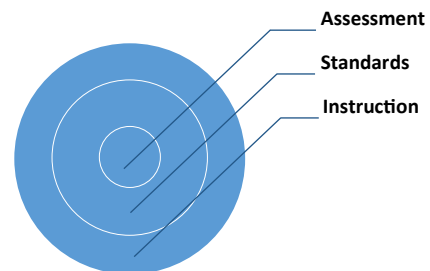


How Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Work Together

Denver Public Schools' instructional and assessment strategy allows teachers to focus on teaching the knowledge and skills needed to be successful with grade level standards as well as skills that develop the whole child.

Schools are encouraged to use assessment to **inform** instruction, not to **drive** instruction. This means that teachers should use assessment results to understand the areas of growth for their students. Assessment is not the end result, but a way to measure whether students have mastered the necessary skills for success in college and career.



Standards	Statements that define what students need to know, understand, and do. (ex: Colorado Academic Standards)
Curriculum	Materials and textbooks, curriculum goals as intended by teachers, and the curriculum that is enacted in the classroom. (Stein et al., 2007)
Instruction	Effective teaching practices that allow students to learn what they should know and be able to do.
Assessment	Process to demonstrate what students know and are able to do.

To truly live our core value of equity, we cannot narrow the curriculum.

The phrase "teaching to the test" is used widely but seldom defined, causing much confusion about what it means and whether it is bad or good. There are two kinds of assessment-aware instruction.¹

Curriculum Teaching

⇒ Focuses on the full body of knowledge and skills represented by test questions even though tests can employ only a sample of questions to assess students' knowledge about a topic.

Item Teaching

⇒ Narrows instruction, organizing teaching around clones of the particular questions most likely to be found on the test, teaching only the knowledge students are most likely to encounter on exams.

One of the greatest risks to this practice is that our underserved students may "encounter a vicious cycle of low expectations: Because little is expected of them, they exert little effort, their halfhearted efforts reinforce low expectations, and the result is low achievement."

-National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2014

The latter kind of teaching to the test is unethical because it *misrepresents how much students really have learned about a topic*. When schools and teachers choose to "teach to the test," they may engage in instructional practices such as

- narrowing the curriculum
- excluding topics that are not tested or not likely to appear on the test
- reducing learning to the memorization of facts easily recalled
- devoting more classroom time to test preparation rather than learning

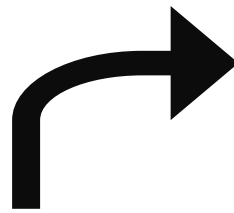
This practice can have harmful repercussions, including denying students the opportunity to engage in a rich, college-preparatory program or preventing students from learning critical skills for success.

¹ Popham, W. J. (2001, March). *Teaching to the test? Educational Leadership*, 58(6), 16'20.

The Teaching and Learning Cycle

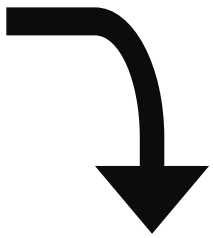
How Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Work Together

LEARNING



ASSESSMENT

<p>FORMATIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information about my students do I want to know? • What assessment tools will provide that information? 	<p>SUMMATIVE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">WHAT?</p>
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TEACHING
140+ MINUTE LITERACY BLOCK

- Teacher Instruction: Explicit instruction of skill, strategy, and reading behaviors. Use of mentor text, anchor charts, and exemplars.
- Student Practice: What opportunities will students have to practice with peers and/or independently?
- Teacher Monitoring: What reading and writing behaviors are being practiced by students?
- Teacher Feedback: How do I provide feedback to reinforce strengths and move students towards proficiency?

HOW?

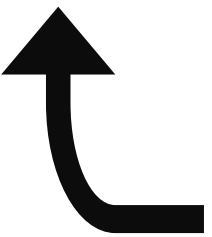
HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT TO TEACH?

- Common Core State Standards
- 6 Components of Reading
- District Continuums
- Student Need

EVALUATION

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the assessment results, what are the strengths and needs of my students? • What patterns of trends emerge? • How effective was my instruction? 	<p>NEEDS</p>
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SO WHAT?



PLANNING
TEACHER DECISIONS FOR EACH COMPONENT OF THE LITERACY BLOCK

- Objective: What are my content and language objectives? What literacy skills and strategies will my students learn?
- Group: Who are the students? Whole group, small group, 1:1?
- Resources: What text(s) will I use? Anchor charts? Exemplars?
- Approach: What instructional strategy will I use? (guided, shared, hands-on activity, intentional read aloud, etc.)
- Assessment: How will I assess mastery? (exit ticket, checks for understanding, rubric, running record)

THE ABOVE CAN BE ADJUSTED TO SCAFFOLD FOR SPECIFIC STUDENT NEEDS

NOW WHAT?

