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Simplifying Common Assessment: A Guide for Professional Learning

Communities at Work™

By Kim Bailey and Chris Jakicic

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Simplifying Common Assessment: A Guide for Professional Learning Communities at Work™* by Kim Bailey and Chris Jakicic. *Simplifying Common Assessment* streamlines the assessment development process for teacher teams so they build confidence in designing and implementing common assessments to effectively monitor and guide student learning.

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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Study Guide

Chapter 1

Clarifying Assessment Types and Uses

1. For what purposes do teams use wide-angle questions and close-up questions?
2. What three main types of assessments do curricular units currently include? What purposes do these types of assessments serve, and what do they measure?
3. What two types of checks for understanding can teachers use, and what advantages, disadvantages, and classroom applications come with each? Describe a case in which you used one of these checks in your classroom and the effect it had. Would you have been better off using the other type of check for understanding in that case? Why or why not?
4. Describe the twofold intent of progressive or periodic assessments.
5. What actions can teams take to clear up and better understand the dispositions, skills, and strategies students have to demonstrate on high-stakes state assessments?

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Chapter 2

Starting With the End in Mind

1. What standards do you think your teacher team needs to prioritize? Why do you think these standards are the important ones?
2. Describe the four filters that districts can use to determine their essential standards.
3. Name and briefly describe the four steps teams work through to unwrap standards and reach consensus on them. Use the common annotating system outlined in this chapter to annotate a standard.
4. What knowledge do you take away from considering what Chadwick Elementary School's and Castillo Elementary Schools' fourth-grade teams did to design their units? What opportunity did the Chadwick team miss?
5. Why do the authors encourage schools to have schoolwide vertical conversations? What topics do you need to cover that you think are well suited to a schoolwide vertical conversation?

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Chapter 3

Considering Rigor and Complexity

1. How do individuals with a fixed mindset and individuals with a growth mindset differ in how they view intelligence and talent?
2. What role does rigor play in the Common Core State Standards? What does *rigor* refer to in the Common Core mathematics and literacy standards?
3. Why is a successful fitness journey comparable to successfully building students' skills? What recommended actions can help build mathematics “muscles”?
4. According to Karin Hess and Sheena Hervey, what five parameters must teachers consider as they determine text complexity?
5. What elements make up the term *student-involved assessment*?

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Chapter 4

Intentionally Planning Instruction and Assessment

1. To answer the question “How often is often enough to assess?” what two things should teacher teams consider? According to research, how frequently should teachers give assessments to make the greatest gains?
2. What is a pacing guide, and what is its purpose?
3. Why should teacher teams include a few flexible days in their pacing guides?
4. What two purposes does preassessment serve?
5. What do *corrective instruction* and *intervention* refer to, and when do they occur?

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Chapter 5

Creating Questions, Tasks, and Tools That Work

1. What four types of items do teachers commonly use on their assessments? What advantages and disadvantages does each type have?
2. What can teams and students gain from the use of analytic rubrics and holistic rubrics? What can you learn from the completed rubric and poor rubric shown in figures 5.2 and 5.3 (page 65) that you can apply in creating your own rubrics?
3. How should teams create answer keys to constructed-response items, and what should they include in the keys? Why should teams establish up front what correct or proficient answers and incorrect answers look like for their constructed-response items?
4. In what two ways can teams make sure they design reliable assessments, and in what two ways can teams design quality questions?
5. What two parts are multiple-choice questions composed of? What are *distractors*, and what should teams consider as they create them?

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Chapter 6

Using Data to Support Student Learning

1. Why is it helpful for teams to use data norms to guide their work?
2. In your own words, define *actionable data*. What two levels of action do teams take with their data?
3. How did working with the authors help a second-grade team realize they should use common formative assessments even if they think they already know which students will pass or fail it? What did they realize a formative assessment should expose?
4. What mistakes frequently come up when teams use common formative assessment data? Which of the listed mistakes would most likely arise on your team, and why?
5. How do reteaching and re-engagement differ? How do re-engagement lessons benefit students who have reached proficiency and who have not reached it, and what role do teachers play in re-engagement?

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Chapter 7

Focusing on Feedback and Grappling With Grading

1. In your own words, define *formative assessment*. What are the four levels of formative assessment implementation, according to W. James Popham?
2. How do teams' and students' needs for succeeding in meeting learning goals parallel each other?
3. Provide your own examples of what praising comments, negative comments, and focused feedback for students sound like. What does effective feedback guide students to do?
4. Which of the suggested activities for enhancing students' ownership of feedback they receive on their work's quality would you most likely use, and why?
5. What questions should teams ask when they consider alternatives to traditional grading? What should teams collectively do when they discuss these alternatives?

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Chapter 8

Using Common Assessments With Singleton Teachers

1. Define *singletons*. Name the four general organizational structures that work for singletons.
2. What issues may impact electronic teacher teams that traditional teams otherwise do not face?
3. What similarities and differences come up in the three examples of how vertical teams can assess by similar skills in each of their classes?
4. What can you learn about how to hold an effective team meeting from Ann Butler's meeting leadership?
5. Why should all teams follow a protocol in data meetings?