BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS:
REDEFINING EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT

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Society has adjusted the role of schools and so a corresponding adjustment is needed in the role of assessment. Schools will no longer be places where some succeed at learning while other tumble into inevitable failure. Rather, they have become places where all students are expected to meet pre-specified and increasingly rigorous academic achievement standards. This change is driven by the accelerating technical and ethnic evolution of our society and the concomitant need for all students to become competent lifelong learners.

As a result, assessment practices historically designed to promote accountability by separating the successful from the unsuccessful now must become practices that support the learning of all students in a variety of ways. The vision of balanced assessment presented below accomplishes that transformation. Because of its traditional place in the forefront of the development of best assessment practices, the measurement community is uniquely positioned to lead this next profoundly important redefinition of the bond between assessment and effective schools.

Some important facets of the evolution of our assessment priorities already have revealed themselves. One example is the long-term shift *from almost total reliance on norm-referenced to far more frequent application of criterion referenced interpretation* of assessment results. This parallels the evolution of our collective thinking about the purposes for assessment. We have emerged from the era of comparing students based on achievement to a time when the key question to be answered is, who has and has not met standards?

Two other important shifts that are just beginning to emerge are the need to balance *summative with formative applications* and *large-scale with classroom assessment*s. While certainly not yet mainstream assessment priorities, these developing priorities are being driven forward by recent discovery of profound achievement gains attributable to effective formative classroom assessment.

These developments foreshadow more profound changes that are to be encouraged. Perhaps the most fundamental of these changes must center on the way we judge the quality of an assessment. Historically, the challenge to the measurement community has been to produce accurate scores. Attention has been lavished on attributes of measurement instruments and the meaning of their results. Those results must lead users to valid and reliable inferences about achievement. Decades of increasingly sophisticated technical advances have resulted in a deep understanding of how to produce, scale, and interpret test scores that consistently and accurately reflect the intended achievement target. To be sure, this always will remain a foundation of quality assessment as we must aspire to the generation of high-quality evidence.

But, as the mission of schools has changed toward strong emphasis on mastery of standards and we have come to more clearly understand how to use assessment to support student learning, it has become apparent that we must judge assessment quality based on far more than merely the meaning of its results. Quality must also turn on *the impact of the results on the learner and the learning*. The most valid and

reliable assessment in the world that has a counterproductive impact on the learning or on students cannot be regarded as a high-quality assessment. For instance, an accurate score that has the effect of causing a student to give up in hopelessness cannot be regarded as a quality assessment because it does more harm than good. Thus, quality must become a function of the instrument and its score evaluated in terms of (or consider simultaneously with) the context and manner within which it is used. Quality control frameworks of the past have not taken impact on the learner into account. The vision of excellence in assessment framed herein places this criterion of quality center stage.

To have a productive impact on the learner, the nature of our assessment practices must continue to evolve in specific directions. For instance, the assessment results must go beyond merely providing *judgments aboutstudent performance to providing* **rich descriptions of student performance**. In other words, if assessments are to support improvements in student learning, their results must inform students how to do better the next time. This will require communication of results that transmit sufficient understandable detail to guide the learner's actions. In such contexts, single scores or grades will not suffice.

Further, to support learning, assessments must evolve from being *isolated events to becoming events that happen in ongoing series* so as to reveal patterns in student learning over time. This will reveal to the learner and the teacher, not only current achievement status, but improvements in student own capabilities—a powerful booster of confidence and motivation.

Finally, to support learning, assessments must move beyond merely informing the instructional decisions of teachers and school leaders to informing decisions made by students too. In the future, balanced assessment systems will need to be designed to *serve diverse purposes* by meeting the information needs of all decision makers. Historically, they have not done this.

The presentation that follows describes a vision of the future for assessment that accounts for each of these ingredients and advocates for bold movement into that future by revealing what will happen to student achievement and school effectiveness as we proceed.

Balanced Systems Serve Balanced Purposes

We assess to gather evidence to inform instructional decisions and to encourage students to try to learn. Both purposes must be well served for schools to be effective. The vision of excellence in assessment described herein holds that, to inform and encourage effectively, assessment systems must yield accurate information about student learning for use at several levels of decision making, and they must be used in a manner that manages the emotional dynamics of the assessment experience effectively for the learner

To yield accurate results, regardless of context of their use, assessments must meet three standards of quality. 1) They must be designed to serve a specific predetermined purpose, 2) arise from a specific predetermined definition of achievement success, and 3) be designed specifically to fit into each particular purpose and target context.

To manage the emotional dynamics of assessment, we must strive for a productive reaction to results from students and their teachers. For the student, a productive reaction leaves them confident and willing to keep trying. A counterproductive response has the student confused, frustrated and ready to give up in hopelessness. For the teacher, the assessment is helpful if it reveals what comes next in the learning. For them, the assessment is counterproductive when it leaves them with no idea what to do next. We will review the conditions that must be present in the assessment environment for the results to have a productive impact; that is, to encourage learning.

The power of assessment as a school improvement tool can be tapped only by achieving a synergy between assessment quality and effective use. Historically, our attention has tended to center on attributes of the assessment instruments and their scores. In the future, our sense of what it means to assess well will expand to bring the student as assessment user into the equation.

Productive Systems

Productive assessment systems within schools and districts must serve the information needs of a wide variety of relevant assessment

users. In other words, such systems need to acknowledge that a wide variety of decision makers need access to a variety of different kinds of information in different forms at different times to help students learn. If any users' information needs are ignored or they are provided with misinformation due to inept assessments, ineffective decisions will result that will harm student confidence, motivation, and learning, as well as teacher efficacy.

For this reason, the starting place for the creation of a quality assessment for use in any particular context within any system must be a clear sense of the information needs of the assessment user/decision maker to be served. Without a sense of what kind of information will help them and, therefore, what kind of assessment must be conducted, the assessor cannot proceed.

Table 1 analyzes the full range potential assessment users and uses within a school district. It begins by describing the assessment demands of the *classroom level* of use, where students, teachers and parents make their instructional decisions. Here, assessment can be used both to support learning and to verify it. Next, the table progresses to the *instructional support level* of assessment use, where teacher leaders and teams, as well as principals, curriculum personnel and others ply their applications of assessment. In this case, one can identify students in need of help or evaluate program impacts. And finally, we move to the *program and policy level* of assessment use, where decisions about resource allocation, programs, policy, and other assessment issues are made by school, district and community leaders. In this case, accountability decisions become most important.

In any particular context at any of these levels, then, to devise a truly useful assessment, one needs to begin the assessment development and use process knowing:

- What decision is to be made?

- By whom?

- What information will help them?

The point of table one is that the answers vary profoundly across the three levels.

For instance, at the *classroom level*, the answers are as follows:

- Decision?   What comes next in the learning?

- Made by?   Students, teachers, parents

- Info need?   Continuous evidence of each student's current level of mastery of the building blocks of competence leading up to each standard.

The answers to the same three driving questions are different at the *level of instructional support*:

- Decision?   Which students are meeting which standards?

- Made by?   Teacher teams, teacher leaders, principals, curriculum personnel

- Info need?   Periodic but frequent evidence of each students current level of mastery of standards; comparable data permits aggregation across students.

And *policy*:

- Decision?   Are enough students meeting required standards?

- Made by?   Superintendents, school boards, legislators, tax payers

- Info need?   Annual summaries of students mastery of standards derived from accountability tests

TABLE 1: COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT USERS AND USES

LEVEL 1: CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT USERS

Decision Makers	Important Questions to be Answered	Information Needed	Assessment System Implications
Student	• What am I supposed to learn?	• Learning targets described in student-friendly language at the beginning of learning	• Accurate assessments must reflect the learning targets students are given
	• What have I learned already and what do I still need to work on?	• Evidence must allow student to track progress and understand where they are now in relation to expectations at any point in time	• Continuous sequence of accurate classroom assessments must provide descriptive feedback in student-friendly terms during learning
	• What do I need to do next to improve?	• Information gained through ongoing self assessment must be clear and student friendly so as to support goal setting	• Continuous sequence of accurate classroom assessments used as practice must help student see what comes next
	• Have I met or am I progressing toward the important achievement standards?	• Status regarding mastery of each standard in student-friendly language	• Assessments must provide evidence of standards mastered periodically throughout the year
	• Have I met the state achievement expectations?	• Status regarding meeting state standards in student-friendly language	• Annual state assessments reporting standards mastered and not yet mastered
Teacher	• What are my students supposed to learn?	• Standards deconstructed into classroom targets leading, over time, up to each standard; district curriculum maps of learning progression	• All assessments must reflect these targets; it must be clear which target any assessment reflects
	• What have they learned already and what do they still need to learn?	• Continuous evidence revealing of each students current place in the learning progressions leading up to each standard	• Continuous sequence of accurate classroom assessments used during the learning to provide picture of progress toward mastery of standards
	• Which students need special services?	• Evidence of how students are doing in relation to grade- or age-level expectations	• Assessments must provide evidence of students' relative status or progress to determine eligibility
	• Have my students met or are they progressing on the important achievement standards?	• Status of each student's mastery of each standard	• Assessments of standards mastery periodically throughout the year
	• Did they meet state achievement expectations?	• Status regarding each student's mastery of each state standard	• Annual assessments of each student's mastery of each state standard
Parent	• What is my child supposed to learn?	• Learning targets in family-friendly language provided from the beginning of learning	• Assessments must accurately reflect these targets
	• What has my child learned already and what does s/he still need to learn?	• Assessments providing information on current place in the progression to each learning target at any point in time	• Continuous sequence of accurate classroom assessments used during the learning need to provide picture of progress

	• Is my child progressing satisfactorily in meeting the teacher's classroom learning expectations?	• Information gained from my child's through self-assessment, indications from the teacher or from my child	• Periodic summative classroom assessments must feed into report card grade or summary of classroom standards met
	• Does my child need the services of a specialized program?	• Student's learning in relation to grade- or age- level expectations	• Assessment evidence needs interpretation in terms of expected achievement levels
	• How is my child progressing on the state achievement expectations?	• Status regarding meeting state standards	• Evidence gathered periodically during the year
	• Has my child met the state achievement expectations?	• Status regarding meeting each state standards	• Evidence of mastery of each standard gathered annually with accurate assessments

LEVEL 2: INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT USERS

Decision Makers	Decisions to be Made	Information Needed	Assessment Implications
Principal. Curriculum Leaders, Teacher Teams	• What standards are students expected to master by subject across our range of grade levels and classrooms?	• Learning targets in the form of achievement standards organized by grade and subject as they unfold within and across grade levels	• Assessments must accurately reflect these standards and their associated classroom-level learning targets
	• Which of these standards are students mastering or progressing appropriately toward? Are there problem areas?	• nformation revealing patterns over time within the school year of achievement within and across teachers, grades, and subjects	• Comparable evidence of student learning status collected periodically during the year
	• Did enough of our students meet standards this year?	• Proportion of students meeting and not meeting each standard	• Annual assessments reveal how student did on each standard
	• What standards are students to master across our classrooms, grades, and schools?	• Standards mastered by grade and subject mapped within and across grade levels across schools	• Assessments must accurately reflect these standards
	• Did enough of our students meet standards this year?	• Proportion of students meeting each standard	• Annual assessments reveal how each student does on each standard

LEVEL 3: POLICY LEVEL USERS

Decision Makers	Decisions to be Made	Information Needed	Assessment System Implications
Superintendent	• What standards are to be met?	• Learning targets in the form of achievement standards organized by grade and subject	• Assessments must accurately reflect these standards
Various Policy Makers:	• Which of these standards are students mastering or making appropriate progress toward in what schools?	• Information revealing patterns of achievement within and across schools	• Comparable evidence of student learning status collected periodically during the year
School Boards,	• Did enough of our students meet standards this year?	• Proportion of students meeting each standard	• Annual assessments need to reveal how each student performed on each standard
Legislators,			
Departments of	• What standards are students expected to master in our schools?	• Learning targets in the form of achievement standards	• Assessments must accurately reflect these standards

Education, Business and Community Leaders		organized by grade and subject	
	• How many of our students are meeting standards?	• Scores reflecting patterns of achievement within and across schools and districts	• Comparable evidence of student learning status collected periodically
	• Did enough of our students meet standards this year?	• Proportion of students meeting each standard	• Annual assessments show how each student on each standard

It is critically important that we in the measurement community, as well as all in school leadership positions, see and understand the fundamental differences in the kinds of information needed across these levels of assessment uses. No single assessment is capable of meeting the information needs of all of these various users. A productive, multi-level assessment system is needed to be sure that all instructional decisions are informed and made well. Table 1 breaks those needs down into more specific person-by-person detail. *Fail to meet the information needs of anyone on this list or fail to implement quality assessments at any level, and we place students directly in harm's way.*

In other words, all parts of the system must contribute to effective schooling. If assessment isn't working effectively day to day in the classroom, instructional support or policy levels of assessment cannot pick up the slack. If bad decisions are being made day to day during the learning, then there isn't an interim or annual assessment yet invented that can overcome the dire consequences for the learner. But at the same time, equally unique and important decisions are made at instructional support and policy levels.

The balanced assessment systems of the future, unlike the unbalance standardized test-driven systems of the past, can meet the information needs of all relevant Table 1 assessment users. With its combination of its large-scale assessment legacy, banks of available quality ingredients for formative assessments, information management technologies, and capacity for providing professional development in classroom assessment, the measurement community has in place all of the ingredients to help clients honor the information needs of all assessment users. Now the challenge is to bring all of the parts to bear on behalf of student well being.

Two Critical Foundations

First, the structural foundation of any assessment system is the framework of achievement expectations to be reflected in the exercises and scoring schemes of its various component assessments. Whether those guiding achievement expectations are framed as state standards, local standards, a teacher's classroom standards, or the local curriculum designed to take students over time to those standards, certain keys to quality must be met. For instance, they must be

- Center on the truly important learnings of the field of study

- Clearly and completely articulated

- Within developmental reach of the students who to master them

- Reflective of the best current thinking of the field

- Organized in a manner consistent with the way learning will unfold

- Manageable in number for mastery within the instructional context

- Thoroughly mastered by those teachers charged with helping students master them

If these foundational criteria are not met, then both quality assessment and effective instruction will remain beyond reach. So the starting place for the development of balanced assessment systems is the verification of the quality of the learning expectations upon which it will rest. Until each local set of standards is in order, further consideration of assessment quality and use will be pointless.

And second in this same spirit, a commitment to the development and implementation of standards-based schools. Faculty must understand what it means to design and offer standards-based instruction and they

must be committed to a mission of maximizing the success of each student in mastering the standards in question. Without these, focus will be missing, as will the willingness to invest in success.

The remainder of this presentation assumes that these foundations are in place. If they are not, excellence in assessment in any terms will remain out of reach.

A Revolution in Assessment Dynamics

When the function of schools was to sort students from the highest to lowest achievers, the amount of time available to learn was fixed: one year per grade. The amount learned by the end of that time was free to vary: some of us learned a great deal, some very little. Able learners built on past success to grow rapidly. However, students who failed to master the early prerequisites within the allotted time failed to learn that which followed. After thirteen years of cumulative treatment in this manner, in effect, we were spread along an achievement continuum that literally labeled each student's rank in class upon graduation. Unfortunately, the system also produced and tolerated a significant number of students who dropped out of the standings altogether.

The emotional dynamics of this process were clear. From the very earliest grades, some students rode winning streaks to the top. Right from the start, they scored high on assessments. The emotional effect of this was to help them come to believe themselves to be capable learners—they became increasingly confident in school. That gave them the emotional strength to risk striving for more success because in their minds success was within reach if they tried. Notice, by the way, that the trigger for their learning success was their interpretation of their own success on assessments.

But other students scored very low on tests right from the beginning. This caused them to doubt their own capabilities as learners. They began to lose confidence which, in turn, deprived them of the emotional reserves to continue to risk trying. Chronic failure was hard to hide and became embarrassing. Better not to try. As their motivation waned, of course, achievement followed. Notice again how the learners' own interpretation of assessment results influenced their confidence and willingness to strive on.

In these schools, if some students worked hard and learned a great deal, that was a positive result, as they would finish high in the rank order. And if some students gave up in the face of what they believed to be inevitable failure, that was a necessary result too, because they would occupy places very low in the rank order. The greater the spread of achievement from top to bottom, the more dependable would be the rank order. This is why, if a student gave up and stopped trying (even dropped out of school), it was regarded as that student's problem, not the teacher's or school's. The school's responsibility was to provide the opportunity to learn. If students didn't take advantage of the opportunity, that was not the system's responsibility.

The important lesson we must learn is that the student's emotional reactions to assessment results will determine what the student thinks, feels, and does in response to those results. They can respond in either of two ways to any set of assessment results, one productive and the other not. The productive reaction has students saying, "I understand these results. I know what to do next to learn more. I can handle this. I choose to keep trying." The counter-productive response leaves students saying, "I don't know what these results mean for me. I have no idea what to do next. I can't handle this. I quit."

Over the past decade, we have come to understand that the accelerating technical and ethnic evolution of our society necessitates that all citizens become lifelong learners. We also have come to see that, in the above assessment environment, students in the bottom half of the rank order, plus all who drop out without being ranked, fail to develop the foundational reading, writing, math, and the problem solving proficiencies needed to become lifelong learners. As a result, society has asked its educators to raise the bottom of the rank order distribution to a certain level of achievement. We call these expectations our "academic achievement standards." Every state and province has them and, as a matter of public policy, schools are to be held accountable for making sure *all students* meet those standards.

If society wants all students to meet standards, then, as a pre-condition, all students must believe they can meet those standards; they all must be confident enough to be willing to take the risk of trying. Any other emotional state (such as the state of perpetual fear perpetrated in the schools of our youth) for any student is unacceptable. We can't have students who have yet to meet standards losing faith in themselves and giving up in futility.

As a result, now, assessment practices that permitted, even encouraged, some students to give up on learning must be replaced by those that engender hope and sustained effort for all students. In short, the entire emotional environment surrounding the experience of being evaluated must change for all, but especially for perennial low achievers. The driving emotional force of fear triggered by the prospect of an upcoming test now must be replaced by the emotions of optimism and persistence triggered by the belief that, "I can succeed at learning if I try." In other words, students must have continuous access to credible evidence of their own academic success.

Over the decades, school improvement experts have made the mistake of believing that the adults in the system are the most important assessment user/instructional decision makers; that is, we have believed that, as the adults make better instructional decisions, schools will become more effective. Clearly parents, teachers, school leaders, and policy makers make crucial decisions that influence the quality of schools and the more data based those decisions are, the better. But this discounts the fact that students may be even more important data-based instructional decision makers than the adults.

Consider, for example, the reality that students are constantly deciding if they can do the learning or not. They ask, can I get this or is it just too hard for me? Is the learning worth the energy I must expend to attain it? Is the learning worth the risk of public failure? We must understand that, if students come down on the wrong side of these crucial decisions and thus stop trying, it doesn't matter what the adults around them decide. If effect, students can render their teachers' instructional decisions null and void. They have it within their power to

make the adults ineffective and to prevent them from doing anything about it. If a student decides that the learning is beyond reach for her or him or that the risk of public failure is too great and too embarrassing, then regardless of what we adults do, there will be no learning.

So the essential issue for we adults is, what can we do to help students answer the above questions in ways that keep them trying? We know how to do this, and it is not by intensifying the intimidation! Further, we know what will happen to student achievement when we put effective classroom assessment practices in place. This leads to a key feature of the vision of excellence in assessment of the future.

Aspiring to a Productive Dynamics

Classroom assessment FOR student learning, as defined herein, turns the classroom assessment process and its results into an instructional intervention designed to increase, not merely monitor, student confidence, motivation, and learning. Research evidence gathered in hundreds of studies conducted literally around the world over the past decade (detailed below) shows that the consistent application of principles of assessment FOR learning can give rise to unprecedented gains in student achievement, especially for perennial low achievers. The implications for such gains for raising test scores and closing achievement score gaps are profound.

One unique feature of the formative assessment FOR learning process is that it acknowledges the critical importance of the instructional decisions made by students and their teachers *working as a team*—it provides the information they need when they need it. In that context, students become consumers of assessment information too, using evidence of their own progress to understand what comes next for them.

Another important feature is its reliance on repeated self assessments, each of which instructs the learner on how to improve performance on the next one. This kind of continuous descriptive feedback provided strategically in amounts that students can address effectively (not be overwhelmed by) and that build progressively over time helps them

continue to believe that success is within reach if they keep trying.

Still another unique feature is its reliance on carefully drawn learning progressions or curriculum maps written in teacher, student- and family-friendly versions so that the trajectory (i.e., what has been learned and what comes next) is clear to all throughout the learning. This, like descriptive feedback above, leads directly to our second reason for assessing: If we assess to motivate students to try, assessment FOR learning enables students by helping them watch themselves grow—by causing them to believe that success is within reach if they keep trying.

Thus, the student's role in the assessment environment is to strive to understand what success looks like and to use each assessment to determine how to do better the next time. Assessments become far more than merely one-time events attached onto the end of the teaching. They become part of the learning process by keeping students posted on their progress and confident enough to continue striving. Students become partners in the self assessment process during the learning by, for example, collaborating with their teachers in the creation and use of assessments like those they will be held accountable later. This reveals to them the secrets to their own learning success while they are still learning. They become partners in the accumulation of growth portfolios that reveal to them, their teachers and their families changes in their own achievement as it is happening. This builds confidence that ultimate success is within reach. Finally, students become partners in communicating about their own learning success as they rely on concrete evidence from their portfolios presented in student led conferences to inform their families of their learning.

When assessment FOR learning practices like these play out as a matter of routine in classrooms, as mentioned previously, evidence gathered around the world consistently reveals effect sizes of a half to one and a half standard deviations and more, directly attributable to the application of formative classroom assessment FOR student learning. In his original mastery learning research, Bloom and his students (1984) made extensive use of

classroom assessment in support of learning in just the same terms as does the assessment FOR learning concept being described here and reported subsequent gains in student test performance of one to two standard deviations. Black and Wiliam, in their 1998 watershed research review of over 250 studies from around the world on the impact of effective classroom assessment and report gains of a half to a full standard deviation, with the largest gains being realized by low achievers. Meisels, et al. (2003) involved students in performance assessments and report gains of over one and a half standard deviations on subsequent tests. And finally, Rodriguez (2004) reports effects of similar size in U.S. TIMSS math performance arising from the effective management of classroom assessment.

According to these researchers, the expected achievement score gains will rival in their impact on student achievement the implementation of one-on-one tutorial instruction, with the largest gains being realized by the lowest achievers, thus reducing achievement gaps.

The Tipping Point: A Total Assessment Solution

The measurement community is uniquely position to lead the transformation of assessment systems into their next era just as it led schools into the standardized test and accountability era over the past century. We remain positioned to advise leaders at the policy level of assessment through the continued application of its large-scale assessment research and development capacities just as it has for decades. In addition, with its immense banks of readily-available assessment exercises and scoring capacities, along with its instructional management technologies, we can help local districts develop interim, benchmark, or short cycle assessments for use at the level of instructional support. Finally, with previously unavailable programs of professional development in day to day classroom assessment now in place, for the first time in the evolving history of assessment in America, the measurement community can help local educators develop and use high-quality day-to-day classroom assessments. So a totally balanced and integrated assessment system with

all parts working together in the service of student success is within reach.

Not only can we help educators devise quality assessments, but we know far more than ever before how to use them effectively. Beneath the technology of assessment is the capacity to fill immense gaps in the ability of educators and the public to use assessments productively in the service of the success of all learners. The severe and chronic problem we can address now is the fact that very few teachers and almost no school administrators have been given the opportunity to learn about principles of sound assessment practice of any sort, let alone assessment FOR learning. While virtually all licensing standards require competence in assessment, typically neither pre-service nor in-service teacher or administrator training programs typically include this kind of training (Crooks, 1989; Stiggins, 1999; Shepard, et al., 2005). As a result of this lack of preparation:

- Educators are unable to differentiate among the various information needs of different assessment users, including students.

- Achievement targets remain written at the state or district-level standards level rather than being translated into classroom level learning progressions that lead up to each standard.

- The risk of inaccurate classroom assessments remains high.

- Feedback provided to students remains evaluative (such as grades) versus helpfully descriptive.

- Students are rarely involved in self-assessment, tracking their own progress, or communicating their learning to others, all of which can give rise to profound learning gains.

The current state of affairs is clear: We know what teachers and administrators need to know and understand to assess effectively day to day or year to year. We can provide them with the assessment tools and technologies needed to assess effectively. It is clear what will happen to student learning when educators do the right thing by their students from an assessment point of view. And we know how to deliver the proper assessment competencies into the hands of all key users with efficient and effective professional development. The only unanswered question is, *will practitioners be given the opportunity to learn to assess effectively*? Historically, the answer has been an unequivocal, no. As a result, the immense potential of assessment to support student learning has gone untapped. It need not be so. We have in hand a new vision of excellence in assessment that will tap the well spring of confidence, motivation and learning potential that resides within every student.

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