Introduction 4
Classroom Assessment Standards 5
Foundations 11
   F1 Assessment Purpose 12
   F2 Learning Expectations 15
   F3 Assessment Design 18
   F4 Student Engagement 22
   F5 Assessment Preparation 25
   F6 Informed Stakeholders 28
Use 29
   U1 Analysis of Student Performance 30
   U2 Effective Feedback 35
   U3 Instructional Planning 40
   U4 Reporting 43
Quality 45
   Q1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of Students 46
   Q2 Differentiation 47
   Q3 Fairness 50
   Q4 Validity 53
   Q5 Reliability 56
   Q6 Reflection 59
Recommended Books 63
ISBE Extension References 64
Illinois State Board of Education
Gerry J. Chico, Chairman
Dr. Christopher Koch, State Superintendent

Division of Student Assessment
Dr. Mary O’Brian, Director of Assessment

Address:
Illinois State Board of Education
110 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777

www.isbe.net/assessment/

November 2014
This document has been developed to guide Illinois educators as they create balanced assessment systems at the classroom, school, and district levels. Balanced assessment systems produce useful data that guide school improvement. In addition, this document provides guidance concerning the measurement of student growth as part of a valid and reliable performance evaluation plan.

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?
Assessment is defined as the process of collecting and interpreting information that can be used to inform teachers, students, and, when applicable, parents/guardians or other users of assessment information about students’ progress in attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to be learned or acquired in school (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2003).

WHAT IS A BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM?
A balanced assessment system is the strategic use of formative, interim, and summative measures of student performance to address immediate student needs, inform ongoing instructional changes, and guide long-term educational improvement (Douglas County School District, 2013). The concept of a balanced assessment system may be used at the classroom, school, and district levels. Ideally, these systems would nest within and inform one another to create an overarching, balanced assessment system.

A balanced assessment system integrates curriculum, instruction, and assessment to involve students in meaningful assessment practices and support the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. In addition, a system that uses multiple and varied measures of student performance provides more valid and reliable evidence of the influence of educators on their students. Therefore, a balanced assessment system supports the use of multiple and varied measures of student performance over time, including:

- **Formative assessment**, which is designed to provide regular feedback to teachers so they can adjust instruction to improve student learning.

- **Interim assessments**, which are designed to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction.

- **Summative assessments**, which are designed to measure overall curriculum and program effectiveness. Summative assessments are standardized to allow comparison across student groups.
Classroom Assessment Standards

The Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment has adapted the Field Trial Draft of the Classroom Assessment Standards: Sound Assessment Practices for PK-12, copyrighted to the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) Classroom Assessment Standards Development Task Force. This document also recommends additional resources aligned to the classroom assessment standards.

OVERVIEW

Classroom assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning. Without sound assessment practices, we may not know if students are progressing as planned. Further, we may not be able to effectively plan for students’ future learning opportunities. The Classroom Assessment Standards contains a set of standards and related guidelines accepted by professional organizations as indicative of consistent and accurate classroom assessment practices. The standards and related guidelines identify the issues to consider when exercising the professional judgment required for fair and equitable classroom formative, interim, and summative assessment for all students. The results from classroom assessments that adhere to these standards and guidelines can then be used with confidence by teachers, students, and, where appropriate, parents/guardians, to better foster student learning.

What is Assessment?

“Assessment is broadly defined in the Classroom Assessment Standards as the process of collecting and interpreting information that can be used to inform teachers, students, and, when applicable, parents/guardians or other users of assessment information about students’ progress in attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to be learned or acquired in school (JCSEE, 2003).”

---

Prior to undertaking any form of assessment, it is essential that we develop a clear understanding of the following:

- Purpose of the assessment, including users, intent, and decisions to be influenced by the results.
- What is to be assessed, in terms of learning targets or expectations.
- The best method for conducting the assessment we have selected or developed, given the purpose and learning targets.
- How to best communicate the assessment results and to whom.
- How to involve students in the assessment process.

These five basic considerations must guide educators from the very start of planning the assessment and the instruction occurring alongside or leading up to it. The consideration of assessment purpose, learning expectations, assessment method, communication, and student involvement can positively benefit students’ continuous learning.

**PURPOSES AND NATURE OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**

Classroom assessments cover a range of purposes. The assessment of student learning might be used formatively to inform small adjustments or enhancements to ongoing instruction or used summatively to help measure overall curriculum and program effectiveness. The size and scope of the classroom assessment itself can vary, as can the degree of formality of the assessment. Three examples of classroom assessment practices that differ in their formality and consequences are:

- Formative assessment to inform teachers and students about progress on learning intentions and to inform and direct subsequent learning and teaching.

- Larger projects, such as an essay, a performance assessment, or a research project that may be used as interim or summative assessments may have significant formative components to support student learning along the way, such as regular self-assessment of progress, feedback from peers or teachers, and drafts before a final version or product is submitted.

- Summative assessments used to hold students accountable for demonstrating acquired knowledge or skills at the completion of a course can also be used in future planning.

When conducting an assessment, consideration should be given to the consequences of the decisions to be made. The outcomes of some assessments may be more critical than others. For example, misinterpretation of the level of performance on an end-of-unit test may result in incorrectly holding a student from proceeding to the next instructional unit in a continuous progress situation. In such "high-stakes" situations, every effort should be made to ensure that the assessment method will yield consistent and accurate results. Low-stakes assessments such
as question/answer during class or homework designed to determine current understanding of an ongoing unit of study may be less stringent.

Regardless of the purpose of the classroom assessment, adherence to the standards and guidelines presented in the Classroom Assessment Standards will help ensure that the information obtained from the classroom assessment and the interpretation of the information are accurate, allowing for follow-up activities designed to support continuous evidence-based learning.

This current revision of the standards is the product of a comprehensive effort to reach consensus on what constitutes sound principles that guide the fair assessment of students and foster learning in PK–12 classrooms—in the classroom, laboratory, gymnasium, or field trip. The standards should be considered neither exhaustive nor mandatory. However, educational organizations, institutions, and individual professionals who support them and/or endorse their use are committing themselves to fair and equitable classroom assessment for all students.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT STANDARDS
The Classroom Assessment Standards statements are organized into three broad domains:

- **FOUNDATIONS**
  The standards begin with the foundations domain. The six foundation standards encompass the basis for developing and implementing sound and fair classroom assessment practices that are focused on the students to be assessed. Within any particular classroom assessment context, the teacher needs to begin the assessment process with a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives to be targeted. Based on this, the teacher selects the appropriate types and methods of classroom assessment to meet that purpose. In addition, the teacher should determine who will use the assessment results and how they will use them.

- **USE**
  The four use standards align with the assessment process and follow a logical progression from the selection and development of classroom assessments to the communication of the assessment results. It is important to understand what learning targets will be assessed and how achievement will be assessed given the purpose of the assessment; how the students’ responses will be analyzed; and how the results will be communicated and used. Additionally, it is important to have student involvement through all phases since students are also important decision makers in the classroom.

- **QUALITY**
  Teachers can use classroom assessment results with increased confidence when their classroom assessment practices meet the six quality standards. Quality assessments yield results that are accurate and reliable, are free of bias, and include all students. Additionally, it is important that teachers review their assessment practices and revise them so that they reflect current and best assessment practice.
SCAPE OF THE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT STANDARDS
For the purposes of the Classroom Assessment Standards, the term “assessment” is used to encompass all of the strategies and techniques that a classroom teacher might use to collect information from students about their progress toward attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors to be learned or what students know and can do.

USES OF THE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT STANDARDS
The focus of the standards at the classroom level stems from the belief that strong and continuous learning requires consistent daily attention to gather, analyze, and effectively use accurate assessment information to guide instruction leading to student learning. The primary intended users are the PK-12 classroom teachers. Other users of these standards may include building-level and district-level administrators; staff developers; faculty in colleges of education and other pre-service programs for teachers; researchers in the field of assessment; and program evaluators; parents and guardians, while users of assessment information, will likely not use the standards themselves. Likewise, students may benefit from being involved in a self- or peer-assessment in their classroom, but they are unlikely to become independent users of the standards.

The standard statements alone are helpful but not sufficient. Regardless of the purpose or intent of the user, the supporting explanations and guidelines offer clarity and definition to the standard statements. Reliance on individual interpretation of standard statements without the support of the research-based explanations and guidelines may result in well intended but misguided applications of the standards. The explanations and guidelines are specific to each standard statement and provide the opportunity for educators to engage in rich discussions within the context of their school setting.

Examples of ways in which the standard statements, supported by their guidelines, can be used include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Individual teachers may use the Classroom Assessment Standards to select, develop, administer, evaluate, and interpret classroom assessments that will yield more accurate interpretations of their students’ performances. This, in turn, can be used to foster their students’ further learning and, where needed, make adjustments to instruction.

- Teacher groups, such as professional learning communities or learning teams, may use the Classroom Assessment Standards to evaluate their practices, shape plans for improvement, and share ideas for classroom assessment. The standards can provide a background for developing a common understanding among teachers as to appropriate strategies for the selection, development, use, and interpretation of classroom assessments.

- Teachers, curriculum facilitators, and administrators may use the standards to develop, strengthen, and reflect on teacher levels of expertise and performance in conducting classroom assessments. This may inform continued professional development efforts.
- Building- and district-level administrators may work with teacher leaders to use the standards to develop written classroom assessment policies and guidelines for assessing students in their schools.

- Colleges of education may use the standards to inform the development of courses for pre-service educators in the area of assessment.

- Instructors of in-service programs may use the standards to identify and teach the important aspects of effective classroom assessment practices.

- Staff developers and consultants may use the standards to align their professional training programs with sound methods of classroom assessment.

- Educational researchers and program evaluators may find the standards helpful in developing assessments to be used within their work.

How and by whom the Classroom Assessment Standards are used should be determined within the specific educational context by the professionals involved. Educational settings vary widely across student populations, states, and regions. Professional judgment should be used to identify which standards are most appropriate for each classroom assessment situation. The JCSEE cautions that the individual standards are not equally applicable in all classroom assessment situations. Professional judgment should be used to identify which standards are most appropriate for each classroom assessment situation.

**ISBE EXTENSION**

Throughout the three domains, sections titled ISBE Extension are incorporated to provide additional resources supporting learning related to the classroom assessment standards. The ISBE Extensions constitute the opinions of their respective authors; they do not represent the views and opinions of the Illinois State Board of Education. A table that outlines these additional resources and their associated standards follows below. Because many resources have information that supports multiple standards but may only be included in a single ISBE Extension section, the following table outlines all of the standards associated with each resource.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 Assessment Purpose</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2 Learning Expectations</td>
<td>x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3 Assessment Design</td>
<td>x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4 Student Engagement</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5 Assessment Preparation</td>
<td>x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6 Informed Stakeholders</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1 Analysis of Student Performance</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2 Effective Feedback</td>
<td>x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3 Instructional Planning</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4 Reporting</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Differentiation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 Fairness</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Validity</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 Validity</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Reflection</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The ISBE Extensions constitute the opinions of their respective authors; they do not represent the views and opinions of the Illinois State Board of Education.*
Classroom assessment practices must be aligned with learning targets grounded in curriculum and expectations for individual student growth to provide accurate information about students’ strengths and areas of need, while also fostering continued learning. Since the support of student learning is a key purpose of classroom assessment, it is necessary to use assessment results to inform instruction. The more students, teachers, and when appropriate, parents/guardians and others with a legitimate need to know, understand the intent of classroom assessment, the more likely they will be to support the assessment process and use the results.

**F 1 Assessment Purpose:** Classroom assessment practices should have a clear purpose that supports teaching and learning.

**F 2 Learning Expectations:** Classroom assessment practices should align with the appropriate learning expectations and instruction intended for each student.

**F 3 Assessment Design:** The types and methods of classroom assessment used should clearly allow students to demonstrate their learning.

**F 4 Student Engagement:** Students should be meaningfully engaged in the assessment process and use of the assessment evidence to enhance their learning.

**F 5 Assessment Preparation:** Adequate teacher and student preparation in terms of resources, time, and learning opportunities should be part of classroom assessment practices.

**F 6 Informed Stakeholders:** The purposes and uses of classroom assessment should be communicated to students and, when appropriate, parents/guardians.
Assessment Purpose: Classroom assessment practices should have a clear purpose that supports teaching and learning.

EXPLANATION
The focus of classroom assessment practices whether summative, interim, or formative in nature is to support student learning. As a result, a clear purpose related to student learning enhances the effectiveness of an assessment process. Purposes for classroom assessment practices may range from obtaining diagnostic information at the start of instruction to determining student growth to be reported at the end of an instructional period. For example, purposes may include the following:

- Providing evidence of learning to inform instructional decisions and practice.
- Providing immediate feedback on current learning targets to students.
- Engaging students in self-assessment to develop an understanding of their own learning.
- Engaging students in peer assessment to support peers’ learning and to deepen the learning of the students actively engaged in the peer assessment process.
- Informing students and parents/guardians about the level of achievement of the learning expectations for a defined period.
- Making diagnostic and assignment decisions to place students into appropriate instructional groups or to receive individualized instruction.

GUIDELINES
Consider the following questions to help identify the purpose(s) of a specific classroom assessment practice:

- Why is the assessment to be conducted?
  - For example, how will the assessment results be used to further students’ learning and inform teaching?

- Who will be assessed?
  - For example, is the classroom assessment intended for all students in the classroom or for subgroups of students (e.g., students with special assessment needs or those with limited English language proficiency skills)?

- What will be assessed, including learning expectations and state content curriculum expectations and interims, process skills (e.g., thinking and problem-solving skills), and performance skills?
Assessment measures are structured to continuously improve teaching and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unlocking the power of the teacher-made test</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Type:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Resource Type:** Article  
**Audience:** Teachers and administrators  
**Overview:** This article introduces the concept of learning progressions.  

**Highlights:** A learning progression is a carefully sequenced set of building blocks that students must master en route to mastering a more distant curricular aim. These building blocks consist of sub-skills and bodies of enabling knowledge. Below are three key points from the article:

- Typically, learning progressions are constructed on the basis of some sort of backward analysis. An educator first identifies a significant curricular aim and then asks, “What does a student need to know or be able to do to master this aim?”
- Learning progressions provide systematic opportunities for students to master skills toward larger goals; and they systematically build a framework for effective formative assessment (which includes systematic data collection).
- “Most education authorities suggest that instead of incorporating a seemingly endless array of minor sub-skills and knowledge, learning progressions should contain only those sub-skills and bodies of enabling knowledge that represent the most significant building blocks.”

**Citations**
Learning Expectations: Classroom assessment practices should align with the appropriate learning expectations and instruction intended for each student.

EXPLANATION
Learning expectations refer to evidence related to the content standards that may be measured through assessment. Learning expectations may include clear statements of what students are to learn, lesson-by-lesson, or for overall units, and provide direction for both instruction and assessment. Learning expectations may be derived from national, state, or local content standards (e.g., New Illinois Learning Standards). Classroom assessment practices aligned with learning expectations, coupled with appropriate instructional approaches, will provide accurate information about students’ strengths and areas of need to foster continuous learning.

GUIDELINES
• Align learning expectations with the full range of knowledge, skills, and abilities individual students are expected to demonstrate.

• Provide clear learning expectations in language students can understand.

• Provide a method to share the clear learning expectations with students for each lesson.

• Recognize that all learning expectations are not equally important and do not require similar assessments.

• Connect the evaluation criteria to learning expectations in a way that is easily understood by students.

• Share exemplars with students to illustrate what achievement of the learning expectations looks like.

• Use informal checks of students’ progress toward the expectations at the end of a lesson or classroom assessment.
What is needed is to create sets of academic content standards focused on the key concepts and ideas for the content area suitable for the grade level. Sometimes called the ‘big ideas,’ these key concepts can guide instruction that is deep and meaningful, helping students to understand the concepts, not just memorize facts.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Structure of the model content frameworks for ELA/literacy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Type:</strong> Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong> Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong> The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) outlines <em>The Model Content Framework</em> for each grade level and defines the term <em>text complexity</em> as well as its purpose and use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong> The Model Content Frameworks for ELA/Literacy help inform the development of the PARCC assessments and support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. They can also help educators and those developing curricula and instructional materials. The authors illustrate one way the standards could be organized over the course of the school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Type:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Highlights:**    | This article discusses the history of standard development, how standards are used, and the typical formats in which they are developed. It also provides suggestions for revising academic content standards. Although this article addresses these topics from a state perspective, much of the information provided is applicable at a district level. For example, the article outlines the following principles as important in developing assessments and is applicable to the development of a standards-aligned assessment system at the district level as well.  
  
  - No single test can meet all the purposes driving the development of the content standards.  
  - Coherence is best accomplished by thinking of an assessment as a system.  
  - Proper development of content standards is essential to a coherent assessment system.  
  - Assessment development should directly follow the intended use of the resulting data and information derived from the assessment.  
  - Both state and local educators have distinct roles in a coherent statewide assessment system. |
Assessment Design: The types and methods of classroom assessment used should clearly allow students to demonstrate their learning.

EXPLANATION
Classroom assessment practices are more effective when careful attention is given to the structure and format of the assessment. For example, the instructions provided should maximize student performance. Sufficient time, space to enter answers, and when needed, technology, materials, and supplies should also be available to allow students to complete the classroom assessment tasks. Failure to attend to issues such as these will lead to incorrect interpretations of students’ performance on the classroom assessment. It is of vital importance to select the right approach on the classroom assessment design as well as to know that all assessment designs have strengths and limitations. A variety of classroom assessment designs will provide a much better picture of students’ learning.

GUIDELINES
- When selecting or developing classroom assessments delivered in a paper/pencil or computer-based format, consider:
  - Age-appropriateness of the classroom assessment
  - Text complexity
  - Amount of space for answers
  - Formatting of the questions or activities
  - Clarity of diagrams and illustrations
  - Method of delivery (e.g., paper/pencil, computer-administered)
  - Clarity of the verbal or written instructions

- When presenting classroom assessments in an oral form (e.g., class questioning), consider:
  - Complexity of word choice
  - Volume level of voice
  - Complexity of questions and directions (e.g., multi-step tasks)

- Provide opportunities for students to practice with new assessment formats and new assessment item types.

- Recognize that different classroom assessments may more effectively serve the intended purpose and that the effectiveness may vary across individual students or groups of students.

- Develop or select classroom assessments that are as engaging as possible to students, thus motivating students to show their best learning.
## Formative assessment: What do teachers need to know and do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article provides information on using formative assessment to improve teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>Formative assessments, if used effectively, can provide key information on learning to both students and teachers and can provide teachers with the knowledge to move forward in effectively assessing students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Attributes of effective formative assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article provides a working definition of formative assessment and discusses the five attributes that have been identified from the literature as critical features of effective formative assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Highlights:   | Formative assessment is defined as “a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes.” The five attributes of formative assessment are listed below. This article contains an in-depth discussion that considers the importance of each attribute:

- Learning Progressions: Learning progressions should clearly articulate the sub-goals of the ultimate learning goal.
- Learning Goals and Criteria for Success: Learning goals and criteria for success should be clearly identified and communicated to students.
- Descriptive Feedback: Students should be provided with evidence-based feedback that is linked to the intended instructional outcome and criteria for success.
- Self- and Peer-Assessment: Both self- and peer-assessment are important for providing students an opportunity to think meta-cognitively about their learning.
- Collaboration: A classroom culture in which teachers and students are partners in learning should be established. |
# Moving toward a comprehensive assessment system: A framework for considering interim assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers, administrators, and policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article discusses the elements of a comprehensive assessment system (i.e., balanced assessment system) and provides specific information about the use of interim assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The following excerpt introduces the three tiers of assessment (i.e., formative, interim, and summative) and their purpose and connection to teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. Tiers of Assessment**

Three tiers of assessment—summative, interim, and formative—are shown in Figure 1. The triangle illustrates that formative assessment are used most frequently, have the smallest scope (i.e., the narrowest curricular focus) and the shortest cycle (i.e., the shortest time frame, typically defined as 5 seconds to 1 day), while summative assessments are administered least frequently and have the largest scope and cycle. Interim assessments fall between these other two types on all dimensions.

### Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right – using it well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Book chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>The chapter, <em>Assess How? Designing Assessments to Do What You Want</em>, explains how to choose an assessment method and outlines the steps in assessment planning and development. This chapter describes four different assessment methods and how to choose a method based on learning targets for planning and development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Formative assessment examples of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article provides examples of formative assessment in practice and demonstrates effective examples of formative assessment through the use of vignettes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Highlights:   | Based on the current literature, formative assessment’s effectiveness is linked to five attributes:  
- Learning Progressions 
- Learning Goals and Criteria for Success 
- Descriptive Feedback 
- Self-and-Peer Assessment 
- Collaboration |
**Student Engagement:** Students should be meaningfully engaged in the assessment process and use of the assessment evidence to enhance their learning.

**EXPLANATION**
Students benefit from opportunities to be involved in their assessments. For example, being able to assess their own learning is an important skill for students as they develop into life-long continuous learners. Several ways in which students can become engaged in the classroom assessment process include student involvement in setting assessment purposes, developing evaluation tools, student-led conferences (in which students lead their teachers and parents/guardians through work samples or portfolios), self-assessment, and peer-assessment.

Self- and peer-assessments, in particular, provide students with opportunities for heightened levels of student engagement. For example, appropriate peer-assessment is valuable to both students receiving the feedback, as well as those students providing feedback. Additionally, students providing feedback may benefit since it enables them to deepen their own understanding of the success criteria and what they have done. When students gain experience in self- and peer-assessment, they will be better able to use their classroom assessment results to foster their own continued learning.

**GUIDELINES**
- Establish success criteria with students where appropriate by guiding students through a process to consider what a quality product of learning would look like.
- Engage students in the development of rubrics when appropriate.
- Provide students with age-appropriate, scaffolded learning experiences to help them develop self-assessment and self-regulation skills.
- Model for students how to give appropriate peer feedback while monitoring and supporting students as they give feedback to peers.
- Provide students with opportunities to evaluate their learning progress and check on the accuracy of their own self-evaluation.
- Provide students with opportunities to react to and use data/observations from either self- or peer-assessment so that learning continues beyond the assessment with an appropriate use of the information generated.
- Use student-led conferences as a way to engage students in self-reflection about their work and progress over a period of time by providing them with an audience (usually parents/guardians and teacher) to talk with about their learning.
- Allow self- and peer-assessments to guide instructional decisions when appropriate.
The way to improve student achievement is not to do more testing or test prep, but rather to engage students deeply in the classroom assessment process and increase the specific descriptive feedback they receive while they are learning.

Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment

Resource Type: Article
Audience: Teachers, administrators, and policy makers
Overview: This article examines the use of formative assessment practices, including the use of self- and peer-assessment, as ways of enhancing formative assessment practice.

Highlights: The following is a representative excerpt from the article:

“Pupils can assess themselves only when they have a sufficiently clear picture of the targets that their learning is meant to attain. Surprisingly, and sadly, many pupils do not have such a picture, and they appear to have become accustomed to receiving classroom teaching as an arbitrary sequence of exercises with no overarching rationale. To overcome this pattern of passive reception requires hard and sustained work. When pupils do acquire such an overview, they then become more committed and more effective at learning. Moreover, their own assessments become an object of discussion with their teachers and with one another, and this discussion further promotes the reflection on one’s own thinking that is essential to good learning.

Thus self-assessment by pupils, far from being a luxury, is in fact an essential component of formative assessment. When anyone is trying to learn, feedback about the effort has three elements: recognition of the desired goal, evidence about the present position, and some understanding of a way to close the gap between the two. All three must be understood to some degree by anyone before he or she can take action to improve learning.”

Citations
### Modern foreign languages—Peer assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers, administrators, and policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This video spotlights effective approaches to developing and using peer assessment in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The video features three UK classrooms that use peer assessment to assess students’ written and oral assignments. Teachers and students discuss the key skills that are part of this approach. These skills include giving feedback and applying assessment criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment for learning in KS3/4 science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers, administrators, and policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This video shows the reasons why and how a biology teacher uses a formative assessment technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The video demonstrates how to make students part of the assessment process. The teacher shown in the video talks about how she assesses her students using the school’s model, The Level Ladder. This approach informs students of their current level, guides them to improve their grades, and encourages them to make progress to the next level, resulting in more students eager to learn more about biology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Assessment Preparation: Adequate teacher and student preparation in terms of resources, time, and learning opportunities should be part of classroom assessment practices.**

**EXPLANATION**
Classroom assessment practices require adequate preparation to obtain accurate information about student learning. This preparation includes sufficient time and opportunities for students to learn and prepare for classroom assessment and sufficient time and resources for teachers to develop/select and administer assessments. Consideration should also be given to the time and resources teachers need in order to complete such activities as evaluating student responses, recording results, developing feedback comments, preparing reports, reviewing student work collaboratively with colleagues, and using the results to inform instruction.

Regardless of the activity, the preparation required should reflect the complexity, type, or method of the classroom assessment. For example, the preparation required for the evaluation of a portfolio assessment or a collection of student work may be extensive, while the preparation for a start-of-lesson or oral discussion to determine the base-line knowledge of a class before beginning a new topic may require less extensive preparation. In summary, the resources necessary for effective classroom assessments may include, but are not limited to, the following: time, assessment materials, software, computer access, administration instructions, and evaluation materials (e.g., rubrics, guides, keys).

**GUIDELINES**
- Consider the complexity of the learning the students will be required to demonstrate and the time and resources required for the learning to occur.
- Provide sufficient notice to students of upcoming classroom assessments.
- Prepare students for upcoming assessments.
- Obtain sufficient materials and resources (e.g., print and electronic resources, lab equipment and materials, art supplies) to complete assessment activities.
- Allow adequate time to develop or adapt assessments, prepare evaluation guides (keys, rubrics), complete evaluation, provide timely feedback to students, record results and/or prepare report cards in electronic or hard-copy format.
- Schedule time in the school for collaboration with colleagues on assessment practices (e.g., common planning time, learning communities).
Research shows that helping students understand what is expected of them, and why, gives students an opportunity to become active participants in their own learning.

### Linking classroom assessment with student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Educators’ guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This guide provides guidance in selecting, developing, and using classroom assessments in concordance with effective teaching practices. The document provides helpful handouts on weighing assessment options and tips for developing new assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The guide discusses the benefits of using multiple sources of evidence in order to accurately interpret what students know and can do. The paper provides the following examples:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informal, day-to-day measures of student progress may include:

- Observation and questioning strategies
- Traditional paper and pencil tests (e.g., multiple choice and short answer)

More elaborate forms of assessment include:

- Essays
- Speeches
- Demonstrations
- Problem-solving activities

No single form of assessment works well in all situations and for all purposes. Some assessments will fit certain assessment goals and situations better than others. Reasons for using a variety of assessments include the following:

- Each type of assessment has its own strengths and weaknesses.
- Each form of assessment provides a different type of evidence about what students know and can do.
- Taking advantage of more than one or two assessment methods increases your ability to fully understand the range of students’ knowledge and skills.
- Some students will perform better on one type of assessment than another. For example, some students will excel in a performance situation while others are strongest when responding to multiple-choice questions. Similarly, what teachers can learn from an oral presentation about how students communicate may be very different from what they can find out when asking students to write an essay.

This concept, the need to use different sources of evidence, is true of all assessment types. Even multiple-choice assessments yield better information if several different questions are used to assess each concept.
**Common formative assessments: Key concepts and skills**

**Resource Type:** PDF handout

**Audience:** Teachers and administrators

**Overview:** This handout suggests “six essential capacities” that teams of teachers should carry out as part of formative assessment.

**Highlights:**
- Appreciate the range of data that are important in affecting student achievement.
- Articulate learning goals.
- Design formative assessments.
- Analyze the results of common formative assessments.
- Use the results of common formative assessments to improve instruction.
- Embrace collaboration.

**Citations**


---

**Secondary assessment—formative assessment**

**Resource Type:** Video

**Audience:** Teachers and administrators

**Overview:** This video offers a review of the features of formative assessment.

**Highlights:**
- The video looks at how formative assessment can raise academic standards. The video gives examples of peer- and self-assessment and feedback and emphasizes the value of open questioning and effective grading.

**Citations**

**Informed Stakeholders:** The purposes and uses of classroom assessment should be communicated to students and, when appropriate, parents/guardians.

**EXPLANATION**
Clear communication of the purposes and uses of classroom assessments helps clarify the rationale for the ways in which these assessments can support teaching and learning. The more students and, when appropriate, parents/guardians and others with a legitimate need to know fully understand the purpose(s) and process(es) of classroom assessment, the more likely they will be to support the assessment process and understand and use the results. The level of information provided to students may need to be of greater detail and immediacy to actively engage them in the assessment process; whereas, parents/guardians and others may need broader information to understand and support the classroom assessment processes and results.

**GUIDELINES**
- Provide students, their parents/guardians and others who need to know with information about the reporting policies and practices that will be used during the instructional period (e.g., newsletters, websites, student/parent/teacher meetings, announcements).

- Describe the purpose of each classroom assessment to students, parents/guardians, and others with a need to know and provide opportunities for them to ask questions and to clarify their understanding of the purpose(s) and how the evidence will be used.

- Inform students about the classroom assessment practices to be used to support their learning and the expectations for them to engage in and use the evidence from these classroom assessments.

- Inform students about any classroom assessment that will be used for grading or preparing a summary comment. Provide them with information about how their performance will be evaluated along with the criteria that will be used.

- Provide clear evaluative expectations to students and their parents/guardians.
Classroom assessment practices meet the standards of use when teachers can be confident the assessment results have supported students’ learning. Careful analysis of student performance yields meaningful information and provides feedback and direction that influences subsequent teaching and learning. Further, the results of classroom assessments should be used to summarize students’ learning and communicate this information to students, their parents/guardians, and subsequent teachers.

U1 Analysis of Student Performance: The methods for analyzing evidence of student learning should be appropriate for the assessment purpose.

U2 Effective Feedback: Classroom assessment practices should provide timely and targeted feedback to improve student learning.

U3 Instructional Planning: Analysis of student performance should inform instructional planning and provide next steps to support ongoing student learning.

U4 Reporting: Student assessment reports should be based on a sufficient body of evidence and provide a summary of student learning in a clear, timely, accurate, and useful manner.
Analysis of Student Performance: The methods for analyzing evidence of student learning should be appropriate for the assessment purpose and practice.

EXPLANATION
During the process of assessment, there is a need to evaluate (measure) the quality of students’ responses. When consistent, fair, and accurate measurement of students’ performances are aligned with the purposes of the assessment and the intended learning expectations, these measurements provide a sound indication of what students know and can do. Such measurements will support subsequent teaching and learning. The nature of the methods used to analyze student responses will vary depending on the nature of the assessment items and tasks. Some assessment practices only require a verbal or short descriptive comment to support student learning (e.g., in-class questions, peer- and self-assessment). Other assessments benefit from more formal methods of evaluation. For open ended, constructed-response formats, clearly developed evaluation tools such as rubrics are beneficial. For forced-choice, selected-response formats, a definitive set of correct answers (answer key) are necessary.

The level of analysis may vary based on the purpose of the assessment. For example, the scope of analysis for formative assessments will likely be more narrowly focused and less formal. However, the standard or expectations of performance must be clear on all assessments.

GUIDELINES
- Align the methods of analysis of student performance with the purposes of assessment (e.g., quickly checking for understanding during instruction; carefully evaluating students’ essays when the essays contribute to final grades.)
- Determine the most effective and efficient methods to express students’ responses given the purpose of the assessment. This may include written comments, ratings, categorizations, letters, or numbers, alone or in combination.
- Inform students about the criteria to be used to judge and evaluate their responses prior to the learning activity.
- Involve students, where appropriate, in establishing criteria to be used to evaluate students’ responses.
- Collaborate with colleagues to develop and apply procedures for judging and evaluating student responses to constructed-response items, projects, and products.
- Develop clear evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics) to consistently and accurately evaluate students’ responses to constructed-response items:
  - Focus on key aspects of learning. Provide clear descriptions that serve to clarify and differentiate the points for an analytical scale and performance levels for a rubric.
  - Weight, if needed, different components of performance according to importance as set out in the learning expectations for the assessment.
Modify evaluation methods and criteria in response to demonstrated problems with initial evaluation procedures (e.g., an unanticipated appropriate response; student lack of understanding of the instruction or writing prompt).
## Learner-centered assessment on college campuses

**Resource Type:** Book  
**Audience:** Teachers and Administrators  
**Overview:** Although this book discusses assessment for learning in the context of higher education, the explanation concerning rubric development is applicable to all contexts within education.  
**Highlights:** The following table was adapted from Huba and Freed (2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What criteria or essential elements must be present in the students’ work to ensure that it is high quality?</td>
<td>Include these as rows in your rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• These should be the criteria that help the teacher distinguish quality work from poor work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many levels of achievement do I wish to illustrate for students?</td>
<td>Include these as columns in your rubric and label them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The levels should describe a range of performance from advanced to beginning (e.g., advanced, proficient, developing, and beginning).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each criterion or essential element of quality, what is a clear description of performance at each achievement level?</td>
<td>Include descriptions in the appropriate cells of the rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use objective descriptions that help provide guidance to students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What rating system will I use in the rubric?</td>
<td>Add this to the rubric in a way that fits in with your grading philosophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I use the rubric, what aspects work well and what aspects need improvement?</td>
<td>Revise the rubric accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the rubric help distinguish among the levels of performance in a student sample?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are the criteria appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This white paper outlines five recommendations to help principals put student achievement data to the best possible use. It includes specific action steps and links to resources and tools for analyzing and using student data. The intended audience is principals and teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Highlights:   | The five recommendations for using student achievement data are:  
- Make data part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement.  
- Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals.  
- Establish a clear vision for school-wide data use.  
- Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school.  
- Develop and maintain a districtwide data system. |

---

### Additional questions/actions when developing rubrics for specific assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there too many or too few performance levels specified?</td>
<td>Revise the rubric accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any descriptions that are incomplete or unclear?</td>
<td>Revise the rubric accordingly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Adapted from Huba and Freed (2000).
## Using data effectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Online module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This online module demonstrates how the use of multiple data sources can improve instruction. This module also provides examples of collaborative processes that schools can adopt to use data to track student progress and to inform instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The video looks at how formative assessment can raise academic standards. The video gives examples of peer- and self-assessment and feedback and emphasizes the value of open questioning and effective grading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

## How do rubrics help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article explains the benefits of using rubrics as evaluation tools to provide consistency when evaluating student work. It also describes project and team rubrics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Effective Feedback:** Classroom assessment practices should provide timely and useful feedback to improve learning.

**EXPLANATION**

Students benefit from assessment feedback that describes features of their performance in relation to the specific learning expectations being measured. The feedback might be from formative, interim, and/or summative assessments. To be most effective, feedback should be timely to allow students and, where appropriate, parents/guardians to see what students know and can do currently, where they should be, and how they can improve their learning. When targeted feedback is effectively provided, students are more likely to use the information to build upon their strengths and address their areas of need. The student may obtain this feedback from personal self-assessment, other students during a peer-assessment or the teacher during and after instruction.

**GUIDELINES**

- Provide descriptive feedback that is specific and directly related to student performance on the assessment task or learning activity.
  - Feedback should target the key components of the assessment task or learning activity.

- Provide verbal or written descriptive comments rather than general positive or negative statements to clarify, support, and direct students’ learning.

- Provide feedback that identifies a student’s strengths, misconceptions, and areas of need and directs learning by providing strategies to address misconceptions and the areas of need while building on strengths.
  - Feedback should also address how students are progressing towards mastery of the content or task (i.e., learning progressions).

- Separate descriptive feedback from grading in order to encourage students to focus on the feedback to better support their learning (e.g., give feedback either without or prior to grades).

- Help students develop both self- and peer-assessment skills to provide feedback to support their learning through the use of modeling, scaffolding, appropriate structures, and monitoring.

- Provide students with opportunities for self-reflection, and help them use feedback to support and guide their own future learning.

- Provide students with opportunities, whenever possible, to use the feedback to revise their work accordingly.
• Share, when needed, specific feedback provided to a student during instruction with the student’s parents/guardians in a timely manner so that they can also support their child’s ongoing learning.

• Include regular discussions and conferences with students and, where appropriate, their parents/guardians so that the feedback is clearly understood and next steps are identified.
Classroom assessments do more than just measure learning. What we assess, how we assess, and how we communicate the results send a clear message to students about what is worth learning, how it should be learned, and how well we expect them to perform.

## Linking classroom assessment with student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article also discusses the importance of giving feedback to students after participating in an assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The excerpt below outlines types of beneficial feedback teachers could give to students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Conduct a post-test discussion with your students. This will give you the opportunity to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Correct misconceptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Discuss issues raised by the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Help students gain a more complete understanding of the material the assessment covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss the different ways students responded to the task, and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give students the opportunity to revise their responses or describe how they would like to revise them. This experience helps students learn there is often more than one correct response to a performance-based assessment. It also helps them learn how to evaluate their own work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be generous with feedback. A score alone doesn’t give students sufficient information about their performance on the assessment. Tell students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Their areas of strength and weakness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ What they did correctly and incorrectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ What they can do differently next time to improve their performance.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The power of feedback

**Resource Type:** Online module  
**Audience:** Teachers and administrators  
**Overview:** This article provides a conceptual analysis of feedback and reviews the evidence related to its impact on learning and achievement. A model of feedback is then proposed that identifies the particular properties and circumstances that make it effective. Finally, this analysis is used to suggest ways in which feedback can be used to enhance its effectiveness in classrooms.

**Highlights:** The authors propose a model of feedback that distinguishes four levels:
- Feedback about the task (such as feedback about whether answers were right or wrong or directions to get more information).
- Feedback about the processing of the task (such as feedback about strategies used or strategies that could be used).
- Feedback about self-regulation (such as feedback about student self-evaluation or self-confidence).
- Feedback about the student as a person (such as pronouncements that a student is “good” or “smart”).

The level at which the feedback is focused influences its effectiveness. Feedback about the qualities of the work and feedback about the process or strategies used to do the work are most helpful. Feedback that draws students’ attention to their self-regulation strategies or their abilities as learners can be effective if students hear it in a way that makes them realize they will get the results they want if they expend effort and attention. Person comments (“Good girl!”) do not draw students’ attention to their learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resource Type:</strong></th>
<th>Position paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>Policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
<td>This position paper contends that there are seven specific actions that must be taken to improve educational assessment, including strategies for giving feedback to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong></td>
<td>Districts, states, and the federal government must work together to balance assessments, refine achievement standards, improve teachers' assessment literacy, ensure classroom assessment quality, support students in self-assessment, provide descriptive feedback to students, and build students' confidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**EXPLANATION**

One of the most important benefits of assessment is a teacher’s use of assessment results to help review and revise her/his instructional practices. Efforts to monitor students’ developing knowledge and skills before, during, and after instruction should be used to inform ongoing instruction and revise future instructional plans. The revisions should be directed toward supporting students’ efforts to build upon their strengths and address their areas of need. At the same time, students need to develop the skills to monitor their own learning and to set learning goals. Both types of activities help to close the gap between what students are expected to learn and what they have learned.

**GUIDELINES**

- Use assessment information to guide instruction and provide support for all students:
  - For some students, the evidence might suggest that they should be supported to move more quickly through material or to deepen their understanding beyond what is generally expected.
  - For other students, the evidence might suggest that they have not yet mastered the concept and may need support in the form of re-teaching or presenting a previous concept in a new way, the provision of an instructional activity to further support understanding, or engagement with peers to help develop understanding.

- Create future lessons based on assessment results to provide effective learning opportunities for current and future students (e.g., curriculum and instructional improvement).

- Involve students in planning follow-up activities and begin by clearly identifying the purpose and then setting out a plan of action to support further learning.

- Establish a plan to monitor the results of follow-up activities – check for possible negative impacts (e.g., a student concentrates on one activity to the detriment of other ongoing learning) and that students are working to build and improve upon their performance.

- Develop a formal support and/or intervention strategy for students who are promoted to the next grade but have not yet achieved the learning expectations in one or more areas by the end of the school instructional period. Where possible, the support and intervention plan should involve the current teacher and the teacher for next instructional period.
### Linking classroom assessment with student learning

**Resource Type:** Article  
**Audience:** Teachers and administrators  
**Overview:** This article provides general information about selecting and developing appropriate classroom assessments.  

### Using data effectively

**Resource Type:** PDF handout  
**Audience:** Teachers and administrators  
**Overview:** This guide describes how to use multiple data sources to improve instruction, which contributes to continuous instructional improvement.  
**Highlights:** Districts, states, and the federal government must work together to balance assessments, refine achievement standards, improve teachers' assessment literacy, ensure classroom assessment quality, support students in self-assessment, provide descriptive feedback to students, and build students' confidence.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resource Type:</strong></th>
<th>Educator’s guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>Teachers, administrors, and policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
<td>This practice guide provides five recommendations for educators to effectively use data to make instructional choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong></td>
<td>The guide recommends that schools set a clear vision for school-wide data use, develop a data-driven culture, and make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. The guide also recommends teaching students how to use their own data to set learning goals. The guide suggests that effective data practices are interdependent among classroom, school, and district levels and educators should collaborate with other school and district staff to implement the five recommendations concurrently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Reporting:** Student assessment reports should be based on a sufficient body of evidence and provide a summary of student learning in a clear, timely, accurate, and useful manner.

**EXPLANATION**

Students, their parents/guardians, and others with legitimate permission should be provided with assessment reports that accurately summarize what the students have learned in the classroom. Further, these reports should be communicated in a timely manner such that they can be used to support students’ learning or inform important learning decisions. For example, students should be provided assessment information about how they are doing as they learn. These reports are often oral. More formal written reports or report cards should communicate clearly the level of student performance in relation to the attainment of the learning expectations for a reporting period. These reports have several important educational purposes, including the identification of student strengths and areas of need and informing decisions concerning future class placement, retention/promotion, and admission to specific programs. Report cards also provide a basis for reporting student achievement to other schools and post-secondary institutions a student may subsequently attend, or to prospective employers a student hopes to work for.

In addition, summative comments should accurately capture a student’s mastery of specific curricular learning expectations. Grades alone cannot adequately summarize all aspects of learning. To more adequately and fairly summarize the different aspects of student performance, letter grades for achievement should be complemented or replaced with alternate summary forms (e.g., checklists, written comments) suitable for summarizing results related to other aspects of learning. Finally, reports, grades and summative comments should align to appropriate standards and learning expectations.

**GUIDELINES**

- Follow the formal student reporting plan for the school, and/or district.
- Recognize the need for different types of informal or formal reporting depending on the intent of the report.
- Report in a timely manner (quickly in case of formative assessment, at regular intervals for more formal reports such as report cards).
- Report both strengths and weaknesses of students so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.
- Report achievement, effort, attitude, and other behaviors separately.
- Use direct, easy-to-understand, jargon-free language.
• Take into account the needs of the different audiences that are to receive formal reports (e.g., students, parents, and, as appropriate, others such as school psychologists, post-secondary institutions, or employers).

• Modify reporting procedures for students with special needs based on their individual education plans and for students whose language of instruction is not English. Work with school or district administrators to address the needs of parents/guardians who may have limited-English language proficiency skills and/or literacy skills in order to facilitate these parents’ understanding of their child’s progress.

• Follow school or district policy to transfer assessment information and reports from the current school to the school the student will subsequently attend.

• Formulate comments in relation to the learned expectations and describe what the student knows and is able to do, areas of learning that require further attention, the ways the teacher is supporting the student’s learning needs and, where appropriate, ways the student and the parents/guardians might support the student’s learning.

• Do not publicly display students’ work with visible grades or comments.
Classroom assessment practices meet the standards of quality when teachers can be confident that their assessment practices provide accurate and dependable information about students’ learning. These practices are free of bias and are inclusive in nature. Reflection on and revision of assessment practices can support the ongoing improvement of these practices.

**Q 1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:** Classroom assessment practices should be responsive to and respectful of the cultural and linguistic diversity of students and their communities.

**Q 2 Differentiation:** Classroom assessment practices should be appropriately differentiated to meet the specific educational needs of all students.

**Q 3 Fairness:** Classroom assessment practices and subsequent decisions should not be influenced by factors unrelated to the intended purposes of the assessment.

**Q 4 Validity:** Classroom assessment practices should provide adequate and appropriate information that supports sound decisions about each student’s knowledge and skills.

**Q 5 Reliability:** Classroom assessment practices should provide consistent, dependable information that supports sound decisions about each student’s knowledge and skills.

**Q 6 Reflection:** Classroom assessment practices should be monitored and revised to improve their overall quality.
**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of Students:** Classroom assessment practices should be responsive to, and respectful of, the cultural and linguistic diversity of students and their communities.

**EXPLANATION**
Assessment practices should be appropriate for students who represent the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds present in schools. For example, a student’s success in responding to a teacher’s oral question, or answering questions on a test should not be unfairly hampered by her/his cultural background, knowledge, or tradition. If cultural and linguistic backgrounds are ignored, students may become alienated or disengaged from learning and the assessment process. Teachers need to be aware of how such backgrounds may impact students’ learning and performance. Teachers should be ready to adjust their assessment practices where needed to ensure students have adequate opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do (e.g., extra time, dictionaries).

**GUIDELINES**
- Be sensitive to those aspects of an assessment practice that may hamper students with different cultures or whose language is not sufficient to respond to demonstrate their knowledge and what they can do.
- Acknowledge students’ cultural backgrounds and differing linguistic abilities and develop procedures to prevent these backgrounds and abilities from unduly impacting their demonstration of learning.
- Adjust or scaffold assessment practices if necessary (e.g., use text-to-speech software on math prompts with complex text).
- Avoid content and language that would generally be viewed as culturally sensitive or offensive.
- Use assessment practices that allow students to accurately demonstrate their understanding by responding in ways that accommodate their linguistic abilities. For assessments not intended to measure linguistic abilities, consider:
  - Simplified instructions.
  - Modeling of instructions.
  - Simplified language in the assessment.
  - Provision of extra time.
  - Oral rather than written responses.
  - Use of an appropriate type of assessment.
  - Use of visual representations.
**Differentiation: Classroom assessment practices should be appropriately differentiated to meet the specific educational needs of all students.**

**EXPLANATION**
Students with disabilities receive special educational services to meet their learning needs. These students include those who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or have a Section 504 Plan. Assessment practices may need to be adjusted or differentiated to allow these students to best demonstrate their learning.

Options include accommodations, modifications, and alternate assessments. Accommodations refer to changes in the way a student accesses the assessment. Modifications refer to changes to the instrument or evaluation procedure. An alternate assessment is used when students cannot participate in the regular assessment process. Typically, alternate assessments are appropriate for students whose instruction is adapted from grade-level content and reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity.

Differentiating the assessment process should also address those students who are gifted and talented. These students may require assessments that are intended to measure learning outcomes that are different from their grade-level peers in order to sufficiently challenge them and meet their learning needs.

**GUIDELINES**
- Use assessment accommodations, modifications, or alternate assessments that comply with local, state, and federal policies.
- Provide accommodations, modifications, or alternate assessments that are most appropriate for the student with special needs on a regular basis for all types of classroom assessments.
- Provide appropriate accommodations, modifications, and support for English learners (e.g., word banks, access to a dictionary, modeling instructions).
- Use formative, interim, and summative assessment practices that target the appropriate learning expectations for students with special needs.
- Work with support staff to provide appropriate assessments for students who have a need for differentiation of assessments.
- Modify grading procedures as needed for students with special needs so that it accurately reflects these students’ individual education plans.
- Involve each student and their parents/guardians, whenever possible, in decisions about what accommodations/modifications work best for the student.
**Tool kit on universal design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resource Type:</strong></th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>Teachers, administrators, and policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
<td>The <em>Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities</em> was developed by the U.S. Department of Education to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The tool kit includes materials that support classroom assessment utilizing the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong></td>
<td>UDL is a framework for designing educational environments (including instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments) with the goal of helping all students gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. Using this framework, educators can improve outcomes for diverse learners including those students with disabilities. This tool kit on UDL is part of its broader toolkit on Assessing Students with Disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Resource Type:** Website  
**Audience:** Teachers, administrators, and policy makers  
**Overview:** The National Center on Universal Design for Learning provides a number of resources and links. Below is an excerpt from the tool kit that describes three principles that educators can apply to improve outcomes for all students.

**Highlights:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for designing educational environments (including instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments) with the goal of helping all students gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. Using this framework, educators can improve outcomes for diverse learners, including those students with disabilities.

The following is an excerpt from the tool kit that describes three principles that educators can apply to improve outcomes for all students. This excerpt is from the US Department of Education’s (2013) toolkit on UDL, also cited in the ISBE Extensions.

- Provide multiple and flexible methods of presentation to give students various ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Technically sophisticated (hi-tech) examples of this include using digital books, specialized software, and Web sites. Low-technology (low-tech) examples include highlighted handouts, overheads with highlighted text, and cards with tactile or color-coded ink.

- Provide multiple and flexible means of expression to provide diverse students with alternatives for demonstrating what they have learned. Hi-tech examples of this include online concept mapping software, which provides students with a graphic map to demonstrate learning, speech-to-text programs, and graphing to a computer, which collects data regarding students’ learning progress. Low-tech examples include cooperative learning (asking the student to demonstrate his/her learning in small groups), think alouds (encouraging the student to talk about what s/he is learning), and oral tests.

- Provide multiple and flexible means of engagement to tap into diverse learners’ interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn. Hi-tech examples include interactive software, recorded readings or books, and visual graphics. Low-tech examples include games or songs, performance-based assessment, and peer tutoring.

**Fairness:** Classroom assessment practices and subsequent decisions should not be influenced by factors unrelated to the intended purposes of the assessment.

**EXPLANATION**

Bias has a negative impact on classroom assessment because it results in the unfair treatment of individual or groups of students. Bias can result from systematic preconceptions, conscious or unconscious, that are unrelated to the purposes and uses of the assessment. For example, sometimes preconceptions regarding what a student can or cannot do may influence the evaluation of student work rather than relying only on the available assessment evidence. Preconceptions may stem from cultural and language differences, physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, previous experiences with other siblings or family members, gender, race, or socioeconomic status.

Bias can also occur due to a lack of alignment among the assessment, the instruction, and the learning expectations or to the presence of irrelevant factors in the assessment process (e.g., reading difficulty where reading is not the focus of the assessment). Recognize that differences in assessment may reflect real variations in student performance; however, these differences still need to be examined for the potential presence of bias. While it may not be possible to totally eliminate all forms of bias from classroom assessment, teachers should work to minimize these biases when assessing students.

**GUIDELINES**

- Revise or remove assessment items and tasks that promote stereotypes.

- Revise or remove assessments that may unfairly impact the performance of individuals or groups of students.

- Avoid language that is overly confusing or complex thus assessing unintended skills.

- Avoid assessment topics that may disturb or be too sensitive for students unless there is a prescribed requirement to assess these topics.

- Minimize all irrelevant factors that may affect the evaluation of student performance:
  - Stylistic factors such as handwriting, vocabulary, or sentence structure when the intent of a written assessment is to assess content and thinking alone.
  - Teacher bias that may result in a general tendency to be too generous or too severe.
  - The halo effect, where a general impression or previous rating influences the present rating.

- Counteract bias through collaboration, well-described evaluation tools, and thorough training.
• Avoid tendencies to be overly severe or generous due to personal values or opinions regarding individual or subgroups of students when evaluating student work or formulating summary comments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resource Type:</strong></th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>Teachers and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
<td>This article briefly introduces assessment topics pertinent to creating classroom assessments, including: types of assessments, purposes of assessment, elements of an effective assessment, planning the assessment, fairness, and reviewing assessments among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong></td>
<td>This article notes that an assessment is not fair if “it measures things unrelated to its objectives.” Assessment bias exists if content in the assessment “offends or unfairly penalizes test takers because of personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, or sexual orientation.” Assessment bias may impact students’ performance on the assessment or their attitudes toward the assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Validity:** Classroom assessment practices should provide accurate information that supports sound decisions about each student’s knowledge and skills.

**EXPLANATION**

Formative, interim, or summative, classroom assessment practices need to be accurate. These practices should lead to decisions that reflect students’ knowledge and skills in relation to the intended learning expectations. Assessment practices should yield evidence so that students’ strengths can be built upon and areas of need addressed. The evidence should be at the appropriate level of detail so that it can be used to further student learning and to inform instruction.

One way to think of validity is through the interplay among the following ideas:

- Learning expectations, curriculum, and instruction
- Assessment design
- Analysis of responses
- Decisions

When the connections between these ideas are weakened, the overall accuracy of the assessment results is lessened. Other issues that affect validity are described throughout the Foundation, Use, and Quality Standards.

**GUIDELINES**

- Choose assessment practices (types and methods) that are developmentally appropriate and aligned with learning expectations, curriculum, and instruction.

- Take into account the impact of unexpected events (e.g., fire alarm, tornado drills, student illness, unexpected personal event) that may have influenced student performance.

- Use multiple sources of evidence to obtain a more complete picture about each student’s strengths and areas of need so that strengths can be built upon and areas of need addressed. Avoid over interpreting results from a single assessment.

- Do not include results from an assessment if the students’ responses suggest flaws in the assessment itself that might jeopardize a fair and accurate judgment. The assessment should be revised before it is used again.

- Choose methods of evaluation (analytic or holistic evaluation, qualitative review) that are appropriate for the purpose of the assessment and the assessment design.

- Appropriately modified assessments are valid assessments. Assessment instruments translated into a second language, transferred from another context or location, or administered in a different mode (e.g., paper-based versus computer-based) should include evidence these modified instruments work as intended.
• Account for the backgrounds and learning experiences of each student, and note any problems that may arise when collecting and evaluating the student’s responses and interpreting assessment results.

• Address the Foundation, Use and Quality Standards during each phase of assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article describes strategies for developing quality performance assessments. It defines performance assessments, describes the process to develop assessments, and presents guidelines to ensure that the assessments are high quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Highlights:  | This article suggests that the validity of the assessments can be maximized by:  
- Being sure about the purpose.  
- Defining the student characteristics to be evaluated.  
- Specifying levels of performance along appropriate continuaums.  
- Using exercises that sample the range of performance contexts.  
- Comparing ratings with other achievement data when possible. |
Reliability: Classroom assessment practices should provide consistent, dependable information that supports sound decisions about each student’s knowledge and skills.

EXPLANATION
Reliability refers to the consistency of assessment evidence. Consider two summative assessments intended to measure the same concepts. If these assessments have high reliability, the students should receive similar, albeit not identical, evaluations regardless of version. In contrast, if these assessments have low reliability, student evaluations on each version will likely differ to a great degree. Assessments that have low reliability result in different interpretations of students’ knowledge depending on which assessment is used. However, one does not have to calculate reliability to understand its implications. For example, during a classroom discussion, asking one student a question and generalizing from a correct or incorrect answer to the entire class would likely not be very reliable since the teacher does not have sufficient evidence for the entire class’ understanding. Similarly, asking only three questions on a test that covers content for a full semester is not likely to produce reliable results. As the consequences of assessments increase, the need for high reliability increases. Greater reliability is required for information sources such as final examination evaluations that contribute heavily to final course grades. Teachers may determine reliability by considering two important principles: the consistency and sufficiency of evidence.

GUIDELINES
- Use formative assessment practices (e.g., observations, individual whiteboards, electronic clickers, entrance/exit slips, hand signals) to gather sufficient information from all students for an immediate sense of class knowledge and understanding.
- Provide clear instructions and, when necessary, provide practice, sample questions, activities, or tasks to support students’ understanding of what will be required during the assessment.
- Follow the guidelines for sound analysis of student responses (Standard U 1), such as the following:
  - Well described evaluation tools (analytic scales, rubrics)
  - Exemplar papers (sample student work representing different performance levels)
  - Teacher moderation (collaborative evaluation of student work in order to increase consistency across teacher judgments)
- Recognize that the conditions in which classroom assessments are administered and evaluated may influence consistency of the results (e.g., time of day, unexpected events, heating/cooling of classroom, noise, evaluator fatigue).
- Take into account the body of evidence available about students when making instructional or other decisions: the higher the stakes the more evidence required.
- Use multiple assessments to make decisions about students’ knowledge and skills.
- Use a variety of assessments types to make instructional decisions.
# Development of performance assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resource Type:</strong></th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience:</strong></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
<td>This article describes strategies for developing quality performance assessments. It defines performance assessments, describes the process to develop assessments, and presents guidelines to ensure that the assessments are high quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlights:</strong></td>
<td>This article suggests that the reliability of the assessments can be maximized by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using clear criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training raters thoroughly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gathering enough samples of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Minimizing rater bias through cultural awareness, clear criteria, and thorough training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing for a standard, uniform assessment condition when needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection: Classroom assessment practices should be monitored and revised to improve their overall quality.

EXPLANATION
The effectiveness of formative, interim, and summative classroom assessment practices requires ongoing monitoring and review. Changes in student learning expectations and curriculum and changes in the nature of the student population over time may lead to the need for changes in classroom assessment practices. Further, given the evolving nature of assessment, new developments in classroom assessment practices such as computer-based assessments should be reviewed and used if found to be appropriate for the context in which the new assessment will be used. Consequently, sound classroom assessment practices include opportunities for reflection and changes to the assessment practices, both short-term and long-term. Flawed classroom assessment practices can lead to incorrect decisions and actions that impede the progress of students. The overarching question to be addressed is: “Are the decisions made from the information and data collected reasonable and accurate, and not open to misinterpretation?”

GUIDELINES
• Examine current classroom assessment practices to be sure they yield valid, reliable, and useful information to enhance students’ learning and improve instruction. Types of questions to ask include:
  ○ What worked in the assessment and why?
  ○ Is the assessment practice clearly related to the learning expectations, in proportion to their importance, and compatible with instruction?
  ○ What evidence do I have that a student learned what was taught in the lesson or in today’s classroom?
  ○ What are the instructional implications for the short or long term?
  ○ Do any students need additional support before moving on to the next lesson?
  ○ Does the assessment evidence reflect what students know and can do as opposed to reflecting problems in the assessment practice?
  ○ Do students’ responses indicate that they misunderstood what was being asked on the assessment, suggesting that the wording of the instructions and/or items and tasks needs revision?
  ○ Is the assessment practice appropriate for all students?
  ○ Are the feedback students receive and the follow-up actions timely and specific?
  ○ Are student reports understandable and useful?
  ○ Is there a more effective way to assess students’ knowledge and skills with respect to a specific learning expectation?

• Become knowledgeable and proficient in current classroom assessment practices (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assessments).

• Revise current classroom assessment practices as needed to meet the assessments’ intended uses.
• Engage colleagues in professional learning communities to help explore ways to improve assessments and students’ responses to assessments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type:</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience:</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview:</td>
<td>This article describes strategies for developing quality performance assessments. It defines performance assessments, describes the process to develop assessments, and presents guidelines to ensure that the assessments are high quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights:</td>
<td>The following excerpt outlines the article’s suggestions for improving classroom assessments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- “Review assessments before administering them. If possible, wait at least one day after writing the assessment before performing the review.
- After reviewing the assessment, ask a colleague to review it. As part of this review process, have someone who did not write the task or question (a colleague or even a family member) respond to it.
- During the review, check to see that:
  - Directions are clear and content is accurate.
  - Questions or tasks represent the topics or skills emphasized during instruction and that knowledge or skills that were not covered in class are not being unintentionally evaluated.
  - The type of assessment used is compatible with the method of instruction used in the classroom and the skill being measured.
  - The assessment will contribute to the instructor’s understanding of what the students know and can do.
  - The question-writing guidelines and/or assessment-development guidelines were followed.
  - The assessment can be completed in the allotted time.
  - The assessment is fair and that all instances of offensive language, elitism, and bias have been eliminated.

When assessments give unexpected results—for example, the entire class does poorly on an assessment, or the students’ responses are not consistent with the type of work the teacher was looking for—it is important to take a close look at the assessment to determine whether it is flawed in some way:

- Did all the students do poorly on the same question or set of questions?
- Did students who are more able, based on other evidence, do well on the assessment?
- Did students answer the assessment appropriately but fail to give the answers you were looking for?
- Was the task well defined and clearly written?
| Highlights (cont’d): | If the entire class failed the test, it might indicate that the material was not taught adequately, or the assessment was so poorly written that the students were unable to apply their knowledge appropriately. Having students explain why they answered a question in a certain way can help the teacher determine whether the problem is in the question (or task), or in the students’ understanding of the concept being assessed. |
Recommended Books


