
Preface

As teachers we are spending more time than ever before testing our students. Though schools have more test data than ever before, many use test results merely to select and sort students and conform to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. As a result, some of us view testing as a mandate that robs us and our students of valuable instructional time and siphons the creativity from our classrooms. If we make the decision, however, to *use* the results of our tests, we can harness the power of testing as an effective classroom resource to inform our teaching, monitor our students' progress, and get our students energized about their learning.

The purpose of *Assessment-Powered Teaching* is to illustrate the power meaningful assessment brings to the art and science of teaching and to share efficient and practical tools and strategies for using formative and summative assessment results to actually enhance our teaching effectiveness and our students' learning. Using testimonials from assessment-powered teachers, the book explains how teachers at any grade level and in any size school can use analyzed test results to inform teaching, monitor students' progress toward learning targets and standards, and provide motivational feedback to students. The book argues that testing is a power tool for helping teachers rather than an intrusion on our academic freedom and our valuable instructional time.

Assessment-Powered Teaching is based on my own experience as a teacher, department chair, assistant principal, and assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction, and assessment, as well as my work as a university professor and with schools around the country on curriculum and assessment issues. Though my ideas are supported by current research on assessment, the suggestions in the book are practical and are currently being implemented in high-achieving classrooms across the country. Examples come from small schools and large schools, and practitioners at various grade levels and subject areas provide supporting quotations and vignettes. The examples are

stories from teachers who have transformed their teaching and their students' learning by using test results efficiently and effectively and from my own work, which has moved economically and culturally diverse schools from being on academic watch lists to receiving state-level "most improved" recognition status.

Because the book is meant to be a practical and motivational guide to teachers at all levels, the content is focused on what I believe are key areas of interest to practitioners.

- Chapter 1 engages the reader in the topic of assessment and its value to a teacher.
- Chapter 2 details how a school, a teacher team, or an individual teacher can set up an efficient and effective system for student test data collection and analysis.
- Chapter 3 shows how teachers can use formative assessments to immediately inform teaching, inform teaching over time, and how benchmark and summative assessments can be used to predict scores on high-stakes tests. Because it is not practical for teachers to do test analysis by hand, discussion of practical and easy-to-use methods of computerized test analyses is included. This discussion focuses on how we can make test data useful at the classroom level without dying under the weight of analyzing test data by hand.
- Chapter 4 focuses on ways teachers can help students use their assessment results to define next steps in learning and become more motivated and self-directed in their learning.
- Chapter 5 is devoted to the importance of disaggregating test data to close the achievement gap and increase the achievement of diverse learners.
- Chapter 6 highlights the benefits of team membership and walks readers through the process of successful team meetings.

These chapters outline methods and resources teachers are currently using to empower their teaching and their students' learning. You probably are using some of these methods already, but hopefully you'll learn about some new strategies and resources to reenergize your teaching. Each chapter ends with a rubric enabling you to self-assess your own status as an assessment-powered teacher as well as "Reflections," which provide an opportunity to reflect upon the next steps you'll take to further empower your teaching. Though you'll still be asked to test, test, test, using test results will put you in the position of gaining power and success rather than in the position of feeling like a victim of too much testing.