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Proficiency-Based Assessment: Process, Not Product

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Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Proficiency-Based Assessment: Process, Not Product* by Troy Gobble, Mark Onuscheck, Anthony R. Reibel, and Eric Twadell. *Proficiency-Based Assessment* focuses on the disconnect between traditional assessment strategies and modern goals for K–12 students’ achievement. It explores how proficiency-based assessment can better meet modern aims for student abilities.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Beyond the Formative and Summative Divide

1. What four benefits do students experience when their teachers use proficiency-based assessment strategies?
2. Briefly describe each of the three elements of proficiency-based assessment.
3. On what components do the health and usefulness of a proficiency-based learning target depend?
4. In what three ways can teacher teams collaboratively settle on the meaning of proficiency language?
5. What three intersecting components interact when proficiency-based instruction is carried out well?
6. How does student learning shift when educators deliberately focus instruction on measurable proficiency levels? What happens in class if a lesson does not have a clear articulation of proficiency?

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7. Name the three components of proficiency-based reflection. Why are proficiency-based reflections more valuable than traditional tests or assessments?

8. In your own words, define *proficiency awareness*; how can teachers help their students gain this awareness?

9. To improve students' feedback acceptance, what must teachers help students realize about assessments?

Chapter 2

Preparation

1. What three key points should educators keep in mind during the preparation stage?
2. Ask yourself the questions presented before the team story in this chapter. What do you learn from this story and your answers to these questions?
3. What four commitments of proficiency-based assessment must a teacher team reach a consensus on during the preparation stage?
4. How does outcomes-based learning impact student growth?
5. What questions should teacher teams ask themselves to make sure that new learning targets are proficiency based?
6. What do *quantitative language* and *negative language* mean, and why are they both detrimental to learning targets?
7. In your own words, describe the four stages of proficiency.

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8. Name the three foci that keep proficiency-based targets at the center of learning.

9. In an *assessment MRI*, what indicators must teachers check to measure an assessment's effectiveness?

Chapter 3

Incubation

1. What three key points should educators keep in mind during the incubation stage?
2. Ask yourself the questions presented before the team story in this chapter. What do you learn from this story and your answers to these questions?
3. What four relationships between elements of proficiency-based assessment must teams weigh during the incubation stage?
4. List the questions that teachers should contemplate as they prepare a learning environment for proficiency-based targets. Why are these questions important?
5. What elements must be present in a lesson for teaching with gradations to successfully happen?
6. Why are product-based assessments less effective than process-based assessments? What single factor can most help teachers move toward a process-based assessment culture?

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7. Consider the three scenarios presented in this chapter illustrating how teachers may shorten the reaction times to student feedback. What can you learn about the best ways to shorten feedback reaction times based on the results of these scenarios?

8. How do linear learning environments influence students' potential for learning?

9. What guidelines should educators follow to craft lessons that are based on proficiency instead of on outcomes?

Chapter 4

Insight

1. What three key points should educators keep in mind during the insight stage?
2. What four insights does the team in this chapter's story gain into its curricular, instructional, and assessment practices as it focuses on proficiency-based assessment?
3. In a proficiency-based assessment classroom, what is at the heart of lesson design?
4. Name the key questions that teachers can use to help guarantee students develop reflective relationships with proficiency-based targets.
5. In your own words, define a *learning threshold*. How can learning thresholds be revealed? How will students react when they challenge their learning thresholds?
6. According to Dylan Wiliam, what five elements must be present for assessment to improve learning?
7. Briefly describe each of the three elements that are required during any point of the learning process.

8. How are gap thinking and gap deficiency different?

Chapter 5

Evaluation

1. What three key points should educators keep in mind during the evaluation stage?
2. Name the four imperatives of proficiency-based assessment that teams address in the evaluation stage.
3. Why do teachers need to see themselves as *mirrors* instead of *presenters*?
4. Define *learning durability*, and state the main reason why this durability is important.
What factors make learning durability difficult to foster?
5. What must teachers do to build emotional durability, cognitive durability, and climate durability?
6. In your own words, define *reflective assessments*. What are the main advantages of using reflective assessments?
7. Describe the five types of reflection necessary to maximize effectiveness.

8. According to Rick Stiggins and Jan Chappuis, what strategies can educators use to hold students accountable for their learning? How have you used these strategies to hold students accountable in your classroom?

Chapter 6

Elaboration

1. In your own words, define *elaboration*. What three key points should educators keep in mind during the elaboration stage?
2. Consider the challenges presented before the team story in this chapter. What do you learn from paying attention to these challenges as you read this story?
3. Why is this stage called the elaboration stage? What four new realizations should teacher teams focus on during this stage?
4. For what two reasons do assessments need to disclose more than just outcomes?
5. Define *portfolio thinking*.
6. How does proficiency-based assessment define the purpose of formative assessment differently than teachers typically define it? With proficiency-based assessment, why should formative assessments be grounded in proficiency-based targets?

