Classroom Assessment
for Student Learning
Jan Chappuis et al.
Second Edition

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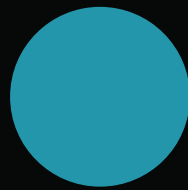# Pearson New International Edition

Classroom Assessment
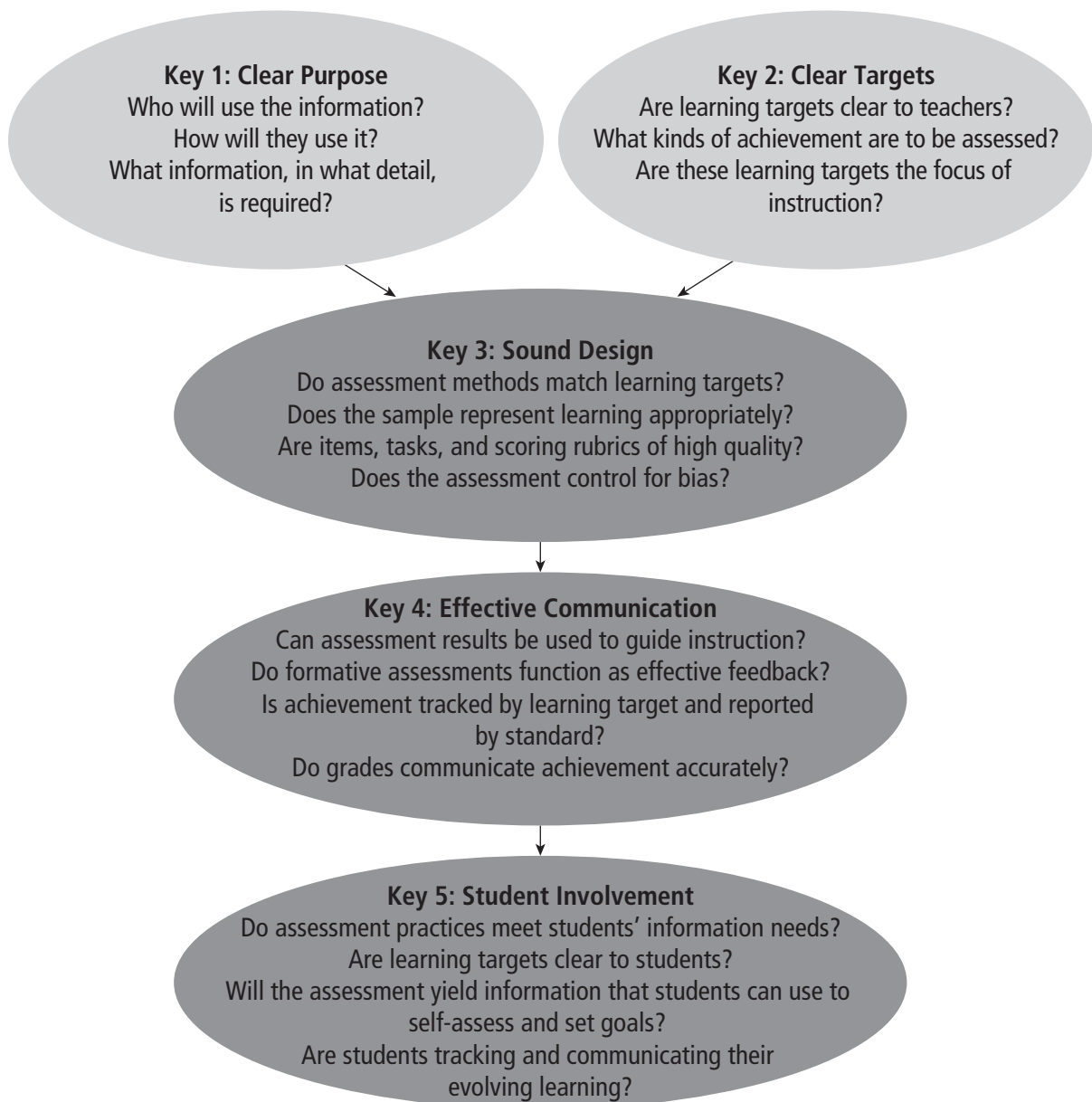for Student Learning
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Chapter 5 Learning Targets

At the end of this chapter you will know how to do the following:

- Make a test blueprint for a selected response assessment.
- Choose from among selected response formats.
- Create high-quality items.
- Audit any selected response test for quality.
- Use selected response assessments to plan further instruction.
- Use selected response assessments as feedback to students and for student self-assessment and goal setting.

FIGURE 5.1 Keys to Quality Classroom Assessment

Key 1: Clear Purpose
Who will use the information?
How will they use it?
What information, in what detail,
is required?

Key 2: Clear Targets
Are learning targets clear to teachers?
What kinds of achievement are to be assessed?
Are these learning targets the focus of
instruction?

Key 3: Sound Design
Do assessment methods match learning targets?
Does the sample represent learning appropriately?
Are items, tasks, and scoring rubrics of high quality?
Does the assessment control for bias?

Key 4: Effective Communication
Can assessment results be used to guide instruction?
Do formative assessments function as effective feedback?
Is achievement tracked by learning target and reported
by standard?
Do grades communicate achievement accurately?

Key 5: Student Involvement
Do assessment practices meet students' information needs?
Are learning targets clear to students?
Will the assessment yield information that students can use to
self-assess and set goals?
Are students tracking and communicating their
evolving learning?

WHEN TO USE SELECTED RESPONSE ASSESSMENT

The first condition for using selected response is that it must be capable of reflecting the type of learning target to be assessed. Selected response formats are ideal for assessing knowledge-level learning targets, some patterns of reasoning, and a very few number of skill targets, as described in Chapter 4.

Several other key conditions influence choosing the selected response method of assessment. Use it when

- The content to be assessed is broad, requiring wide-ranging coverage. Since the response time to one item is so short, you can include lots of items per unit of testing time and thus sample student achievement thoroughly.
- You want to diagnose student misconceptions and flaws in reasoning.
- Students can read English well enough to understand what each test item is asking of them.

FAQ 5.1

Misconceptions about Selected Response Assessment

Question:

Shouldn't we be using mostly multiple-choice tests because all the high-stakes tests use them?

Answer:

No. Although high-stakes tests use this format extensively, the reason for that choice is not because it is a better method. Large-scale tests usually need to be administered and scored in as little time as possible, as inexpensively as possible. These requirements lead to the use of selected response formats such as multiple choice. The obvious problem is that, unless other formats are also part of the assessment, learning targets representing important patterns of reasoning, skills, and products are going unmeasured.

Giving students practice on answering large-scale test items is one thing, but mirroring characteristics of high-stakes tests that are not instructionally useful or that do not provide accurate results in the classroom is not a good idea.

Question:

Shouldn't we minimize the use of selected response assessments because they are not authentic?

Answer:

First, let's define "authentic." The *New American Oxford Dictionary* offers this as one definition: "made or done in a way that faithfully resembles the original" (p. 107). In the usual application to assessment, *authentic* refers to the context of the assessment

mirroring the use or application of the learning in a situation that would require it in life. (We prefer to call this "life beyond school" rather than "real-world" because school can and should be part of the real world for students.)

By that definition, selected response methodology is not "inauthentic." Life beyond school often calls for correct answers and solutions chosen from a variety of options. We believe it is more helpful to think of authenticity as a *dimension* of assessments, not as a label given to some forms rather than others. We can keep it as a consideration when writing assessments of any sort, as long as the application or context doesn't interfere with the accuracy of the item, task, or scoring guide.

DEVELOPING A SELECTED RESPONSE TEST

We will follow the steps in the Assessment Development Cycle described in Chapter 4.

Planning

1. Determine who will use the assessment results and how they will use them.
2. Identify the learning targets to be assessed.
3. Select the appropriate assessment method or methods.
4. Determine sample size.

Development

5. Develop or select items, exercises, tasks, and scoring procedures.
6. Review and critique the overall assessment for quality before use.

Use

7. Conduct and score the assessment.
8. Revise as needed for future use.

PLANNING STEPS

As we saw in Chapter 4, careful attention to each of the four planning steps is essential to ensuring that the resulting assessment will do what you want it to.

Step 1: Determine Users and Uses

We begin planning by answering these questions: How do we want to use the information? Who else will use it? What decisions will they make? Typically, we will use assessment information for one or more of the following purposes:

- To plan instruction, as with a pretest
- To offer feedback to students so they can self-assess and set goals for further learning
- To differentiate instruction according to student needs, as with a mid-unit quiz or an interim assessment
- To measure level of achievement to inform grading decisions, as with a post-test

Each one of these purposes can be accomplished with selected response formats, as long as we keep the intended use in mind while making further planning and design decisions.

Step 2: Identify Learning Targets

At this step we simply list the specific learning targets we have identified for the assessment. If one or more targets on the list are complex or unclear, clarify them or deconstruct them first, following the processes outlined in Chapter 3.

Step 3: Select Assessment Method(s)

Although we have already determined that we will use selected response, we must make sure the list of clarified targets only includes knowledge and reasoning learning targets and also that those targets can be assessed well with selected response methodology. So, review the list of learning targets to verify that they are knowledge and reasoning targets and that selected response items can capture an accurate picture of achievement.

Step 4: Determine Sample Size

This step requires that we assign a relative importance to each learning target. One simple way to do this with selected response questions is to decide how many points the test will be worth and then divide the points according to relative importance of each learning target. The number of points we assign to each learning target outlines our sample, which should represent the breadth of the learning targets and their importance relative to each other in the instructional period the test is to cover. At this step, you may want to review the sampling considerations described in Chapter 4.

When using a test that you didn't develop, check carefully that it matches the learning targets you taught and that the amount of emphasis each receives is appropriate.

Remember, when identifying the relative importance of each learning target, we consciously match our emphasis in assessment to our emphasis in the classroom. If, say, we spend 50 percent of the time learning how to read maps, then roughly 50 percent of the assessment should focus on map reading. If only 5 percent of the course deals with reading maps, then in most cases it would misrepresent learning to devote 50 percent of the final assessment to map reading.

If, on the other hand, the results are to be reported by individual learning target, or if the test only measures one single target, the sample must be sufficient to defend an inference about mastery of that individual target.

COMBINING PLANNING DECISIONS INTO AN ASSESSMENT BLUEPRINT. For selected response assessments, we offer two useful types of blueprints. One is a list of the learning targets and the other is a table crossing content with knowledge and

FIGURE 5.2 Blueprints for Third-Grade Mathematics and Reading Tests

Mathematics

Learning Targets	Number of Points
Identify place value to thousands	6
Read, write, order, and compare numbers through four digits	10
Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100	4

Reading

Learning Targets	Number of Points
Determine the lesson of a fable	1
Identify key supporting details	2
Infer a character's feelings	2
Distinguish literal from nonliteral language	2
Identify meanings of words in a text	3

pattern(s) of reasoning to be assessed. Each is suited to different types of content, but both are equally effective as test planning instruments.

Figure 5.2 shows plans for a third-grade mathematics test and a third-grading reading test consisting of a list of learning targets and how many points each will be worth. Note that on the reading test, only one to three points are assigned to each learning target. That is because, for any one reading passage, it can be difficult to develop more than one or two items to assess targets such as "Infer a character's feelings." So, especially with the shorter passages at the lower grades, you would want to construct similar items for a variety of reading passages at the same level of difficulty to obtain a sufficient sample size from which to draw conclusions about students' level of mastery.

Figure 5.3 shows a list of learning targets for a fifth-grade social studies unit on westward expansion. The test blueprint consists of a list of the content embedded in the learning targets in the left-hand column labeled "Content Categories." Each category represents many facts and concepts, some of which will be sufficiently important to test. The blueprint also includes columns labeled for the cognitive action to be carried out: know outright and reason comparatively. These patterns will be emphasized during the unit of study. The numbers in each cell represent its relative importance in the unit as planned. This kind of test plan is especially useful if we want to ensure that the test covers both recall of important information and reasoning processes we have taught. (Remember that there could be other learning targets taught during the unit—this blueprint represents only those covered by the selected response portion of the test.)

FIGURE 5.3 Learning Targets and Blueprint for a Fifth-Grade Social Studies Unit

1. Explain the concept of Manifest Destiny and its contribution to the migration of people in the development of the United States.
2. Compare the motives of the different groups who participated in the westward expansion by leaving the eastern United States and heading west.
3. Compare the lives of different Native American groups before and after westward expansion.
4. Identify significant individuals who took part in the westward expansion.
5. Explain how the westward migration led to conflict between Native Americans and settlers and between Mexicans and settlers.

Content Category	Knowledge	Compare/ Contrast	Totals
1. Manifest Destiny	2		2
2. Reasons settlers went west		6	6
3. Life of Native American groups	4	2	6
4. Significant individuals	6		6
5. Effects on Native Americans and Mexicans	6	4	10
TOTALS	28	8	36

DEVELOPMENT AND USE STEPS

The remaining four steps of the Assessment Development Cycle focus on developing the items and scoring procedures, critiquing the assessment for quality, administering the assessment, and revising it as needed.

Step 5: Develop or Select Items, Exercises, Tasks, and Scoring Procedures

The process for developing selected response items is as follows: identify the specific content to include, choose which kinds of items to write, write the items, and assemble the test.

IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC CONTENT TO INCLUDE.   Even though people often think of selected response tests as objective measures of learning, selecting the content for the test is itself a subjective exercise. The test developer—you yourself, a textbook author, or a test publisher—chooses what will be on the test from a vast array of possible considerations. It is a matter of professional judgment, just as is determining how to teach the material in the first place. This element of subjectivity does not compromise the test's validity if the learning targets that underpin the content standards have been clearly and accurately identified.

Now that you have numbers on the test plan to indicate the relative importance of each learning target or content category, the next step is to identify what content