

## Data Tracking Outline:

- Benefits of data tracking
- Questions, questions, questions...
- Jigsaw...in groups of 4, read *Assessment as Feedback* by Grant Wiggins
- Discuss reading
- Why should I track data?
- Why should I care about my student's progress or decline?
- Why is it important for my students/parents to understand TCAP lingo?
- What are the TCAP levels? Should my students be aware of these levels? Why or why not?
- TN Dept of Ed cut scores, what they mean and how are they calculated?
- How much of your present teacher evaluation is based on student achievement?
- How can I most efficiently track my students?
- What is TVAAS and how is it calculated?
- What are levels 1-5 per TVAAS for a teacher?
- What does it take to be a level 5 teacher?
- Pre-test, pre-test, pre-test...
- Communicate in a one on one setting each students grade
- More signatures and goals...
- *Sell, sell, sell...POINTS GAINED is the key-this is your TVAAS...*
- Examples of past data
- What is an item analysis and why is this important?
- File your results year to year.
- Pending questions?????

## Part 1:

*\*\*Can you say right now that you know the growth/decline and TCAP level for each student that you teach? That each student and parent understands the different levels for TCAP and presently knows their growth/decline and level? That you are confident you are on par to be a level 5 TVAAS teacher for the State?*

*Why or why not?*

Below, please write down any questions you may have regarding TCAP levels, TVAAS levels, data tracking, etc:

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Parts 2-5, please watch the PowerPoint presentation.

2014

2015

2016

## ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

1. **BELOW BASIC** – Students who perform at this level have not demonstrated mastery in academic performance, thinking abilities, and application of understandings that reflect the knowledge and skill specified by the grade/course level content standards and are not prepared for the next level of study.

**2. BASIC** – Students who perform at this level demonstrate **partial** mastery in academic performance, thinking abilities, and application of understandings that reflect the knowledge and skill specified by the grade/course level content standards and are minimally prepared for the next level of study.

**3. PROFICIENT** – Students who perform at this level demonstrate mastery in academic performance, thinking abilities, and application of understandings that reflect the knowledge and skill specified by the grade/course level content standards and are prepared for the next level of study.

**4. ADVANCED**—Students who perform at this level demonstrate superior mastery in academic performance, thinking abilities, and application of understandings that reflect the knowledge and skill specified by the grade/course level content standards and are significantly prepared for the next level of study.

The Individual Profile Report (IPR) is intended primarily for students and parents. The IPR provides information regarding a student's overall performance on the content area and in each reporting category. Reporting Category Performance Index (RCPI) results can be used to help identify areas of student strengths and opportunities for improvement in each reporting category. This report provides important information that can be used for instructional planning specific to the student and it also provides a point of reference for the teacher during a parent-teacher conference.

- How to calculate levels.

2011 Pre-Equated ACH Cut Scores

		2011 Pre-Equated ACH Cut Scores				2011 Pre-Equated ACH Cut Scores			
		Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Below Proficient	Advanced
Reading/ Language Arts	3	600-708	709-759	760-796	797-900	0-26	27-47	48-58	59-67
	4	600-708	709-759	760-798	799-900	0-30	31-50	51-60	61-67
	5	600-705	706-754	755-802	803-900	0-28	29-47	48-60	61-67
	6	600-707	708-751	752-802	803-900	0-32	33-51	52-66	67-75
	7	600-717	718-759	760-797	798-900	0-34	35-53	54-64	65-75
Mathematics	3	600-706	707-759	760-798	799-900	0-32	33-52	53-64	65-75
	4	600-702	703-754	755-790	791-900	0-28	29-49	50-59	60-64
	5	600-721	722-766	767-798	799-900	0-30	31-48	49-57	58-64
	6	600-727	728-765	764-794	795-900	0-31	32-47	48-57	58-64
	7	600-732	733-769	770-794	795-900	0-29	30-44	45-53	54-64
Science	3	600-739	740-771	772-797	798-900	0-29	30-42	43-52	53-64
	4	600-742	743-774	775-797	798-900	0-31	32-45	46-54	55-64
	5	600-715	716-741	742-791	792-900	0-35	36-45	46-58	59-64
	6	600-720	721-755	756-792	793-900	0-30	31-44	45-55	56-64
	7	600-722	723-750	751-798	799-900	0-34	35-45	46-58	59-64
Social Studies	3	600-727	728-752	753-800	801-900	0-30	31-40	41-55	56-64
	4	600-720	721-751	752-791	792-900	0-29	30-40	41-54	55-64
	5	600-715	716-747	748-788	789-900	0-30	31-42	43-55	56-64
	6	120-187	188-211	212-280		0-33	34-50	51-64	
	7	120-189	190-215	216-280		0-26	27-43	44-64	

TCAP Achievement Form B, Spring 2011  
Pre-Equated RCPI Cut Scores  
Science

Grade	Objective Code & Objective Title	Pre-Equated RCPI Cut Scores			
		Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Below Proficient
3	1. Cells, Flow of Matter & Energy, Heredity	14	53	69	94
	2. Interdependence, Biodiversity & Change	11	58	72	89
	3. The Universe, The Earth, The Atmosphere	16	56	72	93
	4. Matter and Energy	11	54	69	90
	5. Motion, Forces in Nature	12	60	74	89
4	1. Cells, Flow of Matter & Energy, Heredity	12	42	64	85
	2. Interdependence, Biodiversity & Change	7	44	70	89
	3. The Universe, The Earth, The Atmosphere	16	48	69	88
	4. Matter and Energy	15	51	70	85
	5. Motion, Forces in Nature	14	53	73	89
5	1. Cells, Flow of Matter & Energy, Heredity	14	61	77	93
	2. Interdependence, Biodiversity & Change	14	62	80	96
	3. The Universe, The Earth, The Atmosphere	13	55	73	90
	4. Matter and Energy	14	43	55	84
	5. Motion, Forces in Nature	9	51	68	90

\*RCPI: B – Basic, P – Proficient, A – Advanced

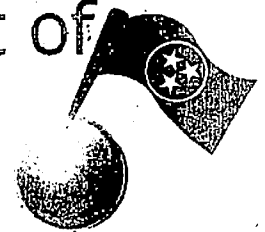
Grade	Objective Code & Objective Title	Pre-Equated RCPI Cut Scores			
		Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Below Proficient
6	1. Inquiry and Technology & Engineering	9	56	70	89
	2. Interdependence	11	49	69	91
	3. The Universe	18	46	60	90
	4. The Atmosphere	10	34	44	71
	5. Energy, Forces in Nature	16	53	69	91
7	1. Inquiry and Technology & Engineering	8	52	67	78
	2. Cells, Flow of Matter & Energy	14	37	58	88
	3. Heredity	9	48	67	89
	4. The Earth	17	45	62	85
	5. Motion	16	49	65	86
8	1. Inquiry and Technology & Engineering	9	49	71	88
	2. Biodiversity and Change	13	53	73	89
	3. Chemical Reaction	18	37	56	87
	4. Properties of Matter	12	56	75	90
	5. Forces of Nature	12	46	63	81

# **TVAAS TEACHER EFFECT**

## **Data Quality are most IMPORTANT**

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- Teacher/Student Linkages
  - Teacher Name found on the Teacher License
  - Student Schedules and Teacher Identification
  - (NEW) Teacher License Number
- 35% of the new evaluation must consist of Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) data or some other comparable measure of student growth.
- 15% of the new evaluation must consist of other measures of student achievement



# Record of Standards Assessed

Subject:

Standard Number													
Student Names	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1.													
2.													
3.													
4.													
5.													
6.													
7.													
8.													
9.													
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28.													
29.													
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31.													
32.													



5

Subject:

lards Assessed

[illegible]

## 2011 System Teaching Effectiveness Summary

### Canary Elementary School in Large Urban School District

All Subject Groups

#### TCAP Subjects

Note: The following subject(s) are included: TCAP Math, TCAP Reading/Language, TCAP Science, TCAP Social Studies.

Teaching Effectiveness Category	Below Reference, Least Effective			Below Reference, Approaching Average Effectiveness			At Reference, Average Effectiveness			Above Reference, Above Average Effectiveness			Above Reference, Most Effective		
	Level 1			Level 2			Level 3			Level 4			Level 5		
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
School	5	5	6	10	8	6	24	27	26	5	5	6	8	7	9
System	946	876	923	189	165	125	646	489	536	204	241	253	1028	1237	1211
State	1871	1855	1839	355	344	296	1300	962	1111	461	453	469	2070	2446	2413

Notes: The reference for high school teachers is the state average teacher. For grades 4-8, it is the gain based on the state growth standard set in 2008-2009. Teachers who teach multiple tested subjects/grades are counted separately for each subject/grade in this report.

#### Rules for Effectiveness Level Determination

Level 5, Most Effective: Teachers whose students are making substantially more progress than the state growth standard/state average (the teacher's index is 2 or greater).

Level 4, Above Average Effectiveness: Teachers whose students are making more progress than the state growth standard/state average (the teacher's index is equal to or greater than 1 but less than 2).

Level 3, Average Effectiveness: Teachers whose students are making the same amount of progress as the state growth standard/state average (the teacher's index is equal to or greater than -1 but less than 1).

Level 2, Approaching Average Effectiveness: Teachers whose students are making less progress than the state growth standard/state average (the teacher's index is equal to or greater than -2 but less than -1).

Level 1, Least Effective: Teachers whose students are making substantially less progress than the state growth standard/state average (the teacher's index is less than -2).

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has had a student/teacher conference today regarding their growth or decline toward the TCAP for 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science. Your child has now completed 2 TCAP pre-tests this school year in Science. Please note that I have now taught your child  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade science standards. This test will NOT be entered as a grade; it is simply for both the student and parent/guardian to be aware the progress toward TCAP.

Pre-Test #1 (Taken 8/16): \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Test #2 (Taken 12/8): \_\_\_\_\_

Total points of growth or decline: \_\_\_\_\_

Your child shows a growth/decline in preparation toward the end of the year TCAP in science.

The following are the cut scores for Science TCAP:

Advanced: 83-100

Proficient: 61-82

Basic: 47-60

Below Basic: 46-0

Please sign and return to Mrs. Casey by Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has had a student/teacher conference today regarding their growth or decline toward the TCAP for 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science. Your child has now completed 2 TCAP pre-tests this school year in Science. Please note that I have now taught your child  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade science standards. This test will NOT be entered as a grade; it is simply for both the student and parent/guardian to be aware the progress toward TCAP.

Pre-Test #1 (Taken 8/16): \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Test #2 (Taken 12/8): \_\_\_\_\_

Total points of growth or decline: \_\_\_\_\_

Your child shows a growth/decline in preparation toward the end of the year TCAP in science.

The following are the cut scores for Science TCAP:

Advanced: 83-100

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Below Basic: 46-0

Please sign and return to Mrs. Casey by Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_



## Review Games

### **Liar, Liar:**

Break your students up into 2-4 groups depending on class sizes. Select one student to be scorekeeper on the board. The first group is asked a review question and everyone who feels confident in answering the question, stands up. At this point, the teacher calls on one of those students to answer. If the answer is correct, then the group wins the number of points that compares to how many people in the group were standing. For example, if five students were standing, then the group gets five points. If the answer is incorrect, the group gets no points and the question continues to the next group. The fun in this game is that students can stand up and "bluff" even if they do not know the correct answer because only one person in the group will be selected to provide the answer. It becomes a fun gamble for the students, because the more people who are standing, the more points the group gets if they answer correctly. However, if the person who is called on to answer is a "bluffer" then the group gets zero points.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Circle Review:**

Give each student an index card and have them write down several questions and answers. Find some space either in your classroom or outside and break the class into two groups. One group forms a circle and the other group forms a larger circle around them. The students in the outer circle face inward and the students in the inner circle face outward so they are looking at each other. One student asks the other one of their questions and then vice versa. When you say "rotate" the inner circle moves one step to the right and the process continues until the original questioners meet back up.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **I have...Who has?:**

This is a great vocabulary review. Ahead of time, you make up the cards with a vocabulary word on the front and a different definition on the back. After passing the cards out to the kids, one student begins by reading the definition on the card. At that point, whoever has the vocabulary word that fits with the definition says, "I have" and whatever the word is. That student then says "Who has," and reads the definition on the back of their card. It continues until you return to the original vocabulary word. If you want to create some friendly competition then time your classes and give a reward to the class that can move through it the fastest.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **The Chicka-Chicka Game:**

Take a square piece of paper and fold the four corners in toward the middle. Flip it over and do the same again. Look familiar from childhood? Adorn the outside four flaps with tough vocab words to be spelled, the inside eight triangles with topics and underneath them a question and answer for the topic.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Charades:**

If you want to make this competitive (which all middle school students love), then break them into small teams that can earn points for correct guesses. This gets even more fun as the year goes on; if you allow them to act out anything you have covered in class up to that point. When a student from one team is up acting it out, the others in that group cannot guess. This allows the actor to get ideas from their group if they need to.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Beach Ball Review:**

Buy a beach ball, and before inflating it, write questions everywhere on it. The rules are you have to read and answer the question that is closest to your right thumb, and you cannot throw to someone who has already had it, unless everyone has already gone.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Assessment as Feedback

by Grant Wiggins

Years ago, Thomas Gilbert summed up the principles of good feedback in his delightful and informative book *Human Competence*. In it, he catalogued the requirements of any information system "designed to give maximum support to performance." The requirements involved eight steps:

1. Identify the expected accomplishments.
2. State the requirements of each accomplishment. If there is any doubt that people understand the reason why an accomplishment and its requirements are important, explain this.
3. Describe how performance will be measured and why.
4. Set exemplary standards, preferably in measurement terms.
5. Identify exemplary performers and any available resources that people can use to become exemplary performers.
6. Provide frequent and unequivocal feedback about how well each person is performing. This confirmation should be expressed as a comparison with an exemplary standard. Consequences of good and poor performance should also be made clear.
7. Supply as much backup information as needed to help people troubleshoot their own performance.
8. Relate various aspects of poor performance to specific remedial actions.

Gilbert sardonically adds that "these steps are far too simple to be called a 'technology,' but it may be that their simplicity helps explain why they are so rarely followed." He elaborates, "In years of looking at schools and jobs, I have almost never seen an ideal [feedback] system. Managers, teachers, employees, and students seldom have adequate information about how well they are performing." A key question to ponder is: why are such "simple" steps "rarely followed"? What views and practices in schools cause us to ignore or violate such commonsensical views about performance?



One reason we rarely follow such simple steps is that there are fundamental misconceptions about assessment generally and feedback in particular among educators. As I have argued, far too many educators treat assessment as something one does after teaching and learning are over instead of seeing assessment as central to learning. (If I were to say that learning requires feedback, then the proposition seems immediately more obvious.) And in terms of feedback, many teachers mistakenly think that giving such general praise as "Good job!" is feedback, for example. But such praise only keeps you interested; it cannot improve your performance, which is what feedback can do.

So, let us begin at the beginning and ask: What is feedback? How does it differ from other forms of performance-related information? And what must assessment be to provide more of it?

What is feedback? Feedback is information about how we did in light of some goal. We hit the tennis ball and see where it lands, we give a speech and hear (as well as witness) audience reaction as we speak, we design an experiment and check the results for error margin, we use the word processor and the spell checker underlines misspellings – feedback. Though we use the word more loosely in day-to-day talk to encompass many kinds of effects or reactions, here we narrow the meaning of feedback to its more technical meaning: information about what and was not accomplished, given a specific goal.

This definition and these examples enable us to see what feedback is and what it isn't. Feedback is useful information about what happened. It thus is not guidance (advice based on feedback) or evaluation (a value judgment about the meaning of the results.) Thus, we profit from pondering our current bad habit of defining assessment as testing and the result as a score merely. How would the tennis player improve if all the coach did was shout out letter grades or stanines? How would the public speaker become skilled and poised if there were never a real audience and experts merely wrote back and gave their scores a few weeks later? Our challenge as educators is to think of assessment as first and foremost educative, in other words. Our aim must therefore be to create assessments that provide better feedback by design, and not think of improvements in terms of more accurate evaluation. Indeed, without better feedback (and guidance based on the feedback) in student assessment, there is little point to precise scores and value judgments.

Feedback is not a labor-intensive, impractical strategy for school reform. Did you notice that all the above examples do not involve a person giving a grade or evaluative comment? A common misconception about feedback in schools is that it is impossible to provide enough of it because good feedback seemingly requires intensive one-on-one tutorials. But much important feedback is derived from situational information in response to trying to accomplish a task. The challenge of designing learning, in fact, is to make it possible for students to self-assess and self-adjust effectively, with minimal intervention by the teacher. Put another way, instructional design is the art of maximizing self-directed learning and useful



information from the situation, hence the freeing up of the teacher to provide personal feedback and guidance when needed.

When we ponder the constant use of year-end tests (be they state-imposed or locally-designed) we better see how far we are from making feedback central to learning. A one-shot "secure" test at the end of the year is as little likely to improve student performance as merely being given a single letter grade at season's end (and no other information) by a tennis coach, after being tested on some drills that you have never seen before test day. If our aim is to improve student performance, not just measure it, we must ensure that students know the performances expected of them, the standards against which they will be judged, and have opportunities to learn from the assessment in future assessments.

What, then, must assessment be to be educative? What are the elements of an effective feedback and learning system?

As the above comments suggest, educative assessment requires a known set of measurable goals, standards and criteria that make the goals real and specific (via models and specifications), descriptive feedback against those standards, honest yet tactful evaluation, and useful guidance. Elaborations for these elements follow:

### **Elements of a an educative assessment system:**

#### **1. Standards**

- specifications (e.g. 80 wpm w/ 0 mistakes)
- models (exemplars of each point on the scale – e.g. anchor papers)
- criteria: conditions to be met to achieve goals – e.g. "persuasive and clear" writing

#### **2. Feedback**

- Facts: what events/behavior happened, related to goal
- Impact: a description of the effects of the facts (results and/or reactions)
- Commentary: the facts and impact explained in the context of the goal; an explanation of all confirmation and disconfirmation concerning the results

#### **3. Elements of evaluation**

- Evaluation: value judgments made about the facts and their impact
- Praise / Blame: appraisal of individual's performance in light of expectations for that performer

#### **4. Elements of Guidance**

- Advice about what to do in light of the feedback



- Re-direction of current practice in light of results

### **Feedback vs. Evaluation**

**1. Facts:** provide the evidence without interpretation or evaluation

- What did or did not happen, exactly? Describe the action/performance/product using only specific, concrete, non-judgmental language.

- Specify context and goal, as needed: what/who/where/when/how.

- Commentary:

Describe what happened in terms of the explicit or implicit goal/intent/standard/model. Confirm what was on-target, where effect matched intent, to reinforce it; and note where actions were off-target, where effect did not match intent, to underscore the need for re-direction.

Avoid or downplay language that stresses what the coach/judge liked or didn't like. Liking has nothing to do with it: how did the behavior meet or not meet the criteria and standards?

- Impact:

Describe the effects that occurred as an immediate result of the facts. (e.g. fact: batter swung late and used his arms in swinging, not his body and legs. Impact: the batter hit a soft ground ball to the second baseman which was not his aim.)

An audience or reactor's response: a description of the particular thoughts and feelings without using value language or authoritative generalizations. Examples: the audience applauded enthusiastically, many people looked bored, the questions afterward suggested key points were not understood, many audience members stayed afterward to talk and ask further questions, etc. (Note: it is a fact, not a value judgment, to say: "The ending of your story really bothered me because I felt like you had built up a completely different mood." A value judgment would be to go beyond the facts of your personal reaction to a blanket judgment about merit: "The ending is poor.")

**2. Evaluation:** The use of specific criterial language (unpersuasive, organized, unclear, polished, etc.) in relation to the goals and standards appropriate to this performance,



not just general words of approval/disapproval, like/dislike.

**Praise/blame, based on criteria:**

- Note that phrases like "Good job!" are useful only when followed or preceded by specific feedback and evaluation justifying the praise or blame. Otherwise the only "feedback" transmitted is that the person was pleased or not, for whatever reason.

**Feedback and guidance.** Feedback is information about what happened, the result or effect of our actions. The environment or other people "feed back" to us the impact of our behavior, be that upshot intended or unintended. Guidance, on the other hand, gives future direction: what should I do, in light of what just happened? And evaluation, finally, judges my overall performance against a standard. Feedback tells me whether I am on course. Guidance tells me the most likely ways to achieve my goal. Evaluation tells me whether I am or have been sufficiently on course to be deemed competent or successful.

As this brief analysis makes clearer, feedback is value-neutral. It merely reports what did and did not happen. Elbow described the difference between feedback and evaluation in writing, for example, in terms of "criterion-based feedback" and "reader-based feedback." The former in effect asks "What is its quality?" while the latter asks "How does it work?" The mixing up of the two ideas "tends to keep people from noticing that they could get by with far less measurement . . . . The unspoken premise that permeates much of education is that every performance must be measured and that the most important response to a performance is to measure it. The claim need only be stated to be seen through . . . . When an individual teacher, a department, or a whole faculty sits down and asks, 'At what point and for what purposes do we need measurement?' they will invariably see that they engage in too much of it.

As this analysis also suggests, performance and assessment form a series of continuous and iterative steps – the so-called feedback loop. A deliberate system of feedback "loops", in which I constantly confirm or disconfirm the results of my actions (by attending to the visible effects of prior feedback acting on that information) is how all successful performance develops and eventually occurs. This analysis underscores what is so often wrong with what passes for feedback in schools, for both students and adults. As Peter Senge put it in his well-known book on management, to get feedback is not to "gather opinions about an act we have undertaken . . . . [Rather] in systems thinking, feedback is a broader concept. It means any reciprocal flow of influence." In education, that means that a "learning system" is one in which I not only receive enough data until I get the task done properly, but opportunities to reveal my learning via self-adjustment in later and deliberately repeated assessments.

**Concurrent Feedback.** Perhaps the greatest indication of our failure to understand the "loop" nature of feedback and the poor feedback in current



testing and student assessment can be found in once again looking at the examples we noted at the outset. In public speaking, tennis, computer, and science the key feedback occurs during performance, not after it. Concurrent feedback is information that is "fed back" to us as we perform; serving as the basis for learning and intelligent self-adjustment en route. (Even when real-world feedback occurs after performance it is typically far more timely than the feedback from all local, state and national testing.)

We often judge competence in the real world, in fact, by a person's ability to adjust in light of feedback to circumstances. Mastery, in other words, is not the answering of simplistic and discrete questions correctly, but the solving of complex challenges which requires responding to the feedback provided as we problem-solve or perform. "You know the trouble with kids today?" one woman in a workshop offered: "They don't know what to do when they don't know what to do." That is primarily because of our testing system which never tests for it. Yet, almost all complex real-world performance requires numerous "trials" (and thus the self-correcting of many "errors" en route through feedback) if standards are to be met.

Here again, then, we must puzzle over our opening question: How did we lose sight of this obvious idea? Though a seemingly-radical move for test construction, the idea of concurrent feedback is hardly opaque or new: Thorndike noted almost a century ago that good educational design involves "the law of effect, which holds essentially that learning is enhanced when people see the effects from what they try." William James, even earlier, wrote that effective education requires that we "receive sensible news of our behavior and its results. We hear the words we have spoken, feel our own blow as we give it, or read in the bystander's eyes the success or failure of our conduct. Now this return wave . . . pertains to the completeness of the whole experience." Haney's recent literature reviews only underscore the point: "a meta-analysis of forty previous studies on the instructional effects of feedback in test-like events showed that relatively rapid feedback (i.e. immediately after a test was completed) is more effective than feedback after a day or more. Also, feedback providing guidance to, or identification of, correct answers is more instructionally effective than feedback that simply tells learners whether their answers are right or wrong."

What, then, should we make of modern testing methodologies that give the students no feedback as they proceed, or the providing of scores and grades on a May test or June exam after school is out? What of instruction that assumes that "coverage" causes learning – as opposed to the learner's attempts to learn? Without being taught what excellent performance is; without being taught how to self-adjust, achievement becomes more a matter of lucky talents and savvy guesswork than self-directed and long-lasting learning. And if instruction only provides teacher guidance (but little in the way of feedback in reference to standards to justify or make clear the meaning of the guidance), then students must perpetually ask – as they do! – "Is this right? Is this what you want?" The development of autonomy and competence is undermined when students are reduced to guessing what will be on the test, puzzling over scores, and getting



what little feedback they receive many days after performance (in a curriculum that moves on, irrespective of results.)

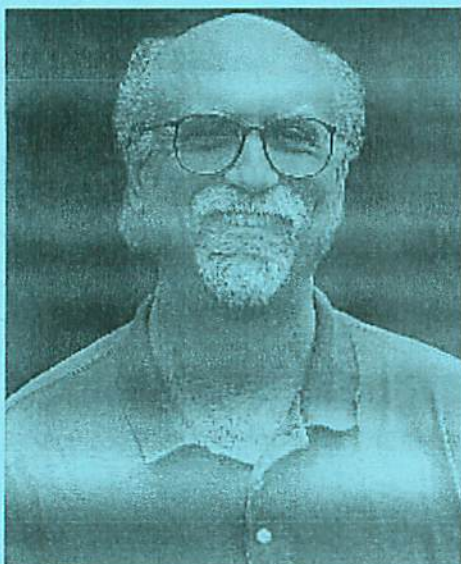
While it is unclear what has caused us to lose sight of these truths about learning, one ironic observation about adults seems obvious: what is obvious to us is not obvious to students. Indeed, we might define "student" as a person who does not yet know or see what is obvious to the expert. The constant challenge of teaching is to escape adult egocentrism about what is and isn't obvious. This point was brought home to me recently in coaching my 9-year-old son's baseball team. What is painfully obvious to all three adult coaches about "backing up the play" (i.e. getting behind another player who is trying to catch the ball in the event that he fails to catch it) is not at all obvious to the kids. They have not developed the habit of anticipating where the ball is headed and where they must head in support of one another.

That skill, like all complex performance learning, can only become instinctive through instruction and constant feedback in attempts to use it; teaching the idea of backing up – the guidance – makes little or no difference in their behavior unless the kids see many times the consequences of backing up and not backing up. And we are talking here about something far more simple than almost all key learnings in school (yet coaches, like teachers, get impatient and upset when kids don't "see it" and do it properly.) Guidance and evaluation make little difference unless there is prior clarity about goals, means, and feedback.

Important performances are never mastered the first or fortieth time. We therefore need less teaching and summative testing, and more feedback in schools. When and where should you start to regain control of learning via educative assessment?

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#### About the author



Grant Wiggins, President of Grant Wiggins & Associates, earned his Ed. D. from Harvard University and his B. A. from St. John's College in Annapolis. Grant consults with schools,



districts and state education departments on a variety of reform matters; organizes conferences and workshops; and develops print materials and Web-based resources on curricular change. Grant's work has been supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the Education Commission of the States, and, he has recently completed a one-year appointment as Scholar-in-Residence on educational design issues at The College of New Jersey.

Over the past fifteen years, Grant has worked on some of the most influential reform initiatives in the country, including Vermont's portfolio system and the Coalition of Essential Schools. He has established a statewide Consortium devoted to assessment reform, and designed a performance-based and teacher-run portfolio assessment prototype for the states of North Carolina and New Jersey.

Perhaps best known for being the co-author, with Jay McTighe, of *Understanding By Design* and *The Understanding By Design Handbook*, the award-winning and highly successful materials on curriculum published by ASCD, Grant is also the author of *Educative Assessment and Assessing Student Performance*, both published by Jossey-Bass. His many articles have appeared in such journals as *Educational Leadership* and *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Grant's work is grounded in 14 years of secondary school teaching and coaching. Grant taught English and electives in Philosophy, coached Varsity soccer, Cross-Country, JV Baseball, and Track & Field. More recently Grant has been coaching his two sons in soccer and baseball. He also plays guitar and sings in a rock band called the Hazbins. You may contact him at [grant@grantwiggins.org](mailto:grant@grantwiggins.org)