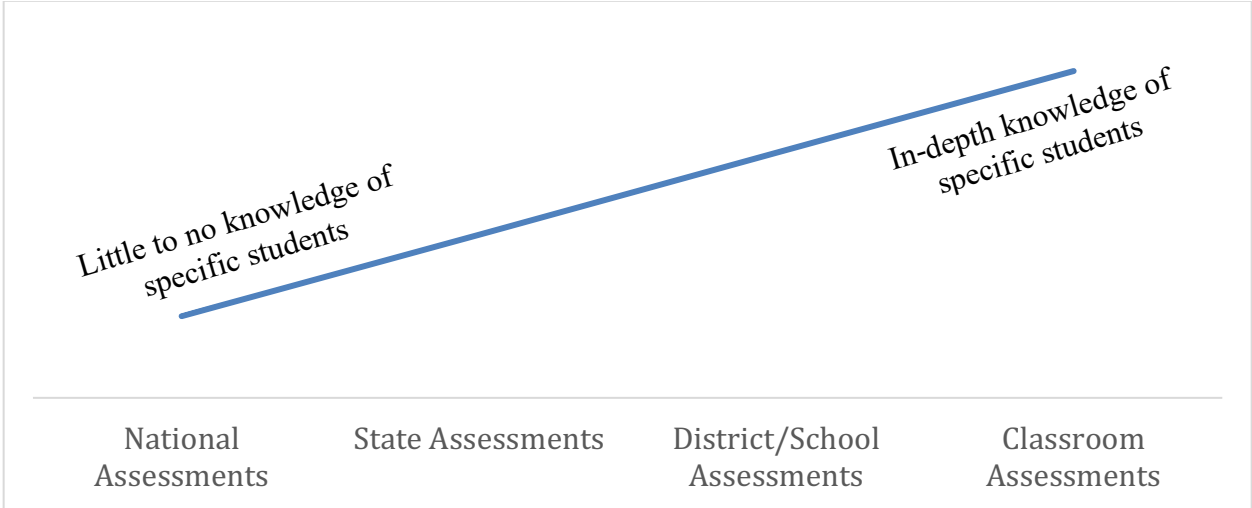
		Quality Rating for Standardized- NRTs (Alone)					
		<i>Quality Criteria</i>					
Quality Rating		Alignment to Standards	Alignment to Curriculum	Bias Free	Developmentally Appropriate	Scoring Consistency	Mastery Level
		Exemplary					
Very Good							
Good							
Acceptable							
Unacceptable							



Standardized or norm-referenced tests (NRTs) are problematic for a variety of reasons, and the moderation review process clearly shows what the problems are. For NRTs or standardized tests of any kind, the rating for all six quality criteria is usually low. And while NRTs are often deemed “acceptable” for state and federal accountability purposes, educators should use caution in using NRT results for decision-making intended to improve teaching and learning for students.

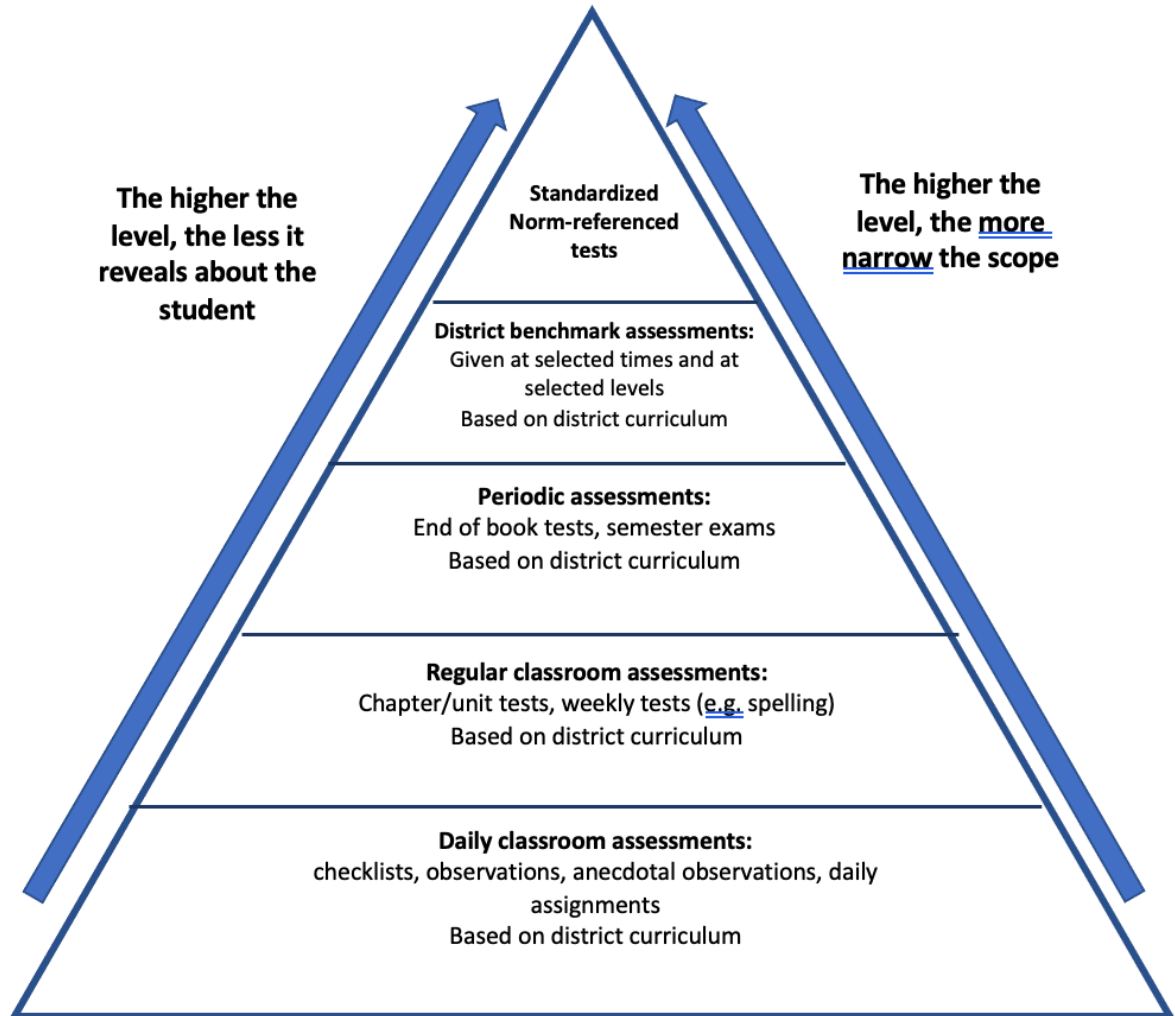
The major problem with NRTs or standardized assessments is the lack of sufficient alignment to standards, which means it is impossible to know if students have met or are making progress in meeting the expectations of the standards. In addition, NRTs rarely match

the curriculum that is actually taught and that students are expected to learn in the local school. This can result in fairness issues if score-based inferences about academic proficiency are differentially impacted as a result of the gender, cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic background of the students at the local level.



One of the useful features of an NRT, however, is that an assessment expert can determine how much and how many of the measures of the instrument are aligned with the standards and the curriculum. Many NRTs have been reviewed for alignment to standards and curriculum and have been found to be between 35% and 40% aligned, which makes the instrument useful to compare local results to those questions that met the alignment requirement. NRT results can be used to validate the local assessments and their results, giving the school or district a comparison to district-wide, statewide, or national results.

LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT



Transforming Schools Through Formative and Classroom-based Assessments

Changing schools for the better by improving assessment processes will not be easy or quick. Teachers and school leaders often take time to see the connections between quality assessment and improving teaching and student learning with formative and classroom-based assessment as a foundational component. However, educators who have engaged in this work find that momentum develops as the work proceeds, and what seems overwhelming at first becomes second nature as practice. And this is the kind of work that elevates our profession

and defines our professional responsibility. **No one can do this work for us. We must engage in it ourselves.** Our strategies must include redefining accountability so that we are clear about for what, to whom, how, and when we are to be accountable.

Guiding Principles for An Accountability System: What Will a System of Accountability Look Like?

An effective assessment and accountability system adheres to these guiding principles:

1. *The system builds from the classroom up – not from the top down.*

In other words, the system is created from the schoolhouse to the statehouse, not the reverse.

2. *An effective accountability report creates a narrative that may or may not include numbers but is never numbers (ranking) alone.*

Numbers are helpful in an effective accountability system if they are embedded in the narrative and explained in terms of what they mean and how the system uses them.

3. *Students are not the product of the accountability system – they, along with their parents, guardians, and community, are our clients.*

The products of the schools and classrooms are the curricula that are designed and implemented, the instruction that is planned, the learning activities that are implemented, and the learning our students demonstrate. Reporting about what schools do, what teachers teach, and what students are learning are critical elements of an accountability system.

4. *The system of assessment and accountability must be educational in practice, not compliance driven.*

Compliance-driven actions or activities rarely elicit our best efforts; they typically result in responses often characterized by concession, surrender, and obedience. We do just enough to meet the requirements of the compliance directive.

- a. Accountability representing our best efforts must originate from within the system; it cannot be prompted from the outside.

- b. Externally mandated assessment and accountability systems can damage the social structure of schools by holding teachers and students to a standard for which they have had little to no input or capacity to meet the standard.
- c. To be embraced and be implemented with professional efforts, an accountability system must have been created with the work of teachers and administrators at the school and classroom levels.

Chapter 6

The Goals of Assessment and Accountability

The primary goal of assessment is to inform and to be accountable for the work we do. In aiming for this goal, schools have a choice - they can step up and “be accountable” through standards-based instruction and assessment practices, or they can stand back, wait, and “be held accountable” for meeting externally imposed accountability requirements. In taking a proactive stance and holding themselves accountable, schools must also be clear about the work they must do.

Clarity of the purpose of the accountability and assessment system is critical to its validity and usefulness. Answering two critical questions will help achieve this clarity:

- Why is this system being implemented?
- What are we to be accountable for?
- To whom are we to be accountable?

The answers to both questions must be focused on the improvement of teaching and learning. To achieve exemplary levels of accountability for classroom teaching and learning, schools must marshal all aspects and resources of the system to that end, including:

1. budget priorities and allocation of resources
2. priorities for staffing and new hires
3. professional development for staff
4. placement and progress of students
5. communication with stakeholders

6. communication with stakeholders
 - a. school improvement plans and goals
 - b. system work and impacts
7. evaluation of programs and curriculum
8. inform the system and classroom of the progress of students in the system
9. inform the judgments being made about the quality of the progress in key subgroups and the equity of the results of subgroups
10. inform and guide decisions about the legal and policy constraints of the system

Step Three: Create an accountability system built on sound policy and practices which are evidence-based.

To do this, we would need to:

1. The policy of assessment would state a clear purpose and provide a framework of practice for teaching and learning.
2. Data is the tool:
 - a. to inform the decision-making of teachers and for school leaders to judge the quality of student learning
 - b. to determine the sufficiency of the learning being demonstrated.
3. The policy of assessment and the use of the data as a tool are based on these critical actions:
 - a. Collecting appropriate, valid, and useful data is key to continuous improvement and key to making judgments about the kind and quality of student learning.
 - b. Reporting data in understandable ways to our public and stakeholders so they are informed and engaged in the work of the classroom and school.
 - c. Using the data to inform continuous improvement without which judgments about progress would be more guesswork than professional judgments.
 - d. Focusing on improvement, not scores.
 - e. Reporting trends in data that show improvement, or lack thereof.

- f. Reporting data in ways that build a culture of improvement, not status as compared to other systems, or as in ranking or grading the system.

Step Four: Create a framework for assessment that provides a common language, so educators share the same understanding and definitions of assessment practices and procedures.

To do this, we would need to:

1. Answer the question: What does “accountability” mean when we say we are “being accountable?”
 - a. Accountability is a public process of gathering data about student learning.
 - b. It’s also about reporting the data to stakeholders within and outside the education system.
2. Provide information about student learning is essential to stakeholders if we expect that they will provide support and be a support system for continuous improvement.
3. Understand how assessment provides the link between teaching and learning and accountability.
 - a. Accountability is continuous and begins with the setting of formal expectations.
 - b. Learning activities are determined to match the capacity of the student.
 - c. Formative measures are implemented to determine student progress.
 - d. Summative measures are employed to judge the level and quality of the student’s work.
 - e. Accountability policies and practices must clearly answer these questions:
 - i. Who is responsible?
 - ii. For what are they responsible?
 - iii. To whom are they responsible?
 - iv. When are they responsible?
 - v. How do they report to those to whom they are responsible?
 - vi. What are the expectations for follow-up actions they are reporting?

Redefining Accountability

The following steps offer a guide to redefining accountability to change schools for the better by improving student learning.

Step One: Operationalize our definitions of Assessment and Accountability

Assessment – a process of information-gathering and feedback

Accountability - continuous improvement, not status reporting

What would we see if we operationalized our definitions of assessment and accountability? What capacity would teachers and principals have to change the definitions of our work in assessment and accountability? To answer these questions, we would need to:

1. Build the capacity of educators to authentically assess student work to evaluate and report student progress.
2. Build the capacity of teachers to know how and what students are learning or are not learning.
3. Build the capacity of administrators to support and advocate for the assessment work of the classroom teacher.
4. Integrate assessment into a teaching model of instruction that embraces instruction, teaching, and assessment aligned to the curriculum (standards).

Step Two: Design assessments with fidelity using the key constructs and concepts that impact how we define and operationalize assessment and accountability.

To do this, we would need to:

1. Align assessment and accountability to a vision and mission to inform the work of the teacher and the student in the classroom and inform the system of the support needed for continuous improvement.
2. Be clear that assessment is the process of seeking information through student responses. The degree to which the responses are aligned to a formal or informal expectation will inform the progress or achievement levels of the student.

3. Design the system of assessment and accountability based on evidence-based design and practices.
 - a. Quality learning is defined by formal expectations of students' behavior and response.
 - b. Equity of opportunities to learn and demonstrate responses to the intended formal expectations
 - c. Accountability of the professionals and the system aligned to the teaching and learning processes of the classroom with a goal of continuous improvement of teaching and learning

Accountability In Action: What Does It Look Like As A System?

The following operating definition might help our understanding of what we mean by an accountability system:

Accountability is the public review of the results of teaching and learning as determined by student responses to activities aligned to key formal expectations and includes the system that is required to support and improve both teaching and learning so that there is equity of opportunity to learn what is expected.

Clearly, accountability is more than the reporting of assessment results. It is the reporting of current efforts and plans for improving teaching and learning and the cultures of the schools and classrooms where teaching and learning occurs. An effective accountability reporting system is intended to be a catalyst for continuous improvement and to do so, the system reports must include data about:

1. Who is learning?
2. What are they learning?
3. Who is not learning?
4. What are they not learning?
5. What needs to be done to improve teaching and learning for all the learners?

An effective accountability and reporting system must embrace core values that align the system with the mission, vision, and values of the education system and align to the same mission, vision, and values of the school and classrooms.

The assessment and accountability system must be built and aligned from the ground up. Assessment and accountability begin with what students and teachers are doing and what students are learning. The setting of standards, alignment of curriculum, alignment of learning activities to standards, and the creation of formative and summative measures must begin at the school and classroom levels.

Assessment and accountability reporting systems must inform the stakeholders of the equity of opportunity to learn what is expected of each student. Opportunity to learn is the key to successful learning for each student and is tailored to each student so that progress is made and documented. Without the equity of opportunity to learn, the expectation of equitable outcomes is hollow. No student will learn what is expected if there is no opportunity to learn.

Asking the Right Questions Before Giving an Assessment

A teacher or a schoolhouse of teachers working collaboratively on assessment should always know what they are testing, who is to be tested, and why they are testing. Blindly giving tests because the text calls for one or because the system or the state mandates it is not professional behavior for educators. Teachers and principals should work together to answer specific questions about any testing, so they are clear about what, who, and why.

The following questions, adapted from Nordegren (2022), guide educators in understanding the key aspects of their assessment processes and procedures.

Question 1:

What is the purpose of this test or assessment? Specifically, who is it intended for, and what is it intended to reveal or document? Without answers to these questions, no assessments should be given.

Question 2:

Given the purpose of the assessment, how will I/we use the information gained from the assessment/test? All staff should be involved in the conversation about how the results will be communicated to parents and the community.

Question 3:

Is the assessment's connection between purpose and use clear and consistent?

The assessment's connection to purpose and use should be straightforward and clear. Using an instrument not aligned with purpose and use will likely interfere with what is being taught and what the students are expected to demonstrate.

Confusion among learners about what is being taught and what is being tested will block motivation to learn, produce inequities for certain learners, and can be confusing to almost anyone in the community.

Question 4:

Do the data from this assessment add information we need to inform important decisions, especially about student progress?

Question 5:

Will my students understand why they are taking this assessment and how it is related/aligned to what they are learning in the classroom?

Question 6:

Will the students be able to use this assessment and the results to judge their learning and plan for what else needs to be learned?

Question 7:

Can I explain this assessment and/or the results to the parents of my students and the community?

The Value of Formative and Classroom-based Assessments

Formative and classroom-based assessments are not new concepts; however, their appropriate use is often lacking. Formative and classroom-based assessments hold great

potential and power for educators and students. Once considered “the stepchild” of summative assessment (testing), they no longer live in the shadow of summative measures. Formative and classroom-based assessments can reframe the work of educators and schools and improve the cultures and systems of schools - they can change education for the better.

As the use of formative and classroom-based assessments increases, and they take their place in the professional practices of educators, schools will likely never be the same. As a result, we will define and think about our work differently. The paradigm of formative classroom-based assessment will shift the work of educators and students taking it to new levels of promise and potential.

Formative and classroom-based assessments can also reframe the work of accountability by:

1. Building capacity for improvement
2. Fostering commitment, instead of compliance, to improve student achievement
3. Changing the conversation about instruction and improving student learning
4. Prompting integrated, collaborative work by teachers and principals.
5. Integrating improvement with public reporting
6. Ensuring all students are included
7. Placing classroom teaching and learning at the center of the educational system at the school, district, and state levels

Formative and classroom-based assessments can also redefine leadership roles and support the distribution of leadership throughout the system and at all levels. Leadership in formative and classroom-based assessment is reflected in:

- teachers as instructional leaders
- principals as leaders of learning
- superintendents of schools as leaders of continuous improvement
- Boards of Education as leaders of policy

This renewed interest in formative and classroom-based assessments comes as we have become weary of standardized, external, and high-stakes assessments mandated by the federal or state governments. After decades of attempts at reform and an unending litany of new

initiatives, all from outside the system of schooling, what remains is a tightly held belief that “assessment will drive reform.” Or put even more stringently, “what gets measured gets done.” If we accept this notion, it doesn’t matter what and how we assess.

However, if we want learning to truly be the focus of education reform, we must measure real learning, not something else – an alleged “proxy” for learning – such as a standardized test score or percentile ranking. When we measure learning, we should connect standards and curriculum to instruction, thereby linking teaching with learning (Katim,1983).

How and when we measure learning is also important. Measuring formatively at the classroom level, multiple times, in multiple ways creates a learning focus, elevates teaching to a leadership role, and changes the culture of the system and the school to one of learning. (Senge, 2009)

Formative and classroom-based assessments are ways of collecting information about student learning that will be used to inform the effectiveness of the teaching and will inform what is reported in the accountability reporting system. The principles of formative and classroom-based assessment measures differ from standardized, external measures and measures that do not closely align with the curriculum and instruction of the classroom. Formative and classroom-based assessments are:

- internal to the system or organization (not outside or external)
- about the data (not the measure)
- processes of data collection to inform (not measure as measuring results in freezing and distortion)
- not system-based
- measures of learning (not content awareness)
- multiple measures; multiple opportunities (not a single event)
- can show improvement over time (not status of the moment or specific point in time)
- responsive to teaching, to students, and to their learning (not static, insensitive, or rigid)
- about informing teacher judgment and instruction

- about inspiring and creative teaching (not prescribing rigid, compliance-based instruction (Christensen, 2007)

In addition, we could summarize formative assessment as follows:

- standards-aligned
- designed by teachers
- moderated for quality
- valid and reliable
- have a high impact, not high stakes (Gallagher, 2007)

Trusting the Results of School and Classroom-Based Assessments for Accountability

Trusting the results of assessment data for accountability reporting purposes requires meeting two levels of quality criteria set by an external agency that is respected and has vetted the criteria over multiple settings and multiple iterations, such as the American Psychological Association.

These criteria levels include (1) reliability - the consistency of the responses to the assessment, (2) validity - the assessment measures what it is intended to measure. Assessment validity addresses these specific aspects:

- Content validity – does the content of the test measure stated objectives?
- Criterion validity – do the scores correlate to an outside reference?
- Construct validity – does the assessment correspond to other significant variables?

The second level of criteria for trusting the results of classroom and school-based assessment data reflects how the assessments are created and their alignment to the standards. Specific aspects of these criteria for quality include (1) alignment of the assessment to the standards; (2) alignment of curriculum to the standards; (3) the fairness of the instruments; (4) the instruments are developmentally appropriate for the learners, (5) instruments yield consistent results over time, and (6) mastery levels are set in advance and are used as benchmarks of student progress.

The Unintended Consequences of Measurement

Regardless of intention or the degree of care that is used in the design and implementation of assessments, there are unintended consequences that must be mitigated if possible. The following are ten consequences to anticipate.

First, measurement freezes. Measurement freezes the instrument in place, putting pressure on the system to use it repeatedly to compare the progress of one group with another. Not only does the measuring freeze the measure in place, but it also freezes what is being measured; changes in the standards and the measure result in the loss of comparability over time.

Comparisons are inevitable, but if comparisons are made from one iteration of the measuring to another, or if trends are to be analyzed, the measure and what is being measured must remain intact, or the comparisons are invalid.

Few individuals realize the impact that measuring metrics or measuring instruments have on our lives. For example, America is the only developed country that does not use the metric system. While the metric system is creeping into our culture, the use of measures in inches, feet, yards, and miles persists. As a result, every mechanic that works on cars must have two sets of tools – metric and SAE.

Second, there are some inconvenient truths about assessments that we must recognize and for which we must mitigate the negative impacts. For example, externally imposed tests, especially standardized instruments, tend to measure “advantage,” not learning. In addition, these tests tend to mold curriculum and instruction to fit the measure, often changing classroom practice in ways that do not improve teaching and learning. They may, in fact, increase the time spent on the drill of content in preparation for the tests.

Third, compliance, coupled with testing, cannot embrace all learners or all teachers. Large-scale and standardized measures are insensitive to individual students and are not diagnostic. Most such measures cannot be brought down to the student and/or the standard level.

Fourth, standardized external measures create no capacity to change. They do not inform the important decisions that must be made. Conversations about “n” sizes, confidence intervals, and inclusion percentages are not conversations about teaching and learning.

Fifth, in addition to the freezing noted above, external, standardized, high-stakes testing has frozen our hierarchy of grade levels, trapping students into a grade level that is not based on their current or prior learning. They have narrowed the definition of “education” to the assessment measures and to the resulting achievement scores. This has resulted in a tendency to focus on “how not to fail” rather than on how all students are learning. To improve test scores, the focus and most extra attention will be given to those just below the “passing” line and those most likely to help raise the school’s score averages.

Sixth, such practices have focused the work of educators on “technician work” that addresses problems instead of supporting their professional expertise and engagement to improve learning for all students. We have turned classrooms into content processing facilities and have kicked educators to the curb in favor of outside expertise making judgments about school achievement. We have shifted the running of our schools to those outside the system and enabled them to do so by “remote control.” We have shifted the school agenda from improvement to one that is solely focused on failing schools. In addition, we have shifted assessment from finding out what our students know and can do and the variety of ways in which they are smart to identifying failing students and failing schools.

Seventh, we have redefined accountability which has now become “measuring standards” rather than “measuring against standards.” If we are measuring standards, we are likely focusing on the content of the standard rather than on the student’s performance or demonstration of their learning of the standard’s content.

Measuring against standards is usually involved in performance measures where professional interpretation of a student's response behavior is what the standard is calling for. In other words, professional judgment is required. When we measure standards, judgment does not enter the picture as a specific response has been designated as the only one acceptable, and almost anyone can determine if it is the “right” response or answer.

Eight, a single measure administered at a learning endpoint tells us little about why or how something was not learned. Yet, this is what we are doing in our current testing culture. It is as if we start school in August, go outside and fire an arrow (a plan for instruction) off in the air. Then, in May, we look for the arrow and draw a target around it, hoping the intended learning occurred. Consider the example of the rocket to the moon in 1969 was off course 95% of the time but still landed exactly where they had targeted it to land due to the continuous assessment of the speed and location of the rocket using the data to guide the rocket to the intended target. This kind of continuous monitoring and adjusting of instruction to help students hit the learning targets will win the day in improving student achievement.

Ninth, “what gets measured gets taught” is one of the mantras of the external assessment proponents in assuming that if something is not measured it either does not get taught or is taught poorly. However, **the reality and truth is that (1) what gets measured gets reported, and (2) what gets measured and reported often gets distorted.**

Tenth, assessment data collected with little regard to policy issues and standards narrow what can be measured. This leads to a narrowing of the work of teachers and administrators – a “de-professionalizing” of their efforts. Data collected in this way eliminates the need for expert judgments of professional educators about the levels and quality of student learning. In this way, again, we may succeed in kicking educators to the curb with testing that drives the results of their work.

Policy Dimensions of Assessment and Accountability

Inherent in assessment and accountability processes and systems are considerations that extend beyond the student, classroom, and school. Thus, educators must also understand the policy dimensions of assessment and accountability. The following are several important policy considerations.

First, policy should answer questions of why? what for? what purpose? and who is responsible? Policy and practice should be framed and developed to create assessments to support teaching and learning. Teachers should be regarded as leaders of reform, not impediments to it.

Second, accountability systems must focus on developing capacity, not control. They should foster commitment, not compliance. They should promote the integration of school improvement and accountability efforts. Accountability systems must risk complexity rather than demand simplicity; must include all students; must leave no teacher behind; engage all stakeholders, keep pedagogy—teaching and learning—at the center; and promote high-impact, not high stakes, assessments. (Gallagher, 2007)

Third, policies should solidly link the work of assessment and accountability to school improvement efforts. Some policies enable desired actions, while others hinder intended, constructive actions. Without the coupling of accountability and school improvement, we are left with scorekeeping. Without the coupling of accountability and school improvement, we lose control, or the potential of the positive impact standards can have on teaching and learning.

Fourth, accountability must be internal to the system to be a catalyst for improvement, must be educational in practice, and not be compliance-based. It must be schoolhouse-based, not statehouse based.

Fifth, policies should not disable the school’s efforts to improve teaching and learning. High-stakes testing can drive out drives out good educational practices, especially ones designed by teachers. Classroom practice is often limited to teaching what is on the test. Using the word “policy” does not liberalize the application of practice. In fact, it can narrow it to specific purposes, applications, timeframes, and audiences. Rules and regulations often define the practice of assessments and do so in more rigid and limited terms.

Sixth, accountability policy should not support the overuse of assessment. More assessment is not necessarily better. Think about this metaphorically: You can’t fatten cattle by weighing them multiple times. In fact, the act of weighing a cow can be quite annoying to the cow and does not add to its weight. Unfortunately for the cow, if it weighs in at a certain level, it may find itself being shipped off to the slaughterhouse - not a good mental model for our classrooms.

These policy considerations should support three key dimensions of accountability and cannot be repeated often enough:

1. The accountability system must be based on appropriate, valid, and useful assessment data.
2. Data must be reported in understandable ways to the public and internal/external stakeholders.
3. The system must use the data to inform continuous improvement.

A Statewide System of Formative Assessments

We usually think of formative assessments in the context of classroom and school-based learning rather than as a part of meeting state accountability requirements, which largely rely on standardized, summative measures. However, based on what we know about the value of formative assessments *for* learning, might we consider how they could be used in a statewide system of assessment and accountability?

First, such a system would be built on state-wide and state-approved standards that are locally defined. Second, it is a state-wide system of school and classroom-based assessments. Third, accountability is shared by all, from classroom to boardroom to statehouse. Fourth, the system puts the policy tools in the hands of practitioners by being clear about the outcomes expected and letting professionals determine the practice (Christensen, 2004).

Such a system of formative assessments would rely on multiple measures rather than a single test or assessment. There are two reasons to pursue multiple measures and classroom-based assessments for accountability. First, the current approaches based on single standardized tests mandated from outside of the school systems are often not a reliable reflection of what has been taught in the classroom. Secondly, these standardized, summative measures may not reflect what students have learned. We would be justified in describing an accountability system that doesn't provide this information as "disastrous."

As a result of current accountability systems, schooling, including teaching and learning, have all become distorted; indeed, they pose a danger to the historical expectations of schooling for all children. A system of assessment and accountability using quality formative assessments built from the classroom and school will be clear and comprehensive. The key

players in such a system - teachers and students - will know what next steps to take and what practices to change to improve.

Chapter 7

Data Is Not King – It is a Tool

Schools invest a lot of time and energy in data retreats and data dives, searching numerous data sources to understand what is and why it might be. These processes may be logical and systematic. Other processes for analyzing data may not be so thoughtful – perhaps more like climbing into a trash dumpster to see what we can find. Once we find it, we claim it was exactly what we were looking for.

There are problems with both approaches; both can distort the use of data and create conditions that border on inappropriate and unethical practices. These efforts often turn into processes of “chasing data” and may not improve teaching and learning. What usually happens when we chase data is that we find outliers. These outliers may at first look like substantial findings but may, in fact, be data fragments. Such fragments are detached from the reasons for measuring the context in which the fragment was generated. Some are detached from the larger context of the data leaving only fragments of data with little or no meaning. Some refer to these fragments or figments as data anomalies caused by factors apart from the content of the assessment itself, such as the day and time of the assessment. Putting too much stock in these figments of data may interfere with analyzing the data over time for trends that can accurately inform decision-making and planning for next steps and improvement.

We talk incessantly about “what the data say.” Data do not actually “talk;” they do not “say” anything. Instead, they are an important tool – perhaps one of the most useful tools – we can use to inform what and how students are learning and the steps we should take to improve the instruction they receive.

The Role of Data in Assessment and Accountability

We do need appropriate and accurate data to inform the decisions we must make in our school systems - quality data that can be used with confidence. Without data to explain the work that has been done or the work yet to be done, we are working in the dark and guessing what our priorities should be to determine the next steps.

Programming pioneer Grace Hopper explained the importance of quality data, saying, “One accurate measurement is worth a thousand opinions, even expert opinions.” (Hopper, 2018). High-quality assessment data has been described as “the canary in the coal mine” (NWEA, 2018) because they can alert educators to dig deeper to learn more and/or inform decisions related to school improvement efforts, including:

1. *Allocation of resources.* Data provides the rationale for how much and when resources should be allocated.
2. *Evaluation of programs and instruction.* Data should help inform judgments about the progress of students and the effectiveness of instruction.
3. *Identification of professional development and professional learning needs.* High-quality data inform the system of the gaps in progress and can be an asset to encourage collaborative inquiry and problem-solving.
4. *Communication with communities inside and outside the school.*
 - a. Data can confirm or contradict stakeholder perceptions of school effectiveness.
 - b. Data is key in helping stakeholders create solutions to improve the practice of teachers and the learning of students.
5. *Information to guide improvement plans.* Whether at the system or school levels, quality data help educators:
 - a. Keep an improvement plan on track and inform any need for changes.
 - b. Identify learning losses and gaps
 - c. Re-enforce learning goals with teachers and students and support recovery from any learning losses

Ten Rules for the Professional Use of Data

To guard against chasing data fragments and engaging in the unproductive use of data, the following rules for using data will ensure a productive data review process and validity in the outcomes.

Rule 1: Create a data checklist for the school's accountability system.

Determine what data are available and can be used to answer the questions being asked about how well the school or district is doing. The following questions can help guide taking a data inventory:

- What data do we have to inform the issue or problem we are working on?
 - What additional data do we need?
 - When should the data we need be collected?
- How can we use data from multiple measures and multiple indicators?
 - Can we combine them in ways that inform our work?
- How can we ensure the data are interpreted correctly and used in valid ways?
- What are the key technical issues that will need to be addressed?
- How can judgments of progress, especially mastery or proficiency, be determined with validity?
- How do schools balance validity and reliability concerns in making decisions?

Rule 2: Beware of quick and easy solutions for managing and using data.

Many vendors are peddling quick and easy ways to collect data, collate it, and issue a report of findings. Contrary to their claims, these processes cannot be done effectively at a distance from the school. This work must be done by people in or close to the classrooms. Unfortunately, data can be a commodity to be bought and sold - packaged and marketed. Beware.

Rule 3: Not everything that can be counted, counts.

Attributed to Einstein, the statement, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted," (Cameron, 1963) cautions us to use data to inform rather than to drive our decision-making. The term "data-driven" is misleading and wrong. Data cannot "drive." At least, it should not. Data can inform our judgments, our planning, and the reporting of accountability for teaching and learning. It should never be the driver.

It's also important to remember that data can intimidate some people, threaten conventional wisdom, and challenge current authority. Caution must be used in implementing an accountability plan, especially when technology is used, to guard against making more of the data than what it shows. No matter what, bad data leads to bad decisions. The integrity of the data review process can get lost in the technology of instrumentation and reporting of results.

Rule 4: Data is about more than numbers.

Too often, data analysis for accountability purposes can bypass or obscure the broader context of the data. Understanding the context means asking why the data might be as they are and how we should respond as professionals. Answers to these questions should be at the crux of our decision-making.

We must guard against becoming too data-dependent, focusing only on the numbers and allowing them to "drive" all our actions and decision-making. Margaret Wheatley (1992) wisely advised that if our focus narrows to numbers, we will disconnect from the larger purpose and only do what is required.

Instead, we want to use data to understand the meaning and experiences behind them more fully.

Rule 5: Guard against indicators of accountability becoming outcomes.

One of the biggest pitfalls of data obsession is that indicators can become outcomes. Campbell's Law makes it clear: "The greater the social consequences associated with a quantitative indicator, the more likely it is the indicator itself will become corrupt—and the

more likely it is that the use of the indicator will corrupt the social processes it was intended to monitor.”

An example is many states and schools that have chosen graduation rates as an indicator of accountability. Thus, they must report it publicly, which inevitably makes it a competition for who has the highest rate. And unfortunately, to get to the highest rate, grades may be inflated so that more students graduate. Graduation rates indicate how students are progressing in the system and whether they are progressing on time. They should not be outcomes for judging the quality of a school.

Rule 6: Test data should not be the only evidence of student learning.

Test data is far too narrow to be the sole informant of how well a student is doing, let alone be diagnostic in ways that help plan for improving learning.

Data “collected” informally, in real-time, at the point of the classroom activity, can help teachers answer these key questions:

1. What are my students doing?
2. Why are they doing it?
3. How well are they doing it?
4. What feedback should I give to help them progress?

Appropriate teacher feedback in the classroom can help students answer these key questions:

1. How well am I supposed to do it?
2. Did I do it as well as I could or should have?

Using classroom data in this way will have a significant impact on improving teaching and learning.

Rule 7: Data must inform continuous school improvement.

Think briefly about what it takes to improve at golf and picture a golfer working hard on their game. It takes a process of continuous improvement to be good at golf –analyzing the success of a shot and using it as feedback to plan a strategy for the next one. The process continues as the game progresses. Getting good at the game requires continuous improvement.

The point of the golf metaphor is clear regarding getting good at schooling. Data as a feedback tool will inform the next steps and strategies for continuous school improvement.

Rule 8: Use appropriate data for appropriate assessment purposes.

The effective use of assessment data to improve schooling requires that educators clearly understand the purposes and outcomes of formative and summative assessments.

Summative assessment *of* learning data can inform the use and outcomes of processes, inputs, and capacities for schools. Formative assessment *for* learning data can effectively diagnose what and how well students are learning.

Stiggins (2017) reminds us that formative assessment data will matter most when they inform and empower the learner. The following example, the “Macy Morrison Effect,” illustrates the power of formative assessment data for a third grader named Macy Morrison, who was interviewed by *The Chicago Tribune*, Dell (2004), about her learning. When asked what she was learning and how she knew what was expected, Macy’s confident response included the following:

- *...” my expression was just right.”*
- *“I am getting there on my smoothness; I had a lot of stops.”*
- *“I get a little nervous.”*
- *“I know this is important.”*
- *“We take these tests so we can learn more, and the teachers can see how we are doing.”*

Rule 9: Develop a clear plan for communicating data and accountability information.

Communicating data and accountability information involves much more than a press release. We must ensure that reports:

- Promote appropriate interpretations and use of results,
- Provide data to schools and communities to answer the following:
 - Who is learning, and what are they learning?
 - Who is not learning, and what are they not learning?
 - What improvements are needed and should be implemented?

Accountability reports should also be designed to assist specific audiences and stakeholder groups - board, staff, media, parents, and other community members - to understand the results. The following is a model for creating such a plan.

An Action Plan for Communication About Assessments and The Results

Audience	What information do they want?	What information do they need and we want them to have?	How do we report both kinds of information/by whom?	How will we secure the feedback we need to improve communications?
Administration and Board				
Teachers and paraeducators				
Other staff				
Parents with children in school				
Public without children in school				
Legislators				
State Department of Education				

Rule 10: Accountability plans should be monitored and evaluated.

Finally, it’s important to consider how the accountability system will be monitored and evaluated. Such a plan must:

- Determine processes for responding to intended and unintended outcomes.

- Establish how the results of this monitoring and evaluation will be used to improve the system.
- Decide how to incorporate revisions to the system in the short term and over time.

Chapter 8

The Impact of Assessment on Schooling and Education

Classroom-based assessments are intended to transform the system of schooling that now exists and a system that does not and cannot meet the needs of all students, let alone each student. **Assessments are intended to transform the current system of “schooling” by measuring outcomes that represent higher levels of learning than the measures in standardized tests. Such a transformation in assessment would begin the transformation from “schooling” (content) to a system of “education” (outcomes).**

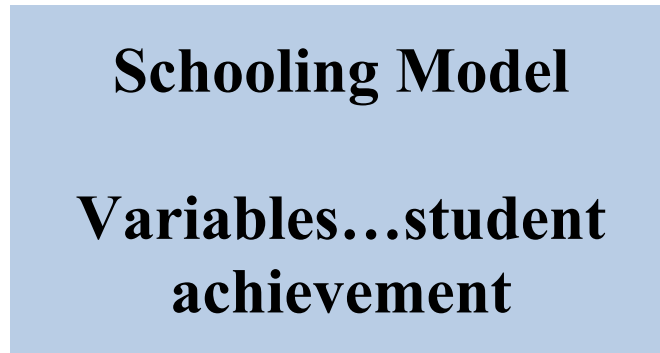
The Schooling Box

Imagine schooling as a box of practices that confine what is learned to the effects of several fixed elements (i.e., time, the curriculum taught within the time allotted, a budget of fiscal resources, a system of organization (PK-12), and governance (elected school boards and a sometimes precarious and evolving relationship with the state Legislature).

In the schooling model, these fixed elements of the design and practice result in all students getting the same amounts of each regardless of need and abilities. The most problematic fixed element of the schooling design is time. The class periods, the school day, and the school year are fixed, and students either accomplish their learning during those periods, or they don't.

Fixed curriculum
Fixed course offerings
Fixed by budget, resources, staffing
Fixed by teaching credentials

Fixed budget
Fixed expenditures
Fixed accounting



Fixed time
Fixed yearly
Fixed class time
Fixed calendar

Fixed governance by public election or
appointment by the governor
Not necessarily elected/selected for expertise
Often elected as a political step for other offices

Boundaries

The variables in the schooling model are the students, how much they can learn, the amount of time spent on the lessons, the system's inputs to support their learning, the quality of the teaching and teachers, and so on. So, in the schooling model, the variables are what matter, but they are not necessarily part of the school design. Variations in the schooling model have been brought forward to include different arrangements of time, different calendars, different scheduling, different grade level configurations and organization, alternative governance systems, and others. Most of these design elements rarely last longer than a decade, and most eventually fade back to the original schooling model, especially when the lead proponent of the change leaves or is replaced. "Thinking outside this schooling box" may result in innovative and creative ideas but they rarely change the overall system and again because they rarely last.

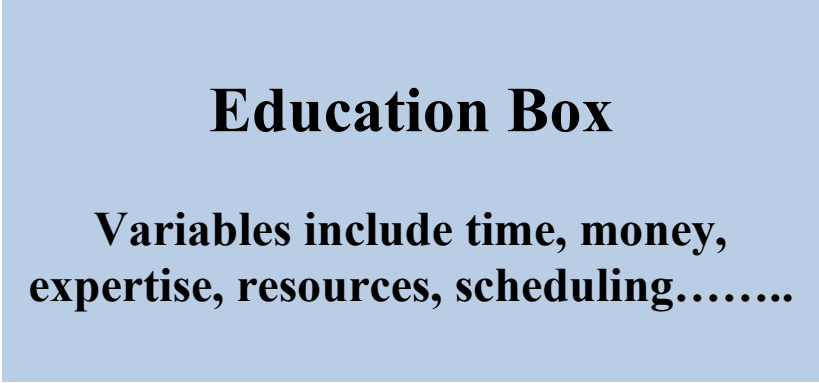
The Education Box

Now, consider an **Education Box** - one that requires us to think differently about what students are to learn, how they are to be given opportunities to learn, and how they make progress in the system. The fixed elements of the Education Box are clear outcomes for all students, and opportunities designed and provided to ensure each student can reach the

outcomes. It's a system where progress is determined by mastery (not age), personal learning plans (PLP) for each student, and a system that spans PK-16 (entry into post-secondary education).

Fixed system of advancement through demonstration of mastery of the outcomes. The completion of the personal learning plan (PLP).

Fixed opportunities to learn are designed for all students through their (PLP)

A light blue rectangular box containing text. At the top, the words "Education Box" are written in a large, bold, black serif font. Below this, in a smaller bold black serif font, is the text "Variables include time, money, expertise, resources, scheduling.....".

Education Box

Variables include time, money, expertise, resources, scheduling.....

Fixed outcomes specified for all students

Fixed education system is organized Pre K-16/20

The variables in the Education Box are time, resources, curriculum, and school organization. There is nothing sacred in the Education Box except that all students are given the opportunity to learn the outcomes that are identified for all students, with progress determining how they move through the system.

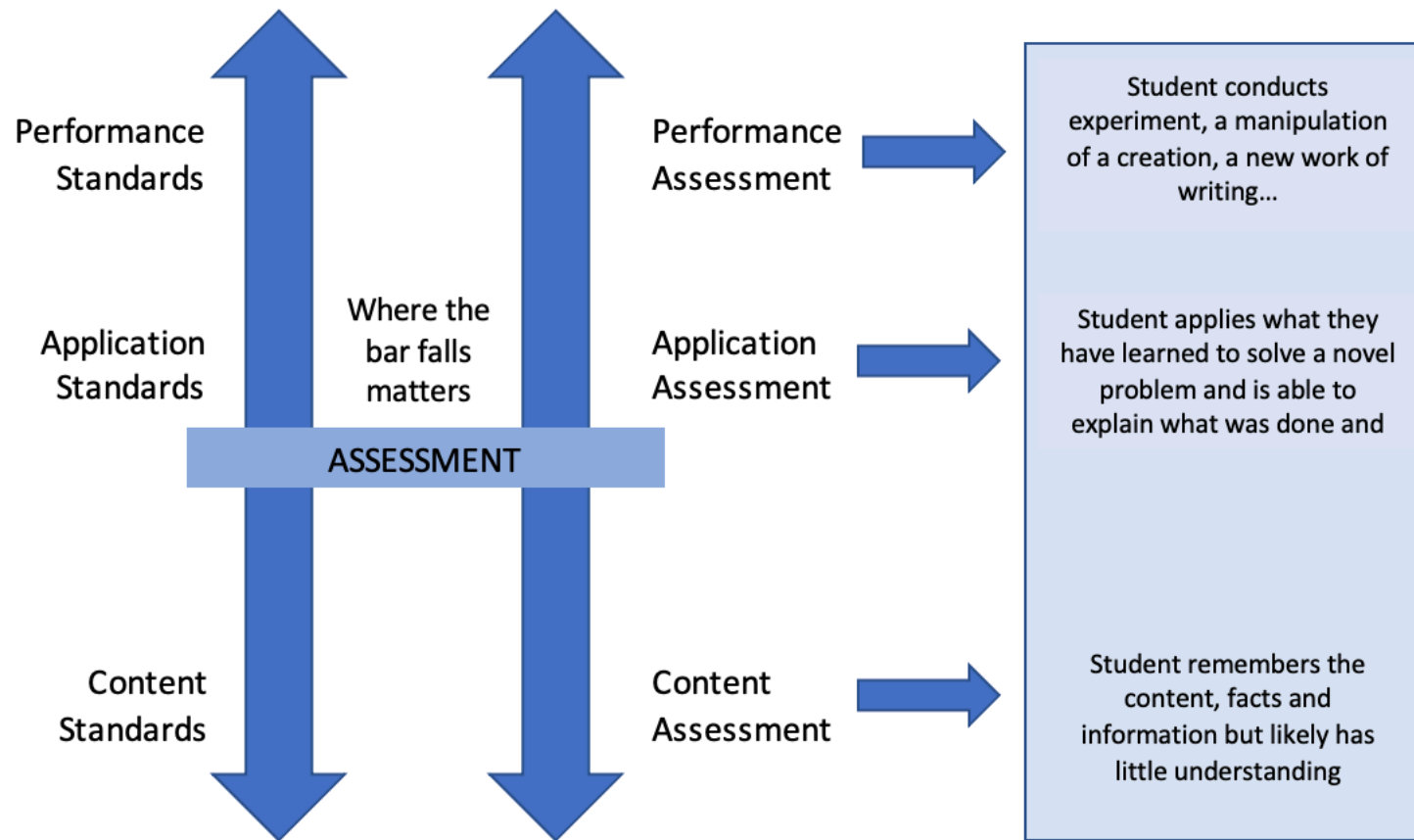
Assessments in the Education Box are designed to measure progress toward a defined learning goal. In an education box, all learners are expected to learn the standards, but may not all do so at the same level or at the same time. Like the track runner, there is a finish line to cross but not all finish at the same time. It is important to understand that in this system, the level of assessment determines the standards, not the language of the standards. In other words, the assessments are the definition of the standard, not the language of the standard. Very few measures of student performance are "perfect" matches to the standards with which they are supposed to be aligned.

Standards and assessments, both from a design and implementation perspective, present a serious alignment problem. For example, a team could write performance standards

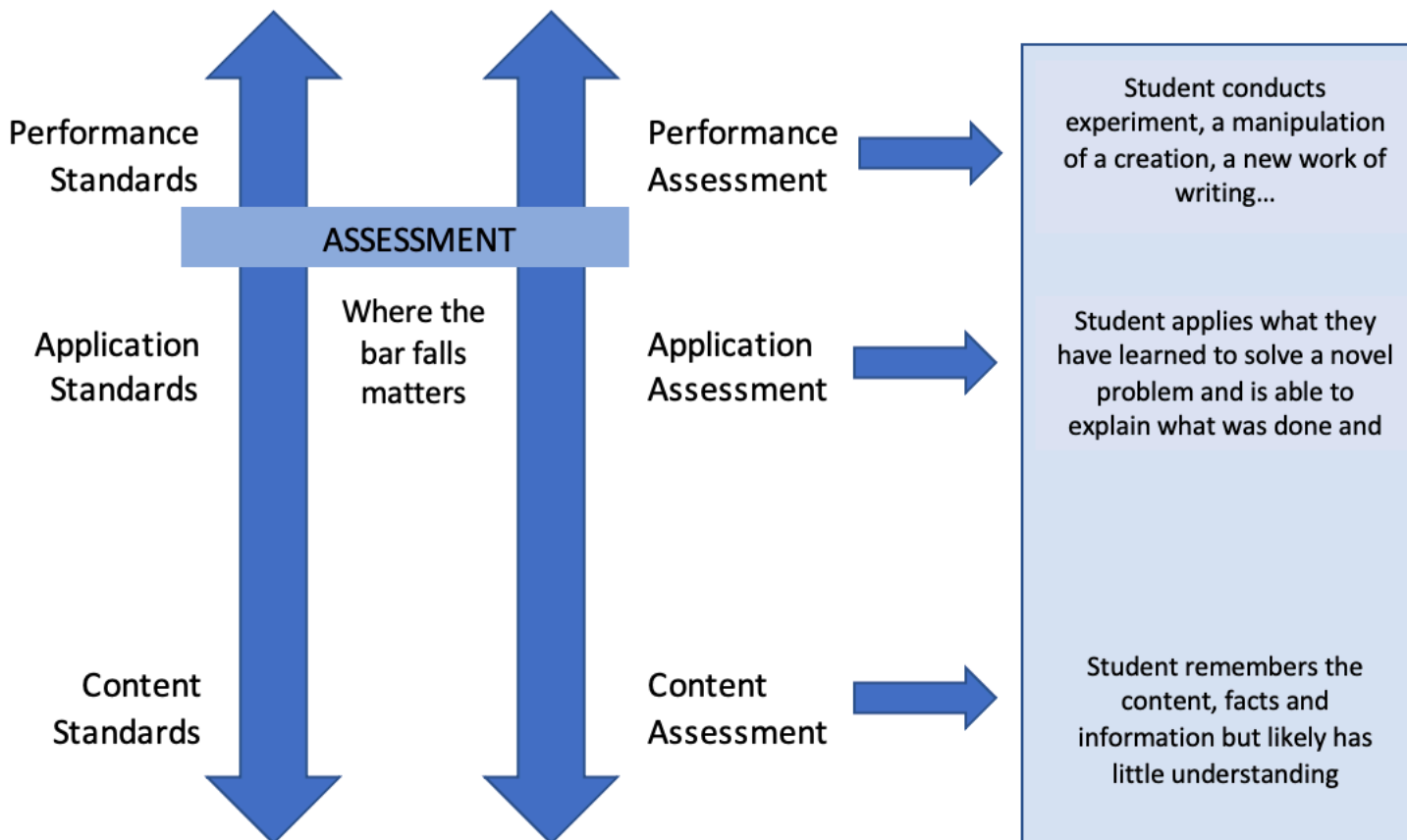
that require the learner to demonstrate through a performance that they have learned the defined expectations. Yet, the school where the standards are being used requires the assessment to be one of paper and pencil, filling in the bubbles from an array of possible answers, none of which require demonstration, but rather recall.

In such instances, the standards being required of students are not the ones proposed but the ones on the test. In other words, the test in the interpretation of what the standard requires.

The figures below show how the “raising of the assessment bar” is the determiner of the standard and what it means in terms of what the learner is to know and be able to do. Aligning the assessments to the standards is difficult to do and takes enormous amounts of time. However, the integrity of the standards and assessments rests on the degree to which the two, standards and assessments, align and “speak the same language.”



Large scale, standardized assessments tend to assess primarily the recall of content rather than applying that knowledge or performing as a result of that knowledge. As a result, the "effect" of the assessment does not match the standard language of expectations for student performance.



Classroom assessments have greater potential to set the assessment bar higher asking students to apply what they know or perform as a result of the knowledge rather than just recall it.

Where the assessments are placed in the system, provides the ultimate definitions for the standards. For example, most states and school districts claim they have defined and are using performance standards. However, for district or state tests to meet the quality standards, the test will barely measure the higher levels of content and will likely only measure a little in the areas of application.

It's a Brave New World

Never before have we needed leaders to step forward, stop thinking outside the box, and be willing to think of new boxes within which to do the work of schooling. We must recreate and redevelop "schooling" into an "education box" model. The current schooling model isn't working. Elements of The Schooling Box matter little and have little impact in improving classroom teaching and learning. Thinking "outside the box" may result in an isolated creative and innovative idea, with some promise to transform our schools, but they often die and fade when leaders change or when resources are diminished because of outside influences. We need to begin building a new box - one in which educators lead and engage the communities within the education system, as well as those outside the system.

We have experienced a huge paradigm shift due to the pandemic. It has impacted everyone, including our families, communities, nation, and the world. The pandemic has been an "equal opportunity impactor." It has affected all of us regardless of wealth, culture, gender, ability, or disability. It has impacted us economically, socially, politically, mentally, physically. And educationally.

Yet we hope. We speak about the pandemic with the hope of "getting back to normal" or moving forward to a "new normal." It is clear there is no "going back." Life will never be the same as before the pandemic. We must move forward and find our 'new normal." We must embrace a similar hope to move to a new way to "do school." Leaders in a brave new world for education will have to be developed and encouraged. Leaders will have to step out and step forward in some very trying times ahead. Our society and our students depend on emerging leaders who will bravely take on the challenges of education in a new world.

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... In particular, the incorporation of classroom-based **assessments** into statewide testing systems is not unique to **Nebraska**. For example, instead of basing a state **assessment system** predominantly on classroom or locally developed **assessments** as is done in **Nebraska...**

... Recent implementation of **Nebraska's Standards-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS)** introduced a unique opportunity to examine the benefits and drawbacks of a teacher-led state **assessment system**. STARS is unique.

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- Christensen, D. (1998). Accountability: A call to leadership. *NCSA Today*.
- Christensen, D. (2000a). Framing the policy issues [Opening Speech]. Administrator Days.
- Christensen, D. (2000b). Policy perspectives on assessment (Ways to better clarify assessment issues across governance organizations) [A Panel Discussion].
- Christensen, D. (2000c). School-based assessment: The vision, purpose, and practice [Opening Speech]. Leadership Conference to Implementing School-based Assessment.
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- Christensen, D. (2005b). Ready for prime time [Closing Remarks]. Leadership for Classroom-Based Assessment.
- Christensen, D. (2005c). The vision of classroom-based assessment [Keynote Address]. Leadership for Classroom-Based Assessment Conference.
- Christensen, D. (2006). Classroom assessment: A brave new world [Keynote Address]. Leadership for Classroom Assessment Conference.
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- Christensen, D. (2007b). Framing formative and classroom-based assessments for the 21st century. *NCSA Today*.

- Christensen, D. (2008a). Data and learning summit [Opening Remarks].
- Christensen, D. (2008b). Data is a tool: Now we have data, what is next? [Speech]. Nebraska Data Conference.
- Christensen, D. (2009). *How does formative assessment fit into the vision and mission and excellence and equity?* CCSSO.
- Clark, T., Englert, K., Frazee, D., Shebby, S., & Randel, B. (2009). *Assessment: A McRel report prepared for Stupski Foundations' learning system*. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Clarke, W. M. (2005). *Nebraska public school superintendents' perceptions of Nebraska's assessment/accountability system's effect on high schools*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska Omaha]. ProQuest.
- The purpose of this study was to determine superintendents' perceptions of the **Nebraska assessment/accountability reporting system (STARS)** as they effect high schools. Data measuring the superintendents' perceptions of the STARS program included how they ...*
- Dappen, L., & Isernhagen, J. C. (2005). Nebraska STARS: Assessment for Learning. *Planning and Changing*, 36(4), 147–156.
- ... STARS is being watched closely by national audiences, but most importantly, it is described by a **Nebraska** school leader as “one of the best things we’ve done in my 25 years in education.” When confronted with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Average Yearly Progress (AYP) ...*
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Standards and assessments: Where we are and what we need. Teacher College Record. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/tcza?ContentID=11109>
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Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Standards, accountability and school reform. *Teacher College Record*, 106(6), 1047–1085.

*... of schools to support teacher and student learning, and **systems of assessment** that drive curriculum reform and teaching improvements. ... the outcomes of test-based **accountability** systems. I also examine research on urban **districts** that have substantially improved their students' ...*

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Standards, assessments, and educational policy: In pursuit of genuine accountability (pp. 1–28) [Lecture]. Educational Testing Service.
<https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICANG8.pdf>

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Performance counts: Assessment systems that report high-quality learning (pp. 1–16). Council of State School Officers. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED543057>

David C. Berliner. (2008). Testing the Joy Out of Learning. *Educational Leadership*, 65(6).

Educational assessment. (2022). Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Educational_assessment&oldid=108596618
2

Elliott, J., Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M., & Erickson, R. (1998). What about Assessment and Accountability?: Practical Implications for Educators. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 31(1), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004005999803100103>

*... Although this type of **assessment** is important, it does not connect with or count in state and district **accountability systems**. ... "I am in favor of including all kids with disabilities in the assessment and **accountability system**, but what do we do with the kids who fall between the cracks...*

Erickson, R., Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M., & Elliott, J. (1998). Inclusive assessments and accountability systems: Tools of the trade in educational reform. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 31(2), 4–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004005999803100201>

*... An educational **accountability system** is built with policies and practices that attach consequencesMuch like our hammer analogy, **accountability systems** are being used today to build better ... **assessment** in determining high stakes consequences for schools and school **districts**? ...*

- Ervay, Stuart & Christensen (2001). Nebraska STARS Program and NCLB: A Contrast in Educational Philosophies, School Administrator.
- Gallagher, C. (2000). Risking complexity: Nebraska teachers as agents of reform. *Nebraska English Journal*, 45(1), 9–20.
- Gallagher, C. W. (2004a). Turning the accountability tables: Ten progressive lessons from one “backward” state. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85(5).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170408500505>
*... I cannot describe **Nebraska’s** standards, **assessment**, and **accountability system** in great detail, but broad strokes should suffice to give you a sense of it. Hoping ... we’d be better off asking questions that correspond to **Nebraska’s** 10 principles of sound **accountability**.*
- Gallagher, C. W. (2004b). Turning the accountability tables: Ten progressive lessons from one “backward” state. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85(5), 352–360.
- Gallagher, K. (2010, November 12). Why I Will Not Teach to the Test. *Education Week*.
- Gallagher, C. W. (2004b). Turning the accountability tables: Ten progressive lessons from one “backward” state. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85(5), 352–360.
- Gallagher, K. (2010, November 12). Why I Will Not Teach to the Test. *Education Week*.
- Goertz, M. E., & Duffy, M. C. (2001). Assessment and accountability systems in 50 states: 1999-2000 (pp. 1–41). University of Pennsylvania.
*... This report uses data collected from the 50 states to describe state **assessment** and **accountability systems** and to examine the extent to ... Therefore, performance measures for school and **district accountability** reflect the diversity of state **assessment systems** described earlier ...*
- Gordon, M. F., & Louis, K. S. (2012). North Carolina and Nebraska: Two States, Two Policy Cultures, Two Outcomes. In K. Seashore Louis & Boudewijn Velzen (Eds.), *Educational Policy in an International Context*. (pp. 171-187). Palgrave Macmillian.

... **assessments**. By 2009, however, the Nebraskan legislature caved in to federal demands and proposed ... **Nebraska State Accountability Framework**, a statewide **assessment system** that outlined a plan to test students in reading, writing, math, and science using the same **assess...**

Isernhagen, J. C., & Dappen, L. (2005). Charting STARS: Voices from the Field. *NCSA Today*, 1–259.

Lukin, L. E., Bandalos, D. L., Eckhout, T. J., & Mickelson, K. (2005). Facilitating the development of assessment literacy. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23(2), 26–32.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2004.tb00156.x>

... In sharp contrast, the educational reform **system** in **Nebraska** represents an attempt to use the development and implementation of a statewide **system** of district level **assessments** as a means of holding districts **accountable** for maintaining a rigorous curriculum while at ...

..*Nebraska Assessment Cohort, A Paper presented to the National Council of Measurement in Education, “an evaluation of the cohort training model in developing assessment literate teachers in Nebraska,”..*

Nebraska and Maine Assessment Models | FairTest. (2007, June 25). FairTest-The National Center for Fair and Open Testing. <https://www.fairtest.org/nebraska-and-maine-assessment-models>

Neill, M. (2010). *Multiple measures: A definition and examples from U.S. and other nations*. FairTest: National Center for Fair and Open Testing.

Olson, M. (2018). *The Nebraska Assessment and Accountability System from 1998-2017*.

*This study provides a historical record of the **Nebraska assessment and accountability system** from 1998-2017. Through a document analysis approach, a narrative has been developed capturing the story of **Nebraska's** unique and evolving **assessment** and ...*

Perie, M., & Park, J. (2007). *Key elements for education accountability models*. Council of Chief State School Officers Accountability Systems and Reporting State Collaborative.

Petrosko, J. M. (2000). *Assessment and accountability*. University of Louisville.

... of assisting local school **districts** in developing -and using continuous **assessment** strategies needed to assure student progress. ... However, questions remain about key features of both the school **accountability system** and the KIRIS **assessment system**. To this reviewer...Therefore, evaluating the districts' **assessments** on these technical quality criteria allows for a more sound and fairer **accountability system** to be in place in **Nebraska**. Another benefit of having these technical criteria in place is in the educational benefits yielded by having ...

Popham, J. (2008). Trolling for tests. *Educational Leadership*, 65(6).

Popham, W. J. (2006). Defining and enhancing formative assessment. *Assessment for Learning*, 1–10.

Popham, W. J. (2010). *Everything school leaders need to know about assessment*. Corwin Press.

Reeves, D. (2008). Leading to change/ Waiting for NCLB. *Educational Leadership*, 65(6), 89–90.

Roschewski, P. (2003). Nebraska STARS Line Up. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(7), 517–520.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170308400708>

Roschewski, P. (2005). History and background of Nebraska's school-based teacher-led assessment and reporting system (STARS). *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23(2), 9–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2004.tb00153.x>

Nebraska's approach to standards, assessment, and accountability, the School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS) is based upon local control belief that classrooms and teachers must be at the heart of student learning and ...

Roschewski, P., Gallagher, C. W., & Isernhagen, J. (2001). Nebraska reach for the STARS. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(8), 611–615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170108200810>

Roschewski, P., Isernhagen, J., & Dappen, L. (2006). Nebraska STARS: Achieving results. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(6), 433–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170608700607>

Ruff, R. R. (2019). State-level autonomy in the era of accountability: A comparative analysis of Virginia and Nebraska education policy through No Child Left Behind. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27(6), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.4013>

...Virginia and **Nebraska** were purposefully selected for this study based on external **assessments** of the level of “stakes” associated with the **accountability** policies created in each state. In reconstructing the policy environment, activities included reviewing executive, legislative, ...

Shepard, L. (2000). *The role of classroom assessment in teaching and learning* Center for the Study of Evaluation.

Sibert, B., Krejci, D., Schoenrock, R., & Sydow, S. (2001). Learning from Nebraska’s assessment system. *Business Education Forum*, 56(2), 46–50.

*Describes **Nebraska's** School-based, Teacher-led Accountability and Reporting System, a statewide accountability program that allows local control of **assessment** methods. Explains the process of developing teacher-designed **assessments** in business education, including ...*

Stephoe, S. (2007). *How Nebraska leaves no child behind*. Time Magazine.

Stiggins, R. (2006). *Balanced assessment systems: Redefining excellence in assessment* (pp. 1–10). Educational Testing Service.

Stiggins, R. (2005). From formative assessment to assessment for learning: A path to success in standards-based schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(4), 324–328.

Stiggins, R. (2014, March 4). *7 principles of student centered classroom assessment*.

<https://rickstiggins.com/2014/03/04/7-principles-of-student-centered-classroom-assessment/>

Part II

Balanced Assessment for Leaders: An Overview

This overview is designed to assist school leaders in considering elements of a balanced assessment approach and ways leaders might create some of the needed processes and structures. This draft reflects the view that assessment is a way in which we gather evidence about the effectiveness of our instruction, determine the next steps, and consider the strength of our programming. The elements below are not necessarily sequential, and priorities could be dependent upon the characteristics of a district.

DuFour Questions	What	Why (Strengths and Limitations)	Leadership Strategies
What do we want them to learn?	<p><u>Curriculum</u> Strong assessment starts with a clear articulation of learning targets. What should students know, understand, and be able to do?</p>	<p>Assessment information is of limited value if not aligned to clear learning goals. As Rick Stiggins would say, it is hard to hit targets when you don't know what they are. Particularly in a larger system, we do students a disservice when we do not provide consistency of essential curriculum across classrooms and buildings. It is not acceptable for a student's opportunity to learn something like fractions to be dependent upon the classroom to which they were assigned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a process for written curriculum including teacher conversations about what students need to learn. What will they need at the next level? What will they need in five years? What is guaranteed and what is optional for the curriculum? ● Review and align relevant standards with district curriculum (e.g., Nebraska Academic Standards, National Standards, ACT College and Career Readiness Standards). ● Consider elements that may be missing from the standards and standards that need to be prioritized. ●

How will we know if they learned it?	<u>Classroom Level Assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal minute-by-minute formative assessment as checks for understanding (see author Dylan Wiliam) ● Teacher-developed quizzes, tests, essays, projects, and products that are designed to determine student learning 	<p>Informal classroom formative assessment practices and teacher-developed classroom assessments provide educators with immediate and/or short-term information about what students know and what they don't. If used well, they can allow teachers to intervene to keep learning on track.</p> <p>A limitation of informal formative assessment and teacher-developed classroom assessments would be that there is limited comparability across classrooms, and teachers will vary in their perceptions of and priorities for learning. There can be vulnerability to implicit biases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide teachers with skills in setting and articulating learning goals. ● Provide or reinforce staff development that gives teachers formative assessment skills in strategies such as “no hands raised,” “find and fix,” and “exit tickets.” ● Create processes by which teachers can collaborate to consider backward design from key learning goals to classroom instruction and assessment. ● Provide teachers with skills in determining target-method match. Some skills can be efficiently assessed with selected-response methods, while others require performance methods. ● Develop an understanding among staff of concepts such as opportunity to learn, validity, intra-rater reliability, sampling of material, and freedom from bias. ● Support PLCs in their use of assessment data for instructional planning and interventions with students.
	<u>District Level Assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District common assessments (interim 	<p>Strengths include the capacity for strong collaboration among teachers, enhanced knowledge of educational measurement, and increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop district parameters and processes for high-quality agreed-upon assessments that will be administered consistently in all classrooms (e.g., at least four per year for

	<p>assessments) that are developed and consistently implemented with adherence to assessment quality criteria</p>	<p>consistency for student learning expectations across classrooms. Limitations can include assessment quality if not accompanied by strong staff development in assessment development along with processes for monitoring outcome data. There is also limited comparability beyond the district or department.</p>	<p>each class/subject area with at least one performance assessment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide strong professional development in assessment development (e.g., six quality criteria used for Nebraska STARS assessments). ● Support PLCs in their use of assessment data for instructional planning and interventions with students ● Develop processes for collecting and using results to inform school improvement initiatives.
	<p><u>State Assessments</u></p>	<p>Advantages can include some level of consistency to monitor trend data and some ability to make comparisons to state performance expectations. Results can also be used to help evaluate district-level curricula and programs. Assessments will be limited by sampling and possibly alignment. Interpretations are limited to the purposes of the test which typically include end-of-year mastery of assessed standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create processes for staff to review test objectives and benchmarks in order to determine alignment with the curriculum. ● Create processes for staff to consider skills that are not assessed but that are important for student learning, and alternative ways to assess those skills (e.g., public speaking, writing). ● Provide staff development to assure that test results are understood and used to inform thoughtful discussion and school improvement. ● Provide information about limitations of interpretation to assure that stakeholders

			<p>remain focused on evidence of learning and not just scores.</p>
	<p><u>Nationally Normed Assessments</u></p>	<p>Advantages can include some level of consistency to monitor trend data and some ability to make comparisons with the norm group. Results can also be used to encourage rigorous course selections and to evaluate district-level curricula and programs.</p> <p>Assessments will be limited by sampling and possibly alignment. Concepts are taught at different times in different classrooms and students may be tested over concepts they have not been taught. Tests are also limited by format in that they typically require a selected response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create processes for staff to review test objectives and benchmarks in order to determine alignment with the curriculum. ● Provide staff development to assure that test results are understood and used to inform thoughtful discussion. As an example, ACT results could be used to seek evidence to determine if scores appear to be impacted by disproportionality in high school course selection. ● Provide information about limitations of interpretation to assure that stakeholders remain focused on evidence of learning and not just scores.
<p>What will we do if they haven't learned it?</p>	<p><u>Diagnostic Assessments</u></p>	<p>Diagnostic assessments are most frequently associated with verification for Special Education services, but like other assessments, they can cross the spectrum and include informal methods to determine specific learning gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with teachers to develop collective efficacy around working with student achievement growth, including an understanding of trend lines and single N design. ● Develop strong progress monitoring strategies as part of the district's (Multi-tiered Systems of Support) MTSS processes.

What will we do if they already know?	<u>Acceleration and Enrichment</u>	A variety of existing assessments can be used to help inform decisions about acceleration or enrichment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop processes for academic acceleration (e.g., a combination of nationally-normed tests with district assessments that would be used to determine full-grade or subject acceleration).
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Part III

Assessment Literacy Learning Modules

Built on research-based assessment practices, these learning modules assume that assessment, curriculum, and instruction form the foundation of successful and ongoing school improvement efforts and that these foundational elements inform and support each other.

Each includes key topics, recommended resources, and suggested learning activities to support assessment literacy. They may be used in any order and are designed to be adapted to the purposes of the users.

Learning Modules Topics

Module 1 - Why Assessment Literacy Is Important

- A. History of Testing
- B. Testing as a Professional Discipline
- C. Current Trends and Challenges in K-12 Assessment Nationally

Module 2 - Balanced Approach to Assessment

- A. Attributes and Levels of a Balanced Assessment System
- B. Types of Assessment
- C. Purposes of Student Assessment
- D. Purposes of Other Education-Related Assessment

Module 3 - Keys to Quality Assessment

- A. Clear Purposes - *Why am I assessing?*
- B. Clear Learning Targets – *What am I assessing?*
- C. Assessment Quality (Sound Design) – *How can I assess learning targets well?*
- D. Proper Test Administration - *How will I ensure test conditions will not interfere with a student's ability to perform well on a test?*
- E. Effective Communication of Results - *How will I share the results for maximum impact?*

Module 4 - The Role of Assessment in Teaching, Learning, and Leading

- F. Understanding Assessment's Role in Teaching
- G. Understanding Assessment's Role in Learning
- H. Understanding Assessment's Role in Leading

Assessment Literacy Learning Module

Module I - Why Assessment Literacy is Important

Assessment literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, and process of designing, selecting, implementing, scoring, and/or using high-quality assessments to improve student learning. (U.S. Department of Education).

I. History of Testing

A. Key Topics

1. History of Testing (Intelligence, Standardized, Educational)
2. History of Federal Testing Policies
 - a. Historical involvement of the federal government in educational policy
 - b. Federal Education Acts calling for testing/assessment
3. Nebraska Assessment History (S.T.A.R.S., NESAs, NSCAS)

B. Recommended Resources

1. S.T.A.R.S. – School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System
 - a. Special Issue on Nebraska’s Alternative Approach to Statewide Assessment (2005). *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23 (2).
 - b. Roschewski, P. (2005). History and Background of Nebraska’s School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS). *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23(2).
 - c. Bandalos, D. (2005). Can a Teacher-Led Assessment System Work? *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23(2).
 - d. Lukin, L. E., Bandalos, D. L., Eckhout, T. J., & Mickelson, K. (2004). Facilitating the development of assessment literacy. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, **23**(2), 26–32.
 - e. Roschewski, P., Gallagher, C., & Isernhagen, J. (2001). Nebraskans reach for the STARS. *Phi Delta Kappan*, **82**, 611–615
2. NESAs – Nebraska State Accountability
3. NSCAS - Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System

II. Testing as a Professional Discipline

A. Key Topics

1. Origins of educational measurement discipline
2. Professional Standards in Testing and Assessment
3. Professional Organizations & Scholarship in Educational Measurement

B. Recommended Resources

1. Briggs, D.C. (2022). *Historical and Conceptual Foundations of Measurement in the Human Sciences: Credos and Controversies*. Routledge (**Chapter 1**).
<https://www.routledge.com/Historical-and-Conceptual-Foundations-of-Measurement-in-the-Human-Sciences/Briggs/p/book/9780367225230>
2. AERA, APA, & NCME (2014). *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*. (Downloadable PDF). <https://www.testingstandards.net/open-access-files.html>
3. Plake, B. (2014). Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Video Presentation. <https://ulearn.unl.edu/a/8/122>
4. Klinger, D.A., McDivitt, P.R., Howard, B.B., Munoz, M.A., Rogers, W.T., & Wylie, E.C. (2015). *The Classroom Assessment Standards for PreK-12 Teachers*. Kindle Direct Press. <https://evaluationstandards.org/classroom/>
 1. Overview: <https://www.ncme.org/community/ncme-committees/classroom-assessment/task-force-standards>
5. NCME Instructional Topics in Educational Measurement Series (ITEMS): Classroom Assessment Standards (Digital Instructional Module)
<https://ncme.elevate.commpartners.com/products/digital-module-20-classroom-assessment-standards>
6. National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME)
<https://www.ncme.org/home>
7. Educational Measurement Journals
 - a. Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/17453992>

- b. Applied Measurement in Education
[https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsSc
ope&journalCode=hame20](https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsSc
ope&journalCode=hame20)
- c. Practical, Assessment, Research, and Evaluation (Open source)
<https://scholarworks.umass.edu/pare/>

III. Current Trends and Challenges in K-12 Assessment Nationally

A. Key Topics

1. Technology, AI, and Innovative Assessments
2. Instructional utility of assessments
3. Equity and effectiveness of assessments
4. Building assessment systems tied to teaching and learning

A. Recommended Resources

1. Center for American Progress (CAP). (N.D.) The Future of Testing in Education.
[https://www.americanprogress.org/series/future-of-testing-in-
education/?_ga=2.139438650.808215713.1657910795-
1648472602.1657910795](https://www.americanprogress.org/series/future-of-testing-in-
education/?_ga=2.139438650.808215713.1657910795-
1648472602.1657910795)
2. Center for Assessment. (N.D.) Five essential features of assessment for learning.
<https://www.nciea.org/blog/five-essential-features-of-assessment-for-learning/>
3. Center for Assessment (N.D.) The Latest Insights, Innovations, and Ongoing
Inquiries in Assessment and Accountability from the Center Team and Our
Partners. [https://www.nciea.org/blog/discussing-what-matters-at-the-national-
conference-on-student-assessment/](https://www.nciea.org/blog/discussing-what-matters-at-the-national-
conference-on-student-assessment/)

Assessment Literacy Learning Module

Module 2 - A Balanced Approach to Assessment

Having a wide range of assessments alone does not ensure the accuracy of results or the effective and appropriate use of information. For a balanced assessment system to work effectively, each assessment must meet standards of quality for accuracy and effective use.”

- Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders*. Corwin Press.

I. Attributes and Levels of a Balanced Assessment System

A. Key Topics

1. State accountability assessment
2. School/District summative assessment
3. Classroom level assessment
 - a. Summative
 - b. Formative

B. Recommended Resources

1. Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment Systems

Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders (pp.1-36). Corwin Press. (Chapter 1)

<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>

2. Overview of the Perfect Assessment Culture and System

Stiggins, R. (2017). The perfect assessment system. ASCD. (Chapter 3)

<https://www.ascd.org/books/the-perfect-assessment-system?variant=117079>

3. Balanced Assessment

Evans, C.M. & Thompson, J. (2020). Classroom assessment learning modules. Dover, NH: National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment.

<https://www.nciea.org/classroom-assessment-learning-modules>

4. Leading a Balanced, Comprehensive Assessment System to Improve Teaching and Learning (Downloadable PDF)

<https://www.wested.org/resources/assessment-leadership-leading-a-balanced-comprehensive-assessment-system-to-improve-teaching-and-learning/>

5. Five Keys to Comprehensive Assessment - Linda Darling-Hammond/ Edutopia (**8 min video**) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFimMJL3Wz0>

- a. Goals and Measures
- b. Formative Assessment
- c. Summative Assessment
- d. Performance Assessment
- e. Student Ownership

II. Types of Assessment

A. Key Topics

1. Summative
2. Interim Benchmark
3. Formative Assessment Practices
4. Criterion vs. Norm-Referenced Interpretations

B. Recommended Sources

1. *Comprehensive Assessment System* (**PDF**)

<https://www.wested.org/resources/designing-a-comprehensive-assessment-system/>

2. *Types of Assessment*

Types of Assessment (Michigan Dept. of Education) **Video - 7 min.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xQKPz0zDL8>

3. *Types of Assessment*

Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders* (pp.1-36). Corwin Press. (**Chapter 1**)

<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>

III. Purposes of Student Assessment

A. Key Topics

1. Assessment **of** Learning - Summative
 - a. End of instructional unit evaluation
 - b. High stakes impact
 - c. Classroom/district outcome-based
 - d. State accountability
2. Assessment **for** Learning - Formative
 - a. Formative assessment practices
 - b. Embedded in instruction
 - c. Designed to inform instructional decisions
 - d. Low stakes, usually not graded

B. Recommended Resources:

1. *Summative Assessment*

Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders* (pp.1-36). Corwin Press. **(Chapter 4)**

<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>

2. *Summative Classroom Assessment*

Chappuis, J. & Stiggins, R. (2020). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right - using it well, 3rd Edition*. Pearson. **(Chapter 1)**

<https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Chappuis-Classroom-Assessment-for-Student-Learning-Doing-It-Right-Using-It-Well-Plus-Pearson-e-Text-2-0-Access-Card-Package-3rd-Edition/PGM2037155.html>

3. *Formative Assessment Practices*

Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders* (pp.1-36). Corwin Press. **(Chapter 4)**

<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>

4. *Formative and Summative Classroom Assessment*

Evans, C.M. & Thompson, J. (2020). *Classroom assessment learning modules*.
Dover, NH: National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment.
Retrieved from
<https://www.nciea.org/classroom-assessment-learning-modules>

5. *Definition of Formative Assessment (Video - 8 min)*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxW7mk1BGvQ>

6. *Formative Assessments: Using Feedback to Guide Instruction*
(San Bernardino City Unified School District) - **(Video - 7 min)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ecp5tFwXA_M

7. *Understanding the Formative Assessment Process*
(Smarter Balanced) - **(Video - 8 min)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpwZCqvt70U>

IV. Purposes of Other Education-related Assessment

A. Key Topics

1. Instructional program improvement
2. Student, teacher, or system accountability
3. Program evaluation
4. Prediction of future performance/achievement

B. Recommended Resource

Sigman, D. & Mancuso, M. Designing a comprehensive assessment system.
WestEd. <https://www.wested.org/resources/designing-a-comprehensive-assessment-system/>

Example Learning Activities

- Have students describe in their own words what a balanced assessment is. This could be done in a discussion format and/or through reflective journaling.
- Have students create a chart of the five types of assessments which include:
 - the definition and purpose of each
 - major indicators of each
 - frequency given
 - likes/dislikes of each

- Have students create an Abbreviated Assessment Audit Model based on assessments at their school and/or district level.
 - Find explicit instructions and accompanying blank charts (p. 21-26) in the Chappuis, Brookhart and Chappuis (2021) book referenced above.

Assessment Literacy Learning Module

Module 3 - Keys to Quality Assessment

“All assessments, whether classroom assessments, interim benchmark tests, or annual tests - will meet standards of quality so as to yield dependable evidence to inform sound and productive instructional decision making.” - Stiggins, R. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD.

I. Clear Purposes - *Why am I assessing?*

A. Key Topics

1. Clear Purposes
2. Assessment *for* and *of* Learning

B. Recommended Resources - Clear Purposes

1. *Assessment Guidance - Oregon Department of Education (Downloadable PDF)*
https://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/oregon_assessment_guidance.pdf
2. Chappuis, J. & Stiggins, R. (2020). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right - using it well, 3rd Edition*. Pearson. **(Chapter 2)**
<https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Chappuis-Classroom-Assessment-for-Student-Learning-Doing-It-Right-Using-It-Well-Plus-Pearson-e-Text-2-0-Access-Card-Package-3rd-Edition/PGM2037155.html>
3. Stiggins, R. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD. **(Chapter 4)**
<https://www.ascd.org/books/the-perfect-assessment-system?variant=117079>
4. Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative. Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2007 **(Downloadable PDF)**
http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/default/files/mac_AssessLitStds_2017_screen-9.19.17.pdf

II. Clear Learning Targets - *What am I assessing?*

A. Key Topics

1. Identifying learning targets
2. Types of learning targets
3. Clearly stated for student understanding

4. Competently mastered by teachers who are responsible for teaching and assessing the student

B. Recommended Resources - *Learning Targets*

1. Assessment Guidance - Oregon Department of Education (**Downloadable PDF**)
https://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/oregon_assessment_guidance.pdf
2. Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders (pp.1-36)*. Corwin Press. (**Chapter 2**)
<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>
3. Stiggins, R. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD. (**Chapter 5**)
<https://www.ascd.org/books/the-perfect-assessment-system?variant=117079>
4. Chappuis, J. & Stiggins, R. (2020). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right - using it well, 3rd Edition*. Pearson. (**Chapter 3**)
<https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Chappuis-Classroom-Assessment-for-Student-Learning-Doing-It-Right-Using-It-Well-Plus-Pearson-e-Text-2-0-Access-Card-Package-3rd-Edition/PGM2037155.html>
5. Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative. Michigan Assessment Consortium, Fall 2007.
http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/default/files/mac_AssessLitStds_2017_screen-9.19.17.pdf

III. **Assessment Quality (Sound Design) - *How can I assess learning targets well?***

A. Key Topics

1. Types of learning to be measured
2. Alignment of assessment items/exercises to learning targets
3. Proper assessment methods (i.e., selected response, constructed response, performance response, personal communication)

4. Sufficient but manageable items/exercises to infer levels of student learning
5. Fairness in assessment items and procedures
6. Appropriate and reliable scoring procedures

B. Recommended Resources - *Assessment Quality/Sound Design*

1. Assessment Guidance - Oregon Department of Education (**Downloadable PDF**)
https://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/oregon_assessment_guidance.pdf
2. Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative. Michigan Assessment Consortium, Fall 2007.
[http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/default/files/mac Asses sLitStds_2017_screen-9.19.17.pdf](http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/default/files/mac_Asses sLitStds_2017_screen-9.19.17.pdf)
3. Brookhart, S. (2005). The Quality of Local District Assessments Used in Nebraska's School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System (STARS). *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 24(2).
4. Buckendahl, C. W., Plake, B. S., & Impara, J. C. (2004). A strategy for evaluating district-developed assessments for state accountability. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23(2), 17–25.
5. Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders (pp.1-36)*. Corwin Press. (**Chapter 3**)
<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-schoolleaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20me mbers%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>
6. Plake, B.S., Impara, J.C. & Buckendahl, C.W. (2005). Technical quality criteria for evaluating district assessments portfolios used in the Nebraska STARS, *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 23(2).
7. Plake, B.S. Assessment...with a touch of class: Ensuring the quality of classroom assessments. Video Presentation.
<https://ulearn.unl.edu/a/8/123>

8. Stiggins, R. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD. **(Chapter 6)**
<https://www.ascd.org/books/the-perfect-assessment-system?variant=117079>

9. James Madison University (N.D.) Instrument Selection and Design.
https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/sass/ac-step-three.shtml#Psychometric_properties

(Although this module was developed for Student Affairs personnel at James Madison University in order to assess desired student learning outcomes, much of the content is applicable and generalizable to classroom and school level assessments in PK-12 education.)

IV. **Proper Test Administration - *How will I ensure test conditions will not interfere with a student's ability to perform well on a test?***

A. Key Topics

1. Administer the test in a way that maintains the integrity of the measure
2. Ensure equitable testing conditions
3. Maintain test and data security
4. Scoring guides aligned to identified levels of performance
5. Procedures to ensure the reliability of scoring

B. Recommended Resources - *Proper Test Administration*

1. Assessment Guidance - Oregon Department of Education (**Downloadable PDF**)
https://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/oregon_assessment_guidance.pdf
2. Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative. Michigan Assessment Consortium, Fall 2007.
http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/default/files/mac_Assess_LitStds_2017_screen-9.19.17.pdf

V. **Effective Communication of Results - *How will I share the results for maximum impact?***

A. Key Topics

1. Assure timely and useful results
2. Tailor the communication to align with the purpose of the assessment (e.g., formative, summative, interim benchmark, etc.)
3. Ensure reports are easily understood by parents, students, or other assessment data users.

B. Recommended Resources - *Communicating Results*

1. Stiggins, R. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD. **(Chapter 6)**
<https://www.ascd.org/books/the-perfect-assessment-system?variant=117079>
2. Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders (pp.1-36)*. Corwin Press. **(Chapter 6)**
<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>
3. Assessment Guidance (Communicating Results) - Oregon Department of Education
https://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/testing/resources/oregon_assessment_guidance.pdf

Example Learning Activities

- Have students work in small groups to create a sample lesson plan demonstrating a clear connection between learning goals, instruction, and assessment. After completing the activity, have groups switch lesson plans to provide feedback on the lesson's goals. This can also be done on chart paper and posted around the room for whole-group discussion.
- Have students create a Mind Map demonstrating the Why, What and How with assessment at the core. Each Why, What, and How should branch off with at least 3-4 pieces of descriptive information.
- Have students create an Assessment Blueprint using a selected-response or constructed-response assessment they have given to students. Explicit instructions can be found in Chappuis, Brookhart, and Chappuis (2021, p. 71-72).

- Ketterlin Geller, L. (2020). Test critique assignment using the [*Mental Measurements Yearbook*](#). [Assignment description]. Dallas, TX. Department of Educational Policy and Leadership, Southern Methodist University. <https://buros.org/ketterlin-geller>

Assessment Literacy Learning Module
Module 4 - Assessment's Role in Teaching, Learning, and Leading

“If we know how to do something with assessment information beyond using it to figure grades, we have the capacity to improve learning.” - Chappuis, J. and Stiggins, R. (2021).

I. Understanding Assessment's Role in Teaching - Key Topics

A. Purposes of Assessment

1. *Assessment of Learning* – Summative Assessment
 - a. Definition – evaluation of student learning at the end of an instructional period; often high-stakes
 - b. Examples – chapter/unit tests, final projects, term papers, performances, major examinations, standardized tests for meeting state accountability requirements

2. *Assessment for Learning* – Formative Assessment
 - a. Definition – a collection of formal and informal processes that teachers and students use to gather and share evidence to guide the next steps toward learning and “for helping students become self-directed learners” (Chappuis, Brookhart, & Chappuis, 2021).
 - b. Formative Assessment Practices and Examples -
 - i. **Establishing Clear Learning Targets and Success Criteria** (*e.g., understand what a claim is, know what reasons and evidence are, draw conclusions from an experiment*)
 - ii. **Using Questioning to Elicit Evidence of Student Thinking** *e.g., questioning to promote deeper thinking, probe student understanding, encourage student-to-student discussion, promote learning for all students*)
 - iii. **Diagnosing Learning Needs to Inform Instructional Next Steps** (*e.g., teachers prepare or select instruments and activities that have instructional traction; teachers plan time in their instructional sequence to gather diagnostic information and to act on it*)
 - iv. **Offering Actionable Feedback** (*e.g., provide during instruction and before the graded event; focus on the salient aspects of the learning; point out strengths; offer guidance on next steps*)
 - v. **Engaging Students in Self-Assessment, Peer Feedback, and Goal Setting** (*e.g., Students practice evaluating a range of work samples as a rehearsal for self-assessment, practice offering feedback in simulated*

settings as a rehearsal for giving feedback to one another, use success criteria/rubrics when self-evaluating and offering peer feedback, opportunities to set goals for further learning based on peer feedback and self-assessment).

3. Diagnostic Assessment
 - a. Definition – a tool to collect information about a student’s strengths and weaknesses in a skill area.
 - i. Teachers can use diagnostic assessment as a formative measure to make classroom instructional decisions.
 - ii. Diagnostic assessment can be used to determine student eligibility for interventions or counseling.
 - iii. Diagnostic assessment should provide instructional traction – its results identify the learning difficulty. (Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J., 2021).
 - b. Examples - can be formal (e.g., standardized achievement tests) or informal (e.g., student work samples).

B. Five Keys to Quality Classroom Assessment

1. Clear purpose
2. Clear targets
3. Sound design
4. Formative usefulness
5. Effective communication

C. Understanding Learning Targets for Instruction and Assessment

1. Definition –
 - a. “Learning targets are student-friendly descriptions—via words, pictures, actions, or some combination of the three—of what you intend students to learn or accomplish in a given lesson (Moss & Brookhart, 2012).”
 - b. Learning targets align with and point toward broader, standards-based curricular learning goals.
2. Types of learning targets and examples (Chappuis, J. & Stiggins, R., 2020).

- a. **Knowledge:** *Recognize acute, obtuse, and right angles; identify nouns and verbs; explain the difference between power and authority.*
- b. **Reasoning:** *draw conclusions from experiment results; compare and contrast points of view from a historical event; evaluate health and fitness information.*
- c. **Performance Skill:** *use laboratory equipment safely; perform CPR correctly; participate in civic discussions.*
- d. **Product:** *create a timeline to show the order of early explorations and settlements; develop a home fire escape plan; draw a bar graph to represent a data set with up to four categories.*
- e. **Disposition:** *choose to read to learn more about something; enjoy playing a sport; seek opportunities to understand how things work.*

II. Understanding Assessment’s Role in Learning – Key Topics

A. Three Key Questions to Ensure Students Are at the Center of Their Learning (Chappuis, J. & Stiggins, R., 2020).

- 1. *Where am I going?*
 - a. I understand the learning targets.
 - b. I can set goals for my learning.
- 2. *Where am I now?*
 - a. I receive feedback from my teacher about my learning.
 - b. I can track the progress of my learning.
- 3. *How can I close the gap?*
 - a. I can learn from the feedback from my teacher and peers.
 - b. I can determine the next steps for my learning.

B. How Formative Classroom Assessment Improves Student Learning

- 1. Formative assessment practices are designed to put students at the center of their learning.
 - a. *Establishing Clear Learning Targets and Success Criteria*
 - b. *Using Questioning to Elicit Evidence of Student Thinking*
 - c. *Diagnosing Learning Needs to Inform Instructional Next Steps*
 - d. *Offering Actionable Feedback*
 - e. *Engaging Students in Self-Assessment, Peer Feedback, and Goal Setting*

2. Diagnostic assessments can serve a formative function when they identify learning difficulties and can help students understand steps to improve their learning.

III. Assessment Literacy for School Leaders – Key Topics

- A. Assessment Literacy Standards (Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative. Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2007.)
 1. Dispositions - Beliefs About Assessment
 2. Knowledge - Understanding of Assessment Processes and Practices
 3. Performance - Assessment Skills and Competencies

- B. Assessment Literacy Goals for School Leaders (Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders*. Corwin Press)
 - a. Chapter 1: Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment Systems
 - b. Chapter 2: Clear Standards
 - c. Chapter 3: Standards of Assessment Quality
 - d. Chapter 4: Formative Assessment Practices
 - e. Chapter 5: Grading Practices
 - f. Chapter 6: Effective Communication
 - g. Chapter 7: Ethical and Appropriate Assessment Use
 - h. Chapter 8: Evaluation of Assessment Competencies and Providing Appropriate Professional Development
 - i. Chapter 9: Analysis of Student Assessment Information
 - j. Chapter 10: School and District Assessment Policies

- C. Foundation of Continuous School Improvement to Increase Student Achievement (Stiggins, R. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD).
 1. Balancing Formative and Summative Assessment
 2. Standards-based Curriculum
 3. Curricular-aligned Instruction

Recommended Resources

Assessment Learning Network Learning Points.

<https://www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/aln/aln-learning-points/#formative-assessment>

Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative. Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2007. **(Downloadable PDF)** Retrieved from http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/sites/default/files/mac_AssessLitStds_2017_screen-9.19.17.pdf (This resource contains standards for assessment literacy for students in elementary, middle, and high school, teachers, building, and district administrators, and policymakers.)

Black, P. & D. Wiliam. 1998. Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80(2), 139-148. Retrieved from <https://kappanonline.org/inside-the-black-box-raising-standards-through-classroom-assessment/>

Brookhart, S. M. 2009. "The Many Meanings of 'Multiple Measures.'" *Educational Leadership*, 67 (3): 6–12.
Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov09/vol67/num03/The-Many-Meanings-of-%C2%A3Multiple-Measures%C2%A3.aspx>

Chappuis, S., Brookhart, S., & Chappuis, J. (2021). *Ten assessment literacy goals for school leaders (pp.1-36)*. Corwin Press. **(Chapters 2, 4, 5 6)**
<https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/ten-assessment-literacy-goals-for-school-leaders/book274134#:~:text=Communicate%20with%20all%20members%20of,that%20support%20quality%20assessment%20practice>

Chappuis, J. & Stiggins, R. (2020). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right - using it well, 3rd Edition*. Pearson. **(Chapters 2, 3)** <https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Chappuis-Classroom-Assessment-for-Student-Learning-Doing-It-Right-Using-It-Well-Plus-Pearson-e-Text-2-0-Access-Card-Package-3rd-Edition/PGM2037155.html>

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). (2018). *Revising the definition of formative assessment*. <https://ccsso.org/resource-library/revising-definition-formative-assessment#:~:text=Formative%20assessment%20is%20a%20planned,to%20become%20self%2Ddirected%20learners>.

Hattie, J. (2022). The Power of Feedback. **(20 min video)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbHt1OecPOU>

Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. (2012). Formative and summative assessment. In *Instructional Guide for University Faculty and Teaching Assistants*. Retrieved from <https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide>

Moss, C. & Brookhart, S. (2021). *Learning targets: Helping students aim for understanding today's lesson*. ASCD. Alexandria, VA.

Sparks, S.D. (2018). Getting feedback right: A Q&A with John Hattie. *Education Week*. Retrieved from

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/getting-feedback-right-a-q-a-with-john-hattie/2018/06>

The IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University. Diagnostic Assessment. Retrieved from

[https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/dbi2/cresource/q2/p05/#:~:text=A%20diagnostic%20assessment%20is%20a,\(e.g.%2C%20work%20samples\).](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/dbi2/cresource/q2/p05/#:~:text=A%20diagnostic%20assessment%20is%20a,(e.g.%2C%20work%20samples).)

Example Learning Activities:

- Connecting standards and assessment:
 - “Deconstruct” a grade level content standard to determine the type(s) of learning target(s) it includes.
 - Determine where this standard/learning target appears in the curriculum that is taught.
 - How is the learning of this standard/learning target measured (i.e., summative – assessment *of* learning; formative – assessment *for* learning).

- Review a classroom-based assessment for the following qualities:
 - Clear purpose (formative usefulness)
 - Aligned to clear learning target(s)
 - Sound design (appropriate methods)
 - Selected response
 - Written (constructed) response
 - Performance assessment
 - Personal communication (interviews, observations)
 - Effective communication/feedback – method(s) used

Based on the review, offer examples or recommendations how the assessment demonstrates the qualities or could be improved.

- Recall professional experiences designed to build assessment literacy among educators in your school or district.
 - Describe the experience(s)/activity(s).
 - What was the focus?
 - Who participated?
 - What was your most important learning from the experience or activity?
 - Is there a need to continue opportunities for professional learning about assessment in your school/district? If so:
 - What should be the focus?
 - What resources are available to support this type of professional learning?