Assessment Quotes

# Quote #1

"Balanced assessment systems provide meaningful, relevant, and sufficient information for each stakeholder, with information quantity and quality commensurate with the uses to made from it: more detailed information for individual learners and their teachers in the classroom, where the learning takes place, and proportionally less (more general, and more aggregated) information available as the distance from the learning increases. Comprehensive and balanced assessment systems include a variety of types of assessments, producing evidence that can be used formatively, to improve learning, and evidence that can be used summatively, to certify, report on, or evaluate learning. Comprehensive and balanced assessment systems pay attention to the quality of assessment information; the process used to gather, interpret, and use assessment information; and the people who participate at all levels of the system, including students."

Brookhart, Susan, et al. The Future of Assessment Practices: Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment Systems. Learning Sciences International, 2019.

# Quote #2

"We have come to a tipping point in American education when we must change our assessment beliefs and act accordingly, or we must abandon hope that all students will meet standards or that the chronic achievement gap will close. The troubling fact is that, if all students don’t meet standards—that is, if the gap doesn’t close between those who meet and don’t meet those standards—our society will be unable to continue to evolve productively in either a social or an economic sense. Yet, paradoxically, assessment as conceived, conducted, and calcified over the past has done as much to perpetuate the gap as it has to narrow it. This must change now and it can. As it turns out (again paradoxically), assessment may be the most powerful tool available to us for ensuring universal student mastery of essential standards."

Stiggins, R. J., *Assessment FOR Learning, the Achievement Gap, and Truly Effective Schools.* Presentation given at the Educational Testing Service and College Board Conference, Educational Testing in America: State Assessments, Achievement Gaps, National Policy and Innovations, Washington, D.C., 2008.

# Quote #3

"Assessment balance can best be achieved at the local school district level, because only local educational agencies have schools, classrooms, students, and teachers . . . . Local school districts are best positioned to coordinate all the various levels of testing, including classroom assessment, and in doing so balance their assessment systems to serve both formative and summative purposes. Local district or school leadership teams can achieve this balance in assessment. Current schools or districts can conduct an assessment audit that acts as an inventory of the assessment 'big picture' . . . teachers can learn the principles of sound assessment, and by exercising leadership in assessment, school leaders can begin to take control of an entity in schooling that at times seems beyond our control."

Chappuis, Stephen J., et al. Balanced Assessment Systems: Leadership, Quality, and the Role of Classroom Assessment. Corwin, 2017.

# Quote #4

“And as the local system must have balance, so should the classroom also be in balance. A heavy diet of formative practice or a steady stream of summative grading events defeats the purpose and misses the opportunity for students when both formative and summative assessments are used in tandem.”

Chappuis, Stephen J., et al. Balanced Assessment Systems: Leadership, Quality, and the Role of Classroom Assessment. Corwin, 2017.

# Quote #5

“Two decades of research has found that when teachers use, score, and discuss the results of high-quality performance assessments over time, both teaching and learning improve. Teachers become expert in their practice and more attuned to how students think and learn. Meanwhile, students learn to internalize standards and improve their own work, as they work on tasks guided by rubrics against which they self-assess and are assessed by peers and teachers.”

Darling-Hammond, Linda. "Testing to, and Beyond, the Common Core." *Principal*. January/February 2014, 8-12.

# Quote #6

"Other studies have found that instruction has become more focused on basic reading and math skills as they are measured by multiple-choice tests. This has been accompanied by less emphasis on skills such as written and oral communication, complex problem solving, and investigation that involves evaluation of evidence or application of knowledge."

Conley, David T. and Linda Darling-Hammond. *Creating Systems of Assessment for Deeper Learning*. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2013.

# Quote #7

"Positive social ties and continual reminders of adults’ high expectations contribute to what educational researcher Camille A. Farrington has dubbed an ‘academic mindset.’ In a 2013 review of several studies, Farrington found that motivation to pursue Deeper Learning objectives depends on four key perceptions by students: 'I belong to this academic community'; 'I can succeed at this'; 'My ability and competence grows with my effort'; and 'This work has value for me.' We found schools pressing home these messages in a variety of ways, as teachers constantly called on students to identify their interests, ask questions, solve problems, analyze, communicate, collaborate with one another, and seek out resources and opportunities to enrich and expand their learning.”

Martinez, Monica R. and Dennis McGrath. Deeper Learning: How Eight Innovative Public Schools Are Transforming Education in the 21st Century. New Press, 2014.

# Quote #8

“Another way to promote deeper learning is to prime students’ motivation so that they are willing to exert the effort to learn. Research shows that students learn more deeply when they:

• attribute their performance to effort rather than to ability;

• have the goal of mastering the material rather than the goal of performing well or not performing poorly;

• expect to succeed on a learning task and value the learning task;

• believe that they are capable of achieving the task at hand."

Guerriero, S., ed. Pedagogical Knowledge and the Changing Nature of the Teacher Profession. OECD Publishing, 2017, Paris.

# Quote #9

“Classroom instruction needs to promote student agency and identity-as-learners through classroom discussion, challenging tasks, and ongoing formative assessment that provides feedback to guide the learning process. . . . Research indicates that teachers’ use of formative assessment can significantly enhance learning by providing better and timely feedback to students about their learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The process of continuously monitoring students’ learning progress allows teachers to clarify learning goals, respond adaptively based on individual learning patterns, and involve students in the process of peer- and self-assessment. Feedback available through formative assessment contributes to students’ monitoring their own learning at a local level and can cue them to the need to adjust their learning activities. Such uses of formative assessment are grounded in research demonstrating that practice with informative feedback is essential for deeper learning and skill development. . . ."

Goldman, Susan R. and James W. Pellegrino. "Research on Learning and Instruction: Implications for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment." *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, pp. 33-51.

# Quote #10

“Set reasonable expectations. Performance assessment is not a panacea for the ills of American education, but it can improve our understanding of what students know and can do, and can help educators focus their effort to bolster critical skills among American youth. Performance assessments are more likely to be successful operating in tandem with multiple-choice items than replacing them completely."

Stecher, Brian. Performance Assessment in an Era of Standards-Based Educational Accountability. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2010.

# Quote #11

"In light of recent misperceptions and confusion about standardized assessments, it is even more important that assessment systems include college- and career-ready items, such as technical writing, real-world projects, and extended-performance tasks that are at the heart of deeper learning. Such assessments can promote an instructional climate that is engaging and collaborative, while placing student voice at the center. All students, including those who are traditionally underserved, stand to benefit from assessments that allow them to draw upon different ways to demonstrate learning, and to do so repeatedly over time."

"Assessing Deeper Learning." *Alliance for Excellent Education*, April 2017, all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Topic-Area-Introduction-Assessing-Deeper-Learning.pdf.

# Quote #12

"Jobs of the future like those of today will require a mix of cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills. The specific set of skills and which ones are most important will vary depending on the pathway a student follows. Increasingly, blended skill sets (e.g., learning agility and new media) will be needed. Fields that had previously been quite separate may be blended in new ways, requiring combinations of skills not seen before. Existing jobs may be blended with new technologies to create positions we have never seen (think: space junk recyclers) and requiring new skills or blended skill sets."

United States, National Assessment Governing Board. Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures of Postsecondary Preparedness, 17 Nov. 2018, nagb.gov/content/nagb/assets/documents/publications/reports-papers/preparedness/final-recommendations-report-combined-20181117.pdf.

# Quote #13

"When used alongside other types of formative, interim, and summative assessments (e.g., multiple-choice tests and short-answer exams), these assessments [competency-based, performance, portfolio, project-based] measure deeper learning outcomes in a more comprehensive manner and provide a more accurate picture of where students are in their progress toward developing the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, a career, and life. Assessments that measure deeper learning also provide multiple opportunities for students to fine-tune their learning as they build and apply knowledge and skills systematically over time. They also help schools to identify and support a full continuum of student learning."

“Assessing Deeper Learning." *Alliance for Excellent Education*, April 2017, all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Topic-Area-Introduction-Assessing-Deeper-Learning.pdf.

# Quote #14

“Today's world does not care about what you know but what you can do with what you know. That new world, in other words, is demanding that digital age workers have digital skills, including the ability to think critically, collaborate, and work independently."

Wagner, Tony. The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don’t Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need – And What We Can Do About It. Basic Books, 2008.

# Quote #15

“Achieve has long recommended that leaders take stock of what tests students are required to take and determine what these tests are designed to do. Such a review will build a shared understanding of what purposes the assessments are designed to serve, point out gaps and redundancies overall and for specific populations of students, identify lack of alignment with standards or low quality, illuminate the cost of testing in the division, and highlight which assessments provide results that are useful to teachers and students and which do not.”

“Student Assessment Inventory for School Divisions (edited).” *Achieve.* October 2014, achieve.org/assessmentinventory.

# Quote #16

“States should take a role in this area, both in examining the state assessments and in partnering with divisions to streamline the amount of testing and increase the coherence. However, division leaders can best foster a conversation about the assessment strategy that is appropriate for their own division and lead an inventory process that streamlines the amount of testing required and works to ensure that the assessments that are in place are supported by structures and routines so that assessment results are actually used for improvement.”

“Student Assessment Inventory for School Divisions (edited).” *Achieve.* October 2014, achieve.org/assessmentinventory.

# Quote #17

“Equally important, the approach to testing should be crafted in the context of the division’s overall strategy to improve student learning. Within that context, divisions must consider what insight they will gain from each assessment, who will use the information, what actions they will take, how they will be supported to take action, and how student learning will improve as a result. Looking across all the assessments used in the division, a consideration is whether the overall array of tests is as limited and efficient as possible while obtaining essential information that will be used for improvement. The bottom line is that any time and resources spent on division assessments should provide valuable information and experiences that are not available on the state large scale assessment or in the classroom through daily instructional activities.”

“Student Assessment Inventory for School Divisions (edited).” *Achieve.* October 2014, achieve.org/assessmentinventory.

# Quote #18

"(S)tudents do not come to classroom learning situations as ‘blank’ slates. Rather they bring conceptions of themselves and their worlds that include beliefs, knowledge, and language and discourse practices. These conceptions come from various experiences in their homes, communities, and prior schooling. People’s conceptions, or funds of knowledge (Moll & Greenberg, 1990), shape how people frame learning situations, their roles in them, efforts they are willing to invest in learning, and ultimately what they learn. Educational efforts need to acknowledge and build on learners’ conceptions, so that they have opportunities to notice and confront consistencies and inconsistencies and engage in productive knowledge integration (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999; Moje et al., 2004). Thus, a critical feature of effective teaching is that it elicits students’ preexisting understandings of subject matter and provides opportunities to build on, or challenge, them.”

Goldman, Susan R. and James W. Pellegrino. "Research on Learning and Instruction: Implications for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment." *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, pp. 33-51.

# Quote #19

“(L)earning is enhanced when people engage in thinking about their own thinking and learning, a process referred to as metacognition. Metacognition is an active process of monitoring how learning is going: what is understood, what is not; what fits to current conceptions and what does not; what questions are answered; whether progress toward learning goals is being made . . . Metacognition is instrumental in students taking control of their own learning because it helps them define and monitor progress toward learning goals, select strategies to enhance learning, evaluate their progress toward the goal, and select alternate strategies when obstacles are encountered . . . Metacognition and many of the strategies we use for thinking reflect cultural norms and methods of inquiry. They are acquired in social interaction and through observation of the behavior of others, including their verbalizations, gestures, and emotional displays . . . Metacognitive activities must be incorporated into the subject matter that students are learning. Attempts to teach metacognition as generic strategies can lead to failure to transfer.

Goldman, Susan R. and James W. Pellegrino. "Research on Learning and Instruction: Implications for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment." *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, pp. 33-51.

# Quote #20

"Through this mapping process, educators identify the summative assessments administered in the course or grade, determining factors such as: • the content focus of each assessment as a whole, considering the alignment to key standards or competencies; • the type of assessment items on the various assessments (e.g., selected response, open-ended, performance-based), focusing on the balance of discrete content skills with performance; and • the cognitive rigor of the assessment items and the assessment as a whole, including opportunities for an integration of knowledge and skills. An analysis of these assessment maps is required in order to identify the gaps and overlaps in the current assessment system, both within and across grades and content areas."

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.

# Quote #21

”As educators review their local assessment systems, they can ask more probing questions about the utility of each assessment. For example, does each assessment provide useful information for deepening student learning; improving instructional quality; and/or supporting administrators in making better decisions about curricular resources, programs, or personnel? Does the K-12 assessment system promote a common vision of teaching and learning, and does it engender more student agency over time? If not, a regular review cycle provides the opportunity for teachers and administrators to consider, in collaboration, how to improve the assessment system’s coherence, utility, and efficiency.”

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.

# Quote #22

“(E)ven without technical training, educational leaders can raise questions about utility. For example, they should ask whether an interim/benchmark assessment is really necessary or useful for making better educational decisions about students, programs, or personnel. If so, they should be able to describe the processes and mechanisms by which this usefulness will play out.”

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.

# Quote #23

“What makes an assessment system balanced? An assessment system is balanced when the assessments in the system are coherently linked through clearly specified learning targets, they comprehensively provide multiple sources of evidence to support educational decision-making, and they continuously document student progress over time (NRC, 2001). These criteria—coherence, continuity, and comprehensiveness—create a powerful image of a high-quality system of assessments, rooted in a common model of learning. We also find that utility and efficiency are helpful considerations in thinking about the functioning of such systems when working with district and state leaders (Chattergoon, 2016; Chattergoon & Marion, 2016).”

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.

# Quote #24

“We agree with Shepard et al. (2018) that districts are better positioned than states to be the controlling entity for balanced assessment systems. Districts typically control curriculum and instruction. Assessments in a balanced system must be designed to reflect and embody the corresponding learning goals and trajectories. Additionally, districts generally control hiring, professional development, supervision, evaluation, and many other structural components of the learning, instructional, and assessment systems. This puts districts in a much better position than states to create coherent and balanced assessment and learning systems.”

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.

# Quote #25

“Many believe that interim assessments should be part of a balanced assessment system, a notion likely fueled by advertising and marketing promises rather than evidence of utility. In fact, commercial interim assessments may distract educators from rich assessment opportunities and students from rich learning opportunities, thereby threatening system coherence. Thus, interim assessments are not required components of balanced assessment systems, but such assessments may play a productive role in balanced systems of assessment only if there is sufficient evidence of coherence and utility.”

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.

# Quote #26

“Given the prominence of assessment types in discussions of balanced assessment systems, however, we offer additional thoughts on formative, interim, and summative assessments. Formative assessment must be inseparable from instruction and can be thought of as a bridge between instruction and classroom assessment (Heritage, 2010, Shepard, in press). The rest of the classroom assessment system—including unit-based performance tasks, extended projects, more-traditional tests, and so on—should be coherent with the formative assessment processes and must focus on shared learning targets.”

Marion, et al. “A Tricky Balance: The Challenges and Opportunities of Balanced Systems of Assessment.” *Center for Assessment*,April 2019, nciea.org/node/493.