

Newsletter

WINTER 2008

Scholastic Professional Newsletter
Winter 2008

EYE ON ASSESSMENT

As every public school teacher knows, since the federal No Child Left Behind Act went into effect in 2001, all states have instituted some form of standards-based assessment of learning. With the exception of Nebraska, which developed a unique system of school-based, teacher-led assessment and accountability, states now rely on statewide standardized tests to meet the requirements of the law.

Long before NCLB was enacted, teachers have relied on their own classroom-based observations and measurements to guide instruction, as they make judgments about what students know and can do as well as what they might need help with. These evaluations have come to be known as **formative assessments**, as opposed to large-scale standardized testing, which is a form of **summative assessment**. The distinction between the two methods is expressed by one pundit in the saying, "When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative assessment; when the customer tastes the soup, that's summative assessment."

Rick Stiggins and others have also distinguished between assessment of learning and assessment for learning. As Stiggins put it, "If assessments *of learning* provide evidence of achievement for public reporting, then assessments *for learning* serve to help students learn more. The crucial distinction is between assessment to determine the status of learning and assessment to promote greater learning." You can read Stiggins' article from the *Kappan* online at <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0206sti.htm>.

New Scholastic Professional Assessment Resources

In *3-Minute Reading Assessments: A Professional Development DVD and Study Guide*, reading experts **Tim Rasinski** and **Nancy Padak** help you accurately identify students' potential reading problems in record time and target areas in which they need more support. Their new DVD lets you observe teachers as they assess students in word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. As the DVD shows, the

assessments are easy to administer and manage. This is also an excellent resource for literacy learning communities and professional study groups.

In *Day-to-Day Assessment in the Reading Workshop: Making Informed Instructional Decisions in Grades 3-6*, Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak provide all the support you need to set reading goals for your students, assess to ensure they're meeting those goals, and tailor instruction to meet individual needs. Stephanie Harvey, co-author of *Strategies That Work*, says the book is “packed with passion and practicality” and “brims with smart ideas for teaching and assessing reading in an authentic, meaningful, and lasting way.”

Assessment Resources for Use With Younger Children

You'll find powerful support in two recent books by **Laurie B. Fyke**: *Easy Assessments for Pre-Kindergarten* and *Essential Kindergarten Assessments for Reading, Writing, and Math* provide complete toolkits for assessing children's progress in language arts and math. Simple, ready-to-go evaluation sheets follow a month-by-month learning expectations grid to ensure that all pre-K and kindergarten learning objectives are covered. Support materials include record-keeping forms to keep assessment data organized and send-home learning activities to reinforce targeted skills.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Formative assessment, which helps you to pinpoint the strengths and needs of individual students, has a natural partner in differentiated instruction, or the practice of matching just-right instruction with the strengths, needs, and interests of learners. Despite the wealth of knowledge we amass about individual learners, as differentiation specialist Carol Tomlinson puts it, too often “we still use assessment data as filler for grade books, more than we use it to help us re-craft the way we will work with students tomorrow or the next day.” In a new resource for grades 5 and up, *Differentiating Reading Instruction: How to Teach Reading to Meet the Needs of Each Student*, veteran teacher and reading expert **Laura Robb** shows you how to:

- manage whole-class reading where each student reads a different book
- provide targeted support while working with small groups
- build comprehension through student-centered journal writing, and
- tier assignments to maximize the learning potential of each student.

In Tomlinson's own words, from her foreword to *Differentiating Reading Instruction*, “Robb's clarity, practicality, detail, and examples provide us with images of an academically responsive teacher and with the tools necessary to begin creating those images in our own work.”

You'll also find inspiration and practical support for targeted instruction in these recent books:

- *Differentiated Literacy Centers: 85+ Leveled Activities With Reproducible Planning Sheets and Student Pages—to Support Centers in Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Word Study* by **Margo Southall** (grades K-3)
- *Strategies for Differentiating in the Content Areas: Easy-to-Use Strategies, Scoring Rubrics, Student Samples, and Leveling Tips to Reach and Teach Every Middle-School Student* by Beverly Strayer and Troy Strayer

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The Complete 4 for Literacy

Pam Allyn, executive director of LitLife, a nationally known literacy organization that provides research-based professional development for educators, provides a comprehensive but imminently practical framework for linking formative assessment and instruction in reading and writing in her new book, *The Complete 4 for Literacy*. Focusing on process, genre, strategy, and conventions—the key components of literacy instruction—Allyn’s structured but flexible approach allows you to address the demands of curriculum and standards as you meet the needs of students at the same time.

A 16-page full-color insert demonstrates the continuum of learning in reading and writing with a year’s calendar of month-by-month topics for each grade level, K through 5. Joanne Hindley, author of *In the Company of Children*, wrote about Allyn’s latest work in these terms: “A must-read for all educators who aim to organize their teaching of reading and writing into thoughtful units, while at the same time **using their students as their number-one curriculum informants**. Pam’s framework will encourage professional conversations about thoughtful literacy instruction across grades, a balanced curriculum that allows for differentiation, and at the heart, the importance of joyful teaching.”

Coming Soon—*The Complete Year in Reading and Writing*, individual books for grades K-5 by Pam Allyn and her colleagues, each with a detailed curricular calendar tied to a developmental continuum and grade-level standards. In addition, you’ll find monthly units of study that integrate reading and writing so both work together to provide maximum support for students

Inside the Writing Traits Classroom: K-2 Lessons on DVD

This new resource and DVD by **Ruth Culham** gives you exciting trait-based lessons where primary students embrace the traits to improve their writing. Culham breaks down the writing process so teachers can implement the traits at every stage to support students as they draft, revise, edit, and publish their work. The package includes a spiral bound guide that clearly describes the lessons and a 34-minute DVD that shows the lessons in action.

Debbie Stewart, Literacy Coach and National Board Certified Teacher (Topeka, Kansas) says that “Watching these teachers and kids in action is the next best thing to having Ruth

Culham come to your classroom. These lessons are a fantastic, hands-on approach to using the traits with primary writers.”

AUTHOR APPEARANCES

Scholastic Professional authors are leaders in the profession who speak and present at conferences, conventions, and other events around the country—and abroad. In the table below you’ll find information about upcoming engagements from February through May 2008.

Please note that we will be in Atlanta for the annual IRA conference: May 4-8. Please stop by booth 2745 to visit us, talk about your needs, and share ideas We look forward to seeing you!

DATE	AUTHOR	EVENT/LOCATION	LINKS/CONTACTS
2/23	Franki Sibberson & Karen Szymusiak	Dublin Literacy Conference. Dublin, OH	http://tinyurl.com/ys7kgb (click to download PDF)
2/21-23	David Harrison, Lester Laminack, Cheryl Sigmon	South Carolina IRA Myrtle Beach	http://www.scira.org/html/conferences.html
2/27	Tim Rasinski	LitLife Reading and Writing Seminar Manhattan College, Purchaseville, NY	Jim Allyn jallyn@litlifeinfo.com
2/28	Tim Rasinski	CORE Literacy Leadership Summit, Burlingame, CA	http://www.corelearn.com/summit.htm
2/29	James Crawford	Illinois TESOL-BE Naperville, IL	http://www.itbe.org/
3/1	James Burke	Northwest Inland Writing Project, Spokane, WA	http://www.niwp.org/
3/2-4	Richard Gentry, Maureen McLaughlin, Laura Robb	Indiana State Reading Association, Indianapolis	http://tinyurl.com/27u38y (click to download PDF)
3/7	Cathy Collins Block	Literacy Promise Conference Spanish Fork, UT	http://tinyurl.com/22ejrj (click to download PDF)
3/7	Jim Burke	California Association of Teachers of English Convention,	http://catweb.org/

		Long Beach, CA	
3/7-8	Nancy Mack, Franki Sibberson, Karen Szymusiak	Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts Spring Conference Columbus, OH	http://tinyurl.com/2ycgc8 (click to download PDF)

3/9-11	David Harrison	Children's Literature Festival University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg	http://library.ucmo.edu/childlit/clf/
3/10- 12	Pam Allyn, Richard Gentry, Maureen McLaughlin	North Carolina Reading Association Annual Conference Greensboro, NC	http://www.ncreading.org/wst_page10.html
3/13- 15	Ruth Culham, Richard Gentry, Maria Walther	Illinois Reading Council Conference Springfield, IL	http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/confere
3/13- 15	Nell Duke	Virginia State Reading Association Conference Richmond, VA	http://www.vsra.org/
3/15- 16	Pam Allyn, Nell Duke, Lester Laminack, Anne McGill- Franzen, Franki Sibberson & Karen Szymusiak	Michigan Reading Association Conference, Detroit	http://www.michiganreading.org/cms/index.php
3/15- 17	Cathy Collins Block, Nancy Padak, Tim Rasinski, Autumn Tooms	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference and Exhibit Show, New Orleans	http://tinyurl.com/5a6yv
3/17- 18	Laura Robb	North Carolina Middle School Conference, Greensboro	http://www.ncmsa.net/conf2008.html
3/17	Janiel Wagstaff	Bureau of Education & Research seminar El Paso, TX	http://tinyurl.com/34tzky
3/18	Janiel	Bureau of Education	http://tinyurl.com/3byzcu

	Wagstaff	& Research seminar Albuquerque, NM	
3/19	Janiel Wagstaff	Bureau of Education & Research seminar Salt Lake City, UT	http://tinyurl.com/2poxox
3/19- 20	Tim Rasinski	4 Keys to Literacy Success SDE, Lansing	http://tinyurl.com/2lau48
3/20	Janiel Wagstaff	Bureau of Education & Research seminar Boise, ID	http://tinyurl.com/2tpg4v
3/28	Jim Burke	Maine ASCD Conference, Portland	http://www.maineascd.org/03282008
3/29	Lester Laminack	Standards in Literacy Workshop, NYC	http://www.baumandbeaulieu.com/index.htm
4/1	Jim Burke	Secondary Literacy Summit, Burlingame, CA	http://www.scoe.net/secondaryliteracy/
4/1-5	David and Yvonne Freeman, David Chard, Judy Scott	TESOL Convention, New York City	http://tinyurl.com/3ddmpv
4/4	Isabel Beck, Cathy Collins Block, Lea McGee, Tim Rasinski	Rutgers University 40th Reading & Writing Conference, Somerset, NJ	http://cesp.rutgers.edu/events/RWC08.html
4/9	Tim Rasinski	Creating Fluent Readers, SDE, Vaughn, Ontario	http://tinyurl.com/38xj85
4/10	Tim Rasinski	Creating Fluent Readers, SDE, Ottawa, Canada	http://tinyurl.com/38xj85
4/10- 11	Margaret Bouchard, Barbara Mariconda, Mary McMacken, Carleen Payne, Nancy Witherell	Massachusetts Reading Association Conference, Sturbridge	http://www.massreading.org/conference.html Mary Aucoin at mgauc@aol.com
4/16- 18	Cathy Collins Block	SoMIRAC Conference (State of Maryland International Reading Association Council), Hunt Valley	Sandra Watt watt1003@hotmail.com

4/18	Jeff Wilhelm	Secondary Reading Council of Florida, Panama City Beach	http://www.flsrc.org/conf2008/index.html
4/19	Laura Robb, James Blasingame	Greater San Diego Council of Teachers of English, Promising Practices Conference, Marina Village Conference Center, San Diego	http://tinyurl.com/33q7pb
4/22	Lester Laminack	First Team Reading Conference, IN	http://www.lesterlaminack.com/events.htm
4/26	David Cooper, Nancy Frey	Aquinas College, Third Literacy Conference, Grand Rapids, MI	http://tinyurl.com/2sxo6f
4/30-5/1	Tim Rasinski	4 Keys to Literacy Success, SDE, Portland, OR	http://tinyurl.com/2lau48
5/4-5/8	Cathy Collins Block, Karen Bromley, Vicki Benson Castagna, Ruth Culham, Sue Dymock, Roger Essley, Carol Fuhler, Richard Gentry, Yvonne Freeman, David Freeman, Lester Laminack, John Mangieri, Susan Neuman, Tom Nicholson, Michael Opitz, Nancy Padak, Tim Rasinski, Linda Rief, Laura Robb, Amy Rocci, Lola Schaefer,	IRA Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA	http://tinyurl.com/36eabv

	Margo Southall, Autumn Tooms, Maria Walther, Myra Zarnowski		
May 13-14	Tim Rasinski	4 Keys to Literacy Success, Staff Development for Educators, Honolulu, HI	http://tinyurl.com/2lau48

5/15- 16	Linda Hoyt, Cathy Collins Block, Cheryl Sigmon	44 th Annual Bloomsburg Reading Conference, PA	http://departments.bloomu.edu/reading
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