**Mindtool Database**

Black Weeks 1-2

Green Weeks 3-4

Purple Weeks 5-6

**Field 1:** Key learnings and insights from the Miller, Linn, &Gronlund and/or Lewin and Shoemaker text.

* Increasing emphasis on content and performance standards has led to an increase in testing, both standardized and classroom.
* Assessment is different than measurement – assessment is any tool or observation that gives value to a process, product, or mastery of a standard; measurement is assigning a number or grade to that assessment.
* Effective assessment follows five principles: decide what is being assessed, select an appropriate assessment tool(s), use a variety of assessments, take into account benefits and limitations of each assessment, and use assessment results to plan future learning.
* There are three major areas to consider when choosing or writing a test: validity, reliability, and usability. Validity, the most important, refers to appropriate interpretation and use of the results. Reliability, the second most important, refers to stability of outcomes from one assessment to another covering the same content.
* There are four main steps in planning an assessment: setting a purpose for assessment, creating a set of specifications, and creating and selecting appropriate items and tasks.
* Assessment location in a unit of study is directly related to assessment purpose. It is important to have a balance of objective assessments and performance assessments.
* Valid test items all meet certain criteria: the format matches the outcome measured, the specific learning outcome determines the knowledge or skill needed to answer the item, the directions and point of the item are clear and free from excessive wording, the answer would be agreed upon by other professionals, there are no mechanical errors or clues to the student, and the item is free from all types of bias.
* The most effective and accurate way of reporting grades to students, families, and school personnel is to use a combination of concise letter/number grades and a more thorough portfolio or report that allows for comments and reflection.
* Observations are made more purposeful and more useful when they are accompanied by a record-keeping process such as anecdotal records, self-assessment or peer-assessment tools completed by students, peer evaluation methods, and attitude/interest inventories.
* In order for anecdotal records to be useful, teachers need to have a system in place that is clear and realistic. For example, aim to observe one or two certain behaviors for a set number of kids each day; keep the records in a notebook or binder where each student has one page.
* A wide variety of tools exist to evaluation performance assessments: checklists, rubrics, assessment lists, and chec brics. It is important to match the tool to the assessment, and to consider allowing students the chance to also evaluate themselves.

**Field 2:** Key learnings and insights from the PowerPoints, Jing Presentations, Handouts, and/or Articles.

* Before each assessment, teachers need to ask themselves: How will these results be used? How will this assessment directly and indirectly impact the students? How will I communicate the results in a way that is understandable to the user?
* Assessments need to be aligned with learning targets, appropriate for the users (students and audience), and continual.
* Students should be involved in the assessment process – setting goals, evaluating their own work/learning, and tracking their own progress.
* Evidence of validity can be found in many aspects of a test: content, criterion, and construct.
* The cognitive domain involves intellectual knowledge and skills; the psychomotor domain involves perceptual and motor skills; the affective domain involves attitudes, interests, and emotions.
* There are three principles of objective writing: state what we expect from the student, include an observable aspect to assess, and measure only one outcome at a time.
* Several things need to be taken into consideration when using a portfolio assessment: purpose, advantages and disadvantages, content, organization, and evaluation.
* Test anxiety can be cognitive and/or physiological. A mild level of anxiety is beneficial to learning and assessment. Combating test anxiety is most effective when multiple methods are utilized.
* Performance assessments should follow the Assessment Design Outline (from Professor Rasmussen): Outcomes, Performance Criteria, Performance Process, Performance Judgment, Performance Feedback.
* High quality rubrics meet the following criteria: be specific with criteria and distinctions between levels, limit the number of dimensions/criteria, use observable and measureable criteria, use 3-4 levels of performance, and let students be involved in creating the rubric.
* Data-driven dialogue should follow a five-step process: build a foundation (collaborative inquiry), identify a student-learning problem, verify causes, generate solutions, and implement/monitor/achieve results.
* Performance assessment is more valid and useful than traditional assessment for ELL students because it allows for more creative and flexible ways of demonstrating understanding than simply reading and writing. Accommodations for ELL students include simplifying test instructions and content language, providing extra time, allowing students to draw or give an answer orally, or use computer testing software.

**Field 3:** Insights gained from your colleagues through Discussion Forum conversations or other means.

* Standardized testing creates a lot of anxiety for students and teachers because of the increased stakes associated with test scores; it is difficult to balance authentic assessment with mandated assessments.
* Formative assessment is more useful and honest than formal testing for younger students.
* Content validity involves adequate and representative sampling of content. Construct validity involves the relationship between performance and identified skill/talent/etc. Assessment-criterion relationships involve predicting or estimating future success on an assessment or with certain content based on a previous assessment.
* Jesus, our master teacher, teaches us to have faith during the storms, to reach all of our students, to reflect on and modify our teachings, and to always persevere and do our best. His model of effective teaching is displayed for us in the scriptures.
* Portfolios can be done in a wide variety of ways, for a wide variety of purposes, but there are a few common elements: student self-reflection, clear guidelines about what to include, a set way to evaluate them, and transparency with families.
* Conferences can be a valuable communication tool with families if they are primarily positive, if teachers listen to parents, and if teachers are well prepared with work examples and notes from other teachers who work with the student.
* Report cards are starting to be more standards-based and highly influenced by technology. Parents and students are given much more access to grades, which increases accountability for students and teachers to stay caught up on assignments and grading.
* Information gathered from observations (anecdotal records) and student feedback (guess-who, surveys, attitude/interest/personality inventories, Likert scales) is very honest and can be effectively used to plan instruction, grouping, and further assessment.
* Rubrics can be used in a variety of subject areas and with a wide range of grade levels, if the key criteria from the articles discussed above are followed. The level of specificity and language used depends on the particular assignment, the purpose of the assessment, and the age/demographics of the students.
* The population of ELL students is increasing, and we as teachers must learn how to accommodate our instruction and assessments to meet their needs.

**Field 4:** Key learnings gained through completion of assignments.

* Assessment terminology clarifies how to match your learning targets to the appropriate form of assessment. (See Week 1 Graphic Organizer)
* Test writers need to consider the overall purpose of the assessment, the characteristics of the test takers, and the usability of the assessment they are creating.
* Teachers need to scrutinize purchased assessments carefully, and need to take validity, reliability, and usability into account when creating their own assessments.
* A Table of Specifications is used to outline a unit assessment to ensure that the correct domains are assessed for each objective and that there is a range of domains assessed.
* General Instructional Objectives (GIOs) state what the student needs to be able to do in an overall sense for each topic of instruction; Specific Learning Outcomes (SLOs) state exactly what a student needs to know or be able to do relative to the general goal/standard.
* When writing traditional test items, teacher must match the SLOs to the type of item to make the best match. Directions need to be written clearly for each type of item, and answers need to be clear and agreed upon by professionals. (See checklists in chapters 7-10 of the Miller, Linn, & Gronlund text.)
* Following the Assessment Design Outline ensures that the evaluation tool is part of the initial plan; it follows a similar format to UbD/Backwards Design.
* The more outcomes measured by a performance assessment, the better because it allows the teacher to evaluate goals in congruence with each other to determine exactly what the students do/do not understand.
* Creating an executive summary was an effective way of outlining my final research paper and conveying my initial research thoughts to my cohort members. Test anxiety is a topic that I could do extensive further research on.
* There is a lack of current research regarding how to justify time spent on teaching test-taking strategies and regarding how teaching test-tasking strategies results in higher achievement scores.

**Field 5:** Additional comments or insights.

* Assessment is not covered enough in undergraduate programs; everyone in our cohort seems to be learning a lot of this for the first time. Until now, we have taken assessment at face value and accepted it.
* Formative assessments, portfolios, and authentic project-based assessments seem to be hot topics right now.
* There are several current assessment research topics that relate to every teacher out there, regardless of position, content area, or experience.
* Creating a Table of Specifications is a time-consuming project, but one that ensures effective teaching and valid assessing. It naturally falls between stages one and two of Backwards Design.
* Portfolios are a very thorough way to assess student progress as well as student mastery, as long as they serve a purpose. Students should have choice in what goes into portfolios, and parents should have equal access.
* Creating portfolio guidelines and evaluation processes are time-consuming up front, but pay off in the end.
* Text anxiety starts to manifest itself around third grade; thus, as a third grade teacher I need to be very cognizant of the warning signs so that I can help address and alleviate it as soon as possible.
* Students find a lot of value in performance assessments versus traditional pencil-and-paper tests; performance assessments are more motivating and more enjoyable for most students.
* Could I somehow do an action research project based on teaching students how to manage and decrease their feelings of test anxiety?
* Undergraduate education programs do not spend enough time (in my opinion) teaching how to create valid, reliable, and usable assessments – both traditional and performance.
* If/when I move to a different school, I will need to take a class on how to effectively teach ELL students. It is not an immediate need right now, but could easily become one in the future.