



## Activity 3.3

### Auditing an Assessment for Clear Learning Goals and Appropriate Sample Size

#### Learning Target for the Activity

- Know how to help teachers determine whether an assessment accurately represents the learning goals taught.

#### Purpose

One of the first places a classroom assessment's accuracy goes astray is in the match to the intended learning. Creating or selecting a test without having a plan, known as an **assessment blueprint**, can result in mismatches between instruction and assessment. The assessment will not likely measure what you intended it to measure, which is known as a **validity** problem. If you have ever faced an exam yourself that did not match what you thought were the most important aspects of the course you were taking, you know what that feels like from the student's point of view. When we make a plan for an assessment, whether we intend to create the assessment ourselves or use one developed by someone else, we are making the advance decisions about validity—what the test will cover and how much weight each learning goal will have. In the following activity the leader works with teachers to analyze a test they have given in order to determine its match to the intended learning goals and examine the sampling choices made.

#### Time

45–60 minutes

#### Materials Needed

- A copy of one of each participant's assessments, as described in the following directions
- Copies of the blank assessment blueprint shown in Figure 3.8

#### Suggested Room Setup

Tables and chairs for small groups (content or grade-level teachers may prefer to work together)

#### Directions

Ask participants to bring a selected-response or constructed-response assessment they have given to students in the past or one they plan to give in the near future. Then have them follow these steps to audit it for clear learning goals and appropriate sample size.

1. *Analyze your test item by item.*

Using the form in Figure 3.8, identify and write down the learning goal each item or exercise assesses. Note the number of points each item is worth. By doing this you are creating a simple assessment blueprint.

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2. *Question your assessment blueprint. Is this a representative sample of what you taught and what you expected students to learn?*
  - Are some learning goals overrepresented? If so, which one(s)?
  - Are some learning goals underrepresented? If so, which one(s)?
  - Are some of the important learning goals you taught left out? If so, which one(s)?
  - Does the number of points for each learning goal represent its relative importance within the whole? If not, which ones are out of balance?
  - Does the number of points for each learning goal represent the amount of time you spent on it relative to the whole? If not, which ones are out of balance?
3. *Adjust your assessment blueprint as needed.*
  - Add or delete learning goals to reflect what you taught.
  - Adjust the numbers in the “# of points” column to reflect each learning goal’s relative importance to the content as a whole as well as the amount of time you spent teaching it.
4. *Revise the items on your assessment to reflect your adjusted assessment blueprint.*
  - Find or create items or exercises to add to your assessment.
  - Delete those you have decided are unnecessary or inaccurate.

## Closure

Discuss your assessment with a partner or with the group.

- Was it difficult to identify the learning goal represented by any of your assessment’s items or exercises? If so, why?
- What did you learn from this process? Were there any surprises?

On which assessments might you use this process next?

## Optional Closure Activity

Pass out index cards, and ask participants to complete either of these two sentence starters with whatever comes to mind:

- Without clear learning goals . . .
- Without knowing what each question on a test measures, we can’t . . .

Give them a few minutes to write down their thoughts; then, collect the index cards, and read them aloud (using no names) to end the session. Here are some possible responses. (You can mention them if they don’t come up.)

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Without clear learning goals, or without knowing what each question on a test measures, we can't . . .

- know if the assessment adequately covers and samples what we taught.
- correctly identify what students know and don't know and their level of achievement.
- plan the next steps in instruction.
- give detailed, descriptive feedback to students.
- have students self-assess or set goals likely to help them learn more.
- keep track of student learning target by target or standard by standard.
- complete a standards-based report card.

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**FIGURE 3.8 Assessment blueprint**

Name of assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

PROBLEM #	LEARNING GOAL	# OF POINTS