

Still Needs Work

No reason for assessment is apparent and none can be inferred from the context; it is not clear why the assessment is being conducted.

There seem to be too many purposes (users and uses) and the assessment couldn't possibly serve them all.

The specified purpose is inappropriate—the information gathered will not serve the needs of the intended users.

If an assessment FOR learning context, the assessment will not serve to build student confidence.

Well on Its Way

Users and uses can be implied but are not made explicit.

There is some question about whether the assessment can fulfill its intended purpose.

If an assessment FOR learning context, the assessment may be encouraging to learners.

Ready to Use

Intended users and uses are explicitly stated.

It is clear that the assessment will help them.

If an assessment FOR learning context, the assessment will provide motivational support for students to strive for excellence.

Reflection

What about important new insights to come to you as a result of your reflection on this chapter?

What questions about assessment can you now answer based on this chapter?

What questions have come to mind as a result of your study of this chapter that were answered as your study continues?

Practice with Chapter 2 Ideas

1. Consider the six keys in Figure 2.2. Reflect on and write briefly about the extent to which the assessments you are experiencing in your college life meet these standards and therefore could be considered assessments FOR learning.
2. Traditional school improvement plans and strategies have operated on the belief

that the most important decisions—the ones that come most to student learning—are made by teachers and other adults in the classroom. Little attention has been given to the needs of assessment users and decision makers. Why do you think this has been the case?

Another level of assessment use focuses on program evaluation and improvement across classrooms. Teacher teams, principals, and curriculum personnel must decide which standards are and are not being mastered by students, which programs are working and which are in need of adjustment. They need periodic evidence (perhaps quarterly during the school year) of student mastery of each standard aggregated across students, classrooms, and sometimes even buildings.

And finally, there is the district or policy level of assessment use where school, district, and community leaders must determine if enough students are meeting standards. This is the purview of the annual standardized achievement tests that typically are administered as statewide or districtwide assessments.

All levels of use are important because they provide valuable information to important

decision makers. However, our journey together through the realm of assessment in this book will center on the classroom, where you, the classroom teacher, will be in charge. You will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the evidence gathered with your assessments, and you will need to be sure your assessments and their results are used well to benefit student learning. Included in this latter responsibility is the need to use classroom assessment to keep students believing they are capable learners. The chapters that follow will show you how to fulfill all of these responsibilities.

Figure 2.3 presents the first entry in a set of rating scales, or *rubrics*, for evaluating assessment quality that I will build through the rest of the book. (These rubrics appear in their entirety in Appendix B.) This entry asks, Does the assessment arise from and serve clearly articulated purposes?



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