

Linking Formative Assessment to Instructional Decisions: Taking a Closer Look



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Formative Assessment

- Some assumptions
- A few sample tools
- Trying out some assessment strategies...
- Thinking ahead – how might this assessment information be used?



Why take formative assessment seriously?

- There is ample evidence that the changes involved in teacher practices will raise the scores of students on normal conventional tests.
- The changes have been shown to be feasible for teachers to implement successfully.
- The changes can be made in small increments over time.

Assessment for Learning: Putting it Into Practice, Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam (2003)

Vygotsky: Zone of Proximal Development

(What a child can do *with assistance* today)

What a child can
do independently
now

Actual
Development
Area

What a child can
do independently
tomorrow/future

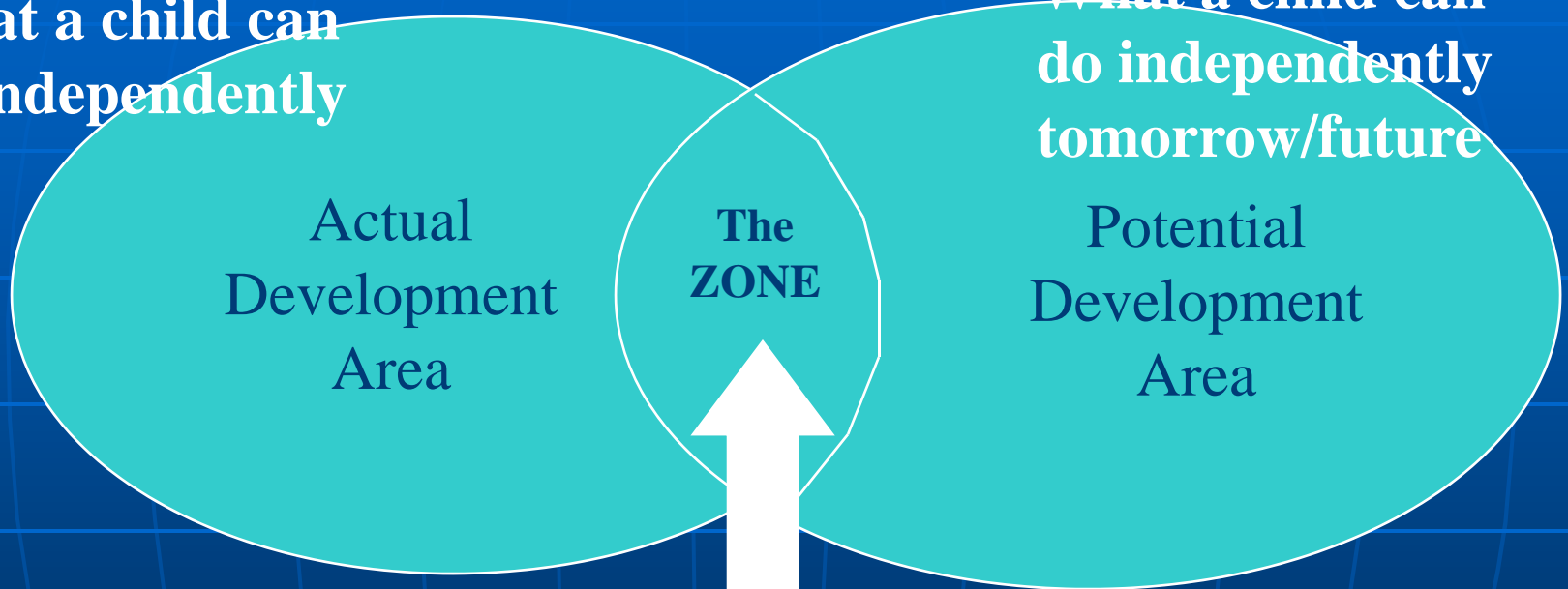
Potential
Development
Area

The
ZONE

Dynamic area

Causes development to move forward

Social interaction essential (scaffolding)



Some assumptions ...

- Formative assessment is important – at all grade levels & in all subject areas!
- Content breadth and depth, and skills, processes, and strategy use are all considerations.
 - A variety of formats and modes of response can be used, depending on the purpose.
 - Teacher/Student Roles will vary depending on the purpose.

Some assumptions...

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- Assessment needs to be efficient, and integrated with classroom instruction and routines as much as possible.
- Some sort of management system should be in place for:
 - Exploring & planning what approaches/tools are appropriate to use
 - Tracking progress over time

Varied & *Complimentary* Approaches

- Planning and Selection of Assessment Tools & Strategies
- Observation (Systematic & Ongoing)
- Eliciting Responses
 - Verbal, Written, Performance, etc.
- Student Self-Assessment & Peer Assessment
- Individual vs. Class/small group assessments

Every assessment, regardless of its purpose, rests on 3 pillars:

- A model of how students represent knowledge and develop competence in a subject domain;
- Tasks/situations that allow one to observe student performance; and
- An interpretation method of drawing inferences from the performance evidence.

Knowing what Students Know, Pellegrino, et al.

How might the assessment information be useful?

■ What does the teacher know?

(How does the student represent knowledge or demonstrate competence?)

- **D**escribe ... what the student did/said.
- **I**nterpret ... what the student knows.
- **E**valuate ... whether what is known demonstrates competence.

How might the assessment information be used to promote learning?

- What could the teacher do next?
 - What patterns might be seen?
 - What instructional decisions might be made (short/long term)?
 - Where is the student along a learning continuum? (e.g., prior knowledge)
 - What differentiation might be useful?
 - Other?

Some Examples: Observation

- Systematic Observation
- Ongoing/On-the-Spot Observation

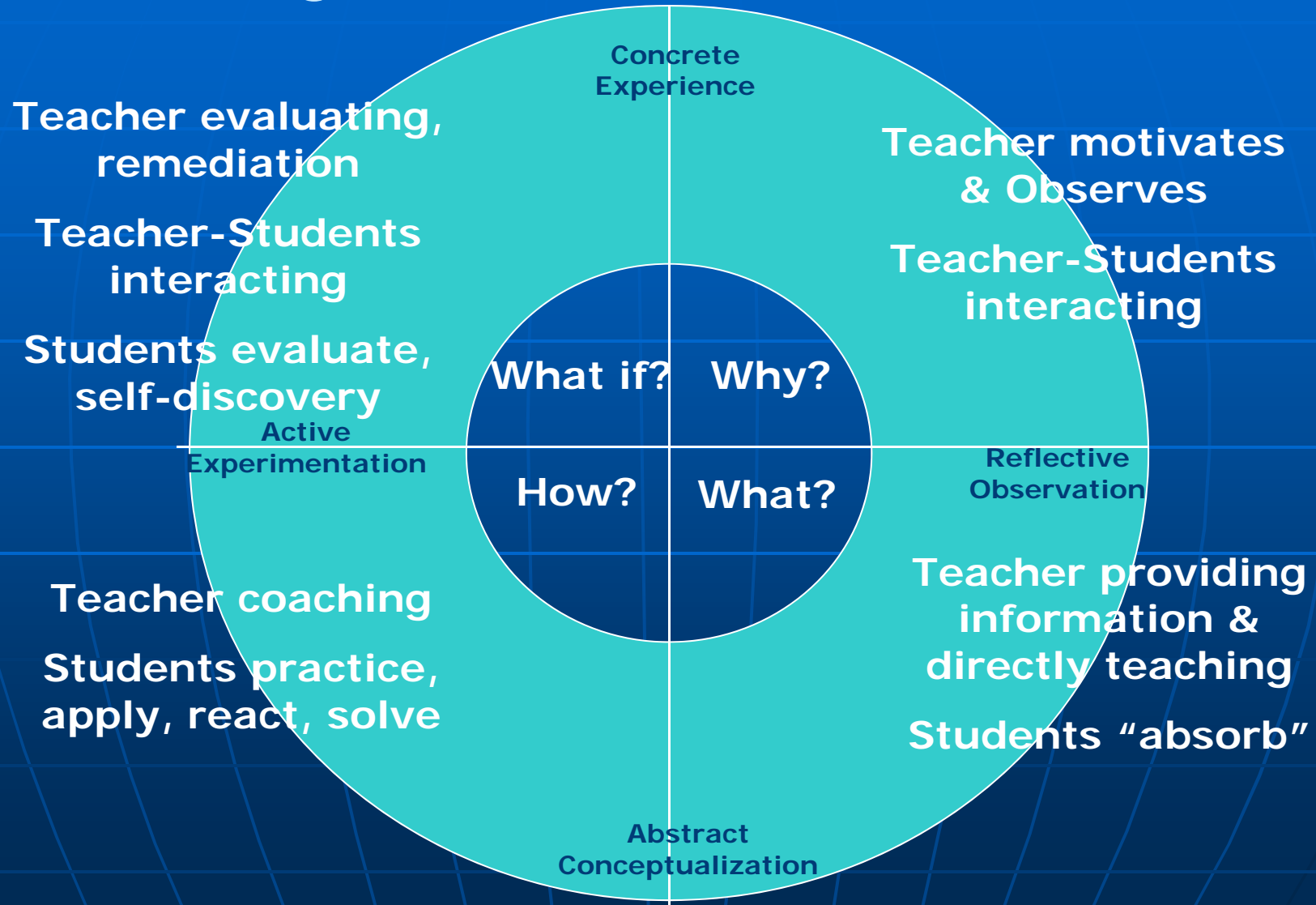
Some Examples: Eliciting Responses

- Verbal
- Written
- Performance

Some Examples: Shifting Roles

- Student Self-Assessment
- Peer Assessment
- 2 Models...

Shifting Roles (Based on Kolb & McCarthy)



Some Examples: Individual vs. Group

■ Every Pupil Response

- Increases student engagement
- Efficiently assess lower-level skills, objectives, and information
- Provides immediate assessment information
- Wait time is important... after asking the question (at least 3 seconds) & again after responses are made

■ Cooperative Learning Structures

- Send-a-problem/question (application)
- Value line, Stand Up & Share, Fist 5, Corners (low consensus questions, deeper discussion or explanation, concept development)

We need to ask:

Will this question/item/set of items/task...

- Support learning progressions & increase understanding (developing schemas)?
- Encourage deeper thinking and ability to transfer learning? (Novice vs. Expert)
- Lead to more meaningful inferences about what students know & what the teacher needs to do next?

Planning and Selection of Assessment Tools & Strategies

- Year-at-a-Glance Classroom Planning
- Off-the-Shelf Assessment Review
- Local Assessment Review Comment Sheet
- Others?