




**Understanding by Design,
Stage 2:
Using a Balanced,
Photo-Album
Approach to Assessment**

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Essential Questions

- ◆ What is a “balanced approach” to classroom assessment?
- ◆ How can a balanced approach to classroom assessment contribute to student achievement?
- ◆ To what extent is balanced classroom assessment necessary for the promotion of student success on high-stakes tests?



Session Objectives (P. 1)

By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the relationship between assessment, instruction, and student achievement.
2. Identify ways to align their classroom (or school) assessment practices with high levels of student achievement.
3. Explain the value of a balanced approach to assessment to create a photo album, rather than a snapshot, of student learning.



Warm-Up Activity

- ◆ **THINK**: What are the major assessment issues in your school or district that motivated you to attend this session?
- ◆ **PAIR**: With a partner, find one issue that you share in common.
- ◆ **SHARE**: Share your issue with your table group. Identify one or two major assessment issues you all have in common. Appoint a presenter to share it with the whole group.



A Preliminary Self-Reflection (Part 1)

- ◆ As you begin this session, how would you describe your perceptions about the connections between and among assessment, instruction, and student achievement?




A Preliminary Self-Reflection (Part 2)

- ◆ Please complete Tool One on pages 2-3.
- ◆ Use your results to reflect on the extent to which you agree with **four essential principles of assessment**:
 1. All effective assessment must *begin and end with standards*.
 2. *Content standards* must guide and inform instructional decision making, but educators must understand the role of *performance standards* and related *benchmark assessments*.
 3. Effective educators support one another in developing a *feedback-adjustment process* related to *consensus-driven standards*.
 4. All staff members share *a common vision for the success and achievement of all students*. *Equity* and *excellence* become controlling principles that *replace mechanical “teaching to the test.”*



Defining Our Terms (pp. 4-6)

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** Effective and balanced assessment systems require that all stakeholders achieve consensus about the language they are using. Without agreement about the meanings of assessment and evaluation language, we can find ourselves in a Tower of Babel, operating at cross-purposes with feelings of ambiguity and frustration.



Defining Our Terms: Eliminating the Tower of Babel (pp. 4-6)

- ◆ **THINK**: Examine the 10 assessment terms on pages 4-6 and think about how you would define each.
- ◆ **PAIR**: With a partner, come to consensus about the terms that you are assigned.
- ◆ **SHARE**: Be prepared to share with the group your perceptions about the extent to which your term(s) would be commonly understood—or misunderstood—by a majority of staff in your school or district.



The Need to “Unpack” Standards

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** It is insufficient for schools and districts to have standards just on paper. Standards must be “unpacked” by staff members, a process in which they build consensus about (1) *what* and *by when* all learners are expected to *know, do, and understand*, and (2) how staff members agree to *monitor each student’s progress*.



“Unpacking” Standards (Part 1)

- ◆ On pages 9-12, you will find actual content standards from states throughout the country. Use the five guide questions on page 9 to make observations about them (both individually and collectively).



“Unpacking” Standards (Part 2)

- ◆ On pages 13-14, you will find criteria and examples for performance standards.
- ◆ With a partner, choose one of the content standards on pages 9-12 and create a performance standard for a grade level you both determine.



“Unpacking” Standards (Part 3)

- ◆ Examine Tool Three on pages 7-8.
- ◆ Think about the extent to which your school and/or district has addressed each of the nine long-range goals presented here for “unpacking” standards.
- ◆ In your opinion, what are some possible action steps for that school or district?



What Do We Know About Promoting Success on High Stakes Tests?

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** Mechanical drill-and-kill teaching to the test produces, at best, a limited plateau of student achievement. Promoting continuous improvement on high stakes tests requires (1) a manageable guaranteed and viable curriculum with (2) consensus-driven standards (3) assessed through a multi-faceted assessment system that complements (4) teaching and learning for deep understanding, not just knowledge-recall learning based on coverage, rote memorization, and/or mechanical modeling with little independent use of knowledge and skills by students.



Video Clip One: TIMSS, NAEP, & Stigler

- ◆ Observe this excerpt from an ABC episode showcasing **TIMSS** (Third International Mathematic and Science Study) results and the work of **Jim Stigler** (“**The Teaching & Learning Gap**”) at UCLA.
- ◆ What does the video suggest about the relationship between high-stakes testing and assessment, instruction, and curriculum?



15 Proven Strategies for Preparing Students for High-Stakes Accountability Assessments

- ◆ As we examine the 15 strategies presented in Tool Four (pp. 16-17), use the rating scale to assess the extent to which your school or district is currently using a balanced approach to assessing and evaluating student achievement in relationship to high stakes testing.



What Is a Balanced Assessment Approach? (P. 18)

- ◆ Vision: *All staff members employ a “photo album” approach to assessing and evaluating student progress [in relationship to consensus-driven standards] by using multiple forms of assessment instead of limited “snapshots.”*



What Is a Balanced Assessment Approach? (P. 18)


◆ Key Elements:

1. Constructed-Response Items on Tests and Quizzes
2. Reflective Assessments
3. Academic Prompts
4. Culminating Performance Assessment Tasks and Projects
5. Portfolio Assessment



Creating a Photo Album of Assessment Results: A Faculty Questionnaire (pp. 19-20)

- ◆ Spend a few minutes completing this questionnaire, evaluating how your school or district is currently using each of the 10 identified strategies for balanced assessment.
- ◆ As you complete this process, what initial conclusions can you draw?
- ◆ How might you use this questionnaire with staff in your school or district?



Designing Effective Tests and Quizzes

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** Selected-response test and quiz items can give us only a limited view of what students actually know, do, and understand. Tests and quizzes can be enhanced by adding constructed-response items that require students to explain, interpret, and/or apply what they have learned via some form of timed performance.



Constructed-Response Test and Quiz Items (P. 21)

- ◆ What are the implications of the sample test and quiz items on this page?
- ◆ How can such items provide deeper insight into student achievement (esp. student understanding) than exclusive use of multiple-choice, true-false testing?
- ◆ To what extent do you see evidence of this type of item design in your school and district?



Student Self-Reflection and Self-Evaluation (pp. 22-24)

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** The more students are actively involved in using evaluation criteria to self-monitor, self-reflect, and self-evaluate, the more successful they will be in achieving standards mastery.
- ◆ **Examples:** Reflective Journals, Think Logs, Self-Assessment and Self-Evaluation Activities, Collaborative Evaluation Strategies



Video Clip Two: A Peer Response Group Activity

- ◆ As you observe Maria Saldana's art class complete their unit on self-portraits, consider how their peer review and peer critique session (1) contributes to their understanding of unit standards; (2) enhances their ability to self-reflect and self-monitor; and (3) supports the growth and development of their classmates.



The Academic Prompt: Framing the FAT-P (pp. 25-26)

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** The more coherent and structured the assessment, the greater the likelihood students will understand how to respond to it successfully.
- ◆ **The FAT-P Model for Academic Prompts:** *format, audience, topic, purpose*



The Successful Culminating Project (pp. 27-29)

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** At key juncture points in a course or grade level, students need assessment opportunities that will allow them to demonstrate independent understanding via explanation, application, interpretation, and self-knowledge.
- ◆ **The G.R.A.S.P.S. Design Template (P. 27):** real-world goals, real-world roles, real-world audiences, authentic situations, both products and performances, and clearly-articulated evaluation criteria (standards)



Video Clip Three: A G.R.A.S.P.S. in Action

- ◆ Observe this culminating project in a high school United States history class as students end their unit on the Industrial Revolution and its impact on the American economy, class structure, and values concerning social justice.
- ◆ How does this project reflect the principles of G.R.A.S.P.S.?



Holistic and Analytic Rubrics and Scoring Guides: Evaluating Performance Tasks (pp. 30-32)

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** Students improve their achievement on performance tasks when they have a clear understanding of how they will be evaluated, including ongoing use of evaluation criteria via rubrics and scoring guides. The more they apply the evaluation criteria, the more they are likely to internalize and apply them independently.



Reflection Activity (pp. 30-32)

- ◆ Examine the various rubrics and scoring guides presented on pages 30-32.
- ◆ Consider the relative advantages and potential uses for each.
- ◆ Also, what are the potential disadvantages or issues each might raise?
- ◆ What are some possible professional development implications associated with this approach to a balanced assessment program?



A Brief Discussion of Portfolio Assessment (P. 33)

- ◆ Assessment Principle: A portfolio is not a work folder. It represents a thoughtful, *balanced collection* of student work *products and artifacts* as well as *longitudinal evidence* of students' *self-reflection* and *self-evaluation*.




Key Portfolio Elements (P. 33)

- ◆ Required student work products and artifacts representing all facets of standards mastery.
- ◆ Self-selected student work products and artifacts that demonstrate students' self-knowledge and self-reflection.
- ◆ Ongoing reflections and analyzes by students related to their continuous progress.
- ◆ Periodic self-evaluations using consensus-driven rubrics, analytic scoring guides, and related scoring tools and processes.



Engaging Stakeholders

- ◆ **Assessment Principle:** An effective balanced assessment system must include parents and community stakeholders in a process of (1) understanding school and district standards; (2) becoming knowledgeable about accountability testing programs; and (3) understanding the range of assessments that students will be required to complete.



Getting Parents and Community Stakeholders Involved in Balanced Assessment (P. 34)

- ◆ Reflection Activity: Consider each of the 10 strategies on P. 34, related to expanding parent and community understanding of the assessment and evaluation process. To what extent is each of these processes currently operational in your school or district?



Closure Activity (pp. 35-37): Post-Workshop Action Steps

- ◆ **Review the principles and performance indicators identified on pp. 35-37.**
- ◆ **Select one or two of the indicators that seem to have particular relevance to your school or district.**
- ◆ **With a partner, share how you might put that indicator into action post-conference.**
- ◆ **Please be prepared to share your action step(s) with the full group as we conclude.**



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