

Annual Conference on Standards and Assessment, April 10-12, 2006

Sessions discussed

- Addressing standards at both the classroom and school-wide level
- Using data to create effective assessments and learning environments
- Best practices for both teachers and administrators
- Big focus on pros and cons of NCLB

Presentation focus is on effective assessments in the classroom

Summative versus Formative Assessments

- Summative assessments are tests administered after learning has (supposedly) occurred, and their goal is to determine whether or not the learning actually did occur.
- Formative assessments are conducted during the learning process to promote – or even evaluate the progress of – student success.

The Transition?

- “Old school” classrooms and other high-stakes exams fall into the summative category – teach everything and assess at the end if the student learned everything.
 - Learning responsibility primarily on the student.
 - Notorious system for promoting high achievers while labeling and accepting low achievers.
- “Modern” classrooms include assessments of a formative nature.
 - Learning responsibility shared among students AND teachers
 - Helps lower achieving students to succeed while simultaneously encouraging higher achieving students to meet their potential
 - Meets the philosophy of NCLB

Classroom formative assessment process:

- Plan instruction based on benchmarks or standards.
- Teach according to plan.
- Assess students with benchmarks or standards as the desired outcomes.
- Analyze assessment results, noting strengths and weaknesses.
- Respond to analysis with varied instruction.
- Adapt for future lessons/classes based on initial process.

Best practices would be to include a combination of both assessment types in the classroom

- Informal checks
 - Hand checks
 - Whiteboards
 - Clicker technology
- Observations
 - Viewing student work in progress
 - Classroom conversation
 - Blogging
 - Individual questions
- Quizzes/tests
 - Lesson quizzes
 - Chapter/unit exams
 - Midterm/final exams (including EOCTs)
- Academic prompts (open-ended questions)
 - Blogging
 - Writing prompts
- Performance tasks
 - Portfolios
 - Projects
 - D-quadrant, baby!

Performance tasks are the bomb!

- If designed well, contain the positive aspects of both assessment types.
- “Performance is any opportunity for a students to *use* knowledge and skills to *create* an answer or product.”

Things to consider...

- Collaboration and feedback is important, especially with students.
- Assessments should evolve from “inauthentic” to “realistic”.
 - Example: write a paper on laws vs. persuasive essay on why to change a law vs. write proposal to legislators to change a law (which is most realistic?).
- Rubrics are a must
 - They should include criteria, a scoring scale, and descriptors

Design process for performance assessments

- Decide on the purpose of assessment.
- What skills and outcomes are to be covered?
- Develop tasks that call for behavior in the outcomes.
- Determine criteria for judging adequacy of performance.
- Create scoring scheme.
- Pilot the assessment.
- Reflect and revise.

Two examples:

- Multivariable portfolio
- Pond project