

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading

Presenters: Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Dr. Tammy Heflebower

Credits: 3 Graduate Credits

Required eBook: *Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* (Robert J. Marzano, Marzano Research Laboratory, 2010)

Course Overview

For educators to design instruction that advances all their students' achievement, they must be able to design assessments that fully illuminate what their students are learning. To grade their students fairly and productively, educators also need to know how to track student progress through detailed descriptors of the essential skills and knowledge their students must learn. Most educators struggle with these issues, however; grades can be inconsistent from teacher to teacher, department to department, or student to student and teachers cannot always adequately communicate to parents how their children's grades are determined. Marzano Research Lab's expert presenters cofounder and CEO Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Vice President Dr. Tammy Heflebower walk course participants through the research and theories that support what kind of feedback, assessment, and grading students need to help them learn; how to construct those assessments; how to create rubric-based scales to inform both formative and summative assessments; and how to monitor and affect their students' progress. Interviews with teachers and students, classroom footage, workshop activities, presentation, and the accompanying text bring to life this critical subject for educators who aspire to provide the kind of responses and guidance to their students that keep them highly engaged in their learning and making steady progress toward meaningful and purposeful achievement.

Presenters' Bios

Dr. Robert J. Marzano is the cofounder and CEO of Marzano Research Laboratory in Denver, Colorado. Throughout his forty years in the field of education, he has become a speaker, trainer, and author of more than thirty books and 150 articles on topics such as instruction, assessment, writing, and implementing standards, cognition, effective leadership, and school intervention. His books include: *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, *Making Standards Useful in the Classroom*, *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance*, *Designing and Teaching Learning Goals and Objectives*, and *On Excellence in Teaching*. His practical translations of the most current research and theory into classroom strategies are internationally known and widely practiced by both teachers and administrators. He received a bachelor's degree from Iona College in New York, a master's degree from Seattle University, and a doctorate from the University of Washington.

Dr. Tammy Heflebower, EdD, is vice president of Marzano Research Laboratory. She is a consultant with experience in urban, rural, and suburban districts throughout North America. Dr. Heflebower has served as a classroom teacher, building-level leader, district leader, regional professional development director, and national trainer. She has also been an adjunct professor of curriculum, instruction, and assessment courses at several universities.



Course Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- The distinctions between formative and summative assessment
- How to employ feedback and formative assessment to facilitate students' learning
- How to develop summative grading systems that are consistent, reliable, and valid

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:

- Design multiple assessments that inform instructional design
- Clarify learning goals for their students
- Develop rubrics, or proficiency scales, to guide students' learning
- Track students' progress through research-tested methods
- Assess students for grades with consistent, reliable, and valid methods

Unit 1: Introduction and Overview of Assessments

In this unit, Solution Tree CEO Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Vice President Dr. Tammy Heflebower introduce the goals of the course, survey the relevant research, and define critical essential vocabulary, including feedback, formative assessment, and learning progressions. They discuss the role of assessment in grading and lay the groundwork for translating theory into practice.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- How the research should inform teachers' assessment practice
- Key terminology related to assessment and grading
- A range of assessment types and uses

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Facilitate criterion- rather than norm-referenced assessments and grading
- Evaluate their current assessment practice and begin to implement changes that advance student achievement
- Distinguish between types and uses of assessments
- Articulate their grading philosophies



Unit 2: eBook: Introduction

Participants read “Chapter 1: Research and Theory” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format..

Unit 3: The Anatomy of Formative Assessment and the Need for a New Scale

In this unit, expert presenter Tammy Heflebower argues for the need for a new assessment and grading scale. She describes proficiency scales—i.e., detailed descriptions of learning goals along a continuum—how to develop proficiency scales, and how to use them to be precise about learning goals and to engage students in their use. She also explores how to align activities and assessments from the foundation of proficiency scales. Classroom footage and interviews with teachers practicing the use of such scales further illustrate this unit’s content.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Why we need a new scale
- How and why to develop proficiency scales
- How to use proficiency scales in instruction
- The importance of aligning activities with assessments

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Develop proficiency scales
- Employ proficiency scales in the classroom
- Align activities with assessments

Unit 4: eBook: Formative Assessment and Changing Scales

Participants read “Chapter 2: The Anatomy of Formative Assessment” and “Chapter 3: The need for a New Scale” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format.

Unit 5: Designing Assessments

In this unit, Dr. Heflebower walks participants and her workshop attendees through the process of back-mapping existing assessments to proficiency scales and continues her consideration of how to incorporate scales into instruction. She also details how to design quality assessments, both obtrusive and unobtrusive, and how to generate assessment banks for teachers’ own and their colleagues’ use. As



in the previous unit, classroom footage reveals theory translated into practice.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- What back-mapping is
- How to incorporate proficiency scales into instruction
- What constitutes quality in assessment types
- The uses of an assessment bank

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Back-map existing assessments to proficiency scales
- Incorporate proficiency scales into instruction
- Design quality assessments
- Create an assessment bank

Unit 6: eBook: The Craft

Participants read “Chapter 4: Designing Assessments” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format.

Unit 7: Tracking Student Progress

In this unit, participants study four methods for tracking student progress in order to select the one (or a combination) most conducive to furthering their students’ learning. Classroom footage and interviews detail the process of topic mapping one school has implemented, which has resulted in tangible improvement in student achievement, relationships between colleagues, and relationships between students and their teachers. Dr. Heflebower and her workshop participants also help explore the perspectives of various stakeholders in shifting to a standards-based system.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Four methods for tracking student progress
- How one school has implemented a standards-based system
- The effects of a standards-based system on students and teachers
- Different perspectives on a shift to a standards-based system

Student Learning Outcomes



After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Choose an appropriate method for tracking student progress, one that advances their students' learning
- Begin to implement a standards-based system in their classroom or school

Unit 8: Grading and Reporting

In this unit, Dr. Heflebower, her workshop attendees, and practitioners from several schools help participants consider the complex and controversial issue of grading. Participants will develop answers to why they grade; how they can improve their grading practice to make it more fair, valid, and productive for students; and how to determine summative grades in a standards-based system.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The key issues around grading
- How to determine fair, valid, and consistent summative scores

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Improve their grading practice to make it fair, valid, consistent, and productive for students (and those invested in their grades)
- Implement a standards-based grading system

Unit 9: eBook: Monitoring and Grading Strategies

Participants read "Chapter 5: Tracking Student Progress" and "Chapter 6: Grading and Reporting" in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format.

Methods of Instruction

- Videos (presentations consisting of lecture, interviews, and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the video presentations where participants are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)
- Discussion forum (prompts after each unit that engage participants in online dialogue with their cohorts)



- Midterm (a project intended to get teachers to begin to develop their practice by putting to work in the classroom what they have learned)
- Final (a project that enables educators to reflect on their practice and assess their students' work through the lens of what they have learned)

Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.

Percentage of Course Credit

- Reflection questions 25%
- Quizzes 15%
- Midterm 25%
- Final 35%

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, quizzes, and any midterm and/or final), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

Grading Policy

A: 3.4 – 4.0
B: 2.7 – 3.3
C: 2.0 – 2.6
F: < 2.0

Reflection/Quiz Rubric

Activity	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Quizzes	90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	69% or below
Reflection Question	Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content.	Participant has included appropriate content from the course content.	Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.	Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.
	Participant has made responses to prompts personally	Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct	Participant has answered most	Participant has not addressed the



	meaningful and relevant to his or her teaching practice.	response to the prompts.	questions directly but some too briefly.	specific questions posed. Participant has not responded to all reflection questions.
				Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.

Midterm

Please address the following in a 3-part essay:

1. Assessing your current practice:

- How do make sure your students know what quality works look like?
- What kind of formative feedback do you provide students during learning and before you assign grades?
- What do you expect students to do in response to your feedback before they submit work for grades?
- How do you determine grades? What kind of scale do you use?
- Do you feel the current scale you use has been effective? Why or why not?

2. Planning modifications of your practice:

- Choose a specific unit of study or project you will focus on.
- Develop a plan to address how you will do the following in relation to that particular project or unit of study. How will you adjust your practice to:
 - a) provide students more information about what exemplary work looks like?
 - b) diversify the types of assessments you use and how you use them?
 - c) provide students more feedback before they submit work for a grade?
 - d) make summative grades more valid and informative?

3. Implementing modifications:

- Provide an explanation of how you plan to implement your modification plan in the classroom (implementation is required for the final).
- Write a reflection addressing the following:
 - a) How do you think your adjustments to your practice will change your role and responsibilities as a teacher?
 - b) What do you expect to see in student engagement and work as a result of these adjustments?



Midterm Rubric				
Step	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Assessing your current practice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do make sure your students know what quality works look like?• What kind of formative feedback do you provide students during learning and before you assign grades?• What do you expect students to do in response to your feedback before they submit work for grades?• How do you determine grades? What kind of scale do you use?• Do you feel the current scale you use has been effective? Why or why not?	<p>Participant has examined with rich detail and appropriate examples all 5 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do make sure your students know what quality works look like?• What kind of formative feedback do you provide students during learning and before you assign grades?• What do you expect students to do in response to your feedback before they submit work for grades?• How do you determine grades? What kind of scale do you use?• Do you feel the current scale you use has been effective? Why or why not?	<p>Participant has adequately examined all 5 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do make sure your students know what quality works look like?• What kind of formative feedback do you provide students during learning and before you assign grades?• What do you expect students to do in response to your feedback before they submit work for grades?• How do you determine grades? What kind of scale do you use?• Do you feel the current scale you use has been effective? Why or why not?	<p>Participant has only referred to 3-4 of the following</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Participant has addressed all 5, but with very little detail or only partially answered the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do make sure your students know what quality works look like?• What kind of formative feedback do you provide students during learning and before you assign grades?• What do you expect students to do in response to your feedback before they submit work for grades?• How do you determine grades? What kind of scale do you use?• Do you feel the current scale you use has been effective? Why or why not?	<p>Participant has inadequately or incompletely responded to 0-2 of the following (or not at all):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do make sure your students know what quality works look like?• What kind of formative feedback do you provide students during learning and before you assign grades?• What do you expect students to do in response to your feedback before they submit work for grades?• How do you determine grades? What kind of scale do you use?• Do you feel the current scale you use has been effective? Why or why not?
Planning modifications of your practice Choose a specific unit	Participant has identified a specific, and appropriate, unit of study.	Participant has identified a specific unit of study.	Participant has alluded to a unit of study.	Participant has not identified a unit of study.



<p>of study or project you will focus on.</p> <p>Develop a plan to address how you will do the following in relation to that particular project or unit of study. How will you adjust your practice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide students more information about what exemplary work looks like?• diversify the types of assessments you use and how you use them?• provide students more feedback before they submit work for a grade?• make summative grades more valid and informative?	<p>Participant has developed a strategic plan to adjust practice and has examined with richly detailed and appropriate examples all 4 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate adjustments to provide more information to students about what exemplary work looks like.• Specific ways to diversify the types and uses of assessments he or she currently uses.• Specific ways to provide students more feedback before grading.• Specific ways to make summative grades more valuable and meaningful.	<p>developed a plan to adjust practice and has examined all 4 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate adjustments to provide more information to students about what exemplary work looks like.• Specific ways to diversify the types and uses of assessments he or she currently uses.• Specific ways to provide students more feedback before grading.• Specific ways to make summative grades more valuable and meaningful.	<p>partially developed a plan to adjust practice and has referred to 3 of the following OR all 4 with inadequate support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjustments to provide more information to students about what exemplary work looks like.• Ways to diversify the types and uses of assessments he or she currently uses.• Ways to provide students more feedback before grading.• Ways to make summative grades more valuable and meaningful.	<p>inadequately or incompletely responded to 0-2 of the following (or not at all):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjustments to provide more information to students about what exemplary work looks like.• Ways to diversify the types and uses of assessments he or she currently uses.• Ways to provide students more feedback before grading.• Ways to make summative grades more valuable and meaningful.
<p>Implementing modifications</p> <p>Provide an explanation of how you plan to implement your modification plan in the classroom (implementation is required for the final).</p>	<p>Participant has provided a clearly articulated and strategic implementation plan with rich detail outlining the adjustments he/she will make to his/her practice outlined in the previous section.</p>	<p>Participant has provided a clearly articulated and well thought out implementation plan for the adjustments to practice outlined in the previous section.</p>	<p>Participant has provided an implementation plan that indicates some adjustments to practice.</p> <p>The plan is not fully realized and/or does not address the adjustment mentioned in the previous section.</p>	<p>Participant has not provided an implementation plan that indicates some of adjustments to practice.</p>
<p>Implementing modifications</p>	<p>Participant has provided a richly detailed and highly</p>	<p>Participant has effectively and persuasively</p>	<p>Participant has responded to both of the following but</p>	<p>Participant has not addressed one or both of the following:</p>



Write a reflection addressing the following: a. How do you think your adjustments to your practice will change your role and responsibilities as a teacher? b. What do you expect to see in student engagement and work as a result of these adjustments?	persuasive response to both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How he or she thinks these adjustments will change the teacher's role and responsibilities.• What he or she expects to see in student engagement and work as a result of these modifications.	responded to both of the following with some supportive examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How he or she thinks these adjustments will change the teacher's role and responsibilities.• What he or she expects to see in student engagement and work as a result of these modifications.	has only been partially persuasive due to a lack of detail or has submitted an incomplete response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How he or she thinks these adjustments will change the teacher's role and responsibilities.• What he or she expects to see in student engagement and work as a result of these modifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How he or she thinks these adjustments will change the teacher's role and responsibilities.• What he or she expects to see in student engagement and work as a result of these modifications.
Formal issues	Participant has made no grammatical errors. Participant has organized paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas. Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure and made careful word choice.	Participant has made a few grammatical errors. Participant has organized most paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas. Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure though not always found the right word.	Participant has made some distracting grammatical errors. Participant has organized some paragraphs around main ideas but not others. Participant has written in a style that communicates his or her thoughts but with no marked eloquence and insufficient attention to word choice.	Participant has made multiple grammatical errors. Paragraphs are not organized around main ideas. Participant has written in a style that does not effectively communicate his or her thoughts.



Final

For your midterm you assessed and modified your current assessment practice. You were asked to implement your modification plan for a unit of study, which is the basis of your final.

For your final, please do the following:

1. Write a reflection about the results of the implementation of your plan, addressing the following:
 - How did the adjustments to your practice change your role and responsibilities as a teacher?
 - What differences did you see in students' engagement and work as a result of your adjustments?
 - Compare the reality of what happened to the expectations you articulated in your midterm reflection.
2. Integrate into your plan any revisions you think would improve it based on evidence of student engagement, quality of student work in response to your original plan, and course content you have learned since the midterm.

In order to track revisions, include a copy of your original plan and indicate where you made changes. Please track your changes in one of the following ways:

- Using a different color font text.
- Using the “track changes” feature in the Review section of Microsoft Word.
- Writing directly on your written plan then scanning and uploading your work.

Note: If you do not plan to make any revisions, please include a paragraph summary explaining how your original plan effectively address all student needs in regard to engagement, quality of work, and quality feedback.

3. Using the unit of study or project identified in your midterm, design ONE proficiency scale for ONE essential learning objective you have identified that you will use for your next implementation of this project or unit of study.
4. Write a reflection addressing the following:
 - a) How do you think the modifications you are proposing to your plan—including but not confined to the incorporation of proficiency scales—will affect student engagement and student work?
 - b) What changes can you make to how you determine summative grades (for projects like the one you've been working with for this course) and report them out to students and their parents or guardians? Why would you make those changes?

Final Rubric

Step	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Write a reflection about the results of the implementation of your plan, addressing the	Participant has analyzed the following with rich supporting examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did the	Participant has described the following with examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How his or her	Participant inadequately or partially addressed the following with very little detail and	Participant did not address either of the following, or has only done so with confusing and/or



<p>following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did the adjustments to your practice change your role and responsibilities as a teacher?• What differences did you see in students' engagement and work as a result of your adjustments?• Compare the reality of what happened to the expectations you articulated in your midterm reflection. <p>Integrate into your plan any revisions you think would improve it based on evidence of student engagement, quality of student work in response to your original plan, and course content you have learned since the midterm.</p>	<p>adjustments to your practice change your role and responsibilities as a teacher?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What differences did you see in students' engagement and work as a result of your adjustments? <p>Participant has analyzed, with example and rich detail, how the reality of what happened in the classroom compares to the prediction he or she made in the midterm.</p>	<p>adjustments changed his or her role and responsibilities as a teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What changed in students' engagement and work as a result of these modifications <p>Participant has explained how the reality of what happened in the classroom compares to the prediction he or she made in the midterm.</p>	<p>examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How his or her adjustments changed his or her role and responsibilities as a teacher• What changed in students' engagement and work as a result of these modifications <p>Participant has only alluded to how the reality of what happened in the classroom compares to his or her prediction without referring to what was said in the midterm.</p>	<p>vague descriptors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How his or her adjustments changed his or her role and responsibilities as a teacher?• What changed in students' engagement and work as a result of these modifications <p>Participant does not address how the reality of what happened in the classroom compares to his or her prediction in the midterm.</p>
	<p>Participant has appropriately modified his or her plan in a well-reasoned response to specific evidence of student engagement, quality of student work in response to your original plan, and course content learned since the midterm.</p> <p>The modifications made to the plan are clearly articulated and appropriate. Participant has demonstrated a deep and thorough understanding of the</p>	<p>Participant has modified his or her plan with reference to student engagement, quality of student work in response to your original plan, and course content learned since the midterm.</p> <p>The modifications made to the plan are clear and appropriate.</p>	<p>Participant has insufficiently modified his or her plans and has only addressed 1-2 of the following: evidence of student engagement, quality of student work in response to your original plan, and course content learned since the midterm.</p> <p>Modifications made to the plan are confusing and/or unclear.</p>	<p>Participant did not modify his or her plans in response to evidence of student engagement, quality of work, or course content learned since the midterm.</p>



	course content through the modifications.			
Using the unit of study or project identified in your midterm, design ONE proficiency scale for ONE essential learning objective you have identified that you will use for your next implementation of this project or unit of study.	Participant has integrated a highly appropriate example of a workable proficiency scale and has clearly organized the scale around the essential learning objective.	Participant has integrated an example of a proficiency scale developed around the essential learning objective.	Participant has integrated an example of a proficiency scale though not organized around the essential learning objective.	Participant has not integrated an example of a proficiency scale.
Write a reflection addressing: a) How do you think the modifications you are proposing to your plan—including but not confined to the incorporation of proficiency scales—will affect student engagement and student work? b) What changes can you make to how you determine summative grades (for projects like the one you've been working with for this course) and report them out to students and their parents or guardians? Why would you make those changes?	Participant has reflected in persuasive detail on how he or she thinks the new modifications will affect student engagement and work. Participant has described in rich detail and effectively justified changes he or she would make to the determination and reporting of summative grades.	Participant has reflected on how he or she thinks the new modifications will affect student engagement and work. Participant has described and explained how changes he or she would make to the determination and reporting of summative grades.	Participant has only cursorily addressed how he or she thinks the new modifications will affect student engagement and work. Participant has listed changes he or she would make to the determination and reporting of summative grades but not indicated why. OR Participant has only addressed one of the above.	Participant has not reflected on how he or she thinks the new modifications will affect student engagement and work. Participant has neither indicated changes he or she would make to the determination and reporting of summative grades nor indicated why.
Formal issues	Participant has made no grammatical errors.	Participant has made a few grammatical errors.	Participant has made some distracting	Participant has made multiple grammatical errors.



	<p>Participant has organized paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas.</p> <p>Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure and made careful word choice.</p>	<p>Participant has organized most paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas.</p> <p>Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure though not always found the right word.</p>	<p>grammatical errors.</p> <p>Participant has organized some paragraphs around main ideas but not others.</p> <p>Participant has written in a style that communicates his or her thoughts but with no marked eloquence and insufficient attention to word choice.</p>	<p>Paragraphs are not organized around main ideas.</p> <p>Participant has written in a style that does not effectively communicate his or her thoughts.</p>
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