Request for Learning
Self Reflection Tool V2
Purpose of this tool:
This tool is designed to foster reflection and discussion about the purposes, practices, and effectiveness of assessment in your school, district, or organization. This discussion is intended to help identify assets upon which to build and questions to guide your continued inquiry about how assessment can help realize your academic and social emotional priorities for students, and create more equitable learning environments and systems.

How to use the Self Reflection Tool:

1. **Assemble a team.** This is a collaborative tool. It should be used with at least two people who have direct knowledge of how your school/district/organization approaches assessment. The more people who use the tool together, the richer the discussion will be.

2. **Schedule a 90 minute or two hour meeting with your team.** The tool can be used iteratively, with different groups of people and to go deeper into certain discussions. To keep the first meeting manageable, we recommend limiting it to 90 minutes or two hours.

3. **Use the Tool.**
   a. **Make a copy of this tool.** We recommend printing a copy of the tool for each meeting participant. There are multiple sizes to choose from, depending on your preference and printer availability. For an electronic version, you can copy this Google doc by selecting File > Make a Copy.
   b. **Participants write down all of the assessment practices and approaches they are aware of in their school/district/organization.** Each assessment practice or approach should be on one sticky note.
   c. **Participants compare their stickies to make sure each person has as comprehensive a list as possible.** Before the next step
   d. **Participants place assessment-stickies along the continuum for the FIRST Core Shift.** Each page of the Self Reflection Tool explains one of the Core Shifts of assessment for learning. Each page also has a continuum participants can use to rank their assessments based on how well they align to the Core Shift. This can be done individually or collaboratively as a group.
   e. **Discuss.** Participants discuss these two prompts:
      i. What assessment approaches do we have in place that are most aligned to this Core Shift (i.e. furthest to the right side of the continuum)?
      ii. What questions does this Core Shift raise for us? In what ways is it consistent with our thinking? In what ways do we disagree? What would we like to learn more about in order to better understand the Core Shift?
   f. **Document.** On each page, write a few bullets about your conversation on each of the two prompts. You may also want to take a photo of the full continuum.
   g. **Repeat for each of the remaining Core Shifts.** After you've documented how your assessments fall along the first continuum, you can use the same sticky notes to repeat the process for each of the remaining continuua.

4. **Discuss your overall reflections.** This process may elicit a variety of different types of conversations - this is the goal! You should expect your conversation to raise new and important questions, rather than identifying the one best pathway forward.
FAQs:

What is assessment FOR learning?
Many traditional assessment practices have the effect of ranking and sorting students, whether this is the intended use or not. These traditional assessments are primarily retrospective, meaning that they provide limited help for students and teachers to move learning forward. They are assessments OF learning. While there is undoubtedly an important role for assessments OF learning, we believe that balanced and equitable systems should rely more heavily on assessment FOR learning. Rather than a means of categorizing a given instrument, we view assessment for learning as an interrelated set of practices, processes and enabling conditions with the power to:

- deepen and personalize students’ development of knowledge and skills;
- foster greater student ownership and agency in learning;
- create more equitable classrooms, schools, and systems.

Assessment for learning is grounded in the four Core Shifts described in this self reflection tool. At www.assessmentforlearningproject.org you can see examples of how schools, districts, and partner organizations are putting assessment for learning approaches into practice. You can also find our emerging design principles for assessment for learning, as well as students describing how they experience assessment for learning.

What should we include on our sticky notes for “assessments” and “assessment approaches”?
For this self reflection, you should think broadly about assessment. You should include traditional assessments like teacher-developed tests and quizzes, exit tickets, standardized interim assessments, diagnostic assessments, and end-of-year summative standardized exams. You should also think about other assessment approaches, like in-the-moment feedback and reflection opportunities in class, student-led conferences, student portfolios, and capstone projects. We consider any practice that intentionally elicits evidence of student learning and compares this work against criteria (for the purposes of evaluation, feedback, and/or reflection) to be an assessment approach.

How many people do we need to have on the team that does this reflection?
At least two. A group with multiple perspectives will lead to a richer discussion, but don’t make the group so large that it’s difficult for all voices to heard in a 90-minute discussion.

What if we’re not sure we know about all of the assessments that are in use?
That’s ok, and it is an important data point! For this exercise, write down the assessments that you are aware of and are used consistently. One of the questions you surface might be, “What other assessment approaches are teachers using?”
**PROCESS: Assessment FOR Learning is an Integrated Process**

Assessment is often understood as an event. A test, quiz, or state exam. In the case of the end-of-year accountability exams that often drive assessment policies in schools, this event is disconnected from the content covered in the curriculum. Assessment for Learning understands assessment as a continuous process that is deeply integrated with curriculum and instruction. Assessment for learning makes success criteria for student work clear at the outset, requires students to apply the knowledge and the skills they are learning to solve complex problems, and involves cycles of feedback and revision. Students have a variety of opportunities and modalities to show what they know, and these opportunities are built right into curriculum and instruction.

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### Where do our assessment strategies fall on this continuum?

The assessment is an isolated event, not directly connected to curriculum  
Assessment is an ongoing process integrated with curriculum and instruction

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**Notes:**

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**In Practice:**

- [Student-led assessment as a continuous process in Fairfax County](https://bit.ly/SLAnetwork)
- [A New Hampshire student explains her year-long project-based assessment](https://bit.ly/2ueT8Vm)
PRIORITIES: **Assessment FOR Learning**

**Prioritizes Feedback and Reflection**

Understanding deepens as students learn to better articulate their ideas, reflect on their learning, and receive feedback that resolves misconceptions and helps make new connections. Many traditional assessments simply show what students know and don’t know. Assessment for learning seeks to surface incomplete understandings earlier and more often. This requires trusting relationships and classroom environments in which students feel comfortable being vulnerable, and can act constructively on feedback rather than defensively.

Assessment focuses primarily on the instrument, rather than on building relationships to enable reflection and feedback.

Where do our assessment strategies fall on this continuum?

Classroom culture and strong relationships enable rich feedback and reflection.

(place stickies here)

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**Notes:**

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**In Practice:**

- Self assessment and peer feedback at Leadership Public Schools: [bit.ly/2R5yhS5](bit.ly/2R5yhS5)
- Students discuss the value of giving and receiving feedback: [bit.ly/2NRG0Nx](bit.ly/2NRG0Nx)
**PRODUCT:** Assessment FOR Learning

**Produces Bodies of Evidence of Learning**

Traditional assessments generate numerical ratings which are then averaged together to produce a final score, which is the basis for a grade. These scores do not provide qualitative or actionable information that shows what students understand and what they don’t. Assessment for learning produces rich and varied evidence of learning. By looking at this full body of evidence, students and teachers can make more informed decisions about how to move student learning forward. A body of evidence can also support stronger claims about student mastery than a single test can. And it makes it possible for students to demonstrate their learning in ways that connect to their passions and goals. Building this rich base of evidence requires assessment tasks that are complex and varied enough to elicit a rich body of evidence.

*Where do our assessment strategies fall on this continuum?*

The main output of the assessment is a score

Assessments generate rich and varied evidence of learning

(placed stickies here)

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**Notes:**

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**In Practice:**

- A parent writes about her son’s portfolio defense: [bit.ly/2OGcFv8](bit.ly/2OGcFv8)
- A student in New Hampshire talks about why a body of evidence is better than a score: [bit.ly/2yejPvh](bit.ly/2yejPvh)
- A recent high school graduate talks about the skills his portfolio demonstrated: [bit.ly/2N6H27H](bit.ly/2N6H27H)
PURPOSE: Assessment FOR Learning Enacts More Equitable Systems and Learning Environments

The decades-long focus on standards, high-stakes testing, and accountability has shined a bright light on the achievement gap. But these strategies have done little to address the underlying opportunity gaps that cause low income students, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities to perform less well on standardized tests. Assessment for learning doesn’t just assess students, it assesses the learning environment - giving teachers more actionable information on how to create inclusive classrooms and schools. When assessment is viewed more broadly than just tests, students can demonstrate their learning in culturally responsive ways. And with more varied and authentic assessments, student access to opportunities can be based more on what they know than how good at test-taking they are.

Assessments make inequities visible but do not directly reduce these inequities

Where do our assessment strategies fall on this continuum?

Assessment strategies enact more equitable learning environments

Notes:

In Practice:

- The Hawaii Department of Education’s culturally responsive assessment framework: bit.ly/2LMeHER
- A teacher talks about how competency based learning has made her classroom more equitable: bit.ly/2NEOZkm
- A student-made video explains how badges earned in high school increase college access: bit.ly/2F43V