Classroom Assessment Workshop Materials
Assessment and Accountability
Illinois State Board of Education
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http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

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This document is intended to provide non-regulatory guidance and is subject to revision.
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Introduction

Workshop Objectives

Participants will...

- Use the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*.
- Engage in the assessment development process.

Day 1
Day 1 of the workshop will introduce the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment* and the first two steps in the assessment development process. In addition, participants will begin developing draft classroom assessments.

Day 2
Day 2 of the workshop will focus on steps three, four, and five of the assessment development process. Participants will continue developing their classroom assessments and provide feedback to their colleagues.

Introduction to the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*
These materials were developed to support educators’ ability to select, develop, and/or modify classroom assessments. Educators are encouraged to reflect on their content knowledge to develop quality assessments that will inform instruction.

The *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment* are organized into three domains:

**Foundations**
The foundation standards encompass the basis for developing and implementing sound and fair classroom assessment practices that are focused on the students to be assessed.

**Use**
The use standards align with the assessment process and follow a logical progression from the selection and development of classroom assessments to the communication of the assessment results.

**Quality**
Teachers can use classroom assessment results with increased confidence when their classroom assessment practices meet the quality standards.

The *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment* is available on the balanced assessment webpage: [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm)
**Activity:** Exploring the Foundations and Use Standards

1) Review the Foundations and Use Standards in the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*.

2) Note what information affirms your prior understanding (✓), surprised you (!), or raised a question (?).

3) Discuss your notes with your colleagues and reflect the following question:
   - What is the key takeaway for each standard as it relates to your content area and/or grade level?

**Steps of Assessment Development**

Assessment is defined as a systematic process of collecting and interpreting information used to inform educators, students, and stakeholders. Assessments vary in frequency and scope from formative daily checks of understanding to summative end-of-term assignments.

To facilitate the development of classroom assessments, this workshop outlines a five step process. These steps may be associated with many of the standards outlined in the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*:

- **Step 1:** Identify population and purpose (F1)
- **Step 2:** Identify Learning Expectations (F2, Q4)
- **Step 3:** Develop assessment design and prepare the assessment (F3, F4, F5)
- **Step 4:** Plan for analysis and use (U1-U4)
- **Step 5:** Evaluate assessments for quality (Q1-Q6)

This process is designed to illustrate a method of approaching assessment development and provides a model for educators as they draft their own assessments.

**Activity:** Assessment Challenges

1) Reflect on the following question and discuss your answer with your colleagues:

   - What are some challenges that you have faced selecting, developing, or modifying classroom assessments?
Step 1: Population and Purpose

Step one of the assessment development process addresses the following questions:

- Who is being assessed?
- What is being assessed?
- Why do I need to assess students at this time?

The answers to these questions may be found in an assessment’s target population and purpose. This section focuses on the following standard from the Guiding Principles of Classroom Assessment:

- **F1 Assessment Purpose:** Classroom assessment practices should have a clear purpose that supports teaching and learning.

Identifying the Population

As a part of identifying an assessment’s purpose, it is important to define the population that the assessment is designed to evaluate. Population refers to the intended grade levels or targeted student groups that will be assessed.

Example Populations:

- Grade 1
- Grades 9-12
- Students in an AP Biology course

Identifying the Purpose

Educators use assessments for many purposes (e.g., formative, interim, and summative). Establishing an assessment’s purpose maximizes the assessment’s effectiveness by ensuring the design and use of the assessment is appropriate.

- **Formative Assessment** is an assessment process used by educators and students during instruction for the purposes of informing teaching and improving learning.

- **Interim Assessments** are used by educators periodically throughout the school year for the purposes of predicting student success, evaluating ongoing programs, and informing teaching and improving learning.

- **Summative Assessments** are used for the purpose of evaluating student, program, or school success at an end point in time.

In addition to identifying the purpose of the assessment, the topic of the assessment must also be identified. At this step in the assessment development process the topic may be defined broadly (e.g., proficiency in a particular skill and/or concept). Finally, the educator must determine the period of instruction associated with the assessment. Below is an example purpose statement template that may be used when developing an assessment:
This task is a/an (type) assessment of learning that measures (population) students’ knowledge of (topic of the assessment) over (period of instruction).

Using this example template, a purpose statement might be constructed as follows:

- This task is a formative assessment of learning that measures Kindergarten students’ ability to interpret patterns in the natural world and will be administered after the first of three lessons about what plants and animals need to survive.

- This task is an interim assessment of learning that will give eleventh- and twelfth-grade advanced dance students a chance to choreograph and perform a solo dance based on a work of visual art, covering course content from the fall semester.

- This task is a summative assessment of learning that will offer an opportunity for tenth- through twelfth-grade students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills acquired over the course of the Automotive Mechanics I class.

**Activity: Identify Population and Purpose**

Brainstorm the population and purpose for an assessment that you would like to work on as part of this workshop. Reflect on the following ideas:

1) The population of students.
2) The type of assessment.
3) The topic of the assessment.
4) The period of instruction.
Step2: Learning Expectations

Step two of the assessment development process addresses the following questions:

- What learning expectations will I measure using this assessment?
- How do I know if my assessment really measures the learning expectations?

This section focuses on the following standards from the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*:

- **F2 Learning Expectations**: Classroom assessment practices should align with the appropriate learning expectations and instruction intended for each student.

- **Q4 Validity**: Classroom assessment practices should provide adequate and appropriate information that supports sound decisions about each student’s knowledge and skills.

Once educators have identified the population and purpose of their assessment, the next step is to identify the specific content standards and learning expectations that will be assessed. Learning expectations are clear statements of what students are to learn, lesson by lesson, or for overall units, and provide direction for both instruction and assessment.

In some cases, learning expectations may be parallel to content standards dependent on the content area and grade level. However, some content standards may not provide information that is specific enough for the creation of certain types of assessment. If needed, educators may draft learning expectations that focus on the specific goals of the assessment related to appropriate content standards.

Educators should reflect on the extent to which an assessment is aligned with the learning expectations that have been taught. In other words, ensuring that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure.

For example, if a visual arts teacher wanted to create an assessment that measures students’ ability to conceptualize artistic work, create or produce the work, and connect the work to their personal experience then the assessment would require demonstration of all of these skills. If the resulting assessment required students to create a piece of art but did not provide a way for them to demonstrate how the students connected the piece of art to their own personal experience, the assessment would not align completely with the intended learning expectations - it would cover some but not all of the learning expectations identified for the assessment.

As educators, we use content standards and learning expectations to inform our curriculum which then informs our choice of assessment and the use of those assessment results. Therefore, alignment is essential to ensure the quality of our curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

**Validity and Alignment**

Validity is the extent to which an assessment measures what it claims to measure. The *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment* describes validity as the interplay among the following variables: learning expectations, curriculum and instruction, assessment design, analysis of responses, and the decisions that derive from this analysis. Another way to think about that interplay is in terms of the alignment of all these variables. Educators may address the alignment in three ways:
• Content alignment refers to whether the assessment items or tasks are measuring the learning expectations they are intended to measure.

• Coverage alignment refers to whether the assessment items or tasks measure all of the identified learning expectations for that assessment. Classroom assessments should focus on the learning expectations that are most relevant for a particular period of instruction.

• Complexity alignment refers to whether the assessment measures the complexity of the learning expectations (e.g., critical thinking).

Reflect on the following questions when reviewing the alignment of an assessment:

• Are there clear connections between the identified learning expectations and assessment items or tasks?

• Do the assessment items or tasks address the most relevant learning expectations?

• Does the assessment address the complexity of the identified learning expectations?

**Activity:** Learning Expectations

What learning expectations will your assessment measure? How will you know if your assessment really measures the identified learning expectations? Discuss your ideas with your colleagues
Day 2 Introduction

During Day 1, steps one and two of the assessment development process were introduced. Day 2 will introduce steps three, four, and five. Participants will continue developing their classroom assessments and provide feedback to their colleagues.

Step 3: Assessment Design

Step three of the assessment development process addresses the following questions:

- What assessment design is most appropriate for my population, purpose, and learning expectations?
- How will the assessment engage students?
- What resources are needed for conducting the assessment?

This section focuses on the following standards:

- **F3 Assessment Design**: The types and methods of classroom assessment used should clearly allow students to demonstrate their learning.

- **F4 Student Engagement**: Students should be meaningfully engaged in the assessment process and the use of assessment evidence to enhance their learning.

- **F5 Assessment Preparation**: Adequate teacher and student preparation in terms of resources, time, and learning opportunities should be part of classroom assessment practices.

Assessment Design and Preparation

After identifying the population, purpose, and learning expectations of an assessment, the next step is to consider the design of the assessment. The design of the assessment should align with the identified learning expectations. For example, if a teacher wants to measure students’ ability to use algebraic equations, she may ask students to complete a series of pencil and paper tasks. However, if a teacher wants to assess students’ knowledge of a computer operating system, she may ask students to demonstrate their understanding by performing specific tasks using a computer. Commonly used classroom assessment designs are listed below:

- Short answer (e.g., short written responses, graphic organizers and diagrams).

- Extended response (e.g., essays, multi-step responses).

- Product (e.g., research papers, computer programs, paintings).

- Performance (e.g., presentations, musical or theatrical performances).

- Process (e.g., designs, visualizations, inventions).

Note that often different types of items or tasks are included in a single assessment.
**Performance and Authentic Assessment.** Particularly effective assessments are performance and authentic assessments. Performance and authentic assessments refer to assessments that engage students in real world or authentic tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (e.g., projects, performances, labs, etc).

**Portfolios.** Portfolios are a specific type of performance or authentic assessment. Portfolios are a collection of student work that demonstrates progress towards mastery of essential knowledge and skills. Portfolios provide educators with a record of what students have learned and are able to do over time. Engaging students in the construction and maintenance of a portfolio motivates students as they reflect on their progress. Educators may consider the following questions when constructing a portfolio assessment:

- What will the portfolio look like (e.g., physical or electronic)?
- Who is the intended audience for the portfolio (e.g., students, teachers, and/or parents)?
- What will be included in the portfolio?
- How will the portfolio be evaluated (e.g., rubrics)?

The contents of a portfolio will vary dependent on the content area and grade level. In addition, educators may consider the use of a common rubric to evaluate the contents of a portfolio, and engage students in the process of self- and peer-assessment.

**Additional Considerations**
Regardless of the design of the assessment, the following are additional considerations educators should take into account:

- **Age-Appropriateness:** Is the assessment appropriate to the students’ age, experience, and background knowledge?
- **Text Complexity:** Is all text included in the assessment appropriate for students’ reading ability?
- **Space:** In the physical design of the assessment, is there enough space for students to complete each task?
- **Formatting:** Are text and diagrams included in the assessment presented in a clear and accessible manner?
- **Delivery:** Is the method of delivery (e.g., paper and pencil, computer, etc.) the most appropriate for the assessment?
- **Clarity:** Are the directions written in a clear and accessible manner?

**Time and Resources**
Next, the educator should consider the time and resources need to prepare and complete the assessment. The time and resources assessments require varies. For example, the time required to
evaluate a portfolio will most likely be longer than the time needed to evaluate a research paper.

Educators should reflect on the following when selecting or developing classroom assessments:

- Teacher instructions (e.g., prerequisites, setup, estimated timeline)
- Materials (e.g., student instructions, lab materials, art supplies)
- Evaluation Requirements (e.g., rubrics, checklists, exemplars)

**Activity: Assessment Design**

What assessment design do you think is most appropriate for your population, purpose, and learning expectations? Discuss your ideas with your colleagues.

**Student Engagement**

Research has shown that increasing a student’s engagement in his/her learning leads to higher academic achievement. Considering how to engage students in the assessment process is a critical component of effective assessment. Some common strategies for engaging students include:

- Establishing Evaluation Criteria: Facilitate a discussion with students that encourages them to identifying the criteria needed for evaluation (e.g., how do you know if you’ve mastered this content or skill?).

- Providing Choice and Autonomy: Allow students to choose how they demonstrate their mastery using the identified evaluation criteria (e.g., presentation, paper, or project). Educators and students could collaboratively develop a list of options or collaborate on the development of the assessment itself.

- Encouraging Self- and Peer-Assessment: Create opportunities and protocols for students to engage in self- and peer-assessment activities to encourage reflection and progress monitoring.
**Activity:** Student Engagement

Reflect on how you could encourage student engagement in the assessment you are drafting. Discuss your ideas with your colleagues.
Drafting the Assessment: Steps 1, 2 and 3

You’ve identified your population, purpose, and learning expectations, and considered what would be the most appropriate assessment design. Next you will begin designing your assessment individually or as a team and complete the Assessment Development Template in Appendix A.

Population and Purpose
First, review steps one through three and finalize your purpose statement identifying the population, topic, timeline, and type of assessment.

Learning Expectations
Second, identify the content standards and learning expectations your assessment will measure. Remember that in some cases, learning expectations may be parallel to content standards dependent on the content area and grade level. The following activities may facilitate this process:

- Review the content standards for the appropriate content area and grade level and identify the standards that align to the purpose statement for your assessment.

- Consider what students should know and be able to do at the end of the instructional period covered by your assessment.

Assessment Design
Third, reflect on the content standards and learning expectations that were identified and begin to develop specific assessment items or tasks. Think about the activities that are already part of your curriculum (e.g., writing tasks, labs, projects, performances). How could you use these activities to collect meaningful information about student learning? It may not be necessary to create new assessments but rather improve what is already available.

Assessment Review
Next, exchange materials with a colleague or another team. Review each other’s work and provide feedback and recommendations. Reflect on the following questions:

- Does the purpose statement provide a clear description of the population, topic, timeline, and type of assessment?

- Do the identified content standards and learning expectations align with the purpose statement?

- Is the type of assessment the most appropriate to measure the identified content standards and learning expectations?
Step 4: Analysis and Use

Step four of the assessment development process addresses the following questions:

- How are rubrics used as evaluation tools?
- How do assessment results inform teaching and learning?

This section focuses on the following standards:

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

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

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

- **U4 Reporting**: Student assessment reports should be based on a sufficient body of evidence and provide a summary of student learning in a clear, timely, accurate, and useful manner.

Often, performance and authentic assessments require a method to evaluate students' work. Rubrics are a useful method for evaluating student performance over time. A rubric is an evaluation tool that uses a set of criteria to measure student performance. Rubrics emphasize developing rather than demonstrating competence; provide clear expectations for student performance; and provides meaningful feedback to students.

Rubrics consist of criteria (i.e., characteristics of performance) and levels of performance (i.e., degree to which a criterion has been met) (see Figure 1). Rubrics provide a standardized means of evaluation that can be tailored to the purpose of an assessment.
Rubric Development

Rubrics are an excellent way to ensure that feedback to students is meaningful. When the feedback is linked to clear learning expectations, students will have a better understanding of their abilities and become more engaged in the assessment process. The use of rubrics supports meaningful conversations between educators and their students and provides opportunities for self- and peer-assessment.

Rubrics should include performance levels that account for a wide range of abilities in order to provide meaningful feedback about what students know and can do. Educators may consider the following elements when developing a rubric:

- Reflect on the purpose, content standards, and learning expectations for the assessment.
  - What subtasks or components are included in the assessment?
  - Are all of the subtasks or components equally important?
  - How will students demonstrate their mastery of the content or skill? How would you describe a progression toward mastery of the content or skill?
  - What kind of feedback would be most beneficial to help students progress toward mastery of the content or skill?
• Keep in mind that rubrics are not necessarily grading tools but rather evaluation tools that provide meaningful feedback to help students progress towards mastery of a content area or skill set.

• Define the criteria that will be used in the rubric.

  o What are the critical components of the assessment exemplified by the purpose, content standards, and learning expectations?

  o Reflect on examples of student work, talk with your colleagues, and brainstorm ideas with students.

  o Consider the effectiveness of the selected criteria:
    • Are the criteria observable?
    • Are they distinct from other criteria?
    • Are they phrased in clear and concise language?

• Practice using the rubric with your colleagues and students. Revise as necessary.

In addition, the use of common rubrics across content areas and grade levels increase the reliability of classroom assessments, and provide valuable data that educators may use to adjust instruction based on emerging patterns of student performance over time.

Activity: Rubric Review

Select one of the Example Classroom Assessments on the Balanced Assessment webpage to review: http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

Reflect on the following questions and discuss your ideas with your colleagues:

• Are the criteria and performance levels clearly defined? If not, note any improvements that may be made.

• Does the rubric allow the teacher to provide meaningful feedback to students across a range of abilities? How could the rubric be strengthened to provide better feedback?
Drafting the Assessment: Step 4

Next, you will begin designing the evaluation tool that will accompany your assessment. First, review step four and use the *Rubric Development Template* in Appendix B to begin drafting your rubric.

**Assessment Review**

After you have completed a draft of your rubric, exchange materials with a colleague or another team and review each other’s work, and provide feedback and recommendations. Reflect on the following questions:

- Does the rubric align to the identified content standards and learning expectations?
- Are the performance levels and criteria clearly defined?
- Does the rubric address all the tasks or components of the assessment?

**Step 5: Evaluating Assessments**

Step five addresses the following questions:

- Is the assessment appropriate for students of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds?
- Is the assessment free from cultural or unintended bias?
- Is this assessment accessible to a broad range of learners?

This section focuses on the following standards:

- **Q1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of Students**: Classroom assessment practices should be responsive to and respectful of the cultural and linguistic diversity of students and their communities.
- **Q2 Differentiation**: Classroom assessment practices should be appropriately differentiated to meet the specific educational needs of all students.
- **Q3 Fairness**: Classroom assessment practices and subsequent decisions should not be influenced by factors unrelated to the intended purposes of the assessment.

**Activity: Exploring the Quality Standards**

1) Review the Quality Standards in the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*.

2) Note what information affirms your prior understanding (√), surprised you (!), or raised a question (?)..

3) Discuss your notes with your colleagues and reflect the following question:
• What is the key takeaway for each standard as it relates to your content area and/or grade level?

**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

Classroom assessment practices must be appropriate and accessible for all students regardless of their cultural and linguistic background. Teachers may consider the following strategies when developing assessments:

- Use clear and concise language.
- Model the instructions and tasks.
- Provide visual prompts.
- Provide additional time and supports as appropriate.
- Allow for oral responses in addition to, or rather than, written ones.

**Differentiation**

In addition, many students may require additional accommodation or modifications to classroom assessments in order to accurately demonstrate their abilities. Below are our definitions of accommodations and modifications:

**Accommodations:** Accommodations refer to changes in the way a student accesses an assessment. Accommodations may make alterations to the presentation of the assessment but do not alter the content. Common accommodations include the following:

- Timing or scheduling accommodations: These may include providing extended time or frequent breaks to complete an assessment or scheduling the assessment over a period of days or at a specific time of day.
- Setting accommodations: These may include such provisions as preferential seating, special lighting or acoustics, a space with minimal distractions, or a private room.
- Presentation accommodations: These may include such things as a large-print version of the assessment, an audio recording of the assessment task, a reduced number of assessment items per page, or a designated reader of the assessment.
- Response accommodations: These may include permitting verbal responses, dictation of responses to a scribe who writes for the student, or responses given via computer.
- Linguistic accommodations: These are based on language proficiency and may include translation, the option to respond to an assessment in the language of origin, and changes to response options.

**Modifications:** Modifications refer to changes in the assessment and/or evaluation tools. Common modifications include additional scaffolding for the task and changes to the tasks such as reducing the complexity of the task or the total number of tasks. When considering modifications to an assessment, educators may reflect on the following question:
• How might I provide opportunities for every student in my class to demonstrate their abilities while maintaining the integrity of the assessment?

In addition, educators may also consider alternative assessments. Alternative assessments are used when students require a reduction in the depth, breadth, and complexity of an assessment.

**Fairness**
When developing an assessment, educators must be aware of any preconceived notions or bias that may affect our evaluation of students’ abilities. Reflection on the following ideas may help reduce any bias within an assessment:

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

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

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

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

• Minimize all irrelevant factors that may affect the evaluation of student performance.
  
  o Stylistic factors such as handwriting, vocabulary, or sentence structure when the intent of a written assessment is to assess content and thinking alone.

  o Teacher bias that may result in a general tendency to be too generous or too severe.

  o The halo effect, where a general impression or previous rating influences the present rating.

• Counteract bias through collaboration, well-described evaluation tools, and thorough training.

• Avoid tendencies to be overly severe or generous due to personal values or opinions regarding individual or subgroups of students when evaluating student work or formulating summary comments.
**Activity:** Considering Accommodations and Modifications

Discuss with a colleague what accommodations and modifications you have had success with in the past? What are your ideas for accommodations and modifications to the assessments you’re developing?

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**Reflection**

Assessment development is an ongoing process. As the reflection standard from the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment* describes, all classroom assessments—formative, interim, and summative—require ongoing review and revision. Changes in the curriculum, or in the students, necessitate changes in the assessment. As educators, reflection about instructional practice includes reflection on our classroom assessments.

**Activity:** Reflection

1) Review the questions listed in the Q6 Reflection standard in the *Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment*.

2) Select three questions from the list and discuss how you plan to address these questions when considering your draft assessment with a colleague.
Appendix A: Assessment Development Template
Assessment Development Template

*Educators are encouraged to modify this template to meet the needs of their local context.*

**Purpose Statement:**

*(Example: The purpose of this assessment is to provide evidence of student learning that will inform teaching practices and provide meaningful feedback to students that measures students’ abilities to perform a selected musical excerpt.)*

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<tr>
<th>Content Standards</th>
<th>Learning Expectations</th>
<th>Aligned Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>(Example: MU: Pr6.1.8: Perform the music with technical accuracy, stylistic expression, and culturally authentic practices in music to convey the creator’s intent.)</em></td>
<td><em>(Example: Students will perform a selected musical excerpt with technical accuracy and appropriate stylistic expression.)</em></td>
<td><em>(Example: Each student will prepare and perform a selected musical excerpt that is appropriate for their identified performance level.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Rubric Development Template**

*Educators are encouraged to modify this template to meet the needs of their local context. Example rubrics may be found attached to the Example Classroom Assessments on the Balanced Assessment webpage: [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm)*

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<td>[Degree to which a criterion has been met]</td>
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