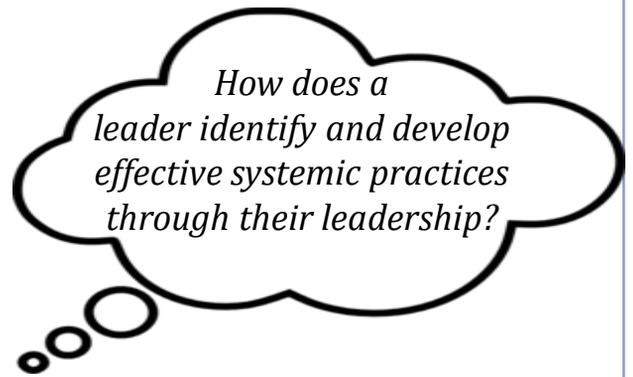


Critical Question #3

How do we know students are learning (Reflect)?



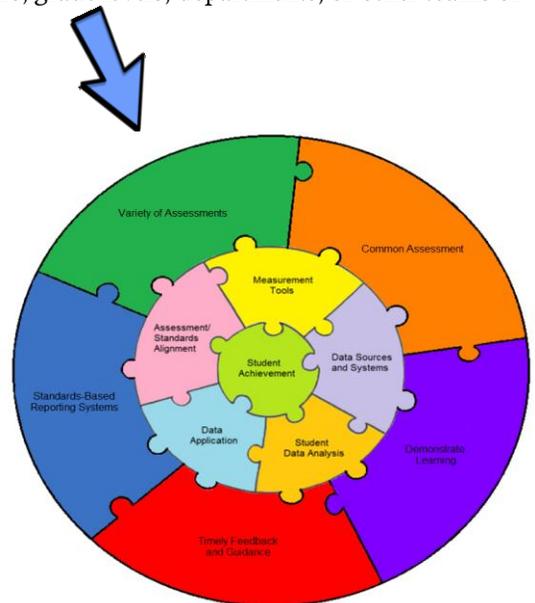
Fundamental Practice 6. *A variety of assessment methods and strategies are available and used to continuously measure student learning and inform instruction.*

If teachers are fully engaged in a continuous teaching and learning cycle, a range of methods will be used to measure and assess student learning. With an understanding of the similarities and differences among formative, interim, and summative assessment practices, teachers need to employ multiple strategies to regularly assess student learning. Similar to differentiated instruction, differentiated assessments provide more opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning. This also gives teachers a more complete picture of the effectiveness of instruction.

Formative assessment practices, including checks for understanding, have been shown to have a significant positive effect on student learning. The definition of formative assessment used by the Colorado Department of Education is “a process used by both the teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust teaching and learning.” These can be pre-assessments to determine current level of knowledge or skill used to gauge progress during instruction or used at the conclusion of a lesson or unit to determine the effectiveness of instruction (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006). These low-stake assessments can be created by teachers, grade levels, departments, or other teams of teachers or specialists.

Guiding Questions:

- How are teachers assessing student learning using a variety of formats and performances?
- How are results of formative, interim, or summative assessments used to determine classroom learning goals?
- How are formative assessments helping teachers to monitor and adjust instruction?
- How are interim or summative assessments informing grade-level, department, school, or district planning?
- How are teachers providing opportunities during instruction to practice mastery through formative assessments before interim or summative assessments occur?
- What type of monitoring and accountability practices are in place to ensure appropriate assessments are being used in classrooms?



Reflections:

1. As a leader, what is my role in ensuring this fundamental practice is taking place in my district and schools?
2. What are current barriers that are getting in the way of successfully implementing this fundamental practice systemically in my district and schools?
3. When I return to my district/school, I will complete the following three action steps to begin enhancing our (my and my staff's) application of this fundamental practice:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

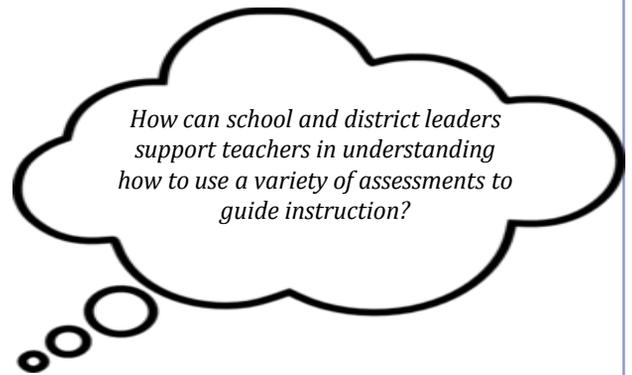
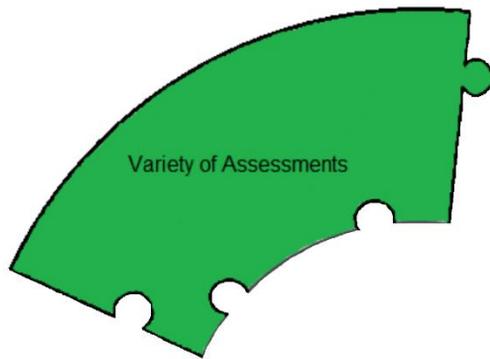


Figure 1 below provides typical questions, types of information and possible assessment types that District and School leaders can use to help support teachers use the data collected within various assessments to guide instructional decisions (Protheroe, 2009).

Figure 1: Examples of Links between Purposes and Methods of Assessment Purpose

Purpose	Primary Users	Typical Questions	Type of Information Needed	Possible Assessment Types
Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent • Local Boards • Principals • State Policymakers 	-Are your programs producing student learning? - Which schools need more assistance?	-Periodic assessment of group achievement	- Multiple choice tests - Performance tasks
Instructional Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Administrators 	-Are teachers and instructional strategies in given areas producing results? - What kinds of professional development would help? - How shall we spend building resources in support of instruction? - What does this teacher need to ensure student competence?	- Periodic Assessment of group achievement - Examination of student work (synthesis of group results) - Continuing assessment of group achievement	-Multiple choice tests -Possible: open- ended tests; performance tasks; portfolios
Instruction: Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers 	-Are my teaching strategies working? -What do these students need help with? -What do students understand and what can they apply?	-Continuous assessment of group achievement and performance -Continuous assessment of individual performance summarized over time	-Multiple means: multiple choice, open- ended, performance -Multiple means as above, plus observation and class discussion
Instruction and Diagnosis: Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers 	-What does this student need help with? -What misconceptions/ strengths does he/ she have?	-Continuous assessment of individual mastery/ performance	- Multiple means: analysis of student work, conservation, observations

SUGGESTED OVERALL PRACTICES:

1. Allocate resources to embed formative instructional practices
 2. Use frequent common/benchmark/short-cycle assessments - at least every three to six weeks
 3. Have teachers create assessments for learning before developing their lessons
 4. Have teachers know and regularly talk about where their students are in the learning process
 5. Ensure all students understand learning targets and can self-assess where they currently are
 6. Develop and communicate success criteria for each developed learning target
- (SOAR: Learning and Leading Initiative, 2015)

Connect to Resources

For additional resources on performance assessments, visit the critical question 3, fundamental practice #6 section of the tool kit.

To view these articles in their entirety:

- http://www.battelleforkids.org/docs/default-source/publications/soar_five_strategies_for_creating_a_high-growth_school.pdf?sfvrsn=2
- <http://www.rogersschools.net/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=3497164>