Designing Common Formative Assessments

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 Targets for Today

• Understand how unwrapping standards into learning targets improves the quality of common formative assessments.
• Learn how to choose the right type of assessment to match the rigor of your learning target.
• Understand how to create an assessment plan that will lead to more valid and reliable assessments.
Critical Questions Teams Ask

- What do we want students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they can?
- What will we do if they can’t?
- What will we do if they already can?

Essential Standards

Common Formative Assessments

Interventions and Challenges

Common Formative Assessment

Common formative assessments are team-designed, intentional measures used for the purpose of monitoring student attainment of essential learning targets throughout the instructional process.

(Bailey, Jakicic, & Spiller, Collaborating for Success With the Common Core, 2013)
Common Formative Assessments in a PLC

- Assessments are designed by the collaborative team.
- Assessments are given in the same timeframe.
- Assessments are given under the same circumstances.
- Data are analyzed at a data team meeting.
- Plans are made together for corrective instruction, interventions, additional time, and support.

Why Common Formative Assessments?

- More efficient than each teacher working independently
- More equity across classrooms
- Teams learn together about instructional strategies
- Teams learn together about assessment strategies
- A better response for students

(DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work*, 2008)

What Makes a Quality Common Formative Assessment?
Solo Thinking …

• What was the best test experience you ever had?
• What made it work for you?
• What was the worst test experience you can remember ever having?
• What made it so bad?

Two Factors to Consider When Designing Assessments

1. Does the student have the preparation they need and do they know what to expect/study?
2. Does the test “type” measure student learning or does it get in the way? (timing, type of questions, conditions of the room, etc.)

Big Idea #1

Common formative assessments are based on targets (not standards) that are clear to both the teachers and students.
What Are Learning Targets?

- Learning targets are the increments of learning that make up the journey to achieving the overall standard.
- They include all of the skills and concepts students must acquire to master the standard.
- Common formative assessments are designed around learning targets rather than standards.
- Learning targets may be written as “I can” statements in student-friendly language.

What Is a Target?

Solve addition and subtraction word problems, and add and subtract within 10 (K.OA.2).

Solve addition word problems.
Solve subtraction word problems.
Add within 10 (by using objects or drawing to represent the problem).
Subtract within 10 (by using objects or drawing to represent the problem).

Finding Targets in Standards (Unwrapping, Unpacking, Deconstructing)

- Circle all verbs (skills we expect them to be able to do).
- Underline nouns (concepts they need to know).
- Put [brackets] around any context clues.
- Add any implied learning targets.
For Example

The student will know and apply the rules of the road, and will skillfully and safely drive a car in a variety of situations.

For Example

The student will know and apply the rules of the road, and will skillfully and safely drive a car [in a variety of situations].

Using the Unwrapping Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on Key Words:</th>
<th>Standard: The student will know and apply the rules of the road, and will skillfully and safely drive a car in a variety of situations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will Students Do? (skills or verbs)</td>
<td>With What Knowledge or Concept? (noun or direct instruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know</td>
<td>The rules of the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>The rules of the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skillfully drive</td>
<td>A car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safely drive</td>
<td>A car</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Example

The student will know and apply the rules of the road, and will skillfully and safely drive a car in a variety of situations.

1. Know the rules of the road.
2. Apply the rules of the road.
3. Skillfully drive a car in a variety of situations.
4. Safely drive a car in a variety of situations.

For Example: Sixth-Grade Reading

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from those that are not.

For Example: Sixth-Grade Reading

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims [in a text], distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from those that are not.
Focus on Key Words:
Standard: Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will Students Do? (skills or verbs)</th>
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<th>In What Context?</th>
<th>Level of Thinking</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trace</td>
<td>The argument and claims</td>
<td>In a piece of informational text</td>
<td>Trace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>The argument and specific claims</td>
<td>In a piece of informational text</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguish</td>
<td>Supported claims from Unsupported claims</td>
<td></td>
<td>Distinguish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Understand)</td>
<td>Support from reasons and evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Argument, claims, evidence, reasons</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Example

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from those that are not.

1. Trace the argument and specific claims in a piece of informational text.
2. Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a piece of informational text.
3. Distinguish supported claims from unsupported claims.
4. Describe claims that are supported by reasons.
5. Describe claims that are supported by evidence.

Higher-Order Thinking in Teacher-Made Tests

- 72% of items on knowledge level
- 11% of items on comprehension
- 15% of items on application
- 1% of items requiring analysis
- Less than 1% on synthesis or evaluation
- Nearly 50% of questions beyond knowledge level were on math tests
- 98% of questions beyond knowledge level were on social studies tests

Are Verbs Important?

- The verb often indicates the “level of thinking” we are expecting from students.
- The verb may be ambiguous (“understand”).
- Be cautious! Discuss what this will look like if students can do it (what is proficiency?).
- Teams can use any taxonomy they are familiar with: Bloom’s, Marzano, or Depth of Knowledge.

Unwrapping Template

Focus on Key Words:

<table>
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<td>Applying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Argument, claims, evidence, reasons</td>
<td>Remembering/Understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Turn!

- Choose one of the Common Core Standards.
- Use the unwrapping template to unwrap the standard to find the learning targets.

Types of Assessments

- **Selected Response**
- **Constructed Response**
- **Performance**

Performance Task

Performance tasks can best be described as collections of questions and activities that are coherently connected to a single theme or scenario.
For Example

The student will **apply the rules of the road** and **correct safety procedures** while **driving a car** [in a variety of situations].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Targets</th>
<th>Formative Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Know the rules of the road.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Apply the rules of the road.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Apply correct safety procedures.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Drive a car in a variety of situations.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Big Idea #2

The type of assessment item used must “match” the level of thinking expected in the learning target.

Assessment Design:
Gathering Valid and Reliable Data by Developing a Quality Plan
Validity of Teacher-Made Assessments

Validity—Does the assessment assess what we wanted it to assess? Will it tell me whether or not the students learned the material I wanted them to learn?

Reliability of Teacher-Made Assessments

Reliability—Can I rely on the information to make decisions about what to do next for my students? Does it tell me with confidence whether the student is ready to move on or if (s)he needs more time and support?

Making Assessments Valid

• Unwrap standards into the learning target to clearly uncover the important knowledge and skills we want to teach and assess.
• Create an assessment planning chart to ensure that we have assessed each of those targets at the level we expect students to reach.
### Assessment Planning Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content/Targets</th>
<th>Knowledge Retrieval</th>
<th>Application Comprehension</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Evaluation Knowledge Utilization</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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- Identify the specific target(s) to be assessed.
  - One or two work best.
- Determine the level of cognitive demand.
  - What kind of thinking?
- Decide what type of assessment items and how many to use.
  - Selected response for knowledge, application, analysis
  - Constructed response for higher level
- Consider how much time the assessment will take.

### Sixth-Grade Informational Text

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
### The Targets …

1. Trace the argument and specific claims in a piece of informational text.
2. Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a piece of informational text.
3. Distinguish supported claims from unsupported claims.
4. Describe claims that are supported by reasons.
5. Describe claims that are supported by evidence.

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### For Formative Assessments

- Based on a few learning targets that are clear to teachers and students
- Should be targets that are essential for student learning:
  - Targets that are often difficult or lead to misconceptions
  - Targets that are prerequisite to future learning
  - Targets that are absolutely necessary for students to know
Assessment Planning Chart

- Identify the specific target(s) to be assessed.
  - One or two work best.
- Determine the level of cognitive demand.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trace an author’s argument in a piece of informational text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Assessment Planning Chart

- Identify the specific targets to be assessed (one or two work best).
- Determine the level of cognitive demand (what kind of thinking?).
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Big Idea

To be valid, the assessment must assess the learning targets that are understood by both teachers and students at the level of thinking they were taught.
Making Assessments Reliable

- Review the assessment specifications chart to ensure that we have an adequate number of assessment items to feel confident with our results.

- Construct questions with good format and clear directions to minimize systematic error.

1. What is the author’s argument? (Quote the text that you believe states the argument.)

2. What claims does the author make to support the argument? For each claim, provide the specific details the author provides or list the page number or quote. Determine if the claim is supported or not and indicate by saying yes or no in the third column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Specific Details/Page or Quote</th>
<th>Supported?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Thank You

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