

Module 4: Aligning Classroom Assessment

Video 4a: Designing Assessments

So, one of the pieces worth reemphasizing from the video is around our responsibility as educators in terms of what we report to parents. So, we are responsible for reporting the learning standard. And the learning standard is comprised of the curricular competencies and the content. So, as we're designing our assessments, we need to be thoughtful about how we are showing and how are we collecting evidence around the progress of students with respect to the curricular competencies using the content.

So, given the profile of classroom assessment, we know that it's a really commonly discussed piece in schools. Tammy and I were able to work with Tom Schimmer to create a three-part webinar series. So each of the three days that we filmed, we have three segments. So, there's ultimately nine pieces of video that are available on the ministry website that you can review either individually or as a staff. And today we're going to use a couple of segments of each of those videos to process together.

So, when you watch a video, we want you to consider connect, extend, challenge as a tool to process the actual video. So while you're watching, we want you to think of how are the ideas and information presented connected to what we already knew. Extend what new ideas did you get that extended or pushed your thinking. And challenge, what is challenging or confusing. What is something that we're still trying to figure out or we're not quite there in terms of our understanding. So we encourage you to use that as your viewing, because we would like you to talk to a partner after you watch the clip using connect, extend, challenge

Video 4c: Curriculum in the Classroom

So the image that you see now is just something that Tammy and I have generated as a way to think about the curriculum from the perspective of a classroom teacher. So when we think about the big idea, the Venn diagram is meant to represent the big idea. We are going to find ways that our content is embedded within the big ideas as a frame for planning. But the most important piece is the colorful spiral in the middle. That's meant to represent the curricular competencies within a course. So there's a finite set of them and they're meant to be longitudinal. You're meant to see their development over the full duration of a course. And that means that we have to provide students with multiple opportunities to show their progress with that curricular competency.

And that's where the content comes in. So I might use one piece of content, develop curricular competency, and then I'm going to use different content throughout the year to show development of that curricular competency. Ultimately those competencies then allow for the development of the core competencies, as we've mentioned earlier. So that's the synthesis piece to get to the curricular competency. But the curricular competency is the focus for my assessment. So that's the piece that I'm trying to collect evidence around, using different content, to show progression for students.

So another document that's available for educators to support the classroom assessment is the framework for classroom assessment. It's available on the ministry website under the classroom assessment tab. And, the thinking behind this framework is to support educators as they're

working with curricular competencies. It was designed by teachers and the teachers who were on the writing teams for the curriculum. And the thinking behind it was to say, how can we repackage the curricular competencies to make them manageable in our classrooms, to simplify things a little bit for us.

Video 4c: A Framework for Classroom Assessment

So if I am offering opportunities for students in a cross-curricular way, what does my assessment look like? So you can see on the screen in the four core areas that were done, science, ELA, social studies and math, they've identified what does that criteria look like in each of those categories. So if I was doing an integrated unit with English, science, math, I might be able to say, okay, I'm going to focus on questioning. And that could be my instructional and assessment focus throughout that piece

And so the criteria categories are just a repackaging of the curricular competencies. But with it they've also generated criteria. So the criteria is meant to be developmentally appropriate and observable behaviors that we would see from students in the classroom. With those criteria, we've also got applications. So teachers have actually said, how would I use this particular document in my context? And so the applications are meant to show a broad range of places where you could apply the curricular framework into your room. And so they represent rubrics. There's different design specifications. There's examples of how you might use it as a pure self-assessment tool or how it might frame conversations with parents. So it's meant to be a way that you can approach assessment and offer support to both you and then also to your students.

So teachers have said that having the five categories is super helpful for them in terms of framing their assessment, but also when they consider cross-curricular opportunities, it streamlined their assessment process and made it more accessible for them to be specific, direct and then students to understand what are they doing on purpose and what are they getting better at throughout that lesson or unit of study. Additionally, they've broken it out on the screen. You can see example for science K to nine, where the criteria category is listed and then developmental indicators are going across the grades.

So when we talk about something as a developmental indicator, what we mean is that it's an instructional support tool. I just want to be cautionary in that this is not a rubric. It's not meant to be used as if we're talking about a grade seven or grade eight class to say that that's the proficient level and then extending would be grade nine. That's not how this is designed. Each bullet is meant to represent something that you would see in a student that would align with that criteria category. So for example, with a student in grade nine who's doing something around questioning, makes and records accurate and precise observations is something that I'd be looking for. But it doesn't speak to the level of quality that I would be looking for. So I need to be able to superimpose some language around the quality of that action that would allow me to take this to an assessment tool.

So here's a grade 9 science example of how this would be used as a design specification piece. So, they've taken the grade nine criteria and then aligned that with how they're designing a typical test. So this was a case study, paper and pencil test that they've designed around the criteria categories and around the specific criteria. So it does mean when we're looking at these

assessment pieces, when we're designing our assessments, we need our assessments to align with the categories or with the curricular competencies, to be able to report on the competency development.

Additional tools you'll find on the website include ELA 10 to 12, science 10 to 12, and ADST K to 12.

Video 4d: Assessing and Reporting

So as we've been traveling around the province, one question that always comes up from educators is how do you navigate the tension between our reporting order, and needing to report with percentages and assessing with curricular competencies and proficiency scales. And so there's no easy answer to that. That is collective work that we have to do. But we did put the question to Tom Shimmer.

And, so one of our webinar series, our third webinar series, he opens with trying to address different ways that you can do that. And one of them is to look at there's space between a four point scale or five point scale and a hundred point scale. And so how do we navigate that? And he offers us language around starting with the science and then moving to the artistry and trusting your professional judgment. So, we're going to ask that you take some time and view that video clip and then have a conversation using the same frame we did earlier. So connect, extend and challenge. What does it connect to? Something you already know about the concept. What's new? What are the extensions? But you understand what he's saying, but it's a new concept. And then, what are the questions? What challenges something that you think or a belief that you hold?

So again, we just want to come back to the point that we recognize that this is challenging work and we've heard a lot from secondary folks around content areas that the switch to looking at the learning standard and including the curricular competency is challenging work. And, we just want to remind everyone that we're better together and we need to invite people to work on this with us. Because, it is going to be hard as we switch to a content-focused area, especially in secondary, to a curricular competency focus and trying to figure out how to do that well, will take time and will take teamwork. So we just want to remind you too, to know that there is support out there and that working together is going to make it easier for us to do that work.