



# Examining Assessments

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*Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove.*

## **Purpose**

To examine an assessment closely and discuss its implications

### **1. Getting Started**

- The facilitator reminds the group of their norms and establishes time limits for each part of the process.
- The designated person in the group gives a brief description of the assessment's purpose and context, and answers a few clarifying questions, if necessary.
- The participants observe or read the work in silence, perhaps making brief notes about aspects of it that they particularly notice.

### **2. Describing the Assessment**

- The facilitator asks: "What do you see?"
- During this period the group gathers as much information as possible from the Assessment. Group members describe what they see, avoiding judgments about the quality of the assessment or interpretations about what the assessment asks students to do. If judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator should ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based. It may be useful to list the group's observations on chart paper. If interpretations come up, they can be listed in another column for later discussion.

### **3. Completing the Assessment**

- Group members complete (parts of) the assessment.

### **4. Interpreting the Assessment**

- The facilitator asks: "From the students' perspective, what are they working on as they complete this assessment?"
- The facilitator then asks: "If this assessment was completed successfully by a student, what would it tell us about what this student knows, understands, and is able to do?"
- During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the assessment asks students to do. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible. As you listen to each other's interpretations, ask questions that help you better understand each other's perspectives.

### **5. Implications for Our Practice**

- The facilitator asks: "What are the implications of this work for teaching, learning and assessment?"
- What teaching and learning issues have been raised for you in terms of your own practice? What issues have been raised in terms of school-wide practices?

### **6. Reflecting on the Process**

- As a group, share what you have learned.
- Reflect on how well the process worked — what went well, and what could be improved.