Designing and Evaluating Quality Assessments

Cassandra Erkens

Solution Tree PLC and Assessment Associate
**Key 2: Targets**

Does the assessment author have a clear picture of what she or he is trying to measure?

- Are the student learning targets stated and easy to find?

- Are the student learning targets focused—there aren’t too many?

- Are they clear? Would teachers agree on what they mean?

- Are they appropriate? Do they represent the heart of the discipline and worth the instructional and assessment time devoted to them? Is there a clear connection to standards?

- Do the stated learning targets reflect a bigger plan to cover all important learning targets over time? Do they reflect a bigger plan across grade levels—previous and next learning—in a continuous progress curriculum?

**Key 3: Design**
Has the assessment developer translated the learning targets into high quality assessments that will yield accurate results?

**Choosing the Best Assessment Method**

Has the assessment method been consciously chosen to fit the learning targets to be assessed and the purpose for the assessment?

- What types of learning targets are being assessed?
- What are the assessment methods used?
- Are the assessment methods best for the learning targets being assessed? Best is a balance between “most accurate” and “practical.”

**Finding and Devising Quality Tasks and Questions**

- Are the assessment questions or exercises written well—not confusing, the answer to one question doesn’t give away the answer to another, etc.?
- If a performance assessment, is the scoring guide (rubric) clear and does it cover the most important aspects of what makes a quality question?

**Sampling**

Does the assessment gather enough information to be able to make a generalization about level of student learning on the target? If not, is this assessment part of a bigger plan to gather sufficient information across time/assessments?

**Avoiding Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion**

Do you notice anything in the assessment or way the assessment is carried out that might not allow a student to be able to adequately demonstrate what he or she knows and can do? This includes unclear targets, unclear purposes, not the best assessment method, problems with tasks and rubrics, inadequate sampling.
Potential barriers to accurate assessment common to all methods

1. Barriers that can occur within the student
   a. Lack of reading skill
   b. Language barriers
   c. Emotional upset
   d. Poor health
   e. Physical handicap
   f. Peer pressure to mislead assessor
   g. Lack of motivation at time of assessment
   h. Lack of “test-wise-ness” (understanding how to take test)
   i. Lack of personal confidence leading to evaluation anxiety

2. Barriers that can occur within the assessment context
   a. Noise distractions
   b. Poor lighting
   c. Discomfort
   d. Lack of rapport with assessor
   e. Cultural insensitivity in assess or assessment
   f. Lack of proper equipment

3. Barriers that arise from the assessment itself (regardless of method)
   a. Directions lacking or vague
   b. Poorly worded questions
   c. Poor reproduction of test questions
   d. Students don’t know the criteria by which they’ll be judged

Potential barriers to accurate assessment unique to each method

1. Barriers with multiple-choice tests
   a. More than one correct response choice
   b. Incorrect scoring key
   c. Incorrect bubbling on answer sheet
   d. Clues to answer in the item or in other items

2. Barriers with extended written response assessments
   a. Lack of writing skills
   b. No scoring criteria
   c. Inappropriate scoring criteria
   d. Evaluator untrained in applying scoring criteria
   e. Biased scoring due to stereotyping of respondent
   f. Insufficient time or patience to read and score carefully

3. Barriers with performance assessment
   a. No scoring criteria
   b. Inappropriate or nonexistent scoring criteria
   c. Evaluator untrained in applying scoring criteria
   d. Bias due to stereotypic thinking
   e. Insufficient time or practice to observe and score carefully

4. Barriers when using personal communication
   a. Sampling enough performance
   b. Problems with accurate record keeping
Author/Team completes page 1 and provides with copy of the assessment tools for reviewer(s).

Name of Course: _________________________________ Date of Review ___________

Author/team of assessment being reviewed: __________________________________________

Title/unit of assessment being reviewed: __________________________________________

Team Members Reviewing Materials:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

**Standard(s)** addressed in the assessment (you will need available copies of the relevant standards – attach if needed):
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Isolate the learning targets found within the standard (assessable parts of the standard above):
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Total number of learning targets: _________________

| Total number of **Strategic Targets** (skill or reasoning oriented) for assessment: |
| Total number of **Specific Targets** (content specific) for assessment: |
### Based on initial review, what is the primary purpose of the assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check 1 only</th>
<th>Assessment Purpose:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possession:</strong></td>
<td>Students demonstrate ownership of declarative and procedural knowledge. Requires basic retrieval and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Execution:</strong></td>
<td>Students use acquired knowledge and skills to create solutions to problems, make informed, strategic decisions, and respond to the demands of daily challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration:</strong></td>
<td>Students extend and refine knowledge to automatically and routinely analyze and solve problems and employ solutions. Students must blend knowledge and skills with other disciplines in order to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction:</strong></td>
<td>Students use extensive knowledge and skill in dynamic ways to construct new solutions to current complex known problems, to solve unanticipated problems, and to take action. Their efforts inform our understanding of the necessary knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected method(s) identified to assess articulated standard(s) - check types to be used:

- [ ] Selected Response
- [ ] Constructed Response
- [ ] Performance Assessment

Describe selected method(s) and identify how it/they will assess the level of rigor in the identified standard(s):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
Quality of Targets relative to standard: Select a level of quality for each provided statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements of quality for over target listing:</th>
<th>Check if Yes</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targets <strong>align</strong> with required or appropriate standards for course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targets are <strong>sufficient</strong> in reflecting the whole of the standard(s)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are <strong>accurate</strong>: They reflect the core processes and knowledge demanded by the standard(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targets are appropriately <strong>scaffolded</strong> (build upon each other)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets are written in <strong>student friendly</strong> language (framed as ‘I will’ or ‘I can’ or ‘students will be able to’ and put in terms students understand)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If selected response, number of questions per target: ________________

**Rigor of Targets** (option – fill in the table below OR write the level of rigor next to the questions or prompts immediately on the assessment).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Depth of Knowledge Levels (Webb Alignment Tool, July 2005)</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1: Recall</strong> – Recite, Recall, Label, Naming, Define, Identify, Match, List, Draw, Calculate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2: Skill/Concept</strong> - Infer, Identify Patterns, Modify, Predict, Distinguish, Compare</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3: Strategic Thinking</strong> – Assess, Revise, Critique, Draw Conclusions, Differentiate, Formulate, Hypothesize, Cite Evidence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4: Extended Thinking</strong> – Synthesize, Analyze, Prove, Connect, Design, Apply Concepts</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If constructed response or performance assessment, criteria used to determine quality of target mastery (list or attach rubric for review):

**Criteria for constructed response or performance based assessments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements of quality for over target listing:</th>
<th>No Evidence</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) aligns tightly to the learning targets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) focuses on assessing skills worth learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) strives to stimulate real challenges facing people in a field of study or real life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) allows for “ill-structured challenges” (more than one right answer).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) emphasize prompts or tasks requiring thought and knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) de-mystifies tasks, criteria, and standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) allows for activities or topics to ‘match’ student learning student learning styles/interests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) require evaluations to be based on explicit criteria and standards of quality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The assessment(s) involve students in the assessment process in meaningful ways.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The Assessment Addresses the 4 C’s of next generation assessments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check if Yes</th>
<th>The C Involved</th>
<th>How will it be measured?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: Reviewer Team Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities for Growth</th>
<th>Celebrations of Strengths</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Author(s) completes page 5 and responds according to feedback from the reviewer(s).

**Author/Team’s Self-Assessment:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities for Growth</th>
<th>Celebrations of Strengths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Author/Team’s Reflections: Next Steps**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
SMART Goals

**Specific**

**Measurable**

**Attainable Goals**

**Results Driven**

**Time-Bound**

**SMART Goals**

Why does SMART work?
- Focused
- Short and Long Term
- Aligned
- Student Centered

SMART goals focus on the few things most likely to have the greatest impact.

SMART goals have both short and long term impact.

**SMART goals focus on results!**

What concepts should we focus on for our SMART Goal?

**LEARNING TARGETS**: The skills, knowledge, or evidence of a performance that comprise or lead to proficiency in our goal area.

**Math Targets**
- Basic math facts
- Basic math concepts
- Computational skills
- Reasoning
- Problem solving
- Spatial relations

**How will we measure progress on our SMART Goal?**

**ASSESSMENTS**: Tools used to monitor progress toward our goal. Assessments are specific to the learning targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timed tests</th>
<th>SATs / ACTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly quizzes</td>
<td>Standardized tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit tests</td>
<td>Quarterly, semester, final exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre/post math competency tests</td>
<td>Performance tasks/rubric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What should our proficiency levels be?

**CUT SCORES**: In advance of giving an assessment, teams decide what ‘proficiency’ levels will be for their range of learners on the assessment itself and then determine which level is the ‘cut score’ or the lowest level they will accept as proficiency. Generally, proficiency levels have descriptors to explain what proficiency looks like at each level.

**Selecting Incremental Proficiency Goals Can Be Tricky!**
- Based on the data, what is attainable?
- Based on our resources, what is attainable?
- If we have no data, what is a reasonable yet challenging level of improvement we think we have a chance of achieving?
### SMART Goal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Learning Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Proficiency Level:**
- **Intervention Strategies:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Proficiency Level:**
- **Intervention Strategies:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
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<th>Assessment 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Proficiency Level:**
- **Intervention Strategies:**

Modified from SMART Teams Handbook by QLD Learning
## SMART Goal

By the end of the XX school year, 90% of our students will be proficient writers at their grade level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Learning Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventions of Writing</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Writing Assessment</td>
<td>Classroom Sentence Structure and Transitions Homework</td>
<td>Classroom vocabulary Homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level: 3 on 4 point Rubric for conventions</td>
<td>Proficiency Level: 80% accuracy in each target area of sentence structures and transitions.</td>
<td>Proficiency Level: 80% accuracy in each target area of vocabulary packets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Strategies:</td>
<td>Intervention Strategies:</td>
<td>Intervention Strategies:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Grammar Tests</td>
<td>Common Writing Assessment</td>
<td>Common Writing Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level: 80% accuracy in each target area of conventions test</td>
<td>Proficiency Level: 3 on 4 point Rubric for Fluency</td>
<td>Proficiency Level: 3 on 4 point Rubric for word choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Strategies:</td>
<td>Intervention Strategies:</td>
<td>Intervention Strategies:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modified from SMART Teams Handbook by QLD Learning
SMART Goal

By the end of the XX school year, 90% of our 5th grade students will be reading at the 5th grade reading level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator 1</th>
<th>Indicator 2</th>
<th>Indicator 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Word Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quarterly Benchmark Assessment (1st Quarter)**

- Team Created Comprehension test using 2 passages – one narrative and one informational
- **Proficiency Level:** 75% accuracy in each target area of the test

**Quarterly Benchmark Assessment (1st Quarter)**

- Individual Read-Alouds with appropriate leveled passages
- **Proficiency Level:**
  - 80 – 120 WCPM
  - word decoding accuracy 90%
  - Level 3 on rubric for all categories

**Quarterly Benchmark Assessment (1st Quarter)**

- Word Analysis Inventory (team modified from existing tool)
- **Proficiency Level:** 75% accuracy in each target area of the test

**3 Common Formative Assessments to support Benchmark**

1. CFA Text Features Test (team creates)
2. CFA Main Idea/Detail (team creates)
3. CFA Author’s Purpose (team adds questions to Theme 1 test)

**Proficiency Levels:**

**Intervention Strategies:**

**3 Common Formative Assessments to support Benchmark**

1. CFA Partner Read Alouds with tracking sheets
2. CFA Teacher Read Alouds – add to tracking sheet
3. CFA Partner Read Alouds with tracking sheets

**Proficiency Levels:**

**Intervention Strategies:**

**3 Common Formative Assessments to support Benchmark**

1. CFA Vocabulary tests
2. CFA decoding test
3. CFA Word Analysis Inventory

**Proficiency Levels:**

**Intervention Strategies:**

Modified from SMART Teams Handbook by QLD Learning
SMART GOAL: By the end of the XX school year, 93% of our 5th grade students will be reading at the 5th grade reading level.

Reading Indicators requiring the most attention in our common assessments to support our SMART Goal (selected indicators and supporting target areas are based on our school’s state testing results for reading):

Indicator 1, Comprehension: Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade-level text.

Target Areas Narrative Texts:
- LA 5.1.6.a Identify author’s purpose(s) (e.g., explain, entertain, inform, persuade) and recognize how author perspective (e.g., beliefs, assumptions, biases) influences text
- LA 5.1.6.d Identify literary devices and explain the ways in which language is used (e.g., simile, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, rhythm)

Target Areas Informational Texts:
- LA 5.1.6.e Summarize and analyze the main idea from informational text using supporting details
- LA 5.1.6.f Understand and apply knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., sequence, description, cause and effect, compare/contrast, fact/opinion)
- LA 5.1.6.g Apply knowledge of text features to locate information and gain meaning from a text (e.g., index, maps, charts, tables, graphs, headings, subheadings)

Indicator 2, Fluency: Students will read a variety of grade-level texts fluently with accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing, and expression.

Target Areas:
- LA 5.1.4.a Read phrases, clauses, and sentences that sound like natural language to support comprehension
- LA 5.1.4.b Read words and phrases accurately and automatically

Indicator 3, Word Analysis: Students will use knowledge of phonetic and structural analysis to read, write, and spell grade-level text.

Target Areas:
- LA 5.1.3.a Use knowledge of phonetic and structural analysis (e.g., Anglo-Saxon common roots and affixes, multiple syllable words)

Note: our SMART Goal and indicator work will strand throughout the year. Our quarter one assessment plan to support SMART Goal achievement follows:


Writing Data-Driven Accountable Goals

Goal: To (do what) ____________________________ so that

(how many) ______________________ will (do what)

_________________ by (when) _____________________________.

Goal: To (do what) ____________________________ so that

(how many) ______________________ will (do what)

_________________ by (when) _____________________________.

Goal: To (do what) ____________________________ so that

(how many) ______________________ will (do what)

_________________ by (when) _____________________________.

Anne Conzemius and Jan O’Neill
THE HANDBOOK FOR SMART SCHOOL TEAMS, ASCD, 2001
SMART Goal Setting Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What steps/activities will be initiated to achieve this goal?</td>
<td>Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining the action steps?</td>
<td>What is a realistic timeframe for each phase of the activity?</td>
<td>What evidence will you present that you are making progress toward your goal?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify a Student Achievement SMART Goal For Your Team: (Strategic/Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results Oriented, and Time-bound)

Designing & Evaluating Quality Assessments
Cassandra Erkens

DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker copyright Solution Tree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level/Department:</th>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Start/End Dates:</th>
<th>Statement of Relevance for Students (appropriate to ages) (do not include testing or credit requirements):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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### Aligning Standards, Targets, Assessments, and Instructional Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Standard(s) (one standard per box)</th>
<th>Formative Assessments (all anticipated formatives that will support success on summative)</th>
<th>Summative Assessment(s) (Comprehensive of all required learning expectations integrated)</th>
<th>Pre-planned Instructional Responses &amp; Tools</th>
<th>Intervention(s)</th>
<th>Enrichment(s)</th>
<th>Materials Required for Unit:</th>
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### Curriculum to Support:

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<th>Instruction to Support:</th>
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### Materials Required for Unit:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority Standard(s)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(one standard per box)</td>
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