

The Main Idea's PD Suggestions for Implementing Student-Engaged Assessment

PART I. How well does your school currently implement the 8 student-engaged assessment practices?

Together with your leadership team or your teachers, determine which of the book's 8 student-engaged assessment practices you already implement well and which need to be strengthened.

1. Learning Targets

- Do teachers discuss and unpack learning targets with students?
- Do teachers refer to learning targets throughout the lesson?
- Do teachers connect daily learning targets to long-term targets and the CCSS?

2. Checking for Understanding

- Do teachers preplan the questions they will use to check for understanding throughout the lesson?
- Do teachers use a variety of techniques to check for *whole-class* understanding and make adjustments during lessons?
- Do teachers use a variety of techniques to check for *individual* understanding and make adjustments during lessons?

3. Using Data with Students

- Do teachers provide the time for students to collect, store, and analyze data and reflect on their goals?
- Do teachers have students use learning target trackers and use this data to understand their progress and growth?
- Do teachers have students create SMART goals based on data?

4. Using Models, Critique, and Descriptive Feedback

- Do teachers have a collection of exemplary student work to serve as models for their students?
- Do teachers conduct group critique lessons so students can understand the characteristics of student work that meet learning standards?
- Do teachers include time for descriptive feedback in their lessons?

5. Student-Led Conferences

- Do teachers make reflection an ongoing part of lessons to prepare students to conduct student-led conferences?
- Do teachers explicitly teach learning targets tied to the Common Core speaking and listening standards to prepare students?
- Do teachers provide time for students to practice and debrief student-led conferences?

6. Celebrations of Learning

- Do teachers plan adequately for celebrations of learning – choose the right structure, create a schedule, reach out to families, etc.?
- Do teachers prepare students for celebrations of learning with time to practice and receive feedback?
- Do teachers help prepare families to give feedback – with questionnaires, comment cards, etc.

7. Passage Presentations with Portfolios

- Do teachers have a clear purpose for portfolios and passage presentations and engage students in understanding this purpose?
- Do teachers clearly tie passage presentations to learning targets and develop criteria for successful presentations?
- Do teachers think through all of the logistics of portfolios and passage presentations (How often? Where? Include work habits? Etc.)

8. Standards-Based Grading

- Is the school developing a faculty grading guide to outline the expectations for standards-based grading?
- Do teachers use a grade book based on learning targets not assignments?
- Do teachers report grades for academic learning targets and work habits separately?

1st DISCUSS the questions above in small groups.

2nd INDIVIDUALLY RANK the 8 practices above from 'best implemented' to 'most need to be strengthened.'

3rd PRIORITIZE the three practices your school most needs to improve by having everyone post their rankings on the wall and then aiming for consensus or at least clarity on what the school's three priorities should be.

Once you have completed this, go on to PART II on the next page.

PART II. Develop workshops on those practices your school most needs to improve

This book is chock-full of information and it would be overwhelming to provide PD for it all. Instead, I will present a *general* format you can use to introduce each of the assessment practices. In addition, I will provide a model of PD ideas for the first chapter (the first assessment practice). To help encourage teacher leadership, you could ask teachers to volunteer to run a PD session on one of the following chapters after looking at the model PD for chapter 1. Here is the general format PD presenters can use for each chapter:

- a) Help teachers understand what the assessment practice entails and what makes it a “student-engaged” assessment practice.
- b) Have teachers practice this assessment approach and apply it to their own teaching.
- c) Explore school-wide implications of this practice.

PD Ideas for Practice 1: Learning Targets

8 Practices That Supports Student-Engaged Assessment			
1. Learning Targets	3. Using Data with Students	5. Student-Led Conferences	7. Passage Presentations with Portfolios
2. Checking for Understanding	4. Models, Critique, & Descriptive Feedback	6. Celebrations of Learning	8. Standards-Based Grading

a) What are *Learning Targets* and what makes this a “student-engaged” assessment practice?

Discuss learning targets with your teachers. Make sure to clarify the difference between *objectives* (teachers are the ones to take responsibility for student learning) and learning *targets* (written in student-friendly terms, students take responsibility for meeting these aims). Furthermore, make sure teachers understand the importance of doing more than simply writing these on the board – instead they need to help students unpack and understand targets, check for student understanding of the target throughout the class, provide time for students to assess their own progress toward the target, and continually refer to the target during the lesson. Have teachers discuss how the use of learning targets is similar or different from the objectives they currently use.

Then have teachers look at the definition of “student-engaged assessment” and ask how the first practice, using learning targets, supports the definition:

DEFINITION: Student-engaged assessment changes the primary role of assessment from evaluating and ranking students to motivating them to learn. It builds the independence, critical thinking skills, perseverance, and self-reflective understanding students need for college and careers that is required by the Common Core State Standards.

b) Have teachers practice the new assessment approach

1. Provide the teachers with some examples of learning targets (you can use the examples in the chart below). Then have them take the CCSS they are currently working on and (1) Choose ONE part of the standard for a day’s lesson and (2) Create an “I can” target based on what they are doing in class.

Learning Targets for Younger Students	Learning Targets for Older Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can describe the differences between living and nonliving things. • I can explain my reasons for sorting and classifying insects. • I can write words that send a message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can show two variable data on a scatter plot. • I can describe how photosynthesis and cellular respiration help an ecosystem maintain homeostasis.

2. Next, have teachers work on the rest of the lesson plan for the “I can” target they just created. Ask them to add in both the TIME and the CRITERIA to work with learning targets. For example, if students have the following target, “I can write a haiku poem that creates a vivid picture” teachers need to ensure that they provide students with the *time* to assess their progress against this target *and* the criteria for students to judge whether their language is “vivid.”

c) How can we implement this practice school-wide?

In addition to making a school-wide commitment to writing learning targets in the form of “I can...” and ensuring that lesson plans include time for checking student understanding of the target and tracking progress toward it, your school can consider creating school-wide *character* learning targets.

Below are some sample scholarship and behavioral traits that a school might instill in its students along with learning targets:

Responsibility: I can begin to advocate for myself. I can maintain focus. I can complete quality work on time.

Revision: I can use critical feedback to improve my work.

Perspective Taking: I can consider multiple perspectives and their implications in terms of justice, freedom, and human rights.

Collaboration and Leadership: I can engage positively with others to learn and create deeper work than I could create on my own.

Pull out your school’s mission and have teachers work in small groups to propose 4 to 6 character traits that the school might adopt. Have each group post their own list and have all teachers circulate to look at the lists of other groups and put up Post-It notes with comments. Afterwards, conduct a discussion and either come to a consensus or charge a smaller group of teachers to take the ideas from this discussion and return in a few weeks with a proposal for 4 to 6 school-wide character traits.