Development of Common Formative Assessments

A Design Overview

Purpose

The term *common assessment* refers to those assessments given by teacher teams who teach the same content and/or grade level. For the assessments to be common, no teacher can opt out of the process; it must be common to all teachers who teach that course or grade level.

Definition

Common formative assessments, the assessments your team will develop and use to assure students are learning and to know what to do next when they need additional time and support, are the focus of your work as a team.

Common formative assessments are written by teacher teams around the learning targets the team identifies as the most important ones to be taught. They help your team know not only which students have learned the targets, but also what to do for the students who have not. The Pennsylvania Student Aligned System (SAS website) must be used by the teacher teams to identify the learning targets.

Benefits

The benefits of common formative assessment are great. According to DuFour and DuFour, common formative assessments do the following:

- Promote efficiency for teachers
- Promote equity for students
- Provide an effective strategy for determining whether the curriculum is being learned
- Build a team's capacity to improve its program
- Facilitate a collective response to students who are experiencing difficulty

Four critical guiding questions (Defined by DuFour and DuFour)

1. What knowledge and skills should every student acquire as a result of this unit of instruction?
2. How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge and skills?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?
4. How will we extend and enrich the learning for students who are already proficient?

Assessment Blueprint

What item types will be included in the assessment, and in what proportion? Common item types include the following:

- 60% **Multiple choice items** can be used to cover a wide range of content. They are efficient in that they take relatively little time to answer or to score.
- 20% **Short-answer items** are best used to assess defined problems with limited solutions, such as math computation. They typically take 2-5 minutes to answer. Students must demonstrate knowledge and skills by generating rather than selecting an answer.
- 20% **Constructed response items** typically require students to apply higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. They take 5-10 minutes to complete. These items are often scored using a rubric.

The common assessments that you will design should be a combination of all three of these item types.

Develop the Assessment

Be careful not to select all very difficult or very easy items. Use the item difficulty to build a balanced assessment. Another check on item balance is cognitive

complexity, also referred to as Depth of Knowledge. Webb has proposed 4 Levels of Depth of Knowledge:

- Level 1: Recall (fact, definition, procedure). Requires student to demonstrate a rote response, perform an algorithm, follow a set procedure, or perform a defined series of steps.
- Level 2: decision-making beyond rote response. May require, for example, classifying information, interpreting, explaining, and describing.
- Level 3: Requires reasoning, planning, and use of evidence. Students might draw conclusions, cite evidence, or develop a logical argument.
- Level 4: Generally involves work over an extended period of time and is often assessed through exhibitions and portfolios. Generally requires making connections and synthesizing ideas.

Timeline - Quarterly

Hard Copy to Building Administrator	**Testing Window**
Due November 2, 2013	Week of November 4-8, 2013
Due December 20, 2013	**Week of January 6-10, 2014
Due February 24, 2014	Week of March 10-14, 2014
Due May 12, 2014	**Week of May 27-30, 2014

****BHS: Follow building mid-term/final schedule**

Analyzing the Results

"Formative assessments are one of the most powerful weapons in a teacher's arsenal. An effective standards-based, formative assessment program can help to dramatically enhance student achievement throughout the K-12 system." (Marzano, 2006)

The common assessments need to be analyzed by collaborative teams of teachers (content, grade level). The following team protocol questions will guide the work of your professional learning community.

Common Assessment Team Protocol

This protocol is designed to help a teacher team quickly and efficiently discuss a common assessment. If each teacher reviews his or her own assessment data prior to the team meeting, then the team should be able to collectively complete this activity within a typical team meeting of forty-five to sixty minutes.

1. Which specific students did not demonstrate mastery on which specific standards? (Respond by the student, by the standard)

2. Which instructional practices proved to be most effective?

3. What patterns can we identify from the student mistakes?

4. How can we improve this assessment?

5. What interventions are needed to provide failed students additional time and support?

6. How will we extend learning for students who have mastered the standard(s)?

10 Item Common Assessment Analysis Protocol

Grade Level: _____ Subject: _____

Skill(s) to be assessed with Common Assessment: _____

Date Common Assessment was given: _____

Purpose of Common Assessment: _____

Analysis of Common Assessment: Was it a good CA? _____

Did it include questions that clearly measure what students in _____ grade should be able to do?

What score is considered proficient? ____ out of 10 is considered proficient

Analysis of results: What did student work tell you?

In the table on the following pages, list the names of students under the corresponding column according to the number of questions students answered correctly on the common assessment. Each teacher's results go in one row of the table. This will make a visual graph that shows where the concentration of students are scoring and where outliers exist.

Keep these critical questions in mind:

- What is it we want our students to learn? (curriculum, target goals)
- How will we know when each student has learned it? (common assessments, other data)
- How will we respond when some students don't learn? (interventions)
- How will we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency? (enrichment)

10 Item Common Assessment Analysis Protocol

	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	4/10	3/10	2/10	1/10	0/10
Teacher 1											
	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	4/10	3/10	2/10	1/10	0/10
Teacher 2											

Protocol created by Angela Upchurch and modified by Barbara James – March 2012

10 Item Common Assessment Analysis Protocol

	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	4/10	3/10	2/10	1/10	0/10
Teacher 3											
	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	4/10	3/10	2/10	1/10	0/10
Teacher 4											

Protocol created by Angela Upchurch and modified by Barbara James – March 2012

10 Item Common Assessment Analysis Protocol

	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	4/10	3/10	2/10	1/10	0/10
Teacher 5											
	10/10	9/10	8/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	4/10	3/10	2/10	1/10	0/10
Teacher 6											

Protocol created by Angela Upchurch and modified by Barbara James – March 2012

10 Item Common Assessment Analysis Protocol

Next steps: (What plans do I need to make for intervention, enrichment, or grouping of my students?)

Enrichment:

Intervention:

Grouping: