MYRON DUECK

# GIVING STUDENTS a SAY

## Smarter Assessment Practices to Empower and Engage

Foreword by **John Hattie**



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# FOREWORD

*Come into the elevator.*

Some years ago, I led a team to develop the assessment scheme for New Zealand elementary and high schools (https://e-asttle.tki.org.nz), and New York City was interested in adopting it. My bosses told me that in business and politics it is critical to get the elevator pitch perfect, since you often have only one chance to get the message across. My business developer worked on the pitch and trained me with religious zeal in delivering it before we went off to New York. Once there, we just happened to enter an elevator at the same time as Joel Klein, then-chancellor of the New York City Department of Education. Somehow my perfectly prepared elevator pitch went by the wayside, and we talked about… *sheep.*

I now have the chance to deliver another elevator pitch, so here goes: "Assessment is something we have done *to* students rather than *with* them." Pause and reread this message. If one sentence sums up the reason this book was written, this is it. This book's aim is for educators to work *with* students for a most just cause: to help students become confident learners who can interpret assessment information, use it to improve their learning outcomes, and be better prepared for the various challenges they encounter. The importance of this pitch is why I was honored to be asked to write this foreword.


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I have worked in assessment for most of my career, and within the assessment community, we moved from seeing tests as valid *if they measure what they intended* to seeing tests as valid *if the interpretations are defensible*. In other words, if a test doesn't result in any consequential reflection, interpretation, decision making, or action, then it doesn't matter if it has all the lovely measurement properties that we psychometricians love. This shift, beginning in the 1990s, has allowed the measurement community to come into closer contact with classroom teachers to help them reliably interpret assessment data, make decisions based on the data, and act on those decisions. These skills are precisely the ones we also need to teach students. We should see the score as but the starting point.

But for too many students, the score is the end point, and the number screams to them that the work is now over. They know how to interpret the score relative to the scores of their peers, and they know that 100 percent is perfect (although in reality, 100 percent usually means that the work was too easy). Such a narrow interpretation of the score won't tell them about their gaps, strengths, and misunderstandings or help them decide what to do next.

I'd like to invite you to carry out two simple tasks. First, ask your students to grade their own performance on the next test *before* they start it. Second, after you have graded the test and written thorough comments, ask your students to write a short list of statements describing what they have learned about their learning and where they need to move next in light of your grade and comments. The results of this experiment will likely bear out what research suggests: that from about age 8 onward, students are quite accurate in determining their place in the achievement equation and predicting their scores—and that teacher grades and comments do little to help students understand what they've learned and where they need to go next.

After students complete a test, we should be asking ourselves what *we* learned—about what we taught well, whom we taught well, and the magnitude of growth that students have made from the beginning of the learning period to this point. Asking these questions will result in more informative tests both for teachers and for students.

Throughout this book, the notion of assessing *with* students is termed as a *student-centered* approach to assessment. With this approach, assessments do not dominate students' radar (as revealed by the eternal question "Will this be on the test?") but, rather, are seen as a supportive interpretive method to enhance student learning. This approach ensures that learning targets, instruction, learning tasks, success criteria, and rubrics are aligned *with* assessment. What is valued should be ever-present and aligned; therefore, the test does not dominate but becomes part of the learning process.

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Assessment applies to so much more than achievement; it can be an invaluable tool to help us understand and effectively use learning strategies. Myron explores such notions as retrieval versus storage strength, desirable difficulties, solution generation effects, how to persist and enjoy challenges, spaced versus massed practice, and interleaving rather than blocking—ideas that have been known for decades in learning theory but rarely are practiced by those most empowered to influence learning. One fascinating idea is that rubrics can be powerful learning aids. I disagree with the common belief that rubrics' main purpose is to assess performance: of course they do that, but they also help students dive deeper and spread their wings of knowing, and they guide students' progression to a lesson's success criteria. Myron's exploration of rubrics as learning tools is just one of the powerful applications of ideas that make this book so practical for teachers and bring to life the goal of assessing with students.

Myron ends the book back in the elevator. If it were me in this elevator, I would ponder all my missed opportunities to talk about something other than sheep: *If only I had thought of presenting these great assessment ideas, if only I had the richness of experience and practice that is evident throughout this book, if only I had focused on conducting assessment* with *students rather than administering it* to *students*. Never mind. Myron is here, and he has done it for us.

John Hattie

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# 1

# THE ELEVATOR PITCH

*How can we make the case for student-centered assessment—and why is it important to do so?*

Terry O'Reilly's book *This I Know* (2017) is a must-read for anyone with the slightest interest in marketing. And if you couldn't care less about marketing, you might just enjoy the background stories to the multitude of ads and products that've shaped our lives. O'Reilly bases much of the book on stories and lessons from his popular podcast *Under the Influence*. One of my favorite tales is that of Steve Jobs attempting to entice John Sculley to leave Pepsi and join Apple. In 1982, Sculley was at the top of his game and firmly entrenched as president of PepsiCo. Starting as a truck driver for the soft drink giant, Sculley had been climbing the Pepsi ladder for 16 years (Mazarakis & Shontell, 2017), though none of his work involved tech (Pollack, 1983). As president of PepsiCo, Sculley was the marketing genius behind the "Pepsi Challenge," which pitted Pepsi against Coca-Cola in a series of blind tastings, and he was considered a strong candidate to become CEO of the entire Pepsi brand. Seeing the effectiveness with which Sculley carved away market share from Coca-Cola—and the inescapable comparison to Apple taking on Microsoft—Jobs was obsessed with poaching Sculley. Unfortunately for Jobs, Sculley wasn't interested


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in the Apple scene. Although Jobs offered Sculley a huge salary and lucrative stock options, he couldn't be swayed. After months of campaigning by Jobs, Sculley attempted to put the matter to rest in a face-to-face meeting with Jobs:

> I've been thinking about it a lot and I'm not coming to Apple. I'm going to stay here in the East Coast doing what I'm doing. I'll be an adviser for free. Let's just be friends, but I'm not coming to Apple. (Mazarakis & Shontell, 2017, para. 41)

Most people would probably have left it at that, but Steve Jobs wasn't like "most people." Upon hearing that seemingly final rejection, Jobs walked up to Sculley and, 20 inches from his face, uttered his now famous line: "Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life? Or do you want to come with me and change the world?" (Mazarakis & Shontell, 2017).

A week later, Sculley was employed at Apple. Ten years later, Apple was the most profitable computer company in the world.

O'Reilly cited this story to highlight the power and importance of the "elevator pitch"—the succinct encapsulation of an idea that takes no more than 20 seconds to convey. In his campaign against the formidable Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan had a simple, successful elevator pitch he posed to voters: "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" (O'Reilly, 2017, p. 29). Any product you've purchased, movie you've watched, or book you've read likely came to fruition because it had an elevator pitch that convinced someone that it was worth producing.

According to O'Reilly, a good elevator pitch has a few fundamental qualities. It needs to be concise and captivating and reflect the essence of the organization or brand. "Pitches are an exercise in clarity," writes O'Reilly (p. 20), and they reflect the adage "Less is more." O'Reilly encourages organizations to distill their mission into an immediately digestible and compelling hook. Warning against our desire to elaborate, O'Reilly states, "If [your elevator pitch] takes a paragraph, it's not ready yet" (p. 24).

Steve Jobs may have understood the power of a good elevator pitch more than anyone. He described Apple as follows: "Apple has always had the ability to take really complex technology and make it easy to understand and use by the end user" (Arthur, 2014, p. XX).

That's compelling—and likely the main reason why I am typing this on a Mac, own an iPhone and an Apple Watch, subscribe to Apple TV, and stop to admire a vintage Apple IIc whenever I pass one.

I've often wondered what responses you might get from a room of teachers if you asked them to produce an elevator pitch for their subject, class, or school. What about an elevator pitch for teaching in the 21st century? How might educators summarize their entire reason for being into a single sentence or two? While

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I was attending a conference in Australia, John Hattie shared with me his simple quest: *Know thy impact* (personal communication, May 2018). I liked it. It was simple, powerful, and inextricably tied to feedback—for the teacher!

Based on the experiences of businesses such as Apple and authors such as Hattie, we will want to start with *why we are* in education, not *what we do* in education. In his book *Start with Why,* Simon Sinek (2009) encourages us to imagine we sell Apple computers, and he predicts that our sales pitch might start with this: "We make great computers. They're beautifully designed, simple to use and user-friendly" (p. 40). Although this may seem logical and describe the essence of our product, this pitch is related to *what* the computer is, not *why* we produce it.

O'Reilly (2017) argues that in crafting really compelling elevator pitches, the most successful companies have a clear understanding of the business they are in, and some examples might surprise us. Nike isn't in the shoe business; it's in the *motivation* business. Michelin doesn't sell tires, it sells *safety*. The marketing geniuses at Heineken no longer flog beer as much as they sell *inclusion, tolerance,* and *moderation*.

Following the lead of these top brands, perhaps educators need to clarify the business they're in, and I'm not sure it's education. I think we would transform our schools if we rebranded ourselves as being in the *empowerment* and *engagement* business. As U.S. Representative and civil rights leader Barbara Jordan declared, "Education remains the key to both economic and political empowerment" (quoted in Newman, 1998, p. 124). If you think about it, throughout history, education is inextricably tied to empowerment.

We explored elevator pitches with our faculty at Summerland Secondary School (SSS) in British Columbia, Canada. Principal Alan Stel and I devoted a significant portion of our staff meetings to crafting individual elevator pitches to answer the question "Why attend Summerland Secondary?" It was an interesting and challenging activity, and the results were as fascinating as they were varied. Here are a few examples:

> SSS helps to build students' skills and confidence so that they can be successful in whatever path they choose.

> We are small enough and big enough to create amazing opportunities for our students and staff. Our opportunities reflect modern realities and valued traditions to balance all areas of learning and to prepare our students for challenges known and unknown.

> Small, Supportive, Innovative, Creative, Flexible… Like *Cheers,* where everybody knows your name.

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I've been working on my own *education* elevator pitch, and a while back I arrived at this:

> I empower my students through authentic learning experiences and engaging assessment practices. In all that I do, I develop meaningful relationships with students so that they become confident learners—better prepared for whatever they might encounter.

I've edited versions of this more than a dozen times, and I'm sure it'll live in continuous development. With each iteration, however, the word *assessment* seems to remain a constant. As much as I've tried, I can't separate my educational elevator pitch from the topic of assessment and why it must be student-centered.

Assessment is the language of learning. From establishing our purpose and defining the learning objectives, to evaluating student progress and reporting on it, assessment is, in the words of Dylan Wiliam, "the bridge between teaching and learning" (2018, p. 56). I recall teaching my own kids to ice skate, ride a bike, back up an ATV with a trailer in tow, and countless other things. Each experience dripped with assessment components: objectives, success criteria, evaluation, and feedback. In the case of skating, my back never really recovered, and the ATV trailer sessions had me periodically walking away out of sheer frustration. However, eventually both of my kids *learned* how to skate and back up a vehicle with a trailer—thanks largely to assessment and their part in it.

The word *assessment* originates from the Latin *assidere,* meaning "to sit beside" ("Assess," n.d.). Let that reverberate through your mind. To sit beside. When looking at assessment practices in schools around the world, I'm not sure we're reflecting the true meaning of assessment. For far too long, assessment is what we have done *to* students rather than *with* them. Students need to stop being the people to whom we apply assessment processes, as if they were inanimate objects. Similar to how a lawyer might become a "partner" in the firm, students need to transform from being the employee to being the co-owner in the learning process.

Furthermore, this is not a student issue but a human one. People want to know the standards by which they are being assessed, how they will be evaluated, and whether they will have some input into the reporting of the result. I mean, seriously, how intrigued would *you* be as a student if this were the sales pitch:

> Welcome, class. I'm going to teach for a while, and then sometime next week I'm going to assess you. After enough of those experiences, I will rank and sort you compared with others based on how well you've recalled the things I've told you. Your scores may affect your future in some dramatic way. Good luck.
>
> Oh, and I forgot to mention, there may be some effects on your grades that have nothing to do with your understanding, but rather how you behave, treat others, display effort—those kinds of things.

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I probably lost you at "I'm going to teach for a while…."

I'm not sure about the rest of you, but that "sales pitch" would largely sum up my assessment model over the first 10 years of my career. Clearly, it needed to change.

## Support for a Student-Centered Approach to Assessment

A more learner-centered model of assessment has ample support. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international governmental forum whose purpose is to "promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world" (www.OECD.org). This Paris-based forum, to which Australia, Canada, Italy, the United States, and more than 30 other countries contribute, has taken a decade-long approach to helping governments respond to new developments and concerns around education in an information economy. In *The OECD Handbook for Innovative Learning Environments* (OECD, 2017), this multinational think tank presents seven principles for designing learning environments. Thankfully, the OECD states that it's "unrealistic for a school or district to start working on all seven principles with equal priority" (p. 22). Although all seven are worthy of further study, for our purposes we will summarize three that support the student being the primary agent in assessment:

- The learning environment recognizes the learners as its core participants.
- The learning environment is acutely sensitive to the individual differences among learners.
- The learning environment operates with clarity of expectations and deploys assessment strategies consistent with these expectations. (OECD, 2017)

In his groundbreaking synthesis of research on factors affecting student achievement, *Visible Learning for Teachers,* John Hattie (2012) presents a ranked list of 150 items. The highest-ranked factor is "student self-reported grades." To be clear, by Hattie's own admission, he would rather have phrased this as "student expectations," meaning that students are incredibly accurate in predicting their own level of understanding and achievement. Hattie states it bluntly: "Students are the best people to report on themselves" (personal interview, 2018).

Let's pause for a moment to consider the ramifications. How is it possible that many of our traditional assessment models largely ignore the voice of the student when reporting learning, while research suggests that the student is the most important agent in the conversation?

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In *Embedded Formative Assessment,* Wiliam (2018) makes a strong case for teaching to be adaptive to the needs of the student, an approach that is impossible if we're not involving the student in assessment. In establishing five key elements upon which we would base our assessment system, Wiliam includes three that directly and overtly involve the student:

- Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and success criteria.
- Activating learners as instructional resources for one another.
- Activating learners as owners of their own thinking. (p. 52)

Involving students in assessment has powerful side effects. In his book *Rigorous PBL by Design,* Michael McDowell (2017) underscores how a student growth mindset is supported by students having the ability to monitor their own progress and take actions to improve their achievement. In a vein similar to the OECD principles and Wiliam's elements, McDowell goes on to encourage the supporting of "assessment-capable learners" who can monitor their own progress by being able to answer these questions:

- Where am I going in my learning?
- Where am I now in my learning?
- What's the next thing I need to improve in my learning?
- How do I improve my learning and that of others?

Inviting students into the realm of assessment is linked to increased motivation, confidence, self-regulation, and performance. Moss and Brookhart (2012) make a compelling argument as to why students must be at the center of the assessment conversation:

> Students who take ownership of their learning attribute what they do well to decisions they make and control. These factors not only increase students' ability to assess and regulate their own learning, but also boost their motivation to learn as they progressively see themselves as more confident and competent learners. (p. 11)

As we dig even deeper into the research, involving the student goes beyond boosting motivation and confidence. Not only should students understand the elements of assessment as McDowell, Wiliam, and Moss and Brookhart propose, but also their understanding of its very *purpose* relates directly to their performance (Brown & Hattie, 2012). There is a positive relationship between assessment and performance when students believe that assessment (1) legitimately helps determine their grades, (2) helps regulate their own learning, and (3) is used by teachers to modify or improve instruction (Brown, Peterson, & Irving, 2009). Conversely, if

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students perceive that assessment is irrelevant, is given for fun, reflects external factors beyond their control, or is related to overall school quality, they perform worse (Brown, 2011).

# Voice and Choice: Key Factors in Student-Centered Assessment

If *assessment* means "to sit beside," we need to stop figuratively placing the learning outcomes on the table *between* us and our students, informing them of what's right and what's wrong, and instead slide our chair around to the same side of the table to facilitate a conversation. Assessment would then become a process by which we collectively strategize and codesign how *we* will best approach, evaluate, and report on the learning objectives. Students would ideally be able to demonstrate understanding over a period of time, drawing on examples and discussing challenges and what's been learned from these experiences. Just imagine the transformational potential if learning were to truly become a *partnership* between the teacher and the learner.

## The Power of Voice

In their book *Student Voice: The Instrument of Change,* Russell Quaglia and Michael Corso (2014) argue for such a partnership, one built upon authentic and valued student voice. As educators, we might *think* we are listening to our students, but Quaglia and Corso question our traditional approach, offering a challenge to transform. They write,

> Sure, we have had student protests, student marches, student sit-ins, and student walkouts, but we are talking about student voice not that reactively opposes something, but rather *proactively participates* in the greater good of learning. We are talking about genuine and authentic student voice, where teachers ask for their students' opinions, listen—*really* listen—to what students have to say, and incorporate what they learn and students themselves into leadership of their classrooms and schools. (p. 1)

Student voice can be very powerful. Over the decade from 2009 to 2018, the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations polled more than 450,000 students, in 820 schools across 34 states, and found that when students have voice they are

- Three times more likely to experience *self-worth* in school.
- Five times more likely to be *engaged* in school.
- Five times more likely to have a sense of *purpose* in school. (Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, 2018)

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Despite student voice being a powerful force in learning, statistics suggest that we are failing to support this teacher-student partnership—especially as our students get older. In 2012–2013, the Pearson Foundation administered the national My Voice survey to just under 60,000 students in grades 6 through 12. The survey found that although 61 percent of students entering middle school felt they had a voice, this number dwindled to 37 percent by grade 12. Just as alarming, only 46 percent felt that they had any say in decision making in their schools, and just over half believed that teachers were willing to learn from students (Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, 2013).

If we pause long enough to listen—*really* listen—students will tell us what's going on. What they need is the opportunity and avenues to share their thoughts, opinions, and reflections concerning their own learning. The thing is, you can't really listen to someone else while you are speaking. Perhaps that's why Hattie contends that we need to stop talking once in a while and "create that space to listen with them" (ASCD, 2019).

In this book, we'll look at specific examples of how we can incorporate student voice into all stages of the assessment process. We'll explore how to create a safe climate of sharing and reflection. Throughout the book, I'll share assessment tools and strategies that empower students and welcome student voice. For instance, when I incorporated a "sharing circle" in my classroom, I experienced a revolutionary change in the learning climate—both during our sharing-circle activities and in classroom conversations that followed long after the circle disbanded. (See Chapter 6 for more on sharing circles.)

Many educators have told me how listening to their students is transformational for them and their practices. One of the best examples was from an educator in Minnesota who listened in on a homework conversation between her daughter and a friend. At one point, her daughter stopped at a question and was trying to explain a key math concept. Barely into the explanation, the daughter was interrupted by her friend, who said, "Listen, I don't have time to learn this. I just need to get it done." Is there a better "elevator pitch" for why traditional homework regimens need to change? Again, we just need to stop and listen—*really* listen—to the learning.

More recently, a whole other sector of the population has been challenged to truly listen to students about their learning experience. The COVID-19 era of home-based learning has placed parents on the front lines of their children's education, charging them with delivering curriculum and assessing how well kids have attained learning objectives. Probably for the first time in the modern era of education, legions of parents have heard their children thinking aloud about their learning, witnessed their children's (desirable) learning difficulties, and been

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forced to move beyond whether it is right or wrong to help children think about a problem. Trust me—I fled the room while my wife Tracey earned a Purple Heart working with my son, Elijah, through his grade 10 math course! Globally, it will be interesting to witness the long-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis as parents everywhere have dived into the language of learning. If my own house is any indication, the way parents speak about learning may evolve from such traditional queries as "Did you complete your homework?" and "What did you do at school today?" These millions of parents, together with their children, may now demand a more sophisticated conversation surrounding *what* their children learn, *how* they learn it, and *why*.

Students are in a unique position to report on their own learning, so it's imperative that we ask them. When I first met Dave Van Bergeyk, a senior math teacher from Salmon Arm, British Columbia, I was astonished to learn that he met with each of his calculus students and negotiated their grades based on a *body of evidence* and a *conversation*. My reaction was swift: "Seriously—you negotiate with the student to determine the final grade?" How could a senior calculus and math teacher be basing his grades on a conversation? (See page 147 for Dave's story.)

Soon after I had met Dave, a few colleagues and I started a system that we informally called *conversation-based grading*. At about the same time that I first offered students in my Leadership class a chance to comment on their progress, Marnie Mennell was asking learners in her Foods class to share their own successes and struggles. Troy Stubbert offered his Auto and Metal students the chance to self-report, and Rachel Stubbert threw the doors open to her math students to track and report their progress on both formative and summative assessments. At times it felt like we were opening up a new frontier. (Templates and resources reflecting these kinds of changes are presented throughout this book.)

I wondered if asking students at Summerland Secondary to report on their own learning was having a positive impact, so we… asked them. Here are some of their responses:

> "Instead of just getting marks back from my teacher telling me what I'm doing, or what they think I'm thinking, they get an idea of what's actually going on." —Xavier
>
> "I know about me; teachers think they know me." —Morgan
>
> "No one knows me like I know me!" —Malaina

These students' comments are compelling. *Giving Students a Say* is about engaging and empowering students in all conversations about learning—particularly assessment. The time has come for teachers to provide opportunities for students to articulate their understanding and be given a voice in reporting it. It's time to create space to listen with them.

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## The Importance of Choice

Voice and choice are arguably inseparable factors when looking at empowerment and engagement—and that goes for all of us. The 20th century saw an explosion of choice in areas ranging from careers and educational opportunities to food products and entertainment. In my lifetime alone, the expansion of choice has been both amazing and numbing. Growing up, I recall "channel surfing" the *three* available TV stations. I bet I watched *The Sound of Music* eight times because there was nothing else on—literally! My kids struggle to understand how I can possibly know the lyrics to "Do-Re-Mi." Limited choice in TV stations has a lot to do with my singing, "Fa, a long, long way to run." For all of you who now have that song in your head for the remainder of the day, you likely had limited choice also. Now I have hundreds of TV channels to choose from, and too many options for streaming.

Our students live in a world filled with contexts where choice is prevalent, but too often school is not one of them. In *The Motivated Brain,* Gayle Gregory and Martha Kaufeldt (2015) note how many of our youngest learners benefit from the exploratory nature of full-day preschool and kindergarten. They cite research, however, that suggests that much of the learning benefits enjoyed by these children, such as increased vocabularies and better social skills, are snuffed out by the time they reach high school due to the "sit and get" nature of grades 1 through 8 (Brownell et al., 2015). It's probably time to learn from our early learning colleagues and invigorate student learning by giving choice a more prominent place in the classroom.

In essence, there is little debate to be had on voice and choice. All you have to do is ask yourself: *What role do voice and choice have on my own feelings of empowerment and engagement?* Few of us would choose to exist in a cookie-cutter environment compared with one that valued our input and offered options.

# The Structure of This Book

Our approach to student-centered assessment should follow logical and clear steps from start to finish, with ample room to be creative within those stages. *Giving Students a Say* will present an assessment plan that fundamentally and authentically involves the student. Specific steps covered in the following chapters include

- Sharing and cocreating student-centered learning targets.
- Using rubrics linked to standards to provide success criteria and ongoing performance assessments.
- Involving students in ongoing assessment opportunities.

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- Devising grading systems that are reliable, fair, and sensible.
- Designing student self-reporting structures.

In covering each of these topics, we'll address some of the problems with traditional approaches to assessment. With each theme, we'll consider some of the research and concepts that support student-centered systems. We'll also look at examples of educators empowering and engaging students in elementary, middle, and high school and the tools that can transform the nature of student-centered assessment. Last, we'll continually measure tools and ideas by the extent to which they employ and foster student voice and choice, self-assessment, and self-reporting.



Returning to the anecdote that opened this chapter, if you were in John Sculley's shoes, how could you possibly ignore the question posed by Steve Jobs: "Do you want to sell sugar water for the rest of your life? Or do you want to come in with me and change the world?" Pardon my extension of this notion, but maybe we should ask ourselves a similar question: "Do we want to continue to shut kids out of testing, grading, and reporting decisions, or do we want to explore ways to truly and authentically involve them in the realm of assessment?"

We can empower students in the assessment process; we just need to establish why it's critical to do so, and then explore how it can be done. On that note, perhaps this book requires an elevator pitch. For now, I'd suggest the following:

> In every aspect of assessment, we will engage and empower the student by offering opportunities for student voice, choice, self-assessment, and self-reporting.

Without further ado, it's time to *give students a say!*

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Myron Dueck** has worked as both a teacher and an administrator for 23 years in Canada and New Zealand, with students in grades 4–12. In 2006, Myron began developing grading, assessment, and reporting systems with his classes that offer students an increased opportunity to show what they understand, adapt to the feedback they receive, and play a significant role in reporting their learning. Myron has been a part of administrative teams, district groups, school committees, and governmental bodies that have further broadened his access to innovative ideas. In recent years, Myron has served in an administrative role supporting assessment and innovation in his local school district, Okanagan-Skaha 67. Myron has shared his stories, tools, and firsthand experiences with public, charter, and international school educators throughout the world. Recently, his presentations have diverged to include global education trends and broader socioeconomic realities that affect learning.

Myron is the author of the best-selling ASCD book *Grading Smarter, Not Harder: Assessment Strategies That Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn* as well as an array of articles for *Educational Leadership.* In 2015, ASCD released a video


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project based in his school district titled *Smarter Assessment in the Secondary Classroom* and, in 2019, the first of a three-part online streaming series titled *Ask Them,* hosted by Myron, looking at how we include students in assessment. The *Ask Them* series features John Hattie, Lorin Anderson, Celeste Kidd, and others.

Myron lives in Summerland, British Columbia, with his partner Tracey and their two children, Elijah and Sloane. You can reach Myron and learn more about his work through his website (www.myrondueck.com), e-mail (myrondueck@gmail.com), or Twitter (@myrondueck).

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