Beginning with clear targets and assessing them with accuracy are the second and third keys to quality assessment presented by Rick Stiggins and others in *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right – Using It Well*. The authors ask, “What is the intended learning?” Georgia Performance Standards provide “clear expectations for instruction, assessment, and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards.” In other words, the standards inform teachers, students and parents about the specifics of what students should know and be able to do.

Are the targets clear and usable? If we can fit them in one of five categories in Stiggins’ suggested framework, they pass a basic requirement. “These categories… become especially useful…when we determine which method we should use to assess intended learning.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Learning Targets</th>
<th>Knowledge – Facts and concepts we want students to know</th>
<th>Reasoning – Students use what they know to reason and solve problems</th>
<th>Skills – Students use their knowledge and reasoning to act skillfully</th>
<th>Products – Students use their knowledge, reasoning, and skills to create a concrete product</th>
<th>Dispositions – Students’ attitudes about school and learning; affective goals that are usually not found in state standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target to Be Assessed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment Method</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment Method</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment Method</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personal Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Good for mastery of elements of knowledge</td>
<td>Good match for relationship understanding</td>
<td>Too time consuming</td>
<td>Good to question, evaluate, infer – but time consuming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>For some reasoning patterns</td>
<td>Suitable assessment for reasoning and complex problem solving</td>
<td>For inferring reasoning through observation</td>
<td>For student demonstration and teacher probing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning</td>
<td>Weak for assessing product quality</td>
<td>Strong match for written products</td>
<td>Good match that assesses product attributes</td>
<td>Not good match</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Skills</td>
<td>Assesses mastery of knowledge prerequisites but not reliable for tapping skills themselves</td>
<td>Good match to observe and evaluate skills</td>
<td>Strong oral skill match</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Create Products</td>
<td>Weak for assessing product quality</td>
<td>Strong match for written products</td>
<td>Good match that assesses product attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Our final focus, in the last edition, will be *Communicating Assessment Results*. For more information on Georgia Performance Standards, see the following website created by the Georgia Department of Education: [www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org).
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
AT
PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

There are basically two types of classroom assessments: formative and summative. Stiggins (2006) describes formative assessment as assessment for learning and summative assessment as assessment of learning. A review of the literature on assessment reveals a debate of sorts on just what constitutes formative and summative assessment. However, according to an article appearing in Educational Leadership, Chappuis and Chappuis (2008) contend that “Even though assessments will continue to be labeled formative or summative, how the results are used is what determines whether the assessment is formative or summative.”

Formative assessment (Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999) is a critical first step in planning instruction. It is during this time when the assessment will guide the decisions teachers make about instructional methods to meet the needs of all the learners. If the assessment approach used is compatible with the goals and objectives of the curriculum, i.e. state standards, then the information obtained from assessments will help teachers to know what to teach, when children are ready to learn and how to structure their learning experiences. Assessment for learning can take many different forms in the classroom. It consists of anything teachers do to help students answer three questions (Atkin, Black and Coffey, 2001):

- Where am I going? (State standards)
- Where am I now? (Quizzes, rubrics, scoring guide, etc.)
- How can I close the gap? (Immediate teacher feedback)

At Parkside Elementary School, formative assessments are used in a variety of ways to gauge student learning on a daily basis. Parkside utilizes the instructional team approach. Therefore, during grade-level weekly common planning times, teachers identify and discuss the state curriculum standards that they are teaching and then create formative assessments that will measure what students will learn along the way. Once the data from the assessments have been analyzed, students who are not mastering standards are re-taught the information in a different way. Students who are mastering the standards are given lessons that provide greater depth of the subject matter utilizing critical thinking skills. Assessments used by teachers include rubrics, descriptive feedback, questioning, exit tickets and student self-assessment. In addition, the use of technology is a valuable formative assessment tool. Through the use of Promethean Board technology, the ActiVotes and ActivExpressions allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the standard being taught and get immediate feedback.

In summary, formative assessments in the classroom provide teachers with information needed to adjust teaching and learning throughout the teaching/learning cycle. Assessment for learning gives students the chance to self-assess and make improvements while there is still time to act before the summative assessment takes place. Research suggests that involvement in and ownership of their work increases students’ motivation to learn. It enables students to take control of their own learning by providing a clear vision of where they stand in relation to the standards and what is needed to make acceptable progress towards those learning goals.
During the 2008-2009 school year, East Lake’s principal, Gwendolyn Benton, was awarded the Atlanta Families Award. Mrs. Benton was excited about the resources the award would bring to the school. As in many districts across the country, math was a concern for East Lake Elementary School. During the summer and as a part of her professional development, Mrs. Benton attended a Singapore Math Conference in Nevada. Upon her return, an attendee and Mrs. Benton redelivered many of the strategies to support learning math as a left brain to right brain process which included model drawing to solve word problems. She also shared several other strategies with the staff. One of East Lake’s second year teachers, Ms. Naomi Washington, received the Singapore training at her previous school. Ms. Washington along with the Math Team reviewed the Singapore Math program and selected three strategies that would be redelivered to faculty and then used in each classroom to enhance math instruction.

Our Math Team and Model Teacher Leaders, Kathy Griffin, Will Todd, Jr. and Adrienne McCray, met to discuss the school-wide implementation of some of the Singapore math strategies.

The implementation of Singapore mathematics focuses on three core areas:

- number bonds
- mental mathematics
- model drawing

These teaching strategies are implemented school-wide and are Singapore Math best practices. These best practices have shown an increase in student performance, including standardized test scores. Singapore mathematics includes the model drawing strategies where math problems are translated to make sense and solved. These simple drawings can also be connected directly to algebraic equations and to the standard algebraic techniques for solving (linear) equations.

During their weekly Madd About Math sessions, teachers mainly use model drawing during the problem-solving presentation.

Utilization of this strategy provides students a visual and it helps students decide which operation to use while problem solving. Instead of relying on superficial and unreliable clue words, the simple visual diagrams help students understand why the appropriate operations make sense.

During classroom instruction teachers use number bonds to teach students math facts. Students are taught to make a visual picture to recognize the relationship between a number and its parts that are combined rather than teaching them basic math facts by rote memory. For example, if a student knows the whole and one of its parts, the student is able to take away the part that is known to find the missing part. Number bonds allow students to see and touch the abstract and it helps them think algebraically. The third school-wide Singapore Math strategy that is used by teachers and students is mental mathematics.

Throughout the school, teachers are conferring with other teachers and attending professional development. The school community is monitoring assessment data to measure the effectiveness of their implementation of the strategies. The teachers, Math Team and Model Teacher Leaders consult with each other, and continue to share new ideas, as well as, interesting and innovative ways to teach math.
Atlanta Families for Excellence Award Recipients

- **Rendell Jackson**, teacher, Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School
- **Claudia Abboud**, teacher, East Lake Elementary School
- **Gregory Coleman**, teacher, Parkside Elementary School
- **Deirdra Denis**, teacher, Whitefoord Elementary School
- **Cassandra Miller-Ashley**, principal, Hill-Hope Elementary School

SRT 3  2009 Georgia Title I Distinguished Schools

**Burgess-Peterson Academy**
- National Recognition Award from the Alliance for A Healthier Generation-Bronze Award Status- From Bill Clinton
- Recipient of EABF Grant to implement Morning Broadcast Station in the amount of $2000
- Trees Atlanta will plant ten fruit and nut trees on the campus of Burgess-Peterson Academy (BPA).

**Parkside Elementary**
- Ronnie Thomas (Science Lab Teacher) for winning the "A Day Made Better Award" from Office Max. Mr. Thomas won $1,000 in school supplies.
- Parkside's PTA for winning the Georgia PTA Visionary Pin Award for 2009-2010. This is the highest membership award given by the State PTA. Parkside is the only APS school to receive this award.
- Parkside hosted 94 4H volunteers who were in Atlanta for the National 4H convention. The volunteers assisted in classrooms, hallway decorations, and props.

SRT 3 Kudos to...

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Help for Haiti seems to be springing up all around School Reform Team 3, from pennies to dollars to baby wipes and hygiene products. The level of caring and giving rises with each day as students, faculty, staff, parents and community supporters rally to the nation’s aid.

- At Centennial Place, K-2nd grades are holding a bake sale. The Centennial Place Foundation will match up to $1000.00 and the PTSA will match up to $500.00. 3rd-5th grades are sponsoring a Coin Drive, as well as, Candygrams in February.
- East Lake Elementary is hosting a Penny Drive.
- Hill-Hope is sponsoring “Flip Flops February: Hygiene for Haiti.” During the month of February, the school will collect hygiene products (deodorant, lotion, shampoo, soap, baby wipes, etc.).
- In an effort to help babies who are struggling in Haiti, Mary Lin collected diapers and baby wipes. The collection was done during the week of Jan. 21-28, and provided a great experience for children to be able to help. The school collected 3,013 diapers and 13,548 baby wipes.
- At Parkside Elementary, students and staff are collecting canned goods, hand sanitizers, baby wipes, clothing, etc. to help the people of Haiti.
- On Jan. 21, 2010, Springdale Park’s school counselor (Jeanine Roussos) held a drawing for (2) Pizza Parties. On Jan. 22, 2010, she had a fund raiser called Hats for Haiti, where students were charged $1.00 to wear hats in school for a day.
- The CADRE & CMCD Facilitators are collecting monetary donations from students, parents and staff of Whitefoord Elementary.
- At Coan Middle, Student Govt. & Project Lead are sponsoring a Coin Drive.
- Inman Middle will provide “A Night of Jazz for Haiti” at 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, at the school’s gymnasium. Tickets are $5 in advance or $5 plus a medical supply donation at the door.

All schools will donate 100% of their proceeds directly to the relief efforts in Haiti.
New Principal at the Helm at Coan

Dr. Tonya Saunders is the newly appointed principal for Sammy E. Coan Middle School. Dr. Saunders is a veteran Atlanta Public Schools educator who has served as a teacher and instructional specialist at the middle school level and principal of Toomer Elementary School.

Dr. Saunders is passionate about the academic success of children and works untiringly to ensure that every child succeeds. Her personal beliefs are in line with the core belief at Coan Middle School that “no child should be left behind.” Her vast experiences and trainings in the field of education have prepared her to make this belief a reality.

Dr. Saunders is an outstanding educational leader who accepts nothing less than the best from herself and requires the same from those with whom she works. Congratulations to Dr. Saunders on her recent appointment.

Hezekiah Wardlow, former ILS at Toomer, is Assistant Principal at Sylvan Middle School.

Leah Goodwin, former teacher at Inman, is now the ILS at Inman Middle School.

Melissa St. Joy, former teacher at Springdale Park, is now ILS at Toomer Elementary School.

Tiffany Burney, former teacher at King Middle School, is now Program Assistant at Sylvan Middle.

Marissa Kalu Thompson, former ILS at Inman, is now Assistant Principal at Garden Hills Elementary School.

Cedric Sheffield, former teacher at King Middle School, is now Math Coach at Sylvan Middle.

Toomer Welcomes New Principal Nicole Evans Jones

Ms. Jones’ leadership pedagogy, based on her varied experiences, is that high performing schools require building leaders who provide strong, visible leadership. These leaders also consistently implement System policies and procedures, provides clearly defined teaching expectations for faculty and staff. As the instructional leader, Ms. Jones will provide direction and support for teacher as they continuously engage children in complex problem solving the exploration of ideas, enduring understandings and essential questions.

SRT 3 Promotions Within and Beyond
Teacher-Parent Collaboration

Parent teacher communication, parent teacher connection and parent teacher relationships are critical elements in a student’s development. Encouraging parent collaboration in educating their children will help educators at all levels become more effective. Continual reflection on questions like these keeps us from diminishing the importance of our collaboration. Reflect on your attitude by answering the following questions in these three areas:

My Words

☐ Do my words indicate a cooperative stance toward teachers and school staff?
☐ Do my words indicate respect for the input of teachers?
☐ Do my words communicate a tone of receptiveness?
☐ Do my words convey hopefulness for the student?
☐ Do my words avoid placing blame at the feet of teachers?

My Nonverbal Behavior

☐ Does my facial expression say welcome?
☐ Does my body language indicate understanding and empathy?
☐ Does my body language indicate a willingness to listen?

My Attitude

☐ Do I look for the positive and seek to build on it?
☐ Do I have clear and immediate goals for the student?
☐ Do I own my limitations and seek continued growth and improvement?
☐ Do I shape intervention and seek resources for the struggling student?
☐ Do I invite constructive criticism and respond to it with action?

When we are sincere in our desire to build the best support network possible for students, we will make parents our valuable allies. After such reflection on our attitudes, we are ready for partnership.

Barbara Hicks, Parent/Community Involvement Liaison SRT3

Technology is ubiquitous, touching almost every part of our lives, our communities, our homes. Yet most schools lag far behind when it comes to integrating technology into classroom learning. Many are just beginning to explore the true potential technology offers for teaching and learning. Properly used, technology will help students acquire the skills they need to survive in a complex, highly technological knowledge-based society.

Integrating technology into classroom instruction means more than teaching basic computer skills and software programs in a separate computer class. Effective tech integration must happen across the curriculum in ways that research shows deepen and enhance the learning process.

In particular, it must support four key components of learning: active engagement, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real-world experiences.

Effective technology integration is achieved when the use of technology is routine and transparent and when technology supports curricular goals. The myriad resources of the online world also provide each classroom with more interesting, diverse, and current learning materials. The Web connects students to experts in the real world and provides numerous opportunities for expressing understanding through images, sound, and text. New tech tools for visualizing and modeling, especially in the sciences, offer students ways to experiment and observe phenomenon and to view results in graphic ways that aid in understanding.

As an added benefit, with technology tools and a project-learning approach, students are more likely to stay engaged and on task, reducing behavioral problems in the classroom.

Technology also changes the way teachers teach, offering educators effective ways to reach different types of learners and assess student understanding through multiple means. It also enhances the relationship between teacher and student. When technology is effectively integrated into subject areas, teaching and learning becomes more meaningful, relevant and fun.

This article originally published on 3/16/2008.

Tech Tips

Technology

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From the Executive Director’s Desk:

You Are Making a Difference

As we begin a new semester, please allow me to commend you for the job you have done thus far this year. Your work has been inspiring -- thoughtful, caring, and student focused. Kudos are extended to SRT 3 schools for stepping outside the box, moving beyond the usual, and challenging students to soar to higher heights. It is obvious that expectations are high for both teachers and students. As you know, research shows that expectations exert powerful influences upon student behavior. Our goal in SRT 3 is to provide optimal environments in which students feel free to challenge themselves and have opportunities to take initiative, to articulate clearly and imaginatively, to be creative, and to learn from their inquiry and experience. Ultimately, we want to cultivate in each student a sense of wonder in the life-long process of learning.

We must also believe that our students can achieve and aim all of our work toward transforming the minds of students, so that they learn to think critically and to believe in themselves. To be sure, the future ahead of us remains very challenging as we continue to build systems and networks to ensure student success. Let us continue to expect the best of our students and accept nothing less.

Of course, the ultimate goal is to provide an effective teacher in every school-in every classroom, everyday. To this end, our destination is non-negotiable. We’re on a journey to prepare students for success in elementary, middle and high school, so that they can be ready for the rigors of college and go on to fulfill their dreams in the real world.

Indeed, we have come a long way, and with your continued commitment to excellence and providing our students with a world-class education, they will view the world from the top of the mountain!