

Assessment For Learning

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Research shows...

- Strengthening the practice of formative assessment produces significant and often substantial learning gains. (Black, 1998)
- Improved formative assessment helps low achievers more than other students and so reduces the range of achievement while raising achievement overall. (Black, 1998)
- Students who understand the intended learning score 27 percentile points higher on standardized tests than those who do not. (Marzano, 2005)
- Results of assessment have to be used to adjust teaching and learning.
- Providing students with specific information about their standing in terms of particular objectives increased their achievement by 37 percentile points. (Hattie, 2009)
- The most powerful single innovation that enhances achievement is feedback. (Black, 1998)
- In order for effective learning to take place, students have to be actively involved. (Black, 1998)

What is assessment?

- Integral part of instruction that determines whether or not goals have been met
- Measures the current knowledge a student has and is used to plan further instruction
- Determines the effectiveness of a lesson in terms of student learning
- Provides corrective feedback to students on performance
- Provides feedback to the teacher about what strategies are working and what content needs to be revised
- Tells us how well we are doing when compared with district, state, national, and international levels
- Assists parents in monitoring their children's progress

Assessment *OF* Learning

- *Summative!*
- Purpose: Checks student status.
- Ranks Students
(Gathers information to document achievement)
- Evaluative (achievement standards for which schools, teachers, and/or students are held accountable)
- Occurs after learning
- Informs ALL about level of competence (above players plus levels above classroom: policy makers, NCLB, district administration, curriculum decisions)
- Pinpoints learning as of a particular point in time
- Achievement tests, final exams, placement tests, short cycle assessments
- An event

Assessment *FOR* Learning

- *Formative!*
- Purpose: Improve Learning
- Helps Students (by changing teacher behavior)
- Descriptive (specific targets that enable students to build toward standards)
- Occurs during learning
- Informs teacher & student about needs (classroom level)
- Pinpoints where a student is in the journey toward competence
- Use of rubrics with projects, student self-assessment, descriptive feedback
- A process

Overview of AFL

1. Clear Purposes

- Use many different assessment methods to provide students, teachers, and parents with a continuing stream of evidence of student progress.

2. Clear Targets

- Teachers select learning targets focused on the most important things students need to know and be able to do.
- Students learn about achievement expectations from the beginning of the learning.
- Students study models of strong and weak work.

3. Sound Design

- Teachers choose assessment methods that match the intended learning targets.

4. Effective Communication

- Teachers communicate timely and descriptive feedback to students, parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

5. Student Involvement

- Teachers partner with students to continuously monitor current level of attainment in relation to agreed-upon expectations so the students can set and evaluate learning goals.

Key 1: Clear Purpose

- What do we assess?

What's the purpose?

Who benefits from the assessment?

Who will use the results?

What will we use the results to *do*?

Key 2: Clear Targets

- Create clear, worthy learning targets
- Determine the type of learning target: knowledge, reasoning skill, product
- Rewrite as “I can” or “I am learning” statement in terms that students will understand
- Define word(s) needing clarification
- Communicate the target to students **
- Provide models of strong and weak work

4 Types of Learning Targets

1. Knowledge

- Items to be learned outright or retrieved.

2. Pattern of Reasoning

- Thinking proficiencies- solving a problem, making a decision.

3. Skills

- Behavioral demonstrations; acting skillfully, reason and solve problems.

4. Product

- Create something, produce a final product.

Bloom's Taxonomy	Bloom's Revised Taxonomy	Webb's Depth of Knowledge	Stiggins Types of Learning Targets	CLUE WORDS
KNOWLEDGE "The recall of specifics and universals, involving little more than bringing to mind the appropriate material"	REMEMBER Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory (e.g., recognizing, recalling)	RECALL Recall of a fact, information, or procedure	KNOWLEDGE/ UNDERSTANDING Concepts to be learned outright; some to be retrieved using reference materials	<i>Knowledge:</i> describe, identify, tell, name, list, define, label, match, choose, recall, recognize, select, know
COMPREHENSION "Ability to process knowledge on a low level such that the knowledge can be reproduced or communicated without a verbatim repetition."	UNDERSTAND Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication (e.g., interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, explaining)	BASIC APPLICATION OF SKILL/CONCEPT Use of information, conceptual knowledge, procedures, two or more steps, etc.		PATTERNS OF REASONING Thinking proficiencies- using knowledge to solve a problem, make a decision, plan, etc. <i>*See second Pattern of Reasoning block below.</i>
APPLICATION "The use of abstractions in concrete situations." "Using information in another familiar situation."	APPLYING Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation (e.g., executing, implementing)		STRATEGIC THINKING Requires reasoning, developing a plan or sequence of steps; has some complexity; more than one possible answer; generally takes less than 10 minutes to do	SKILLS Behavioral demonstrations; where the doing is what is important; using knowledge and reasoning to perform skillfully
ANALYSIS "The breakdown of a situation into its component parts." "Breaking information into parts to explore understandings and relationships."	ANALYZING Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure on purpose (e.g., differentiating, organizing, attributing)	EXTENDED THINKING Requires an investigation; time to think and process multiple conditions of the problem or task; and more than 10 minutes to do non-routine manipulations		
SYNTHESIS "Putting together elements & parts to form a whole." and EVALUATION "Making value judgments."	EVALUATE Making judgments based on criteria and standards (e.g., checking, critiquing)		CREATING Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product (e.g., generating, planning, producing)	PRODUCTS Where the characteristics of the final product are important; using knowledge, reasoning, and skills to produce a final product.

Key 3: Sound Design

- What is the purpose of the assessment?
- Assessment method should match the (clearly defined) intended learning targets
- Learning targets to be assessed should represent what is taught
- Items, tasks, and scoring guides are clear
- Assessment should accurately communicate achievement

Key 3: Sound Design (cont.)

Methods of Assessment

- Personal Communication
 - Thumbs up, white boards, observation, conferences, class discussions, oral examinations, dialogue journals, exit slips
- Performance Assessment
 - Apply a performance skill or create a product
 - Evaluate on quality
- Written assessment
 - Selected response: true/false, multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, short answer
 - Extended written response

Key 3: Sound Design (cont.)

Stages of Assessment

- Plan the assessment
 - Does the assessment match the learning targets? Is it balanced to match the level of importance of each learning target? (test plan)
- Develop the assessment
 - Match learning targets with appropriate evidence of student learning. Develop scoring guides for extended written response and performance assessments.
- Critique the assessment
 - Check for bias and distortion (does the test match the test plan; how well are items written; do the items test what you intended)
- Administer the Assessment (never begin here!!)
- Revise the Assessment
 - Was the intended accomplished? Ask students to help reflect on the assessment.

Key 4: Effective Communication

- Teachers communicate timely and descriptive feedback to students, parents, colleagues, and other stakeholders
- How will feedback be communicated? (report card grades, mastery judgments, narratives, rubrics, portfolios, standardized test scores)
- Feedback should be high-quality:
 - Feedback is most effective when it identifies what students are doing right as well as what they need to work on next
 - Offer descriptive feedback on work that is for practice instead of grades
 - Feedback must be immediate, frequent and timely; occurs during learning
 - Feedback promotes ongoing dialogue and achievement in relation to mastery of learning target
 - Student must be involved in feedback—should lead students to self-monitoring/self-adjustment with minimal prompting

Key 5: Student Involvement

- Students help write rubrics
- Provide structures to teach the students self assessment
 - Peer Feedback
 - Self-Assessment Forms: Student-Teacher Compare Ratings
- Teach students focused revision
- Engage students in self-reflection; let them keep track of and share their learning
 - Portfolios
 - Student-Teacher Conferences

Key Components

(or 7 strategies for AFL)

- Where is the student going?
 1. Make clear, understandable learning targets
 2. Provide models of strong and weak work
- Where is the student now?
 3. Provide quality descriptive feedback
 4. Teach students to self assess
- How can the student close the gap?
 5. Provide guidance-focus on one aspect of quality at a time
 6. Teach students focused revision
 7. Engage students in self-reflection; let them keep track of and share their learning

References

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Suggested Reading

- *Accountability for Learning: How Teachers and School Leaders Can Take Charge.* (Reeves, 2004)
- *Assessment for learning: An action guide for school leaders.* (Chappuis, Stiggins, Arter, and Chappuis, 2003)
- *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research based strategies for increasing student achievement.* (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001)
- *Student Assessment That Works* (Weber, 1999)
Succeeding With Standards: Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Action Planning. (Carr and Harris, 2001)
The Truth About Testing: An Educator's Call to Action (Popham, 2001)