

# Overcoming a Legacy of Mistaken Assessment Beliefs

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**“The real voyage of  
discovery consists, not  
of seeking new  
landscapes, but in  
seeing through new  
eyes”**

Marcel Proust

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**Accurate assessments  
+ Appropriate uses**  

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**STUDENT SUCCESS**

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## **PART 1: THE EMOTIONS OF OUR ASSESSMENT LEGACY**

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**What does it mean to  
“leave no child behind?”**

**Why have standards  
become so important  
today?**

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**Our schools were specifically  
and intentionally designed to  
leave lots of children behind:**

**There were winners & losers**

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800-480-3060  
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## Assessment's Impact

Criterion	Winners
Assessment Result	Success
Effect on Confidence	Grows
Lesson Learned	How to succeed
Responsibility	Internal
Character Result	Compliance
Lifelong Result	Learner

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## Assessment's Impact

Criterion	Losers
Assessment Result	Failure
Effect on Confidence	Wanes
Lesson Learned	No hope of success
Responsibility	External
Character Result	Rebellious
Lifelong Result	Longing for success

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## STUDENTS WHO ALWAYS WIN EXPERIENCE:

- CONFIDENCE
- OPTIMISM: AN EXPECTATION OF A POSITIVE RESULT
- STRONG DESIRE TO SUCCEED
- SELF ANALYSIS IN FAILURE
- HIGH LEVEL OF EFFORT
- RISK TAKING--STRETCHING

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## STUDENTS WHO ALWAYS LOSE EXPERIENCE:

- PESSIMISM: EXPECTATION OF A NEGATIVE RESULT
- A SENSE OF FUTILITY, HOPELESSNESS, FATALISM
- WAINING EFFORT
- SELF CRITICISM IN FAILURE
- DENIAL; COVER UP
- FEAR OF RISK TAKING--DEFENSIVENESS

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Previously, if a student gave up in hopelessness and stopped trying, that was the student's problem—not the teacher's or the school's...

**Accountability: provide an opportunity to learn**

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**Something changed:  
Our society continues to evolve...**

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**Over the years, society has realized that schools that merely sort students no longer meet our education needs; failure to learn can no longer be an option...**

**Accountability: learning**

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## **Our Mission Evolves**

**Mastery Learning (1960s)  
Behavioral Objectives (1970s)  
Minimum Competencies (1980s)  
Outcomes-based Education (1990s)  
Standards-based Schools (2000s)**

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### **Previous Mission:**

Rank students on achievement by graduation

### **New Supplemental Mission:**

Assure competence in math, reading, writing, etc.

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## **Implications?**

Assessment and grading procedures born and bred to encourage just a few students succeed now must serve to keep all students trying...

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## **Assessment & School Improvement in the USA:**

Hold schools accountable for standardized test score reporting to **drive, force, compel** school improvement

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## **A Testing Explosion**

1950s College Admissions  
1960s District-wide Testing  
1970s State-wide Testing  
1980s National Assessment  
1990s International Tests  
2000s NCLB Every Pupil Test

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## Research Says

- Achievement has been very consistent since the 1960s
- 1 study reveals a tiny achievement gains favoring high stakes, but this finding have been challenged
- Increased drop out rates & decreased graduation rates, especially for minorities (among other negative effects)

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## Why No Impact?

Mistaken beliefs about how to use assessment to support school improvement

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## A Testing Explosion

1950s	College Admissions
1960s	District-wide Testing
1970s	State-wide Testing
1980s	National Assessment
1990s	International Tests
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## Mistaken Belief

High-stakes tests are good for all students because they motivate learning

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## Corollary Beliefs

If I judge you to have failed, it will cause you to try harder.  
If a little intimidation doesn't work, try a lot of intimidation.  
To maximize learning, maximize anxiety.

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## Mistaken Belief

It is the adults who use assessment results to make the most important "data-driven" instructional decisions

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## **Mistaken Belief**

The most important decisions are made annually based on once-a-year tests

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## **Profound Mistake**

Teachers & leaders don't need to understand sound assessment practices—the testing people will take care of us

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## **Assessment Legacy**

Assessments that cause as many students to give up in hopelessness as they spur to more learning

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## **Assessment Legacy**

Assessment has been far more about compliance with reporting requirements than about teaching and learning

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## **Assessment Legacy**

Disregard of the info needs of students and teachers who make the most frequent and highest impact instructional decisions

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## **Assessment Legacy**

And we fail to provide practitioners with the assessment tools needed to help...

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**We can show little impact of 60 years of annual testing because those tests are insufficient & we have not used them well.**

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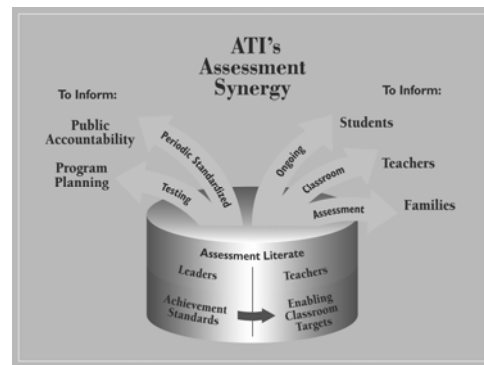
## **Part 2: THE EMOTIONS OF A NEW ASSESSMENT FUTURE**

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### **Remedy?**

Balance continuous classroom assessment to support learning with periodic assessments used to verify learning

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### **Crucial Distinction**

#### **Assessment OF Learning:**

How much have students learned as of a particular point in time?

#### **Assessment FOR Learning:**

How can we use assessment to help students learn more?

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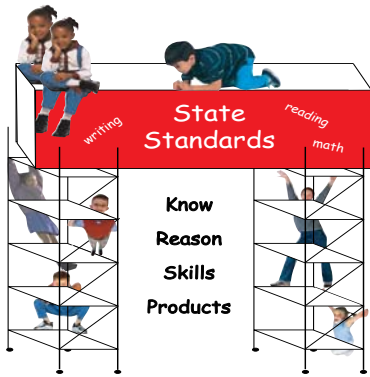
### **Overview**

	<b>Assessment OF Learning</b>	<b>Assessment FOR Learning</b>
<b>Reason</b>	Check status	Improve learning
<b>To Inform</b>	Others about students	Students about themselves
<b>Focus</b>	Standards	Enabling targets

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## Overview

	Assessment OF Learning	Assessment FOR Learning
Example	External acc'ty tests; Internal classroom assessments used for grading	Assessments that diagnose needs or help students see themselves growing
Place in Time	An event after learning	A process during learning

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	Assessment OF Learning	Assessment FOR Learning
Teacher's Role	Administer test, interpret & use results, develop classroom tests & assign grades	
Student's Role	Study to meet standards, strive for highest score/avoid failure	
Primary Motivator		

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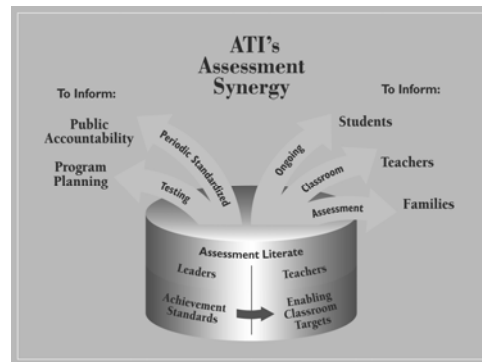
## Teacher's Role Assessment FOR Learning

1. Identify & master the standards
2. Deconstruct them into enabling targets
3. Transform to student-friendly versions
4. Create accurate classroom assessments
5. Use them with students to track growth

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	Assessment OF Learning	Assessment FOR Learning
Teacher's Role	Administer tests, interpret & use results; develop classroom tests & assign grades	Change standards into classroom targets, inform & involve students
Student's Role	Study to meet standards, strive for highest score/avoid failure	Strive to understand the target, use results to learn to do better next time
Primary Motivator	Promise of reward, fear of punishment	Joy and expectation of success

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**Rethink the relationship between assessment & student motivation**

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**If kids don't want to learn or don't feel able to learn, there will be no learning...**

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## **The Essential Question**

**Can we use assessment to help our students want to learn?**

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## **Applying the Principles of Assessment FOR Learning**

- Student-Involved Classroom Assessment
- Student-Involved Record Keeping
- Student-Involved Communication

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## **Student-Involved Assessment**

- Partners in practice test development
- Learn the meaning of success
- See how close they are now

**Result? A clear path ahead**

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## **Student-Involved Record Keeping**

- Repeated self-assessments over time
- Growth portfolios with self-reflection on improvement
- Change (improvement) is apparent to the learner

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**Result? Success is within reach**

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## Student-Involved Communication

- Student-led parent/teacher conferences
- Greater sense of responsibility
- Pride in accomplishment

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**Result? Greater achievement**

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The key is to use assessment to help the student believe that the target is within reach...

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## To Improve, students must:

- Know what good work looks like
- Compare their work to that standard
- Know how to close gap between them

Royce Sadler

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## Student-Involved Assessment FOR Learning

Anything we do that helps students:

- Understand learning targets
- Engage in self-assessment
- Watch themselves grow
- Talk about their growth

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## Self-Checklist: Assessment FOR Learning

1. I understand the relationship between assessment and student motivation and use assessment to build student confidence.
2. I understand and can articulate in advance of teaching the achievement targets my students are to hit.
3. I inform my students continuously about those targets in terms they can understand.
4. I can transform these targets into dependable assessments that yield accurate information.

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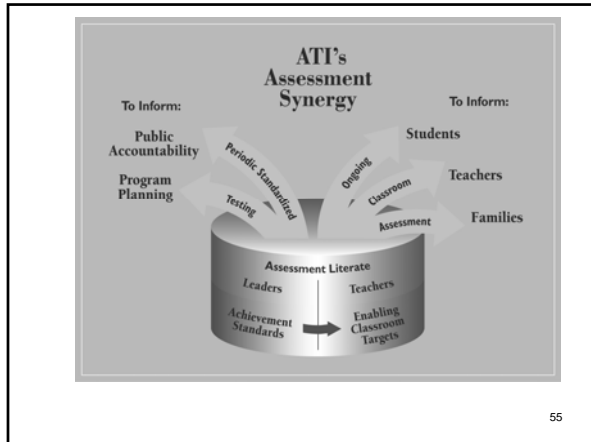
## Self-Checklist: Assessment FOR Learning

5. Feedback to students is frequent and descriptive.
6. My students are actively involved in their own assessment.
7. My students actively and continuously communicate with others about their achievement status and improvement.
8. My students can describe the targets they're trying to hit, even though they can't hit them yet.
9. I consistently use classroom assessment information to revise instruction.

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### Research on Effects

Study	S.D. Gains
Bloom (1984)	1.0 to 2.0 *
Black and William (1998)	.5 to 1.0**
Meisels, et al. (2003)	.7 to 1.5
Rodriguez (2004)	.5 to 1.8**

\* Rivals one-on-one tutorial instruction  
 \*\* Largest gains for low achievers

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- ### 1.0 Standard Deviation Score Gain Equals:
- 35 Percentile Points
  - 2-4 Grade Equivalents
  - 100 SAT Score Points
  - 5 ACT Composite Score Points
  - U.S. TIMSS scores would move from middle of the pack to top 5
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- ### Achievement gains come from increasing:
- Classroom assessment accuracy
  - Amount of descriptive feedback
  - Student-involvement in assessment, record keeping and communication
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**Students may hit the target today or they may not.**

**If they do not, it is crucial that they remain willing to return and try again tomorrow.**

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### The Way It Used to Be

Active Ingredient	Our Legacy
School Mission	Rank students
Student's Mission	Beat the others
Student's Nature	Must be coerced to learn
Rate of Learning	The same for all
To Get Learning	Demand it
Driving Forces	Competition and anxiety
What Works	Rewards & punishments
Assessment's Role	Evidence for ranking

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## The Way It Could Be

Active Ingredient	Possible Future
School Mission	Meet standards
Student's Mission	Become competent
Student's Nature	Naturally want to learn
Rate of Learning	Differs across students
To Get Learning	Worthy targets in reach
Driving Forces	Collaboration & success
What Works	Record of prior success
Assessment's Role	Clarify targets & track growth

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## A Proper Belief

Our job is to help kids believe they are capable learners

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## Physician's Creed

**Above all, do no harm**

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## Educator's Creed

**Above all, do nothing to diminish hope**

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**NEW PROGRAM  
INTRODUCTION:**

**"Classroom Assessment FOR Student Learning: Doing It Right-Using It Well"**

A Learning Community Experience  
for Classroom Teachers

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