**Growing A Teacher’s Own Student-Growth Evidence**

By W. James Popham, University of California, Los Angeles

In 2009, ASCD published my book, [*Instruction That Measures Up: Successful Teaching in the Age of Accountability*](http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/Instruction-That-Measures-Up.aspx), that I wrote well before Race to the Top raced its way into our consciousness. In [Chapter 6](http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108048/chapters/Evaluating-Instruction.aspx), entitled “Evaluating Instruction,” I suggested that a potent form of evaluative evidence—evidence by which a teacher’s instruction might be judged—could be the data collected from teacher-made classroom assessments. Indeed, I argued that most of the tests then being used to evaluate instruction were *instructionally insensitive*, that is, unaccompanied by evidence showing those tests could accurately distinguish between well taught and badly taught students. Accordingly, if the evaluation of a teacher’s instruction were to be based on instructionally insensitive state tests or instructionally insensitive district-acquired tests, evidence of instructional effectiveness based on classroom assessments could be far more persuasive.

When collecting evidence of student growth via classroom assessments, however, not only do the results of such tests need to be constructed so they accurately gauge changes in students’ levels of achievement, but those results must also be seen as *credible.* Skeptics will often discount the importance of classroom-assessment evidence because they regard such evidence as likely to be contaminated by teachers’ self-serving conduct. In *Instruction That Measures Up*, I described several data-gathering designs that use variations of pre-test and post-test data-collection methods, coupled with blind scoring of students’ results by nonpartisan scorers, to show that it is possible for teachers to collect evidence of student growth that is both accurate and credible.

Summing up, teachers *can*grow defensible evidence of student growth by relying on teacher-made classroom assessments. But teachers need to learn how to build tests that accurately measure such growth—and how to administer and then score those tests so the world believes what they say.

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