

Creating Assessments in Financial Literacy

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“Improving basic financial education at the elementary and secondary school level is essential to providing a foundation for financial literacy that can help prevent younger people from making poor financial decisions that can take years to overcome.”

Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Board of Governors
of the Federal Reserve Board, April 6, 2002

Chapter Overview

As teachers prepare to instruct their students in the area of financial literacy, a crucial component of the planning must entail assessment. How will the teacher recognize the student has sufficiently mastered the desired skills and knowledge of a particular topic?

Assessment tools should be used throughout the instructional unit. Such a practice will result in enhanced coordination between the material presented in the classroom and the concepts being assessed. Financial literacy lends itself to assessments that are relevant to the students. Teachers can work together with colleagues and use community members to develop performance based assessments where the students show what they know.

What Is a Balanced Assessment System?

The ultimate goal of assessment is to assist the learner in becoming increasingly self-directed, motivated, and evaluative. Assessments can be formative, interim or summative. Formative assessments must happen throughout a unit to help teachers see if students are moving towards understanding. These can be quick quizzes, visuals, checklists, tickets to exit or enter. They are assessments that are daily and ongoing. Interim assessments are monthly or quarterly. They can be performance based and connected to real world activities and issues. (See Chapter 13 of the *Planning a Connected Curriculum* (DPI 2003) for more depth examples.) They can be classroom level or district level assessments. These are common assessments that give student and program data directly to teachers to see how students are progressing and to use to review the curriculum being taught. Summative assessments are done on an annual basis, usually by the state, to identify how schools and districts are progressing. The following chart describes the types and levels of assessments.

“Financial literacy is an issue that should command our attention because many Americans are not adequately organizing finances for their education, healthcare and retirement.”

Ron Lewis,
U.S. Congressman

Balanced Assessment System

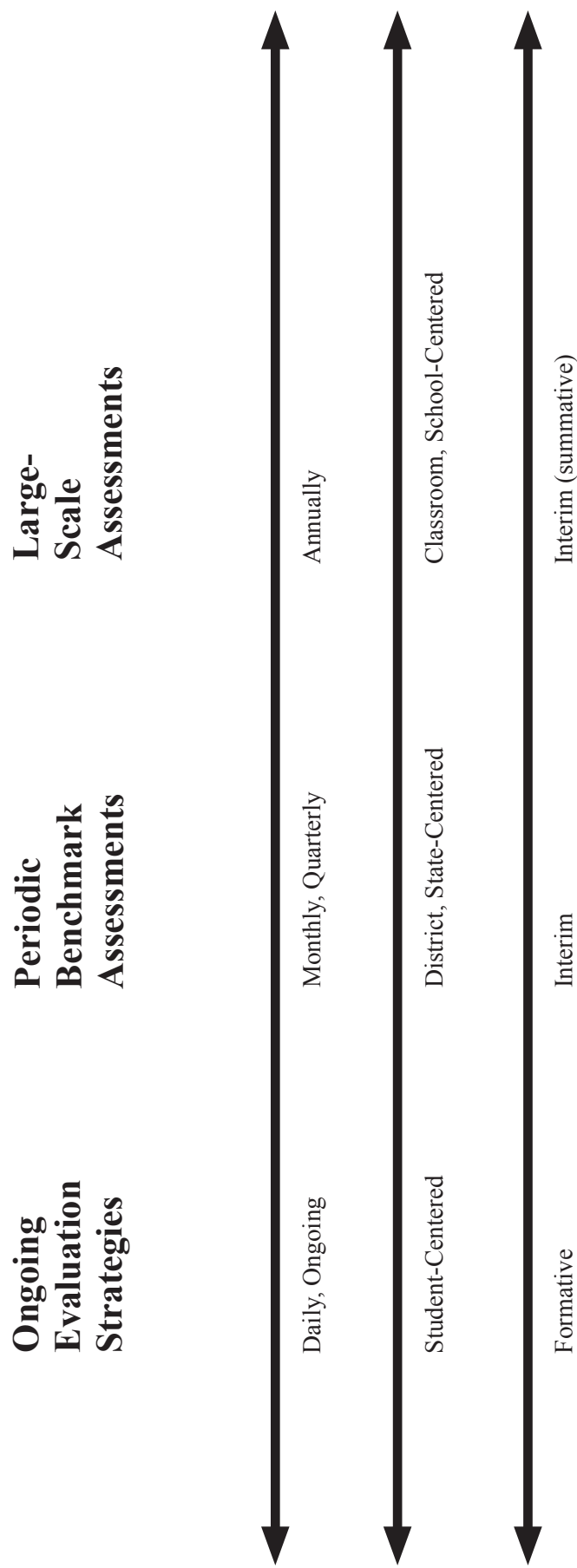


Figure 3.1

Balanced Assessment System

Table 3.1

		<i>Ongoing Strategies</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Large-Scale</i>
Purpose	What learning comes next for this student?	How are students progressing? How well is this program working?	How are schools, districts, and states progressing?	
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Teachers, teaching teams • Parents • Schools, districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State • Federal • Higher-education institutions • Researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Teachers • Parents • Schools • Districts
Frequency	Occurs within and between lessons.	Occurs within, between, and among instructional units.	Occurs annually or bi-annually.	
Use of Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the instructional activity, information is used to change or to adjust teaching. • Student receives frequent and meaningful feedback on performance. • Teacher engages student in the monitoring of student learning. • Teacher decides if the student needs remediation or enrichment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-level or content-based professional learning communities use data to identify strengths and gaps in curriculum and instruction. • Grade-level course curriculum may be changed, refined. • Teachers may modify instruction for student groups based on their progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School or district teams develop strategic, long-term evaluation of curriculum and programming based on trends over time. • States monitor school and district progress. • U.S. Department of Education monitors state performance. 	

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	<i>Ongoing Strategies</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Large-Scale</i>
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how to gauge student progress toward a standard and how to scaffold instruction to reach that goal. • Teacher reflection on what types of formative strategies are currently employed in the classroom. • Implementation of new strategies. • Opportunities to practice and to perfect usage. 	<p>If teacher-developed, school-team-developed, or district-developed products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of learning outcomes based on state content standards. • Development of assessment items and tests. <p>If using a commercial product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn features of the instrument and how the content links to district curricula and state standards. <p>Using local products or commercial products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregation and interpretation of data. • Discussion of results. • Sharing effective strategies across teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and interpretation of large-scale assessment trends over time. • Data disaggregation and progress evaluation at the building level and at the grade level. • Opportunities for revising district or school instructional practices and curricula.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback • Questioning, interviewing, exit questioning • Observations • Discussions • Ungraded class work 	<p>Teacher, school-team, or district-developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm and end-of-unit assessments • District assessments; e.g., 6-trait[®] <p>Commercial Products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP, SCANTRON[®], ThinkLink[™] etc. • Specific reading inventories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WKCE • WAA-SwD • NAEP[™] • ACT[®]/SAT[®] • AP[®] Exams

Examples of Formative and Summative Assessments

Formative

Exit questions: “your ticket out the door”
 Write a paragraph
 Journaling
 Graphic organizer
 Text-based questions
 Notebook checks
 Quizzes
 Worksheets
 Homework assignments
 Review games
 Diagrams/drawings/cartoons
 Oral questioning
 Nerf basketball review game
 Pass-the-ball review
 “What did you learn?” closure questions
 Vocabulary/concept skits
 Daily warm-up review questions
 “Ask the Teacher” forms
 Pictionary
 Idea webs
 Making and supporting predictions
 Group work updates
 Create a timeline around the room

Summative

Debate
 Perform a television show
 Perform a television commercial/infomercial
 Improvisational role-play
 Simulation and reflection
 Mock Trial and reflection
 Create advertisements
 Create a newspaper
 Editorial cartoon analysis
 Create an editorial or opinion piece
 Create an editorial cartoon
 Write and perform a play
 Role-play journals/diaries
 Critique an article, work of literature, work of art
 Present and support a new way of doing something
 Present and support your answer to a “what if” scenario
 Students create books
 Plan a museum exhibit/commemorative stamps/historical markers
 Research paper
 Recommendation presentations for problem-based assessments
 Decision presentations
 Create a time capsule/trunk and support selections
 Compare/contrasts

“The need for financial education in the United States has never been greater. The precipitous drop in savings rates and the rise of personal debt indicates a looming crisis that will be averted only through the combined efforts of public and private sectors, educators and, in the end, individuals making informed choices about their own financial futures. These problems will not be solved by education alone, but we are certain that they cannot be solved without education.”

NASAA, the North American Securities Administrators Association

Examples of Formative and Summative Assessments (cont)

Summative

Interpretations/analysis of oral histories

Text analysis

Children's book analysis

Interpretations of images

Interpretative/inferential conclusions from statistics (example: *CIA World Factbook*)

Invent and design something

Simulate a press conference¹⁹

All levels of assessment are important in informing instruction and programs. Formative assessment gives teachers continual access to how students are understanding the information. It can help teachers gauge if they should move forward or if they need to spend more time on an area. Interim assessments can be useful tools for collegial discussions around how key concepts, skills and understandings are being internalized by the students. It gives teachers common data to discuss to see if a financial literacy program is effective and it can give them continual information on what they need to enhance or expand. Assessment is the key data tool for information regarding student learning and can give parents, teachers, and administrators data on how the written and taught curriculum is matching with the students' needs.

How Can We Use the Standards to Create Assessments?

Assessments need to be connected to the standards. Teachers must clearly identify what it is they want students to know and do. Then they can determine what the assessment should look like and how they will know when students learn it.

Pre-assessment is key in determining where a teacher needs to focus time. Pre-assessments answer the question, "What do I do if they already know it or if they don't know what they need to know to move on?" They can help a teacher define the areas to focus on with students. Pre-assessment can be an informative tool to help focus instruction. Pre-assessments can be short activities that are structured around what the teacher wants students to know and do. The pre-assessment can be a short multiple choice quiz, online survey, journal entry to a series of questions, or any other quick way of assessing each student's cur-

¹⁹All assessment examples from: <http://aaa.mpls.k12.mn.us/formative.html>.

rent knowledge. Here is a sample list developed by Montgomery County (MD)

Public Schools:

- Teacher prepared pretests
- KWL charts and other graphic organizers
- Writing prompts/samples
- Questioning
- Guess Box
- Picture Interpretation
- Prediction
- Teacher observation/checklists
- Student demonstrations and discussions
- Informational surveys/Questionnaires/Inventories
- Student interviews
- Student products and work samples
- Self-evaluations
- Portfolio analysis
- Game activities
- Show of hands to determine understanding: Every Pupil Response
- Drawing related to topic or content
- Anticipation journals²⁰

Assessments answer the question, “How will I know they learned it?” A teacher should assess daily to adequately monitor student progress throughout a unit. These can be as simple as thumbs up or down, tickets to enter or leave, journaling or observations, or can be as complex as an essay response to a prompt, simulations or projects. Varying the assessments throughout the year also helps address the different learning styles of all students.

The standards are written in a way that naturally leads to thought provoking questions. For instance, Content Standard F, Community and Financial Responsibility, includes a grade level performance standard that states, “F.8.5.2 Demonstrate the consequences of consumer-citizen decisions and actions on the economy, broader society, and the environment.” If this standard was addressed in a science course, a teacher could use the standard to build an assessment around the issue of global warming. Students could analyze the consequences of how specific decisions, like driving a car, relate to global warming and how this impacts the economy. A social studies teacher could ask students to analyze the cost and benefits of specific decisions citizens make that impact how the Federal Reserve makes its decisions regarding interest rate adjustments. These are just some examples of how the standards can lead to high level assessments.

A teacher can also extend or refine an assessment using standards from another grade level or using the framework. If a pre-test or daily assessment

“Assessment is today’s means of modifying tomorrow’s instruction.”

Carol Tomlinson, Faculty member,
University of Virginia’s Curry
School of Education

²⁰www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org.

“Understanding the basics of personal finance is a life skill everyone needs.”

Carrie Schwab-Pomerantz,
President, Charles Schwab
Foundation

reveals a student understands a concept a teacher can use the framework and standards to ask the student to apply the knowledge at a higher level. If a student is at a lower level the teacher can use the standards and framework to develop assessments that address the needs.

Assessments can also be on-going and cross-curricular. The standards are written to be worked on throughout the PK-12 learning experience. The assessment of learning can be ongoing throughout the PK-12 education and across content areas. Students can build a portfolio that shows evidence of what learning takes place at each grade or districts can create a report that follows the student. Evidence can be from a variety of curricular areas. The chart found in Appendix E can be used as an example.

Assessments are key components in the learning experience. They give teachers constant feedback regarding student understanding of the standards and skill development. Financial literacy can be one tool that can help build cross curricular connections through the use and assessment of the financial literacy standards.

How Do We Develop Rubrics Around Key Ideas?

The final step in building assessments is to create a rubric that helps clarify the expectations for students. A rubric can be created during unit development or it can be developed with help from the students. A rubric can be a way to guide instruction and learning. It can be a rubric teachers share and/or it can be the same rubric for all assignments. A teacher should use the standards to create a rubric. A teacher can decide which standards are focused on in a course and highlight those in a rubric used throughout the year to show individual student growth. See the chart in Appendix F for an example of a rubric that can be used to show individual student growth connecting to the standards.

Resources to Build Quality Assessments and Rubrics

There are a lot of resources that teachers can use to build quality assessments in financial literacy. The following websites can be used to locate a variety of assessment tools, potentially related to some of the suggestions listed above.

- Family economics and financial education: The Family Economics & Financial Education (FEFE) project is in collaboration with the University of Arizona in Tucson and the credit counseling and debt management company **Take Charge America, Inc.** The site provides educators with no-cost curriculum materials and the skills and confidence to effectively teach family economics and finance to their students. The site provides test banks for multiple financial literacy topics—requires sign-up. <http://fefe.arizona.edu/curriculum.php>
- Jump\$tart financial literacy survey: This is a 55 multiple choice survey on financial literacy. <http://www.jumpstartcoalition.com/upload/2006SurveyWithAnswers.doc>

Rubrics

- University of Wisconsin - Stout professional development web portal—website has rubrics for various ideas like collaboration, group work, team responsibility, power point, websites, videos, multimedia, writing, etc. <http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml#primary>
- Kathy Schrock’s Guide for Educators—Assessment and Rubric Information
Kathy Schrock has gathered a collection of rubrics and assessments for use of the World Wide Web that might be helpful for you as you design your own. <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html>
- Peer Review and Rubrics
This project was created by two Teachers College student teachers: Tracy Higashi and Lee Spilberg. The website also contains an extensive list of rubrics and rubric development sites. The intent of their project was to guide peer reviewers through the process of providing constructive, meaningful feedback to students on their writing projects and class reports. <http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/38.html#rubrics>
- TeAch-nology.com’s Teacher Rubric Makers
This commercial site provides a starting point for developing rubrics that make alternative assessment activities more objective in the evaluation process. The rubrics are free, and encompass solving a math problem, basic writing skills, oral expression, class participation, science fair activities, and a variety of classroom activities that are appropriate for elementary and middle grades. Note: Since this is a commercial site, there are advertisements, some of which have blinking features. http://teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

General Assessment Sites

- How Can I Ensure the Integrity of My Assessments?: Guidelines for Appropriate Assessment by *RMC Research Corporation*
This table provides a checklist for effective assessment. Teachers can use this to ensure that their assessment—to name a few—is aligned with content standards, provides results that can be easily communicated to students and parents, and fosters student reflection, review, and improvement. Administrators can also use this to identify professional development needs in assessment development. <http://www.rmcdenver.com/useguide/assessme/gideline.htm?>

“In today’s complex financial markets, financial education is central to helping consumers make better decisions for themselves and their families.”

Chairman and member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Ben S. Bernanke