Essential Question

• How are on-going, classroom formative, and summative assessment, evaluation, accountability and documentation developed, maintained, and effectively executed to ensure maximum student success with meaningful and challenging standards?

Chapter Overview

Chapter 12 is packed with valuable information about classroom assessment. In Section 1, we compare assessment and evaluation and discuss the impact of both in and out of school. Section 2 categorizes the kinds of assessment tools we have available to match our assessments and evaluations with our learning targets. Section 3 describes the critical attributes of classroom parallel assessments by objective, and Section 4 details their design components. Next, in Section 5, we look at how the parallel assessment process “flows” within the classroom. The actual process, including corrective instruction and practice, completes Section 5. Strategies to manage parallel assessments (from the paperwork to communication tips to the best strategies for reaching success on Form A) make Section 6 a must read. The last section, Section 7, provides tips and forms for scoring and grading.

Effective assessment is seamlessly integrated with instruction.
Assessment: Perhaps the Most Critical Teaching Tool

The concept of assessment might be the most misunderstood concept in the world of K-12 instruction. The introduction of grades and marks for student work over a hundred years ago did much to undermine the understanding and effective use of assessment within school settings. Grading students, though certainly worthwhile for providing documentation to parents and other stakeholders, has gradually changed the use of assessment from a teaching tool to documentation—What we call evaluation.

If we define effective teaching as the act of working with learners until the learning objectives are met, then it follows that effective teachers need to use both assessment and evaluation. Effective teachers intersperse assessment with instruction until they have convincing evidence through their last assessment addressing the objective(s) that the objective(s) have been met, and then they bestow a grade (or mark) that befits successful completion of objectives.

Effective teachers use assessment to gather information in order to determine what next steps are necessary to ensure the students meet the desired standards and objectives. With assessment, any grades or marks assigned are only to provide information regarding progress toward the standards and an ultimate good grade—grades are not permanent until the student has demonstrated the standards or until no more time can be provided and the learning is frozen at its current level. If assessments are graded, the grades are NOT permanent; they will change when the students show improvement as part of a deliberately planned and executed corrective process.

Assessment often happens informally throughout instruction. Effective teachers assess how well an activity is working, how well students are on task, or how effective a particular lesson was. The difference between a mediocre teacher and a truly outstanding teacher is the desire, ability and consistency of the outstanding teacher to assess throughout the entire learning process and to make appropriate modifications until virtually all students reach all the objectives.

To best understand assessment for the teaching tool that it is, it is helpful to reflect over the teaching process in an outside of school setting. Please pause for a moment in your reading to think through the process you might use to teach a friend something that is important to be learned— for example, how to make your favorite soup, parallel park a car, drive on snowy roads, or perform a card trick. If you were to actually take the time to write out the entire process from the beginning of instruction until the end, your instructional plan would probably look something like the following set of steps.

1. Explain and/or model what is to be learned.
2. Explain or have your friend explain why success in learning is important.
3. Explain, think aloud, and model what is to be learned.
4. Ask your friend to do whatever it will take for you to see how well the learning is happening so that you can determine what further instruction is needed.
5. Praise your friend for all that was done well and provide additional modeling, examples, and instruction to help your friend in whatever facets of the learning were not done well.
6. One more time, have your friend do whatever it takes to show the extent of his or her learning.

7. Repeat Steps 5 and 6 in varied ways until you observe that your friend has successfully shown that he/she has learned well what you were teaching.

In the example above, Step 4 is the assessment step that occurs whenever someone is teaching anything for which it is important that the learning actually occur. It is how parents teach children to ride a bike, swim, set the dinner table, or clean their rooms. It is how the military trains recruits to do their jobs. It is how police, nurses, firefighters, and doctors are taught to do the important aspects of their jobs. And lastly, it is what friends and loved ones do when they are teaching anything they want learned well. In fact, about the only place a different approach is used is in school.

**Totally Effective Assessments**

- Are seamlessly integrated with instruction
- Are on-going
- Are comprehensive back to the beginning
- Teach throughout the assessment
- Provide holistic and analytic perspectives simultaneously
- Provide for celebration
- Provide immediate corrective instruction
- Align with specific, desired learning objectives
- Coach to standards
- Provide valuable information to all
- Support, extend, expose, nurture and pressure for excellence
- Are used until standards are met and formal evaluation is done
### Assessment vs. Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bob’s father came into his bedroom to make sure it was finally picked up enough or if Bob would need more guidance and next steps before going out to play.</td>
<td>The critic for a major newspaper reviewed a new novel from a famous author and stated that it was definitely inferior to her earlier books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While teaching her son to drive in winter conditions, Becky kept taking him out to drive on wintry days, praising him for what he was doing well and providing additional instruction where needed.</td>
<td>A pair of movie critics reported on television that a new movie earned “two thumbs up” and should be considered a “must see.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>While writing an article, Lisa kept sending her writing to the editor, who provided ongoing feedback until the article was good enough to be published.</td>
<td>When asked by a friend how the pizzas were at a neighborhood restaurant, Carol responded they were quite mediocre, but for the price, they were not too bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police academy instructors kept working with the young officers until each one of them correctly entered a building in a dangerous situation.</td>
<td>Every month, Sally’s favorite computer magazine reviews the newest product in one category and provides ratings of one star to five stars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kindergarten teacher worked with all of his students until they all could write their names correctly.</td>
<td>A second grade teacher gave her students a spelling quiz and recorded the grades to be average in for the grading period. She had the students correct their mistakes and practice spelling the words correctly several times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The math teacher worked with her students, providing special help in varied ways as needed, (even while, as a class, they were all proceeding into the next unit) until each student met all the objectives of the unit and had earned excellent grades (evaluations of good work).</td>
<td>The math teacher gave a unit test and assigned grades to the students indicating how well they had done.</td>
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**Assessment is the gathering of information in order to change our behavior to improve.**

**Assessment is about teaching and learning.**

**Assessment is a commitment to quality!**

**It is assessment if the grades/marks are changeable and students will be supported in improvement.**
<table>
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<tr>
<td>A fifth grade teacher had his students work on a project designed to show the extent of their understanding of the hardships of life on the plains during the mid-1800s. He provided feedback to each student and asked them to continue work on their project until all the standards were met.</td>
<td>A fifth grade teacher had his students work on a project designed to show the extent of their understanding of the hardships of life on the plains during the mid-1800s. On the due date, he graded the projects using the rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An English teacher read through the essays her students had turned in, providing numerous comments informing students as to where they were doing well and where they should make revisions so that their essays would be at the exemplary level. The teacher’s comments provided students with feedback as to how their work compared to the coaching rubric.</td>
<td>An English teacher read through the essays her students had turned in, provided numerous comments, and scored them with grades of ‘A’ through ‘F’ with the use of a scoring rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A standard in a language arts teacher’s curriculum stated that the students should be able to summarize a technical article from a grade level appropriate magazine as shown by writing a “proficient level” summary based on each dimension of a rubric provided by the district. As the year progressed, he provided instruction and periodically engaged each student in writing the summaries of new articles, provided feedback loops with the rubric, and engaged the students in activities that focused on the needed skills and concepts until each student successfully met the standard for all dimensions of the rubric.</td>
<td>A language arts teacher’s curriculum listed as a standard that the students should be able to summarize a technical article from a grade level appropriate magazine as shown by writing a summary that would reach a proficient level in each dimension of a rubric provided by the district. The teacher “taught” a unit on summarizing technical articles, and ended the unit by engaging each student in writing a summary of a technical article. The teacher graded the students’ writing with the scoring rubric.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the book, *The High Performance Toolbox* by Spence Rogers & Shari Graham

Evaluation … is the gathering of information in order to document, label, grade, or score performance.

**Evaluation** is about grades and scores.

Evaluation is a commitment to scores and judgments!

It is evaluation if the grades/marks are permanent and the students are expected to improve with the next task.
Assessment and evaluation are both important tools, but assessment is a part of a true teaching process and is clearly more common outside of typical school environments, while evaluation (grading) is more common in school. In a school setting, grading can typically be equated to evaluating, but not assessment. Assessment is a part of a teaching process, it is NOT about grading. We can definitively grade eggs (jumbo, large, medium) or beef (USDA prime, USDA choice) and the label makes sense. The egg doesn't have the ability to change from large to jumbo. Children are different. They have the ability to learn, to grow and to change their labels. If those labels (grades) are permanent, aren't we missing our purpose for teaching in the first place? Read more about grades, accountability and standards later in this chapter.

Throughout instruction, most teachers gather information to some extent regarding the effectiveness of their actions in order to determine how to continue. The real issue, however, is to what extent assessment is continued. Is it just limited to assessing within the daily lessons, or does the commitment to excellence continue until the students meet the standards? Do students receive the support they need to meet the standards? In other words, are they reassessed and taught in alternative ways until standards are met? Or are they let “off the hook” with mediocre or poor grades? Are they required to meet standards, or are they allowed to slide? Are they provided the extra help when they need it, or are they left at the end of the year without essential learning?

When excellence and meeting standards are the primary goals, teachers both in and out of school consider each quiz, test or culminating project an assessment – in other words, the students are supported and are required to continue to work until they reach the standards. Truly outstanding teachers make standards non-negotiable and vary the amount of time and the means necessary for learning to occur. Excellence means students aren't finished until the objectives are met.

*Evaluation* is very similar to *assessment*, yet the differences are profound. With both assessment and evaluation, the teachers are checking for levels to which learning has occurred but for very different purposes. With assessment, the teachers are determining next steps they need to take with the students to ensure the standards are met. With evaluation, the teachers are determining the grades, scores, or marks that will be averaged to determine the overall grades. With truly outstanding teachers, students reach standards and receive good grades in the end to show it. With teachers who depend on evaluation, many students do not reach the standards and receive lesser grades.

Evaluation is the gathering of information in order to score, label, grade, or document performance. When the students’ work is graded and the grades cannot change, the students’ work has been *evaluated, not assessed*. Evaluation is a normal and important part of much of what occurs both in and out of school; however, as a classroom learning tool, assessment is
the much more powerful choice. *Evaluations* are judgments that fall at the end of learning and, for many, result in discouragement and withdrawal.

Assessments are about teaching and learning – a commitment to quality. Evaluations are about grades and scores – a commitment to labels and judgments. The difference between the two is obvious in learning situations outside of school. For example, parents embed assessment in the process of teaching their children how to drive until they are satisfied with the performance. No parent would be willing to say to a child, "Well, that was pretty good. You earned a “C” for accelerating and a “D” for braking. We're done working on those, so tomorrow we move on to steering. I hope you will work harder at that." Instead, they work with their children, praising what is done well and providing additional instruction where needed to ensure that all the standards are met. And finally, after parents’ assessments of their children’s driving show they are totally ready, they take their children to the Department of Motor Vehicles. At this point, the state administers an evaluation to determine if the young drivers possess the knowledge and skills required to earn a driver’s license.

Most parents are committed to excellence and will work with their children until excellence is reached – at least when the family car is involved. Similarly, in school, truly outstanding teachers are more interested in whether the learning occurs than whether the learning occurs by test day – they use assessment until they are certain that an evaluation will result in excellence.

**Section 2**

**Kinds of Classroom Assessments**

When we use assessment to determine the extent of students’ knowledge and their ability to use it, we are faced with clarifying all the specific, desired assessment targets. Remember in Chapters 3 and 4, we discussed aligning our course, unit and lesson objectives with our assessments. Common assessment targets include:

- information
- skills
- conceptual understanding
- application of knowledge, skills, or understanding
- product development abilities
- performance development and execution abilities
- process abilities
- attitudes/states of mind (note: these are not to be scored or graded)

We define thorough assessment as the combination of assessment methods that will best assess all the relevant assessment targets. Seldom is one method adequate. Each of the assessment targets can be addressed with varying levels of effectiveness through the three major assessment methods of performance-based, selection-based, and personal communication-based. (Each of these methods will be explained in detail later in this chapter.) The thoroughness of an assessment initiative is not determined by the selection of methods; rather, it is determined by the effectiveness of the selected methods in assessing all the essential assessment targets.

From the book, *The High Performance Toolbox* by Spence Rogers & Shari Graham
Three Major Assessment and Evaluation Categories

In a classroom setting, we tend to focus on performance-based assessment for the most accurate depiction of individual student learning. (While we will also include a brief explanation of selection-based and personal communication-based assessments, the majority of this chapter is devoted to performance-based assessment and, in particular, parallel assessment by objective.) Each of these three broad categories has several specific assessment types, and each one has its own strengths and weaknesses.

1. Performance-Based Assessments and Evaluations

All of the following are types of performance-based assessments and evaluations. They fall into four general categories:

- **Constructed Response Assessments** in which the students create short responses to given prompts or questions – an excellent means of assessing information and some skills. Examples of constructed response assessment and evaluation methods include:
  - fill-in-the-blank tests with words and phrases
  - short-answer tests – sentences and paragraphs
  - show-your-work tests – as with many math tests
  - organizers and visual representations (depictions) such as concept maps, pattern maps, webs, flow charts, graphs, tables and matrices and illustrations.

- **Product (Development and Usage)** Assessments and Evaluations in which students plan, produce, and possibly use a product to meet given criteria and/or needs – an excellent means for the teacher to assess product development skills. It is important to note that a completed product is not necessarily solid evidence of a student’s product development ability or knowledge information. Typically, additional methods are required. Refer to *The High Performance Toolbox* for a list of product, performance, and process ideas. The following are but a few example products:
  - art exhibits
  - articles
  - audio tapes
• books
• dioramas
• editorials
• essays
• journals
• logs
• models
• museum displays
• plays
• poems
• process logs
• research papers
• science projects
• spreadsheets
• stories
• videos

• **Performance (Development and Execution)** Assessments and Evaluations in which students plan and carry out a performance that meets given criteria and/or needs—an excellent means of assessing performance skills and any imbedded information and/or skills. Refer to *The High Performance Toolbox* for a list of product, performance, and process ideas that the students can create and/or perform to use and/or disseminate information. For clarification, several example performances from the list are:
  • athletic or artistic skill demonstrations
  • dances
  • dramatic readings
  • enactments
  • individual athletic performances
  • oral presentations
  • recitals
  • scientific demonstrations
  • speeches

• **Process (Usage)** Assessments and Evaluations in which students use a process according to specific criteria and/or needs—a excellent means of assessing process skills. Because a process provides for numerous decisions and changes in direction, process assessments tend not to be an efficient means for assessing content specific information, concepts, and skills. Again, *The High Performance Toolbox* provides for a list of product, performance, and process ideas. This list includes numerous ideas for processes in which the students can engage. When assessing processes, it is helpful to have the students record their efforts through the use of process logs. A few example processes are listed below:
  • competitive athletic games
  • conferencing
  • consensus building
  • debating
  • dialoging
• interviewing
• problem solving (process focused)
• process “think out loud” assessments
• questioning
• researching
• resolving conflicts
• teaching
• using the scientific method

2. Selection-Based Assessments and Evaluations

Selection-Based Assessments and Evaluations are those in which students select from available responses for given questions and prompts. Selection-based assessments (sometimes referred to as selected response assessments) are efficient for systems to assess the level of students’ knowledge of information, some concepts and some skills. However, they offer several drawbacks for classroom teachers, one of which is that guessing can affect the accuracy of the data. The information provided might also not reflect the true abilities of an individual learner. Another drawback is that the selection of a response shows nothing about the depth of knowledge or the processes the student used to determine the response. Example selection-based assessment and evaluation methods include multiple-choice, true/false, and matching. For more information concerning multiple choice and preparation for system assessments, please refer to Chapter 6.

3. Personal Communication-Based Assessments and Evaluations

Personal Communication-Based Assessments are those which entail conversations with the students or observations of students’ efforts to determine attitudes or perspectives.

It is important to devote a few words to the assessment of attitudes, states of mind, or perspectives. Respect the rights of the students. Most teachers use continuous, on-going assessment of the students’ thoughts regarding the content and the effect of the instructional methods. Also, most teachers want their students to like/appreciate the subject matter/discipline being taught, and thus are constantly monitoring how the students feel about it. Under no circumstances should students’ attitudes, states of mind, perspectives or beliefs be graded, scored, or marked. If they are, the students will quickly learn not to share them. This is not to say that as teachers we should not be striving for students to appreciate learning or school, be honest, or have integrity. Nor is it implying that we shouldn’t be teaching and expecting honest behavior. It’s just saying, “Don’t grade attitudes, beliefs, states-of-mind, or perspectives – students have the right to have the thoughts that they have.” We have the obligation to require students to act with honesty and show respect for others’ property. We don’t have the right to require that they like, value, or appreciate anything. Besides, once people learn that their thoughts will be scored, graded, or used for or against them, the assessor loses the ability to accurately perform an assessment.

Sample assessment targets for personal communication-based assessments include the students’ appreciation for a particular piece of literature, respect for the rights of others to have their own beliefs, beliefs about the merits of different forms of government, and personal value placed on classroom rules or procedures.

Performance Learning is not Performance Assessment or Evaluation

One last major distinction – projects, performances, performance tasks, and units that provide active, hands-on, authentic or simulated learning opportunities for students will not be referred to in this book as
either assessments or evaluations. We will refer to these as the “performance learning” that is used to support multiple, varied, and rich opportunities in which intended learning and aligned assessment can occur.

**Portfolios: A Brief Introduction**

Portfolios are purposeful collections of work. Many people refer to portfolios as assessments or use the phrase “portfolio assessment;” however, in and of themselves, portfolios are not true assessments. They can be assessment vehicles. In other words, portfolios are the vehicles through which much assessment can occur or be presented. They may contain any combination of the assessment methods mentioned previously. Portfolios are also an excellent vehicle for assessing the students’ abilities to self-evaluate their work or progress.

Portfolios, like any other approach to assessment, should be based on clearly identified criteria. Several of the more common types of student portfolios include:

- **Best Work Portfolios** – Students and their teachers select pieces of student work that best illustrate the students’ varied best achievements. These selections are to be made based on specific, predetermined criteria aligned with the purpose of the portfolio.
- **Growth Portfolios** – Students and their teachers select those pieces of work that best illustrate past, present, and probable future improvement. These selections are based on, and justified with, specific, predetermined criteria.
- **Scrapbook Portfolios** – Students include selections they think best illustrate or represent what they consider to be important or exemplary work. They also include rationale for each selection.
- **Introduction Portfolios** – Students select those things that will best introduce or support an introduction of themselves for some particular purpose in a given context.

Regardless of the type, a student’s portfolio should have entries from the student that serve as “road maps” to explain the contents of the portfolio, justify each selection, and present the supported direction and procedures targeted for growth. Through these entries, the student’s ability to assess or evaluate his/her own work and/or see patterns or trends in it can be assessed. Students can also use these entries to develop and present effective, appropriate improvement plans of their work using their strengths and weaknesses.

**CAUTION:** Do not score, grade, or mark attitudes, values, beliefs, or states of mind that students may express in portfolios.

**Align Targets with Methods**

Match assessment and evaluation targets with aligned methods of assessing them. Doing so will improve alignment and validity. The following chart taken from the *The High Performance Toolbox* provides some basic guidance for matching common targeted learning with appropriate assessment. We’ve chosen common learning targets used in classrooms:

- Information and facts
- Skills
- Application of information or a skill
- Understanding of a topic or concept
- Product development
- Performance ability
- Process ability
- Attitudes/perspectives
## Assessment & Evaluation Matching Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets: What do I want students to “learn?”</th>
<th>Methods: How will I know WHEN they’ve “learned” it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information (Facts)</td>
<td>Say, circle, list, match, select, find, fill-in-the-blank, present in an essay or oral presentation. (Note: Multiple-choice and true/false fall into this category; however, we do not recommend these for classroom assessment.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Do it. Show the procedure and describe or explain how it was done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(write, listen, speak, paint, perform mathematical operations, scientific procedures, isolated athletic skills, or structured problem solutions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of Information or Skill</td>
<td>Use the skill to achieve a purpose; describe and/or explain its use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Use arithmetic to determine change, use writing to describe how to find or make something, use welding to repair something.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of a Topic or Concept</td>
<td>Explain, generalize, create examples, find examples, apply concept in varied contexts, draw conclusions in new contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(topics such as equations, literature, animals, change, force, evolution, conflict)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Development</td>
<td>Create product and describe and/or explain how it was done and why it was done in the manner it was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(products such as essays; lab reports, books, stories, paintings, models, video/audio tapes, portfolios, research papers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Ability</td>
<td>Do it and describe how it was done and explain why it was done the way it was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(singing, dramatic reading, science demonstrations, oral presentations, individual athletic performances such as figure skating)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Ability</td>
<td>Work through it in varied/unexpected contexts; explain how it was done and why it was done the way it was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(interview, debate, build consensus, teach, dialogue, communicate, compete in athletic games, research, solve unstructured problems)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes/Perspectives</td>
<td>These can be assessed by observing behavior or engaging in open conversation providing trust has been developed. (Do NOT score or grade.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(appreciation for something, liking or disliking something)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the book, *The High Performance Toolbox* by Spence Rogers & Shari Graham
Five Essential Considerations with Performance-Based Assessments and Evaluations

Performance-based assessments and evaluations are purposeful, active experiences in which the students’ abilities to do any of the following are assessed against specific criteria:

- use specific information and/or concepts
- communicate specific information and/or concepts
- perform specific skills
- apply specific skills
- execute performance abilities
- utilize product design and/or development abilities
- use transferable process skills

Each performance-based assessment or evaluation needs to have the following:

1. A clearly identified purpose which includes:
   - the type of data to be generated
   - the intended use for the data
   - the audience for the data

2. A clearly and precisely identified focus which includes:
   - specific skills, knowledge, and/or abilities to be assessed
   - a clearly defined context in which these are to be demonstrated
   - clear, precise, and example supported criteria for evaluation

3. A well-designed task that includes:
   - a clearly stated task that will cause the students to demonstrate the targeted learning focus in assessable ways
   - a structure that addresses the five actions associated with quality performances (access, interpret, produce/create, disseminate/use, evaluate)

4. A clearly and precisely identified administration context which includes:
   - nature and extent of coaching permitted
   - nature and extent of student preparation prior to the assessment
   - time and other resources needed and to be provided
   - clear and precise directions for both the assessment administrator and the students
   - conditions of the assessment site

5. A clearly identified evaluation and reporting procedure which includes:
   - criteria with models for evaluation
   - adequate preparation for the scorers to produce consistent evaluation results
   - established procedures for multiple readings as needed
   - a plan for what, how, and for/to whom
Visible Assessment

Invisible Assessment

When people are teaching loved ones outside of school, the instruction is almost impossible to separate from the assessment process. Both the teaching and the assessments are scaffolded and step-by-step. In fact, they are so close, it’s as if the assessment is invisible. Critical to the learners’ progress, this assessment goes unnoticed by the learner – it’s how the teacher knows what to do next. Imagine the power and the benefits of bringing this invisible assessment concept into classroom teaching.

Whenever planning instruction of a concept or skill, determine in advance the important steps and phases the learners will move through. Then, plan on-going, interim activities of tasks that will safely expose the students’ progress, provide for needed scaffolding and learning without grades or fanfare, and ultimately, accelerate continued growth.

Section 3

Parallel Assessments

Parallel Assessment is the “in-school” adaptation of the demanding standards approach to assessment outside of school. Before we address the critical attributes of parallel assessments, let’s review the definitions we’ve established thus far in this chapter.

*Evaluation* – the careful determination of the extent to which specific criteria have been met in a performance, product, or process for the purpose of determining an appropriate label, grade, score, mark, or other designation of the quality in order to inform others.

*Assessment* – the careful determination of the extent to which specific criteria have been met in a performance, product, or process for the purpose of determining next steps required for meeting of standards.

*Parallel Assessments* – multiple, equally focused and leveled assessment instruments developed to facilitate repeated assessment of a performance, product, or process following successive improvement efforts until the standards are met.

Parallel assessments are multiple forms of a classroom assessment that assess exactly the same objectives at the same level of difficulty in a mastery learning approach. With multiple, parallel versions, we can make the learning non-negotiable by being flexible with the time it takes for students of varying ability levels to reach each objective. Because students learn at different rates, parallel assessments are ideal for holding students accountable. If, after taking the assessment, the students show they have not yet met one or more of the objectives, then we involve the students in further instruction, engaging activities, and additional practice until we believe the students have met the missed objective(s). (See correctives later in this chapter.) At this point, we reassess, using a parallel form of the assessment.
With parallel assessments, the objectives remain constant. What varies is the amount of time some students may take in reaching them. Parallel assessments, when combined with assessment by objective and distributed practice, profoundly impact student achievement. They are how assessment occurs when learning is critical. They are the tools typically used outside of schools, and they are the tools commonly found in the arts, trades, and sports at school. They are definitely powerful tools for the classroom, too.

One Tool for Removing Mediocrity from Classrooms

Parallel assessments exist in the world outside of school. Parents repeatedly assess how a child cleans a bedroom, parallel parks the family car, or drives in snowy conditions. For parents, this is a relatively easy process. First, these situations usually only involve assessing one or two children’s performances at-a-time – unlike classroom situations involving up to 35 or more students. Second, it is much easier to develop “out of school” assessment opportunities because they occur naturally as a part of daily living. In order for teachers to thoroughly assess students’ writing, reading, math skills, or conceptual understanding, they must design specific aligned assessments. This takes considerable work.

From the book, The High Performance Toolbox by Spence Rogers & Shari Graham
Because classroom teachers have so many students and so many objectives, it is critical to have all the assessments and the process for using them thought out in advance. If we know what the standards are for our students, and if we know that students will take longer to meet each of these standards, then we can plan in advance.

For the standards we are teaching in our classrooms, we need the equivalent of three to seven different beds to make or snowy road conditions, so we can assess and provide additional needed instruction. What this means is that in order for classroom teachers to hold all students accountable for reaching standards, they need multiple forms of the tests. These multiple forms must address the same content at the same level of difficulty just as if we were teaching parallel parking to one person. To see if someone could parallel park, we would find spaces that required equal difficulty for practice. If one space was three car lengths long, it would be too easy, and if one space was barely large enough for our oversized pickup truck, it would be too hard. In order for multiple assessments to work and be valid, whether at home, work or school, they must be equally challenging over the same content. When this occurs, they are called parallel assessments.

Designing “Know” Objectives

When assessing “content” of a recall nature, determine which knowledge is essential, important, and nice to know. (See Chapter 3 for more information about sorting content into these categories.) Prompts might ask students to explain what, name, recall, state, describe, label, list, circle, tell, find, identify, locate, underline and give the reasons given, or any other prompt that in actuality requests “something” that could be memorized and provided in the form being requested.
- With the essential to know, ask for exactly the same knowledge on all parallel forms of the assessment. Rearrange the items, reorient the graphics, but don’t deviate from the essential content. Be careful not to change the objective by asking for varying behaviors that actually require students to vary their thinking process.

- With the important to know, do the above or determine what percent of the important content will be tested to mastery. Students are then required to meet this minimum percentage at an excellent level. For this type of information, ensure that all practice forms of the parallel assessments engage the students with ALL the content, but inform the students that the actual parallel assessments will require the specified percentage of randomly selected items. Another way of saying this is that students should be over-prepared. If you plan to teach 50 facts, they should practice all 50 even though the parallel assessment might only require them to recall any random 30 of the facts at an excellent level.

- When some of the content to memorize is essential and some of it is important, combine the above two procedures.

From the book, *The High Performance Toolbox* by Spence Rogers & Shari Graham

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**Designing “Do” Objectives**

With content of a skill or procedural nature, determine the difficulty level at which the students should be performing (content limits). Also identify a generic prompt format that can be used over and over again on the various forms with appropriate modifications based on the objective and the defining content limits. Prompts might ask students to solve, write, draw, describe, weld, map, explain, graph, act out, depict, convey, compare, persuade, contrast, diagram, or construct charts.
Examples:

- Solve an equation of the form ________. (The teacher varies the coefficients, constants, required operations, etc. in such a way that the content limits will continue to be met.)
- Summarize a paragraph ______________. (The teacher selects varying paragraphs that have reading levels, interest likelihoods, etc. in such a way that the content limits will continue to be met.)
- Write a persuasive, five paragraph essay about __________ using the attached prewriting tools. (The teacher selects varying contexts in such a way that the content limits will continue to be met.)
- Solve an application problem __________. (The teacher varies the context, the numbers/factors, etc in such a way that the content limits will continue to be met.)
- Interpret a passage (editorial cartoon, chart, graph, etc.) ______________. (The teacher maintains the prompt and selects varying “targets” to be interpreted that are of the same complexity and require the same levels of skills, interests, and background knowledge.)

Designing “Understand” Objectives

Assessing understanding happens over time. A single assessment cannot reveal understanding because understanding is developed over time.

Prompts for assessing long-term procedural knowledge are complex. They may include examples like: solve and explain how, write and explain how, draw and explain how, describe and explain how, weld and explain how, map and explain how, explain what or how, graph and explain how, act out and explain how, depict and explain how, convey and explain how, compare and explain how, persuade and explain how, contrast and explain how.

When assessing for understanding, the assessments are always complex. They must require the student to apply, explain why, extend, generalize, create examples, use in another setting, project to another context, develop deep and rich metaphors and similes, infer, show and work with deep nuances of distinction, predict based on trends or patterns, etc. in an unexpected and unrehearsed context.

Complex Reasoning Objectives

Analysis

For Structure: What is the main idea, purpose, or function? What is most important? What patterns exist? What are the dominant patterns? What are the supporting patterns? What are the component parts? How are the components related?

For Error: What's wrong? What are specific errors? What are indicators of error? What is the magnitude of the error? What is the significance of the error? What are causes of error? What are effects of error?
For System: What is the purpose? How does it work? What are the essential components? What are the supporting components? How are the components related?

**Comparison**

What are the appropriate characteristics to compare? How are these alike? How are they different? What are relevant similarities? What are relevant differences?

**Classification**

What groups or categories are appropriate/useful? What are the patterns that seem to fit? What are the rules governing placement into groups/categories? How do identified items sort based on the categories?

**Conclusion Drawing**

What conclusions can be drawn? What generalizations can be made? What is the support? How likely is it that the conclusion is accurate? Is the conclusion logical? Does the conclusion represent appropriate depth and breadth for the context?

**Decision**

What are the choices? What are the possible consequences of a decision? What are the relative merits of choices and consequences? Based on merits and consequences, what is a well-supported choice?

**Deduction**

What generalizations or principles can be developed? What do the generalizations or principles mean? What are the logical consequences of the principles?

**Extension**

What general pattern exists? What trend(s) exist? How can the information/topic/concept be represented/used in another way?

**Induction**

What are the specific pieces of information from which a generalization is to be made? What meaning can be inferred from the pieces of information? What conclusions can be drawn? What is the rationale to support the conclusions?

**Inquiry**

What question is to be answered? What relevant information can be gathered from direct observations? What can be gathered through variable controlled experimentation? How can the information be organized and used to generate a supportable answer? What is an answer and how is it supported?

**Investigation**

What is the situation? What are the defining characteristics? How did (does) this happen?
Solving

What is the problem? What is the desired result? What are the obstacles? What are the parameters affecting a solution? What are their relative levels of importance? What are possible solutions? What are advantages and disadvantages of options? Which option is best possible in light of parameters?

**Section 4**

**Designing Parallel Assessments**

The structure of parallel assessments, along with critical attributes regarding the objective design, question design and score box planning, are what make parallel assessments work effectively. Many management issues can be proactively avoided simply by following certain design elements. Much of what is shared in this section could easily be a part of Section 5 or Section 6 of this chapter.

- Parallel Assessments promote assessment of individual objectives within the assessment for improved diagnostic and corrective focus.
- Parallel Assessments align with both the taught and, the prescribed curriculum, — we teach what we test and we test what we teach.
- Parallel Assessments address current instruction and through “distributed practice objectives,” assess objectives from previous units that have been deliberately re-practiced to mastery during the unit.

**Parallel Assessments**

Ensure Standards

**Test and Assess By Objective**

Separate assessments into individual objectives. Having this design element allows you to score each objective individually, give aligned corrective instruction, practice and then re-assess separately.
Assess a maximum of five objectives on a single test. Typically two to four works best. This number will vary based on grade level and content area, as well. Within those five objectives on a single assessment, have only one to three objectives address new topics. Devote one to four objectives to addressing old topics (material from previous units). These distributed practice objectives can be assessed at the same level or incrementally developed to higher levels.

Incorporate Distributed Practice objectives with Incremental Development (DP with ID). By the end of the school year, the majority of your assessment might very well be “old” objectives.
**Number of Questions**

Assess objectives using the fewest number of items necessary to effectively determine whether students have learned the objective to the highest level. For example, depending on the topic, you might only need one to five questions or prompts to assess an objective. Usually one to five questions is best.

**Mastery Lock**

Use Mastery Lock appropriately for controlling curriculum mastered. Mastery Lock is a design strategy to ensure that no way a student can master an objective without doing the most difficult level. For example, if there are five questions on an objective, two of the questions should be designed to assess the most difficult level. To master the objective, then, students must correctly answer four of the five questions. The content is "locked" in; they can't master the objective without correctly completing at least one of the most difficult questions.

Mastery Lock is used to force the desired standard of performance for a score of “B”. For example, with a skill application such as combining sentences, performing a math procedure or interpreting a passage, paragraph, or cartoon, there are two items of the “highest difficulty level” and the students are told they must do all but one of the items correctly for "mastery".

Mastery Lock serves another purpose, as well. Because the highest level of performance is “locked in,” there isn’t a need for extra questions at an easy level. Students might need one or two easier questions to warm up. The objective can then be assessed with a fewer number of questions.

Sort your content into two categories: what is critically important to learn and what is important to learn but not essential. Hold the students accountable for learning everything in the critical category by requiring mastery – even if the students need additional tries, time, re-writes, or approaches. Accept lesser performance with the other content, as time and other constraints limit what we can do. (Typically students don’t learn or remember it all until the end of the year, anyway.)

**Mastery Level**

Mastery Lock ensures rigorous content; Mastery Levels are scores set at appropriate levels, ratios or percents to ensure true, desired mastery at that stated score. In the example described earlier, four out of five is the Mastery Level that ensures each student masters the most difficult question. If the level had been set at three out of five, some students could reach the level, but not master the content. To remedy that example, the Mastery Level needs to be adjusted OR the questions themselves need to be redesigned so three of the five questions lock in the most difficult content.

**Timing**

Design your parallel assessments so they address the equivalent of one to two weeks of instruction and learning. With a block schedule format, this means assessing at least once per week, if not more often. In a block schedule, plan to administer a new test every three to five days. When requiring mastery, it is important to assess two to three times more often. The frequent monitoring and adjustments ensure manageable adherence to mastery and progress with standards.

Another design element to consider is the actual time it takes for students to complete the parallel assessment. For most classes, this time frame should not exceed fifty minutes. In elementary school, it would be shorter.

Plan your assessments on a calendar in advance and stick to specific retest dates.

From the book, *The High Performance Toolbox* by Spence Rogers & Shari Graham
# Know, Do, and Understand Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know and Recall Verbs</th>
<th>Short-Term Memory Do Verbs</th>
<th>Long-term Memory Do Verbs</th>
<th>Understand Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Solve</td>
<td>Solve &amp; explain how</td>
<td>Explain why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>Write</td>
<td>Write &amp; explain how</td>
<td>Create examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Draw</td>
<td>Draw &amp; explain how</td>
<td>Use in another setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Describe and explain how</td>
<td>Project to another context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate</td>
<td>Weld</td>
<td>Weld and explain how</td>
<td>Develop deep and rich metaphors and similes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underline</td>
<td>Map</td>
<td>Map and explain how</td>
<td>Infer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Explain what or how in context</td>
<td>Show and work with deep nuances of distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Graph</td>
<td>Graph and explain how</td>
<td>Predict based on trends or patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>Act out</td>
<td>Act out and explain how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain what</td>
<td>Depict</td>
<td>Depict and how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how</td>
<td>Convey</td>
<td>Convey and explain how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give the reasons given</td>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Compare and explain how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persuade</td>
<td>Persuade and explain how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Contrast and how</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagram</td>
<td>Construct charts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure

Develop parallel assessments with multiple forms. Usually two to four parallel forms of the assessment are made depending on student needs for mastery of objectives. Each form should have the same objectives and equivalent levels of difficulty to be used for re-assessment. If students can’t master the objective the first time, they must go through a corrective loop (more instruction and more practice) and reassess. They aren’t done until they’ve learned the content to an excellent level.

Also design parallel practice assessments that students use to prepare for each or all of the forms of the parallel assessments. One to three practice forms are usually enough depending on student needs.

Use equivalent formatting and structure across all forms of the parallel assessments (both the actual assessments and any practice versions). One exception to this tip is the practice form for factual recall objectives. On the practice form, include all the potential information even though the actual assessment might only include a random sampling drawn from the larger set.

Finally, design the assessment so that the entire test fits on one page (excluding graphics, stories, poems, maps, etc. that take up space). In other words, the test questions themselves should be no longer than one page.

Correctives & Scoring

Parallel Assessments have “corrective instruction and additional practice” developed in advance to bolster students before they re-assess. The majority of information about correctives and scoring is in the next section; however, a few tips here are related to the design of parallel assessments.

- Award students full credit for any mastered objectives at the time of mastery. Instead of giving one score for an entire assessment, break the scores into objectives, as well. This provides recognition for those who are motivated by grades, and makes the task of completing an entire assessment more manageable for those that aren’t.
- Do NOT require that students master every objective by form C. Set aside unmastered objectives temporarily and return to them in alternative ways as you can later in the course. Students are more likely to pass those objectives after they’ve had the necessary time to deepen their understanding by making connections with other content.
- Do NOT give “partial credit” before your final form. There is no need for partial credit with the way that parallel assessments are designed. They either “got it” or they didn’t. If a student still needs to master an objective, the system is in place to do so. Partial credit lets students off the hook for not reaching an excellent performance level.
- Do NOT give extra credit. Use alternative assessment forms and instruction instead. The learning is defined by the objectives and the aligned assessments for those objectives. Extra credit only allows students to accumulate enough points so they can ignore content standards that they miss. Like partial credit, extra credit lets kids off the hook.

**Important!**

As we transition into management of parallel assessments, remember that many management issues can be solved by solid design. MOST IMPORTANTLY, work your hardest to avoid the need for Forms B, C and beyond. Teach, delay assessments, overlap curriculum, sprinkle and shower before soak, and use Distributed Practice and Incremental Development to ensure success on form A.

Focus on instruction with embedded informal assessment to ensure success with Form A. Instruction is our primary tool. The parallel assessments are our secondary tool to lead ultimately to documentation of successful learning.
Parallel Assessment Design Example

2nd Grade

IMPORTANT NOTE

This is only an example to show various parallel assessment design methods. It contains second grade level subject matter, but the assessment would never be appropriate for second grade students. It covers far too much content. The point sizes are too small, and the overall design is too mature.
Parallel Assessment Design Example

**Form A**

Objective I – Solving Word Problems with Addition and Subtraction

**Directions:** Write out a plan for each problem. Put your solution in a complete sentence.

1. Billy has 7 footballs. His sister gave him 6 more. How many footballs does Billy now have in all?
   - **Plan:**
   - **Solution:**

2. Cindy had 12 marbles. She gave 5 of them to her friend. How many marbles does she have left?
   - **Plan:**
   - **Solution:**

3. Ginny had some kittens. She gave 6 of them away. She then had 4 left. How many kittens did she have to start with?
   - **Plan:**
   - **Solution:**

4. Matt’s horse is 13 years old. His friend’s horse is 5 years old. How many years older is Matt’s horse than his friend’s horse?
   - **Plan:**
   - **Solution:**

---

**Objective I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/A</th>
<th>4/4 correctly done (correct answer and plan with the solution in a complete sentence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D/B</td>
<td>3/4 correctly done (correct answer and plan with the solution in complete sentences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Imaginary Unit Overall Score Box**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obj. No.</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>S/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>D/B</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>D/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>D/B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Objective II – Recalling major parts of a DOG
Directions: Label the body parts of the dog in the picture.

S  All parts labeled correctly
NY

Objective III – Adding two digit numbers “with trading”
Directions: You have two friends who do not know how to do addition with regrouping. Your job today is to teach them how to do these challenging math problems. Step-by-step, in your own words please.

Steps are clear and in the right order 〇 〇
Steps are correct to solve the problem 〇 〇

49
+ 37

Student Checklist
I wrote each step in complete sentences.
I have checked for capital letters and punctuation.
My steps are clear.
I showed my work in the math problems.
I checked my work.
PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Objective IV – Adding one and two digit numbers “with trading”
Directions: Solve the following problems. (Please show your work.)

1. 84 + 15
2. 36 + 25
3. 57 + 64
4. 98 + 76

Objective Va – Reading Charts
Directions: Answer the following questions about the chart below.

1. Which day got the most rain?
2. Which day got the least rain?
3. Which two days got the same amount of rain?
4. How many more inches of rain fell on Friday than Sunday?
5. How many more inches of rain fell on Saturday than Monday?
6. What was the total rainfall for the whole week?
7. What was the total rainfall for Saturday and Sunday?

Objective Vb – Interpreting Charts

On the back of your paper, explain everything else you can tell (conclude) from the chart above.

S: Response shows two or more different types of relevant insights that can be drawn from trends and patterns in the chart
D: Response shows one relevant insight that can be drawn from trends and patterns in the chart
NY
Objective VI – Interpreting Stories

Directions: Fill in the parts to the story map with the key information from the story Dragon’s Fat Cat by Dav Pilkey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Characters</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Write a complete sentence to describe the problem in the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Events:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
List three events that lead up to the problem in the story.
1. 

2. 

3. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ending (Solution):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Write a complete sentence to describe the ending and the solution to the problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>NY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All but 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All but 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Objective VII – Writing Paragraphs
Directions: Complete all parts of this paragraph writing assessment.

Please circle one of the following topics to write about for your paragraph.
• What is your favorite candy and why?
• If you could choose any animal for a classroom pet, what would it be and why?

Topic Sentence:

Supporting Details:

Put your paragraph together.

I Checked For...
• CAPITAL LETTERS
• !..? Punctuation
• Spacing & Handwriting
• ABC... Word Wall Spelling
• Words
• Sentence sounds good
PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Paragraph Assessment Check Sheet

Student Name: ____________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
<th>Supporting Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>It is clear, relevant, and focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>It is relevant but lacks focus or clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>It is not relevant to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>There are three relevant, clear, and accurate supporting details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>There are three relevant supporting details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>- or -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>there are two relevant, clear and accurate supporting details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Paragraph Writing

S
- The paragraph is correctly formatted.
- The content is well organized
  o The topic sentence opens the paragraph.
  o The supporting details logically follow the topic sentence.
- Punctuation and capitalization are used correctly.

D
- The paragraph is almost correctly formatted.
- The content is organized
  o Topic sentence opens the paragraph.
  o The supporting details are not in the best order for readability.
  - or -
  There are two relevant, clear and accurate supporting details.
- Punctuation and capitalization are used at almost correctly.

NY
Objective VIII – Math Distributed Practice

These are math concepts and skills we learned earlier in the year. We practiced them almost every day during this unit to make sure we remember them.

Directions: Answer the questions and do the problems below. Be sure to show any work you need to do.

1. Write any three digit number you want.
   Circle the number in the ten’s place.
   Draw a square around the number in the one’s place.
   Put a line through the number in the hundred’s place.

2. Draw a one digit number story in the box. Write the story and the number model on the lines below the box.

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   Number Model:

3. 56
   + 23

4. Input=9
   Rule: + 8
   Output=

5. Input=11
   Rule: + 6
   Output=
Parallel Assessment Design Example

Form B

2nd Grade
Parallel Assessment Design Example

**Form B**

**Objective I – Solving Word Problems with Addition and Subtraction**

**Directions:** Write out a plan for each problem. Put your solution in complete sentences.

1. Carol has 8 soccer balls. Her sister gave her 7 more. How many soccer balls does Carol now have in all?

   **Plan:**
   **Solution:**

2. Frank had 13 apples. He gave 7 of them to his uncle. How many apples does he have now?

   **Plan:**
   **Solution:**

3. Jim had some candy bars. He gave 8 of them away. He then had 5 left. How many candy bars did he have before he gave any away?

   **Plan:**
   **Solution:**

4. Mike’s house is 17 years old. His friend’s house is 7 years old. How many years older is Mike’s house than his friend’s house?

   **Plan:**
   **Solution:**

**Objective I**

**S/A** 4/4 correctly done (correct answer and plan with the solution in a complete sentence)

**D/B** 3/4 correctly done (correct answer and plan with the solution in complete sentences)

**NY**
Objective II – Recalling major parts of a DOG

Directions: Label the body parts of the dog in the picture.

Objective III – Adding two digit numbers “with trading”

Directions: You have two friends who do not know how to do addition with regrouping. Your job today is to teach them how to do these challenging math problems. Step-by-step, in your own words please.

36
+ 59

Student Checklist
- I wrote each step in complete sentences.
- I have checked for capital letters and punctuation.
- My steps are clear.
- I showed my work in the math problems.
- I checked my work.
PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Objective VII – Writing Paragraphs

Directions: Complete all parts of this paragraph writing assessment.

Please circle one of the following topics to write about for your paragraph.
- What is your favorite candy and why?
- If you could choose any animal for a classroom pet, what would it be and why?

Topic Sentence:

Supporting Details:

Put your paragraph together.

I Checked For...
- CAPITAL LETTERS
- !,.? Punctuation
- Spacing & Handwriting
- ABC... Word Wall Spelling Words
- Sentence sounds good
PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Objective IV – Adding one and two digit numbers “with trading”
Directions: Solve the following problems. (Please show your work.)

1. 73 + 24
2. 47 + 38
3. 48 + 75
4. 89 + 95

Objective Va – Reading Charts
Directions: Answer the following questions about the chart below.

Snow in Detroit

1. Which month got the most snow?
2. Which month got the least snow?
3. During which two months did Detroit get the same amount of snow?

4. How much more snow fell in January than December?
5. How many more inches of snow fell in March than April?
6. What was the total snowfall for all November and December?
7. What was the total snowfall for March and April?

Objective Vb – Interpreting Charts

On the back of your paper, explain everything else you can tell (conclude) from the chart above.

S: Response shows two or more different types of relevant insights that can be drawn from trends and patterns in the chart
D: Response shows one relevant insight that can be drawn from trends and patterns in the chart
NY
PARALLEL ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

Paragraph Assessment Check Sheet

Student Name: ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
<th>Supporting Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S It is clear, relevant, and focused.</td>
<td>S There are three relevant, clear, and accurate supporting details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D It is relevant but lacks focus or clarity.</td>
<td>D There are three relevant supporting details, - or - there are two relevant, clear and accurate supporting details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY It is not relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Paragraph Writing

S
- The paragraph is correctly formatted.
- The content is well organized.
  - The topic sentence opens the paragraph.
  - The supporting details logically follow the topic sentence.
- Punctuation and capitalization are used correctly.

D
- The paragraph is almost correctly formatted
- The content is organized
  - Topic sentence opens the paragraph.
  - The supporting details are not in the best order for readability.
  - There are two relevant, clear and accurate supporting details.
- Punctuation and capitalization are used at almost correctly.
Objective VIII – Math Distributed Practice

These are math concepts and skills we learned earlier in the year. We practiced them almost every day during this unit to make sure we remember them.

Directions: Answer the questions and do the problems below. Be sure to show any work you need to do.

1. Write any three-digit number you want.
   Draw a square around the number in the ten’s place.
   Circle the number in the one’s place.
   Put a line through the number in the hundred’s place.

2. Draw a two digit number story in the box. Write the story and the number model on the lines below the box.

Number Model

3. 47
   \[ + 22 \]

4. Input = 8
   \[ \text{Rule:} + 7 \]
   Output =

5. Input = 23
   \[ \text{Rule:} + 8 \]
   Output =
Section 5

Correctives and Corrective Loops

Correctives and corrective loops are terms we use to represent the two-part support students need when they do not demonstrate desired mastery levels with an assessment. A corrective loop must be included between an assessment and a reassessment for each objective that is to be reassessed. The primary purpose of corrective loops is to ensure success for the students in reaching standards. The additional instruction and practice provide the preparation to be sure those students who need to reassess are actually ready to do so and can demonstrate mastery. Another purpose for correctives is to ensure that students who have already mastered an objective (but who wish to be reassessed in order to get a higher score) actually take necessary steps to ensure that higher score. There is one additional benefit. If the correctives are well-designed, they not only improve students’ learning and increase scores, they discourage students from ignoring or “blowing off” assessments and just retesting forever hoping to eventually show mastery – a strategy that seldom works and horribly burdens the teacher. Though correctives should never be presented as punitive, the students need to be aware that there is a consequence of extra work for not doing what they can to succeed as quickly as possible. Without well-designed correctives, teachers often find themselves buried in work and surrounded by many high-achieving students taking advantage of the system. With meaningful and effective correctives in place, students quickly learn to use assessments as they are meant to be used. Students actually stop taking advantage of the system, and the teacher is no longer overworked.

Corrective loops are most effective when they are tightly focused on the objectives for which the students will be reassessing. For each objective assessed, develop a separate corrective loop that focuses only on that objective. In order for students to be qualified for a reassessment in one or more objectives, they must complete the corresponding corrective loops. This is true whether the students are reassessing to reach mastery or to improve their level of mastery.

To be effective, correctives for an objective must:

- Have an instructional component or phase. Align well-planned instructional activities to the targeted objective. These instructional activities (peer tutoring, one-on-one work with the teacher, working with an instructional video) are designed to teach the objective that has not been mastered. To be most effective, the corrective instructional component needs to be in a different modality than what was used originally.

- Include a practice or re-engagement component. After the students complete the instructional component, they must be given additional practice or be engaged in an activity that will build additional skills, memory, or understanding.

- Not be seen as punishment. However, they must require enough energy and time commitment from the students that they will work hard to master objectives as quickly as possible to avoid remaining in the corrective loop.
Align Correctives to Match Objectives

Correctives are done differently for the different types of objectives: factual declarative knowledge objectives, procedural objectives, and conceptual declarative objectives. Each of these three different types of objectives prompts for a different set of behaviors from the students on the assessment. It is important to align the corrective activities to the behaviors expected by the assessment.

Part 1 – Corrective Instruction

Students must engage in activities that are designed to teach what has not yet been learned to the desired mastery level.

Part 2 – Practice

Students must participate in activities that provide additional repetition with factual knowledge, practice with skills, and engagement with concepts. It takes both parts for the corrective loop to be effective. Whatever form this second part takes, the students must correctly complete it before engaging in a reassessment.

Factual Declarative Knowledge

Corrective Loop - Part 1

For each test question or objective, tell the students how or where to find the answers. Students might search in a book, magazine, video, website, or other location. Next, have them find the correct answers and correct their assessments. Monitor the students while they are working by walking amongst them checking for answers.

Corrective Loop - Part 2

Provide the students with memory tricks for remembering the required facts. In addition, have the students develop and use flashcards or other memory games individually and in small groups.

Before reassessment, have the students provide evidence they have successfully memorized the correct answers.

Skills or Procedural Knowledge

Corrective Loop - Part 1

For each question or task, provide the students with a complete, step-by-step solution guide (paper, video, or modeling). Have the students work in groups of two to three to help each other as they correct their work and their answers. While students are working, walk amongst them and monitor while checking with them for correct procedures and answers.
Typically it is helpful to have the students write the correct steps for the skills they performed incorrectly within their work. Writing the “steps to a process” increases the likelihood the students will remember them later. In addition, requiring concept maps, flowcharts, and other graphic organizers helps the students learn the required skills.

Corrective Loop - Part 2

Before reassessment, have the students complete a practice assessment with items parallel to those to be assessed. Provide students with the correct answers to the practice assessment so they may check themselves and seek help if they need it.

Caution: Correcting or editing work is helpful in the corrective instruction phase (Part 1), but it is not adequate for assessment or re-assessment of the skill. For example, having students edit a paragraph they wrote for Form A of an assessment does not replace having them write a “parallel” paragraph for Form B. In this case, it is appropriate to have the student edit a paragraph and reassess on Form B.

NOTE: SEE CORRECTIVE FORMS IN APPENDIX 683-685

Conceptual Declarative Knowledge

Corrective Loop - Part 1

Provide students with resources for correcting their incomplete knowledge or misunderstandings. Engage the students in collaborative activities that will support their growth in reaching convincing levels of understanding. Engage the students with deep, probing and guiding questions to deepen and broaden their understanding. It is also helpful to have the students create concept maps, metaphors, similes, and diverse examples to extend their understanding.

Corrective Loop - Part 2

Before reassessment, have the students respond to prompts that will reengage them and prepare them for the prompts of the parallel assessment. Provide them with rubrics and other tools they can use to check their progress before the reassessment.

Section 6

Managing Parallel Assessments

Managing parallel assessments is simply the process of bringing into the classroom an assessment approach commonly used outside of school whenever the attainment of standards is vitally important. Parallel assessments are the tools we need to hold students accountable for meeting the learning standards while also providing extra time, opportunities, and support for those students who need it.

Using parallel assessment tends not to be complex when the number of learners is very small, which is more typical outside of school. For example, parents teaching their children important life lessons use a parallel assessment approach. They provide instruction, check
to see if mastery has occurred, and if it has not, they provide additional instruction and repeated checks until the desired standards are met. This is also common practice in on-the-job training, military training, and teaching between friends.

Clearly, using a parallel assessment approach outside of school is often easy and important enough to do. However, for teachers the question becomes, “How can I manage this commitment to excellence through parallel assessments with all the students I have?”

Providing parallel assessments to ensure learning standards are maintained puts an extra burden on the teacher. With careful attention up front, much of this burden can be alleviated; without it, a management crisis might result.

Managing parallel assessments is definitely worth the effort. Without using parallel assessments to support most students’ meeting the learning standards, a teacher faces ever-widening gaps in student knowledge. This growing spread in the amount of students’ content knowledge creates a gradually increasing challenge for the teacher as the year progresses.

Parallel assessments are used as tools to stabilize student learning at a high level. As with just about everything else we do in life, every action results in consequences. It is important to plan carefully for the challenges and benefits of parallel assessments.

The challenges that can surface with parallel assessments include:

- increased paper and paperwork
- attempts by some students to slide and manipulate the system
- resistance by some students to meet increased standards in their learning and the ensuing increased demands on their time and energy

The positive results associated with parallel assessments include:

- increased learning
- improved student motivation
- reduced gaps in students’ prerequisite knowledge and skills that lead to complex teaching situations

**The Causes of Management Issues**

Whenever professionals modify what they are doing, they can expect a drop in their performance levels until they work past all the bugs in the new system and perfect their new skills. This is as true in teaching as it is in singing, golfing, swimming, or skiing. The important thing to remember is that the changes are being implemented to solve problems – resist the desire to quit and revert to what drove you to change in the first place.

Putting new ideas in place takes time. As you implement parallel assessments, pace your progress to a rate that will work for you in a step-by-step fashion. It is important to recognize, however, that a logical step-by-step approach to making positive changes will often present some new problems. Encountering temporary speed bumps is a normal experience during growth. Expect it and just keep going until you get everything in place and running smoothly.
Parallel Assessment Components to Manage

When fully implementing parallel assessments for a unit, you will be managing:

- Three forms of the parallel assessments designed by objective
- Three parallel practice assessments
- Two corrective loops, each requiring a:
  - plan for corrective instruction for each objective on the assessments
  - plan for additional practice
- Corrective practice/re-engagement plan and materials
- A system for supporting high achieving students and providing incentive for responsible behavior
- A system for addressing resistant and irresponsible behaviors
- A scoring approach that fosters excellence while addressing classroom realities

Clearly, there is a lot to manage. Management systems need to vary based on your individual needs and style, but the suggestions that follow have proven themselves to be effective tools for many teachers.

Maintain Security to Save Huge Amounts of Time

Allow students to keep all practice forms of your parallel assessments, but do not allow the actual parallel assessments to leave the classroom.

Because good parallel assessments take a great deal of time to prepare, if they are allowed out of the classroom, it will be necessary for you to develop new forms each year. This will not add an almost impossible load to your teaching, but with some objectives the number of parallel assessment forms that can be developed is severely limited.

Sometimes parents or students believe they need to learn from the actual assessments. Assure them the parallel practice tests contain all the information they need to be successful. If, however, the parents insist on having the actual parallel assessments brought home, don’t fight the issue and endanger all your hard work. Help the parents to understand your need to maintain security and solicit their support. Tell them you will be placing the requested student assessment in a sealed envelope to be taken home, and ask them to return the assessment to you the same way. Though some parents may think of you as being overly cautious, most parents will meet you halfway.

Managing All the Forms

The following management tips have saved countless hours for hundreds of teachers:

1. Colored paper is an incredible tool that makes it easier to file and retrieve all the different forms. Establish your own color code and stick with it. Assign specific colors for each form of the assessment. Light pastels in shades of blue, green, lavender,
beige, ivory, yellow, and pink tend to be easier to read, will stand out in your files, and will be easier to spot if students accidentally start to carry an assessment out of the classroom.

2. Post your practice assessments on your website for easy access and downloading, or use white paper or different colors than what you have assigned to the actual assessment forms. Though white will not stand out as well for differentiating the separate forms of the practice assessments, it does not provide as much of an environmental problem. When using white for multiple forms, label the forms in a prominent and consistent way.

3. Hanging file folders make an excellent system in a file cabinet. Use one hanging file folder for each unit. For each unit's hanging folder, separate the parallel assessment forms, practice assessments, and corrective materials with manila folders.

4. With computer files, establish a consistent code system for naming all the files. Consider something like:
   a. A course or subject abbreviation of two or three letters followed by
   b. The unit number or two letter abbreviation for the unit name followed by
   c. The letter P for Practice or A for Assessment followed by
   d. The number or letter for the practice or assessment.

Examples:
   • MA7AB would be Math, Unit 7, Assessment Form B
   • LA9-7P2 would be Language Arts Grade 9, Unit 7 Practice Two
   • BIO-13PB would be Biology, Unit 13, Practice Form B
   • USH12CB would be US History, Unit 12, Corrective for Form B
   • SSCI-ROCKS-AC would be Grade 5 Science, the Rock Unit, Assessment Form C

Managing for Excellence on Form A

1. Use pre-instruction clouds, sprinkles and showers before the unit and within the unit to ensure deeper and more efficient learning.

2. Use distributed practice and incremental development within the unit for each topic to ensure better, longer-lasting learning. Continue this after the unit as well to ensure important topics are learned to much deeper and broader levels.

3. Before beginning a unit, provide the students with a study guide containing as much of the following as you feel may be helpful to the students. (Provide the guide both on paper and on the Internet to improve access from home.)
   a. The unit objectives in language that is easily understood by the students.
   b. Lists of any vocabulary or other information that requires memorization.
   c. All the independent practice and other assignments that will be assigned as a part of the unit.
d. A schedule for the unit lessons with specific lesson objectives.

e. For c and d above, prioritize and label the importance of these assignments. Indicate which are essential for all students, which are qualifiers, which are "non-coupon-able." (See numbers 9 & 10 below.) Include labels for only those procedures you are implementing.

f. The projected date for Form A of the unit assessment.

4. On the first day of a unit, provide the students with all the practice assessment forms. Also, post these on the web for parent and student access from home. These practice assessments provide a clear focus for students. In addition, highly motivated students use them as the unit progresses to be sure they are ready for the unit assessment Form A so they will not need to be involved in correctives and re-assessment.

5. Require completion of a parallel practice assessment as a qualifier for the students to take Form A.

6. Encourage students to focus on those objectives from Form A that they are relatively certain they will be able to master. Doing this helps students learn to build on their strengths and manage their time well. An additional huge benefit for you comes from not having to spend time scoring work that is not even close to meeting the standards.

7. Prior to teaching each unit, determine those assignments and activities that are essential for all, some, and a few of the students to complete. It is seldom essential for all students to do everything in order to be highly successful. When you determine the relative importance of each assignment or activity, you can differentiate the demands you place on students to match the needs of the students. This prioritization also helps determine where you will draw firm lines that cannot be crossed and where negotiable boundaries exist. In your study guide, label each assignment activity based on its importance.

8. Use Delayed Testing in combination with distributed practice incremental development. Continue distributed practice and incremental development as you teach the next unit(s) until you are convinced that most, if not all students will show mastery of the objectives of the assessment, and then administer it.

9. Develop Self-Directed Licenses in advance of the unit and make them available for responsible, effective, self-directed learners.

Students who master all the objectives on Form A earn a Self-Directed License (SDL), which can be revoked if they make inappropriate decisions. This SDL provides the students who have earned it the privilege of determining whether or not to complete SDL designated assignments or activities.

Keep plenty of copies of your SDLs on hand. Make sure there are spaces on them where you can designate the unit for which the license is earned, sign your name, and have students sign. These steps will save you tremendous amounts of time and eliminate potential misuse by students who have not earned the SDLs.

Place the blank SDLs where the eligible students can easily access them. Then students can take responsibility for bringing the SDL to you for completion and record keeping. Again, only the truly self-directed will take the initiative to complete the process. You don’t have to do the work – the students do!
10. Develop Homework Coupons (HC) in advance. Follow the same procedures for these coupons as for the SDLs with only a couple of minor differences. If the students engage fully in your instructional activities, complete their work, and master all the objectives for a unit by the end of the corrective instruction and Form C, then they earn one Homework Coupon. The Homework Coupon can be submitted in lieu of any assignment designated to be “coupon-able.” In other words, if your study guide labels a homework assignment as eligible for exemption, collect the coupon and exempt the work. The critical point here is that the coupon must be relinquished.

Caution: Do NOT designate the completion of a practice test as “coupon-able.” Practice assessments should be required as qualifiers for either Form A (the preparation for Form A) or Form B (the practice portion of the corrective loop).

11. Provide recognition certificates to students for each objective they master on Form A and a different recognition certificate for each objective mastered or improved if already mastered. These recognition cards have no extrinsic value and are merely recognition for a job well done. Students typically save these simply for their intrinsic value.

12. Use Knowledge Banks, Walls, Caves or Centers to increase learning and improve results during the assessments. Knowledge Walls and Caves are awesome tools for increasing student learning while improving assessment results. They provide an effective way to:
   a. Prevent students from convincing themselves of incorrect information or procedures during increased emotional states caused by test taking.
   b. Reduce inaccurate assessment results by reducing test anxiety.
   c. Make needed information available to students who may be suffering from short-term memory glitches.
   d. Give students one more practice to increase their memory of important information.

Refer to the Knowledge Wall topic in this resource for tips for setting up and effectively using Knowledge Walls and Caves to increase student achievement over time.

13. Use Criteria-for-Credit to improve the quality, readability, and general accessibility of your students’ responses. This powerful strategy will save you much time during your scoring process in addition to reducing the total number of reassessments that need to be taken and scored. (See Chapter 10 for details.)

14. Make certain the students understand the corrective loop process. They need to know what will be required for each objective not mastered on Form A or for objectives for which the students wish to improve their scores. In order to qualify for reassessment in any of the objectives on Form B, the students must engage in corrective instruction and complete the additional practice (typically on the second pre-prepared practice assessment) for each objective to be re-assessed.

15. Ensure the students know that for any objectives they do not master on Form A, they must engage in a corrective instruction and practice and then reassess the objective. It is important that they understand that no credit will be given unless this corrective instruction and reassessment is completed. This requires developing understanding and support from the principal, the parents, and the students perceived as leaders by the various subgroups within your classroom. If students do not engage in corrective loops and reassessment, then this is a behavior issue and should be addressed accordingly.

16. Reproduce only the objectives for which students will be re-assessing. In many cases, paper and time can be saved by only “copying” or printing those objectives that are actually needed.
17. Continuously modify your instructional strategies to ensure they are most effective for the varying learning styles and backgrounds in your classroom.

**Parallel Assessment Flow**

- **Purpose**
  To increase long term achievement through coaching during assessments.

**Rationale and Caution**

Just as in many sports, coaching throughout the assessment to ensure learning and correct practice can have a huge impact on lasting achievement. If done well, doing so can significantly improve student achievement, but done without extreme care, and it can result in grade inflation, upset stakeholders and diminished achievement.

When students are progressing correctly through an assessment, they are reinforcing their knowledge and skills in the process. But when students aren’t doing anything, they aren’t accomplishing anything either. When students are making mistakes or doing things incorrectly during an assessment, they are actually reinforcing incorrect knowledge and skills ... i.e., they are getting better at being wrong. With the overload of curriculum to teach and the pressure of external assessments, can we really afford to lose this valuable instructional time?
**Procedure**

“To coach or not to coach?” is a difficult question. It leads to a tough decision for teachers. Most coaches and most parents will coach young people during the game or “assessment at home.” It’s not considered cheating, it’s considered to be essential for maximum performance and motivation. However, most teachers will not coach a student during a test. Why not? Grades or marks? Well, don’t count it, but coach them and stop them from wasting time at best or becoming more proficient at being wrong at worst. Coach them on the spot, make note of the impact on a grade or score, and if the students aren’t proficient, mark them incomplete, put them in a two-part corrective loop, and reassess them until mastery.

**“Show Me” Assessment**

**Purpose**

Increase the focus on reasoning, process, and correct practice.

**Quick PEAK**

When possible, give students the answer and ask them to follow the appropriate procedures to determine that answer. Students must at least show all their “work,” and for increased rigor, ask them to describe their procedures and provide their reasoning.

**Determine the Best Assessment Timing**

Use informal assessment tools to determine when the unit assessment will most likely result in most of the students showing mastery of rigorous standards. After finishing each unit and before the assessment, start the next unit while inserting distributed practice and incremental development activities every day until your informal assessments show that the students are ready to excel. This will result in deeper, more lasting learning, improved motivation and attitudes, and greater retention for increased summative and end of course/grade level assessments.

**Reassess Only What Needs Reassessing**

Encourage, but don’t require, students to improve their scores for objectives they have already mastered. If they choose to make the effort to increase their performance, it is important to require that they engage in the corresponding corrective.
Establish and Follow Policies and Procedures for Absences

If a student is absent during class when a form of the assessment is administered, they may make it up after school on that day or before school the next day. If they do not assess during these scheduled times, the students are automatically entered into the corrective loop. Most absences are short enough for this to be an effective approach, but if an absence is extensive or if a student is coping with distressing circumstances outside of school, make adjustments based on a balance of compassion and standards.

Provide Written Reassessment Policies and Procedures

Avoid confusion and garner parent support by providing parents and students with a written document describing your policies and procedures. An added benefit to doing this is that the document becomes a vehicle for ensuring effective dialogues between yourself and your principal to make sure everyone has a common understanding. The following is an example letter modified from an actual letter used in the Galena City Schools in Galena, Alaska.
Example Letter to Parents about Parallel Assessments

To parents and students,

I am committed to your child’s success both in school and beyond. As such, I will go above and beyond what is required of me. I will be available before and after school almost every day to help students. In order for me to more effectively support everyone, we will operate using the following guidelines:

All testing and retesting dates for a unit will be posted in the classroom by the date of the Form A assessment. In order for students to be eligible for Form A, Practice One must be completed according to our Criteria-for-Credit.

Practice One is a required assignment for all students. If Practice One is not completed by the beginning of class on test day, it will be completed while the other students are taking Form A. Any students in this situation will then be required to engage in the corrective loop for Form B.

For any objectives to be assessed on Form B, the matching Practice Two objectives must be completed according to our Criteria-for-Credit. Also, all related missing assignments (including Practice 1) will be completed and turned in before taking Form B at its scheduled time.

For students to be eligible to assess any of the Form C objectives, they are to follow the guidelines of number three above, except for Form C.

Forms A, B, and C will be administered on their designated days only. If students have an excused absence on the day of the test, they may only take the test after school that day or before school on the day of their return. Failure to take a test on designated days will result in the loss of that test opportunity. Exceptions will be addressed on an individual basis and only for unusual and extreme circumstances such as extended illnesses or individual or family emergencies.

Meeting deadlines is an important part of life, and meeting standards with appropriate coaching is, as well. As such, these guidelines and support systems are intended as support for all students as they work to master objectives of the course.

By working together, teachers, parents and students can effectively have a positive impact on student learning.

Thank you.
Post Schedules and Use Them

Before administering Form A, announce and post the dates and times for all corrective loops and reassessments. If it is at all possible, try to post this information at the beginning of the unit. Also, whenever feasible, schedule the corrective loops after Form B and all reassessments beyond Form B on the students’ own time. If working with highly motivated students and if bus and extra curricular schedules permit, schedule all corrective loops and reassessments before or after school.

Although it is important to remain flexible with this schedule so that students are not overloaded, in general, try to stick with your schedule.

Section 7

Scoring Assessments

One of the purposes of using parallel assessments is to help ensure that more students reach high standards. Parallel assessments provide the means for providing extra time and instruction for students who need it, and they provide the tools to hold all students accountable for reaching the standards and not manipulating a point system.

In a single assessment (evaluation) system, teachers are forced to score more leniently since there are no “back-doors” to what might be considered fair grades. We might ask if grades in such a system truly reflect learning. Take advantage of your parallel assessments as tools supporting higher levels of learning.

It is important not to accidentally undermine the power of parallel assessments by holding on to various strategies that we found necessary before parallel assessments. For example, do NOT score leniently; do not give “the benefit of the doubt,” do not give “partial credit,” and do not let any students “get by” on any form of the assessment as long as there are additional corrective loops and parallel assessment forms available. If students have not totally demonstrated the criteria established by your objectives, assign an incomplete and put those students into your corrective loops. However, do this with a compassionate and caring hand. Compliment students for all they have demonstrated, give praise for all that is done well, but be firm and caring as you inform them that you care enough not to give up, because you know they can reach the standard.

What if objectives are not met by Form C? Here is the only place partial credit might occur. On your last form (typically Form C), assign partial credit if the students have shown the basics of the objective but lack desired depth, breadth, or proficiency. If the student’s performance is too weak to assign a partial score indicating the basics, the choices are tough but important. Many teachers assign zeros, step away for a while and return later in the grading period or semester and support the student in making up missing objectives. This tends to work fairly well if there are enough objectives within a grading period so that doing so does not produce a devastating effect. Many others assign an incomplete to be addressed later.

Caution: Do not give a few points and let it go – this will prove ineffective at best and disastrous at worst. Students will quickly learn they don’t really need to master the objectives; they just wait out the teacher and never reach the desired standard. They learn they can get by with D’s if they play the system long enough.
Score Boxes and Answer Sheets

Score Boxes placed directly on the parallel assessments and on separate Answer Sheets can save a tremendous amount of time for you while providing guidance to the students. It is most helpful to place a separate Score Box for each objective immediately adjacent to the objective on the assessment. Another tremendous time saver is to provide the students with pre-designed Answer Sheets with specific score boxes placed with each objective. This accelerates scoring by ensuring that response locations always follow a pattern, and it allows teachers to simply circle scores. Whenever a score other than those in the Score Boxes is more appropriate, the teacher can just quickly write the appropriate score in the Score Box. Remember, because of this new system of demanding high standards, you no longer need to mark all corrections in order to give partial credit (see above). Look for correct responses, mark what is right and move on. The use of correctives and additional parallel assessments will ensure the standard is met. (Refer to the section on correctives for further information.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, Score Boxes on front of the assessment and/or on the top of an Answer Sheet near the students’ names, also save significant amounts of time while helping the students. They allow teachers to indicate the scores for each objective in an easily seen spot.

One important note for elementary teachers – balance the addition of Score Boxes in your assessments with the needs of your students. Many elementary teachers have found that the extra text involved with Score Boxes actually undermines the purpose behind the entire assessment. Because their students are distracted by the extra words and text boxes, the more appropriate decision is to not include Score Boxes on the assessments for younger children. A management option that decreases achievement is really no option at all.
General Tips for Parallel Assessment Management

- Parallel Assessments address one to three weeks of instruction and learning with traditional schedules (one-half to one and one-half weeks with a 4x4 schedule).
- Parallel Assessments promote mastery by individual objectives within the assessment.
- Notify students of the specific dates and times for the initial assessment and all the reassessments when the unit begins – this notification is posted until the final reassessment has been administered.
- Engage students in corrective instruction and practice only for those objectives for which they will be reassessed.
- Before “taking” a form of an assessment, require each student to correctly complete a qualifying practice assessment and/or other tasks that will prepare that student for reaching mastery.
- Engage students and parents in discussions through which they surface and defend the concept of parallel assessment (through outside of school examples) as a natural and essential approach when learning is important. Engage students in an additional discussion to surface the benefits of using the approach in school, and then facilitate their discovery of the possible caveats and options for protecting against them.
- Treat as qualifiers only those assignments and tasks that are deemed to be most important to a student’s success on Form A of a parallel assessment.
- Require Criteria-for-Credit for assessments to be eligible for scoring.
- Avoid leniency in scoring until the last form that is to be administered, at which point a student can earn a “C” or its equivalent on any objective(s) where the basic, minimal level of knowledge, ability or understanding has been demonstrated but the desired level of depth, breadth, proficiency or accuracy is not evident.
- Administer reassessments for “still not mastered objectives” from various units at a time that is doable, but not convenient at the end of each semester – require evidence of preparatory work as a qualifier for these reassessments.
- Use distributed practice before a unit to ensure that students’ background knowledge is in place to improve their learning with the “current unit.”
- Provide students with all forms of the practice assessments at the very beginning of the unit to ensure “clear target” and to facilitate ambitious preparation by students who choose it.
- If students need more practice/engagement time to do well with Form A, start the next unit with time devoted to additional practice/engagement with the content of this unit that still needs assessing. As soon as monitoring indicates students are ready for Form A, administer it.
- Print the forms of the assessment and practice assessments on different colored paper to facilitate management, filing, and retrieval.
- Do NOT allow students to keep any forms of the assessments. If parents wish to see them, remind them of the parallel practice assessments. If parents still insist on seeing the actual forms of the assessment, work with them to develop a secure system that will ensure you get them back and that no copies will be made.

Caution! When the score is permanent, efforts and learning can stop.
• Do NOT apply any scoring or other penalties (points off) for students requiring extra time to reach mastery. If necessary, construct assessments that can be given over a period of time. For example, in a language arts class, save the in-class essay portion for a second day.

• Do NOT use extra credit – instead support students to mastery so they don’t need extra credit.

• Plan to complete the re-assessment process for a unit within about five to eight school days.

• Develop three forms of the Parallel Practice Assessments.

• Develop and plan to use three to four forms of the actual Parallel Assessments.

• Avoid true/false, matching, and multiple choice items.
CAUTION! Watch your step!

This chapter has much to offer to profoundly change the attitudes and achievement in your classroom; however, there are many cautions as well. Trying to change your classroom assessment system will result in road bumps, and as you try to navigate those bumpy spots, you might be tempted to use solutions from the very system you are trying to change! Please know that this process takes time.

In a perfect world, we won’t see:

- Students being asked to publicly answer questions for which they do not know
- Final exams with students able to pass a course without final demonstration of mastery
- Questions asked of individual students as opposed to responses being developed by groups of students
- Tests and other forms of evaluation (grades) administered at the end of the unit before mastery is achieved through incremental development overlapping into the next unit
- True/False and Multiple Choice being used for classroom assessment or evaluation
- Fill in the Blank being used without the students, particularly those receiving coaching during the process, writing the responses as complete, meaningful, content rich and rigorous sentences
- Grades computed by averages or point totals
- Formal assessment without practice assessment, two-part corrective instruction and reassessment
- Content not periodically revisited in future units and formal assessments until the end of the course
- Easy items on formal formative or summative assessments that eliminate the need for students to reach true mastery at desired difficult levels
- Grades or scores for objectives on formal assessments based on percentages
- Formal classroom assessments resulting in a single score when the assessment addressed one or more current objectives and distributed practice objectives
- Graded quizzes before research shows the students could have learned (28/3)
- Practice and homework of a practice variety exceeding 10% of a grade
- Assessments and evaluations used to threaten low achieving students
- Students merely sitting idly during “tests” because they don’t know what to do or how to do it
- Students not being expected to reassess until mastery
- Students not being coached when they are struggling
- Students being asked to do things on “tests” they have not shown mastery of during practice
- Students being asked to do independent practice without completed solutions and/or exemplars to ensure correct practice
- Students NOT required and coached to meeting standards
- Each student expected to master the same content in the same time period or in the same way as every other student
- Students not going on with new material until they master the old
- Grades used as motivators with low achieving students or with students who just don’t care
- Grades NOT used to pressure students who value them
IN A PERFECT WORLD

Classroom On-going and Formal Assessment, Evaluation, Accountability & Documentation

Assessment is the deliberate gathering of information in order to determine appropriate next steps. Effective assessment is totally integrated within instruction and is virtually inseparable from it.

Evaluation is the gathering of information in order to score, label or document. While the tools used are similar to those of assessment, the difference lies in the purpose and result.

What we can see in a perfect world includes the following:

1. Virtually every instructional question, activity and task is designed and used to provide meaningful insights as to where students are conceptually while simultaneously causing increased learning.
2. Assessments are used to provide information and are not graded – evaluations are graded.
3. Evaluation is performed after assessment suggests most students will excel.
4. When most students are ready and show mastery, the assessment phase moves to evaluation to generate grades and documentation.
5. Formal and informal formative and summative assessments are administered by objective – e.g. most assessments address more than one objective and each is scored, provided with corrective instruction and then reassessed separately.
6. Formal and informal classroom formative and summative assessments are timed to be administered when most students will be able to show mastery of the objectives.
7. Distributed practice and incremental development are a part of assessments.
8. Two part corrective instruction is used between assessments and reassessments as needed for mastery.
10. Multiple Choice (MC) and True False (TF) are NOT used for classroom assessment or evaluation except when students are taught how to answer MC and TF AND the students are required to provide full reasoning with a response in order to receive credit for the item. (See “Standardized Test Preparation”)
11. Students who are being coached are required to complete “Fill in the Blank” items by writing the response as a complete, correct, content rich, meaningful and rigorous sentence.
12. Coaching support occurs as needed throughout quizzes and testing and other forms of assessment to ensure ongoing learning.
13. Classroom assessment is used as a teaching/coaching vehicle and documentation (grade and mark determinations) is done through evaluation at the end of assessment loops.
14. Questioning during instruction involves all learners and is used to generate learning, NOT catch or show lack of knowledge or incorrect thinking.

15. Units overlapping to provide time for students to achieve mastery without holding them or the rest of the class back.

16. Teachers providing up to three opportunities for students to show mastery of an objective with an end of course last opportunity.