

Monday Focus

October 1, 2007

Assessment, Defined There has been talk about the distinction between different types of assessment terminology. Many think that this is nothing more than warmed-over edu-blabber. It isn't. Assessment is the most concrete action that schools do. Because the bones of our assessment practices live on in Chancery hell and on transcripts, assessment matters a great deal. In a nutshell:

Benchmarks are typically tests that are intended to collect data on student performance in relation to an externally-given assessment. Because the objective is to mimic the state or national assessment, context is as important as content. These are tests that should be administered using Campus On-Line so that the data can be disaggregated. These should be 100% identical from one classroom to the next. Benchmarks should be reviewed with Curriculum Directors and administration to review content and context prior to test administration.

Common Assessments can be any kind of assessment—warm-up, project, quiz, test, or daily assignment. On a CA, it is entirely permissible to limit the “common” factor to a portion of the assessment (e.g. 3 commonly asked questions on a 10-question quiz). School administration has no interest in seeing the CA prior to administration. The only purpose of a CA is for teachers to look at the results together and figure out the next steps in the learning cycle. Common Assessments are arguably the most powerful weapons in a Curriculum Team's arsenal.

Assessment FOR Learning is a way to assess and can be used at any time other than during state or national tests. During aFI, a teacher and students are able to correct and redirect their work at any point during the assessment. In an aFI test environment, a teacher would be walking the room and might note that students are struggling with a concept. The teacher would be compelled to stop and re-teach that concept at that point—but not necessarily show students how to answer any specific question on that exact test. The idea is that learning should be happening all of the time.

Test Days are allocated to departments according to the following schedule:

Math	Tuesday & Friday
English	Monday & Wednesday/Thursday
Social Studies	Tuesday & Friday
Science	Monday & Wednesday/Thursday (alt. Tue)
PE/Electives	Wednesday/Thursday

All teachers should follow these guidelines, including Pre-AP and AP classes. Quizzes that take longer than 15 minutes are considered to be tests.

We're Number One, Baby Cedric French and Erik Ostergren each ranked #1 in the state with their Laying the Foundation scores. Cedric's Pre-Cal students and Erik's Pre-AP Biology students earned 3's, 4's, and 5's at a rate that put them ahead of about 100 other teachers who were in their LTF comparison groups. Additionally, our teams did exceptionally well, with nearly every teacher scoring above the state and district averages. This work will be showing up in our AP scores this year.

“So You Want to Give a Zero?” Chapter 2 Some of our faculty members want to be able to distinguish between students who “earned” a 50 versus those who did nothing. Here's an idea—use a 5.0 scale. With this scale, you can splice student work to the thousandth of a point while preserving the ability to issue an absolute zero. This accomplishes the task of maintaining fairness in the grading scale (the difference between a D and an F is still one gradient.) while allowing zeroes to be used.

Feedback as a Best Practice Try this: give someone (staff or student) a precise compliment in a timely manner. Empty praise (good job!) is rarely heard by the recipient without being dismissed. Instead, tell the person exactly what you like or appreciate. Try it today. It's free and might actually make you feel as good as the person who's receiving the compliment.

Calendar of Events

- Tue Oct 2** **JV Volleyball vs. Westbury, Wolf Den, 5 PM**
PTO Meeting, Library, 7 PM
- Wed Oct 3** **Director's Meeting, 3rd Period**
Peggi and the Directors will be conducting no-name walk-throughs. The objective is to see what teaching and learning looks like on campus
Varsity Volleyball vs. Westbury, Butler, 5:15 PM
- Thu Oct 4** **Late Start Meeting—Testing Protocols, Mini-Theater, 7:45 AM**
This is a mandatory meeting for all teachers. We have been selected as a testing site for Iowa Test of Academic Skills. Beth will be reviewing how this honor will result in a complete adjustment of our lives for two days. EVERY TEACHER must attend so that they can be inoculated against the “I didn’t know” virus.
Departmental Meetings follow
JV Football vs. Westbury, WHS Wallin Field, 4:30 PM
Small School Meetings, TBA, 6:30 PM
Freshman Parent Meeting (Aud) and Senior Parent Meeting (Theater), 7:30 PM
- Fri Oct 5** **Pep Rally, Wolf Den, 2:45 PM**
Volleyball vs. Milby, Butler, 5 PM
Football vs. Westbury, Butler, 7:30 PM
- Sat Oct 6** **SAT Administration, WHS**