CHAPTER NINETEEN

# HISTORY SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORK

## FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*

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CHAPTER 19

# Assessment of Proficiency in History–Social Science

In the use of any assessment, a central question is, "Am I using this assessment for the purpose for which it is intended?"

Assessment of student proficiency in history–social science can be a powerful tool to deepen student understanding of specific content and develop literacy, analytical thinking, and civic participation skills. Contrary to the traditional belief that assessment is useful only as a yardstick for measuring student mastery of specific facts, customized, rigorous, and thoughtful assessment practice can also guide instruction, improve student learning, and develop discipline-specific thinking skills. Rooted in the specific disciplines that comprise history–social science, assessment tools can provide teachers with the necessary information to improve student learning and literacy. Moreover, because of the impact that the marginalization of history–social science may have had upon student content knowledge, critical thinking, and literacy, a successful instructional program must have regular assessment in a variety of formats.

The importance of determining what is critical for students to know and understand is complicated by the fact that the amount and quality of history–social science instruction have varied

tremendously in elementary schools and classrooms in the last decade, making middle-grades classrooms even more diverse in terms of students' background knowledge compared with other subjects. Students with solid experience posing relevant questions about eyewitness accounts and historical photographs will have less trouble realizing that there are differing viewpoints on historical events than those students who have never examined any historical documents in prior grade levels.

As priorities transition to align with the instructional shifts embedded in the *California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy), this marginalization will necessarily lessen, but in the meantime, both the volume of the content standards and the impact of limited access to history–social science in the lower grade levels make the process of determining the essential understandings at the middle grades absolutely indispensable. Teachers and district administrators need to set and prioritize their instructional goals to ensure that all students will be prepared to meet the demands of a more rigorous secondary curriculum.

Assessment of student learning in history-social science is informed by three separate state-adopted tools: (1) the *History–Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools* (History–Social Science Content Standards), which includes both the grade-level content expectations and analysis skill sections, (2) CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy, and (3) *California English Language Development Standards* (CA ELD Standards).

With the adoption of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards, the landscape of assessment and accountability in California has experienced a dramatic shift. Not only do the standards present new goals for California educators, but the implementation of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system represents a major shift in the intent of statewide assessment: "It is the intent of the Legislature . . . to provide a system of assessments of pupils that has the primary purposes of assisting teachers, administrators, and pupils and their parents; improving teaching and learning; and promoting high-quality teaching and learning using a variety of assessment approaches and types" (*Education Code* Section 60602.5(a)). This shift is consonant with major emphases in California's standards for college and career

readiness: a renewed focus on purposeful and deeper learning for students and their teachers, strong collaboration and partnerships at all levels of education, and a culture of continuous growth based on reflective practice.

History–social science teachers may also want to consult the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (C3 Framework), a publication of the National Council for the Social Studies (http://www.socialstudies.org/c3). The C3 Framework offers suggestions on student skill development organized around an "Inquiry Arc." Many of the expectations in the C3 Framework are consistent with the CA CCSS and the History–Social Science Content Standards, especially the Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills (HSS Analysis Skills). However, the C3 Framework has not been adopted by the California State Board of Education and does not constitute a mandate for California schools. This chapter utilizes each of those documents to provide teachers and administrators with tools to support a deeper understanding of student content and skill development.

Although each document is different, all require student skill levels to become increasingly sophisticated as children progress through the grade levels. Students should be expected to demonstrate improved chronological and spatial thinking and the ability to conduct research, evaluate evidence, and make persuasive arguments as they move from elementary to secondary levels.

For example, the HSS Analysis Skills include geographic literacy skills at all grade levels, but the expectations are different at each level. In the elementary grades, students are to use maps and globes to *determine* locations; in the middle grades, they use the maps and globes to *explain* the migration of people and historical events such as the rise and fall of empires; in high school, the students go one step further to *interpret* the impact or the push-and-pull factors that encourage human migration, changing environmental preferences, friction between groups, and the diffusion of ideas.

Similarly, the C3 Framework describes the progression of student understanding of historical perspectives, organized into four grade spans. By the end of second grade, the C3 Framework argues that students should be able to understand that people in the past often had different perspectives than people today. By the end of fifth grade, students learn that people in the past did not always share the same

perspective. By the end of the eighth grade, students should understand that many factors influence the perspective of historical actors. And by the end of their senior year of high school, students should be able to analyze many different and conflicting factors that influenced and informed the perspective of individuals throughout history.

The *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools* (ELA/ELD Framework) is similarly organized—meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational skills organize instruction throughout the grade levels with increasingly sophisticated expectations for student skill development. This chapter describes what is involved in the skilled use of assessment to support student achievement of the History–Social Science Content Standards, CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy, and CA ELD Standards. Through the careful incorporation of assessment of content, disciplinary, and literacy skill development in classroom instruction, students develop readiness for college, careers, and civic life; attain the capacities of literate individuals; and acquire the skills necessary for living and learning in the twenty-first century.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the different purposes of assessment—both for and of learning. Snapshots of teacher use of assessment are included throughout the discussion of the different types of assessment. The role of student involvement and feedback in assessment is described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the current state of mandated statewide assessments.

## Purposes of Assessment

Assessment is designed and used for different purposes. An annual assessment designed to assess how well students have met a specific standard (for example, HSS Analysis Skill 6–8: Research, Evidence, and Point of View: Distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories) does just that: It tells educators whether students have met a specific standard. However, it cannot serve the purpose of diagnosing a particular reading difficulty that a sixth-grade student is experiencing in achieving the standard. Nor can it provide substantive insights into how a student is beginning to understand what constitutes reliable evidence in a specific text. In the use of any assessment, a central question is, "Am I using this assessment for the purpose for which it is intended?"

As part of a balanced and comprehensive assessment system, assessment ***for*** learning and assessment ***of*** learning are both important. Although assessments of learning usually involve a tool or event *after* a period of learning, assessment for learning is a process. Any evidence-gathering strategies that are truly formative yield information that is *timely* and *specific* enough to assist learning as it occurs. Figure 19.1 presents the key dimensions of assessment *for* and *of* learning and highlights the differences.

**FIGURE 19.1.** Key Dimensions of Assessment ***for*** Learning and Assessment ***of*** Learning

| Assessment: A Process of Reasoning from Evidence to Inform Teaching and Learning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dimension | Assessment *for* learning | Assessment *of* learning | |
| Method | Formative Assessment Process | Classroom Summative/ Interim/ Benchmark Assessment* | Large-Scale Summative Assessment |
| Main Purpose | Assist immediate learning (in the moment) | Measure student achievement or progress (may also inform future teaching and learning) | Evaluate educational programs and measure multiyear progress |
| Focus | Teaching and learning | Measurement | Accountability |
| Locus | Individual student and classroom learning | Grade level/ department/ school | School/district/ state |
| Priority for Instruction | High | Medium | Low |

* Assessment of learning may also be used for formative purposes if assessment evidence is used to shape future instruction. Such assessments include weekly quizzes; curriculum embedded in unit tasks (e.g., oral presentations, writing projects, portfolios) or end-of-unit/culminating tasks; monthly writing samples, reading assessments (e.g., oral reading observation, periodic foundational skills assessments); and student reflections/self-assessments (e.g., rubric self-rating).

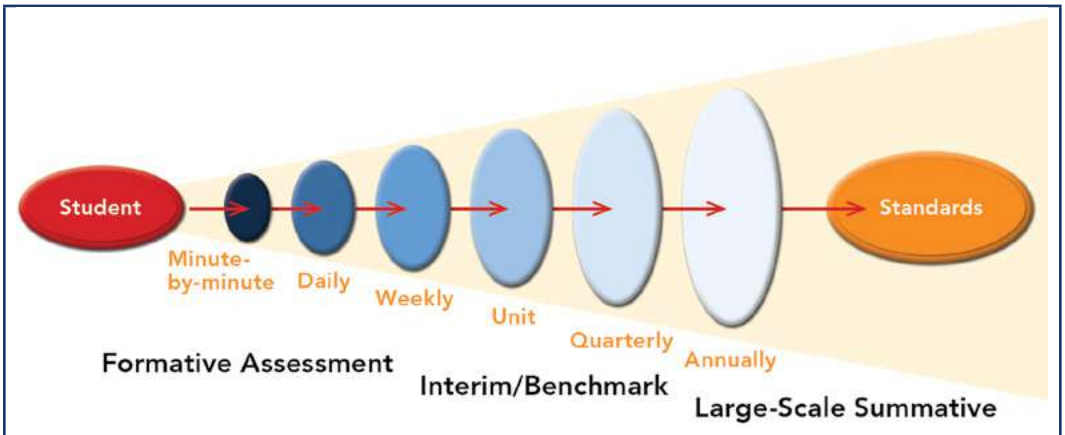
**Figure 19.1.** *(continued)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Proximity to learning | In-the-midst | Middle-distance | Distant |
| Timing | *During* immediate instruction or sequence of lessons | *After* teaching-learning cycle → *between* units/ periodic | *End* of year/ course |
| Participants | Teacher and Student (T-S/S-S/ Self) | Student (may later include T-S in conference) | Student |

***Source:*** Adapted from Linquanti, Robert, 2014. *Supporting Formative Assessment for Deeper Learning: A Primer for Policymakers.* Paper prepared for the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers/State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards, 2. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Assessment has two fundamental purposes. One is to provide information about student learning minute-by-minute, day-to-day, and week-to-week so teachers can continuously adapt instruction to meet students' specific needs and secure progress. Figure 19.2 presents a range of assessments within a comprehensive assessment system.

**FIGURE 19.2.** Assessment Cycles by Purpose




***Source:*** Adapted from Herman, Joan L., and Margaret Heritage. 2007. *Moving from Piecemeal to Effective Formative Assessment Practice: Moving Pictures on the Road to Student Learning.* Paper presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers Assessment Conference, Nashville, TN.

Formative assessment is intended to assist learning and is often referred to as assessment *for* learning. Formative assessment occurs in real time, during instruction while student learning is underway (Allal 2010; Black and Wiliam 1998; Bell and Cowie 2000; Heritage 2010; Shepard 2000, 2005). For example, a fifth-grade teacher working with small groups of students on distinguishing the point of view of Loyalists during the Revolutionary War is able to gain insights into students' developing skills through the use of strategic questions and can adjust instruction and students' next steps immediately based on the students' responses. As it is intertwined and inseparable from teachers' pedagogical practice, formative assessment is of the highest priority. Educators need to interpret assessment evidence in order to plan instruction and respond pedagogically to emerging student learning.

A second purpose of assessment is to provide information on students' current levels of achievement after a period of learning has occurred. Such assessments—which may be classroom-based, districtwide, or statewide—serve a summative purpose and are sometimes referred to as assessments *of* learning. They help determine whether students have attained a certain level of competency after a more or less extended period of instruction and learning, for example, at the end of a unit that may last several weeks, at the end of a quarter, or annually. Inferences made by teachers from the results of these assessments can be used to make decisions about student placement, instruction, curriculum, and interventions, and to assign grades.

Each assessment cycle provides information at varying levels of detail, and inferences drawn from the assessment results are used to address specific questions about student learning and inform a range of decisions and actions. Figure 19.3 summarizes the types and purposes of the assessments within each assessment cycle.

**FIGURE 19.3.** Types and Uses of Assessments Within Assessment Cycles

| Cycle | Methods | Information | Uses/Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Short** | | | |
| **Minute-by-minute** | • Observation<br>• Questions (teachers and students)<br>• Instructional tasks<br>• Student discussions<br>• Written work/ representations | • Students' current learning status, relative difficulties and misunder-standings, emerging or partially formed ideas, full understanding | • Keep going, stop and find out more, provide oral feedback to individuals, adjust instructional moves in relation to student learning status (e.g., act on "teachable moments") |
| **Daily Lesson** | Planned and placed strategically in the lesson:<br>• Observation<br>• Questions (teachers and students)<br>• Instructional tasks<br>• Student discussions<br>• Written work/ representations<br>• Student self-reflection (e.g., quick write) | • Students' current learning status, relative difficulties and misunder-standings, emerging or partially formed ideas, full understanding | • Continue with planned instruction<br>• Instructional adjustments in this or the next lesson<br>• Find out more<br>• Feedback to class or individual students (oral or written) |

**Figure 19.3.** *(continued)*

| Cycle | Methods | Information | Uses/Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week | • Student discussions and work products<br>• Student self-reflection (e.g., journaling) | • Students' current learning status relative to lesson learning goals (e.g., have students met the goal[s], are they nearly there?) | • Instructional planning for start of new week<br>• Feedback to students (oral or written) |
| **Medium** | | | |
| End-of-Unit/ Project | • Student work artifacts (e.g., portfolio, writing project, oral presentation)<br>• Use of rubrics<br>• Student self-reflection (e.g., short survey)<br>• Other classroom summative assessments designed by teacher(s) | • Status of student learning relative to unit learning goals | • Grading<br>• Reporting<br>• Teacher reflection on effectiveness of planning and instruction<br>• Teacher grade-level/departmental discussions of student work |

**Figure 19.3.** *(continued)*

| Cycle | Methods | Information | Uses/Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quarterly/ Interim/ Benchmark | • Portfolio<br>• Oral reading observation<br>• Test | • Status of achievement of intermediate goals toward meeting standards (results aggregated and disaggregated) | • Making within-year instructional decisions.<br>• Monitoring, reporting; grading; same-year adjustments to curriculum programs<br>• Teacher reflection on effectiveness of planning and instruction<br>• Readjusting professional learning priorities and resource decisions |
| **Long** | | | |
| Annual | • Smarter Balanced summative assessment<br>• CELDT (California English Language Development Test)/ ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California<br>• Portfolio<br>• District/school-created test | Status of student achievement with respect to standards (results aggregated and disaggregated) | • Judging students' overall learning<br>• Gauging student, school, district, and state year-to-year progress<br>• Monitoring, reporting, and accountability<br>• Classification and placement (e.g., ELs)<br>• Certification<br>• Adjustments to following year's instruction, curriculum, and programs<br>• Final grades<br>• Professional learning prioritization and resource decisions<br>• Teacher reflection (individual, grade level, departmental) on effectiveness of planning and instruction |

*Source:* Adapted from California Department of Education, *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools.* Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2015, pp. 827–28.

As part of a balanced and comprehensive assessment system, assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning are both important. Classroom teachers, school leaders, and professional learning providers should consider the support that educators require in order to understand and implement the formative assessment process, as well as to use summative assessments effectively. Collaborative professional environments, such as communities of practice, should be the nexus of learning and work that teachers do relative to assessment evidence as part of an ongoing cycle of inquiry. To maximize the use of assessment information for decisions related to student achievement, teachers and leaders need to make full use of assessment for both formative and summative purposes.

## *Formative Assessment in History–Social Science*

Formative assessment provides the most detailed information for teachers and their students. The idea of formative assessment, or assessment for learning, does not apply to a specific tool or assessment. This is not to say that a tool or assessment cannot be used for formative assessment purposes—it can, but only if it provides actionable information about students' learning status relative to the desired lesson goal and teachers can use it immediately to adjust their instruction. Formative assessment is briefly defined in figure 19.4.

**FIGURE 19.4.** What Is Formative Assessment?

**What is formative assessment?** Formative assessment is a *process* teachers and students use *during* instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching moves and learning tactics. It is *not* a tool or an event, nor a bank of test items or performance tasks. Well supported by research evidence, it improves students' learning in time to achieve intended instructional outcomes. Key features include:

1. ***Clear lesson-learning goals and success criteria,*** so students understand what they are aiming for;
2. ***Evidence of learning*** gathered during lessons to determine where students are relative to goals;
3. ***A pedagogical response to evidence, including descriptive feedback,*** that supports learning by helping students answer: *Where am I going? Where am I now? What are my next steps?*

**Figure 19.4.** *(continued)*

4. ***Peer- and self-assessment*** to strengthen students' learning, efficacy, confidence, and autonomy;
5. ***A collaborative classroom culture*** where students and teachers are partners in learning.

***Source:*** Linquanti, Robert. 2014. *Supporting Formative Assessment for Deeper Learning: A Primer for Policymakers.* Paper prepared for the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers/State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards, 2, Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

The sources of evidence available to teachers in formative assessment are what students do, say, make, or write (Griffin 2007). For example, sources of evidence can be teacher–student interactions fueled by well-designed questions (Bailey and Heritage 2008; Black et al. 2003), structured peer-to-peer discussions that the teacher observes (Harlen 2007), dialogues that embed assessment into an activity already occurring in the classroom (Ruiz-Primo and Furtak 2004, 2006, 2007), student work from well-designed tasks (Poppers 2011), and Web-based reading assessments that provide immediate feedback (Cohen et al. 2011).

In a history–social science classroom, these might include the analysis of short primary-source documents through a structured discussion protocol: Students first detail the literal or descriptive information (such as the document's title, author, location, and publication date), discuss the context in which it was produced (e.g., what was going on at that time at that place?), then consider the purpose of the document by discussing the audience and tone, and finally speculate as to the intent and overall significance of the document.

Maps and timelines provide another opportunity for teachers to learn about their students' content understanding and literacy development. For example, in a unit on westward expansion, eighth-grade students may track the travels of individual families as they read diaries by pioneers who traveled the Mormon, California, Oregon, or Montana trail (tracing on a map of the United States or through the use of interactive timelines). Performance tasks can take the form of demonstrations, oral performances, investigations, and written products (Lane 2013). Performance assessments provide better possibilities to measure complex skills and communication, important competencies, and disciplinary knowledge needed in today's society (Palm 2008), and important learning goals that cannot be easily assessed with other formats (Resnick and Resnick 1992). Performance tasks

can also take the form of longer projects that are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice twenty-first century skills (such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products and presentations. These student projects can function as both formative and summative assessments.

The cognitive tasks outlined in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating) and Webb's Depth of Knowledge levels (recall and reproduction, skills and concepts, thinking and reasoning, and extended thinking) are useful for gauging the range and balance of intellectual challenge for students. (See figure 19.5.)

**FIGURE 19.5.** Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge

| Depth of Thinking (Webb) + Type of Thinking (Revised Bloom, 2001) | DOK Level 1<br>Recall and Reproduction | DOK Level 2<br>Basic Skills & Concepts | DOK Level 3<br>Strategic Thinking and Reasoning | DOK Level 4<br>Extended Thinking |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Remember | • Recall , locate basic facts, definitions, details, events | | | |
| Understand | • Select appropriate words for use when Intended meaning is clearly evident | • Specify, explain relationships,<br>• Summarize<br>• Identify central ideas | • Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence (quote, text evidence, example…) | • Explain how concepts or ideas specifically relate to other content domains or concepts |

**Figure 19.5.** *(continued)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apply | • Use language structure (pre/suffix) or word relationships (synonym/ antonym) to determine meaning | • Use content to identify word meanings<br>• Obtain and interpret information using text features | • Use concepts to solve non-routine problems | • Devise an approach among many alternatives to research a novel problem |
| Analyze | • Identify the kind of information in a graphic table, visual, and the like | • Compare literary elements, facts, terms, events<br>• Analyze format, organization, and text structures | • Analyze or interpret author's craft (e.g. literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to critique a text | • Analyze multiple sources or texts<br>• Analyze complex/ abstract themes |
| Evaluate | | | • Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for conjectures based on one text or problem | • Evaluate relevancy, accuracy, and completeness of information across text/ sources |

**Figure 19.5.** *(continued)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Create | • Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept | • Generate conjectures or hypothesis based on observations or prior knowledge and experience | • Develop a complex model for a given situation<br>• Develop an alternative solution | • Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts<br>• Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective |

***Source:*** Adapted from Hess, Karin, K., Dennis Carlock, Ben Jones, and John R. Walkup. 2009. "What Exactly Do 'Fewer, Clearer, and Higher Standards' Really Look Like in the Classroom? Using a Cognitive Rigor Matrix to Analyze Curriculum, Plan Lessons, and Implement Assessments."

The report of the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers/State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (FAST/SCASS) Project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) emphasizes several features of formative assessment. First, "formative assessment is a process rather than a particular kind of assessment. There is no such thing as a 'formative test'" (McManus 2008, 3). Second, "the formative assessment process involves both teachers and students, both of whom must be actively involved in the process of improving learning" (McManus 2008, 3). Third, teachers must be clear about the ultimate goal of a unit and the sub-goals or stepping-stones that are important along the way: "from a learning progression teachers have the big picture of what students need to learn, as well as sufficient detail for planning instruction to meet short-term goals" (McManus 2008, 4). Fourth, success criteria and evidence of learning need to be laid out at the beginning of the project and reviewed along the way: "teachers must provide the criteria by which learning will be assessed using language readily understood by students, with realistic examples of what meets and does not meet the criteria" (McManus 2008, 4).

Whatever the source of the evidence, the teacher's role is to construct or devise ways to elicit responses from students that reveal where they are in their learning and to use the evidence to move learning forward (Sadler 1989). For effective

formative assessment, teachers need to be clear about the short-term learning goals (for example, for a lesson) that cumulatively lead to students' attainment of one or more standards. They will also need to be clear about the success criteria for the lesson goal—how will the students show if they have met, or are on the way to meeting, the lesson goal. The evidence-gathering strategy can then be aligned with the success criteria.

Questions that formative assessment can answer include the following:

- Where are my students in relation to learning goals for this lesson?
- What is the gap between students' current learning and the goal?
- What individual difficulties are my students having?
- Are there any missing building blocks in their learning?
- What do I need to adjust in my teaching to ensure students learn?

Information from formative assessment is used to make instructional adjustments in real time, to continue with the planned lesson, or to provide feedback to students that will help them take steps to advance their learning.

An important point about teachers' use of evidence in formative assessment is that their inferences from the evidence and their actions in response to that evidence focus on individual students. This does not mean that instruction for students is necessarily on a one-to-one basis, but rather that individual needs are addressed in the context of a class of students. This orientation to individuals is necessary if students are going to have the opportunity to learn and progress equally (Heritage 2013). To do so, instruction needs to be contingent upon each student's current learning status. In other words, instruction has to be matched to where the students are, so that they can be assisted to progress and meet desired goals.

The use of technology that enables students to give immediate responses to teachers (e.g., clickers, mobile devices) can help teachers with large numbers of students to get an ongoing sense of where students are during the lesson. For example, halfway through a lesson, a tenth-grade teacher asks three or four questions related to their analysis of Winston Churchill's 1940 Address to Parliament (later known as Churchill's Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat speech) that

the class has been analyzing during their study of World War II. The results immediately appear as a pie chart on the smartboard. Both teachers and students can quickly see how the class responded and can decide together if more work needs to be done in this area before the lesson progresses.

For assessment to be formative, it must be both timely and produce information that can inform teaching practice during its ongoing course (Erickson 2007). For this reason, the immediate, or proximate, timing of evidence is a key component of formative assessment validity. In addition, formative assessment must also yield substantive insights into students' current learning status in order to be valid and be used in subsequent pedagogical action (Heritage 2013).

An important point about validity in formative assessment concerns the consequences of the assessment use. Because action resulting from the use of formative assessment evidence is intended to produce benefits to student learning, consequences represent an important component of the validity of such assessment. Even if assessments are formative in intention they may not be so in practice if they do not generate further learning (Stobart 2006; Wiliam and Black 1996).

Reliability for classroom formative assessment takes a very different form because errors in instructional decisions can be rectified quickly through gathering more evidence of learning (Shepard 2001). Reliability in relation to instructional decisions can be thought of as "sufficiency of information" (Smith 2003, 30). In other words, teachers have to be confident that they have enough information about the student's learning to make a reasonable judgment about the current status of that learning. This idea of *sufficiency of information for reliability* argues for multiple sources of evidence before a teacher makes an instructional decision. The wider the range of information, and the more frequently the information is collected, the more accurately learning can be inferred (Griffin et al. 2010). In practical terms, this may mean that before making a judgment about student learning on a specific topic in history–social science, a teacher has evidence from students' oral language production, from a quick-write, and from a text that has been underlined by the students to identify the specific language feature in question. The more this kind of evidence can be gathered in the context of everyday learning tasks, the less time will be taken away from instruction and the more reliable the evidence gathered about a student's learning will be (Linn and Baker 1996).

Because reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills do not develop in lockstep with content and disciplinary understanding by all students, formative assessment is inevitably personalized and teachers will need to employ strategies that tap into individuals' knowledge and skills. Whatever evidence sources a teacher selects, they should account for the range of students present in the class so that all students have the opportunity to show where they are in their learning and have the prospect of moving forward from their current status. For example, well-designed questions and tasks that are sufficiently open-ended can give all students the opportunity to reveal their learning.

Formative assessment can take many forms in a history–social science class. Consider, for example, a class in which students read a series of primary and secondary sources about what happened when Hernan Cortés met Moctezuma. The class has previously studied European exploration and Spanish conquistadors. They are now reading a textbook excerpt that says that Moctezuma believed Cortés was the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. Subsequently, they read two primary-source documents that provide divergent accounts of the meeting and excerpts from a historian's analysis of the encounter between Cortés and Moctezuma.

As students read the documents in small groups and answer a series of guiding questions, the teacher circulates through the room and listens to students' conversations about the documents. By listening to these conversations and looking at students' written responses, the teacher quickly gathers feedback about students' understanding of the documents and challenges that have arisen. Perhaps several students are unfamiliar with a particular word or are confused about the circumstances in which the Florentine Codex was created. Similarly, some students might be unable to identify how the two primary sources differ from the textbook account of the meeting between Cortés and Moctezuma. The teacher can gather additional information about student understanding by asking impromptu questions of students. For example, the teacher may ask, "What do you think this word means, given the context of the document?" Based on the information gathered during these informal interactions, the teacher can either redirect students individually or, if the teacher observes many students struggling with the same topic, reconvene the class as a whole to provide instruction in response.

Sometimes, formative assessment occurs during the course of classroom discourse. The teacher may have specific, planned questions to ask at specific

moments during classroom instruction. For instance, after students have read Cortés's letter to King Henry, the teacher may ask the whole class, "Who was the recipient of Cortés's letter? How might that influence what he writes about his interaction with Moctezuma?" This planned-for-interaction type of assessment allows the teacher to gather information about students' understanding of a crucial aspect of the document.

Formative assessment can also include curriculum-embedded tasks. For example, after students have worked in groups to examine the various primary and secondary sources in the Moctezuma lesson, the teacher could ask students to complete a short document-based task as an exit ticket. The task may feature the same letter by Cortés that is included in the lesson. During the lesson, the teacher might ask students aloud to consider how the recipient of the letter might shape the content of the letter. However, the task would require students to answer the same question in written form. This would provide the teacher with detailed feedback about whether all of the students in the class understood this key aspect of the lesson. The teacher would not necessarily have to even grade these responses. Simply by reading through students' responses, the teacher could gain a sense of students' grasp of this aspect of historical understanding. Moreover, the teacher could use students' responses to shape instruction during the next class period. For instance, if students struggle to answer the exit ticket, the teacher can prepare a mini-lesson focused on how a document's intended audience can shape its content.

## *End-of-Unit Assessments*

End-of-unit assessments can serve a summative purpose to evaluate student achievement toward the goals of the unit. If such assessments are given to students before the end of the unit when there is still time to take some instructional action before moving on to the next unit, then they can also serve a formative purpose.

In developing unit assessments, teachers will need to ensure that the goals of the unit are clear and aligned with standards. In other words, what is to be assessed must be well articulated and derived specifically from the standards and lesson planning. When teachers know what to assess, they can best determine how to assess.

End-of-unit assessments can help teachers answer questions such as the following:

- Have my students met the goals of the unit?
- Are there some students who need additional help to meet the goals of the unit?
- What help do they need?
- What improvements do I need to make in my teaching the next time I teach this unit?

## *Interim or Benchmark Assessments*

Interim or benchmark assessments address intermediate goals on the way to meeting standards. Typically administered quarterly or every six weeks, interim assessments cover a shorter period of instruction than end-of-year assessments and consequently give more detail about student learning. Results from interim assessments provide periodic snapshots of student learning throughout the year. These snapshots assist teachers to monitor how student learning is progressing and to determine who is on track to meet the standards by the end of the year and who is not, which may mean that a student needs additional support. When using or designing interim or benchmark assessments, teachers and school and district leaders should consider what is reasonable to expect students to be able to do about meeting the history–social science and English language arts standards at various points along the year (as opposed to at the end of the year). While there should be goals for meeting the end-of-year standards at points along the school year, these goals may look different from the end-of-the-year standards. Results from these assessments can help teachers answer the following questions:

- What have my students learned so far?
- Who has and who has not met intermediate goals?
- Who is and who is not on track to meet the standards by the end of the year?
- What are the strengths and areas of need in an individual's or a group's learning?

- Who are the students most in need of additional support? What do they need?
- What are the strengths and areas of need in my curriculum?
- What are the strengths and areas of need in my instruction?
- What improvements do I need to make in my teaching?

If students are not making desired progress, then teachers and administrators should consider whether changes are needed in curriculum and instruction while adjustments can still be made before the end of the year. In this sense, even though they sum up a period of learning (over a few weeks or months) their use is also formative if adjustments to curriculum and instruction are made during the school year. Interim assessments also supply individual performance data. These data are useful to identify an individual student's strengths and learning needs. In addition, while these results sum up a period of learning, they can also be used formatively if steps are taken to respond to an individual student's needs while there is still time within the year. In instances where no action is taken to support student learning, the results from these assessments remain only summative.

## *Rubrics*

Performance assessments that require students to demonstrate learning through an oral, written, or multimodal performance task (e.g., a presentation, a report) can be evaluated according to a rubric. A commonly accepted definition of a rubric is that of a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality (Andrade et al. 2009). Criteria should relate to the learning that students are being asked to demonstrate rather than the tasks themselves, and they should provide clear descriptions of performance across a continuum of quality (Brookhart 2013). The criteria should be linked to standards and reflect what is required to meet a specific standard or cluster of standards. Descriptions of performance are usually presented within score levels; the knowledge and skills at one level should differ distinctively from those at other levels. If schools are using commercially produced performance assessments for high-stakes assessment purposes (for example, placement or end-of-year grades), they will need to ensure that the rubrics have undergone a series of studies that provide evidence of their technical quality. Examples of such

studies include review by content area and literacy experts, review to ensure cultural and language sensitivity, and field tests to provide evidence that the rubric can differentiate performance across levels of the rubric and across grades.

For classroom assessment, teachers—sometimes in collaboration with students—can also develop rubrics for their own classroom performance assessments. Co-construction of rubrics with students is a powerful way to build student understanding and acceptance of what is expected. When rubrics are being created, there are a few points to bear in mind. First, holistic rubrics should express as clearly and concisely as possible the expected performance at each level. Therefore, it is important to avoid ambiguous language. Before using the rubric, teachers need to explain the language of the rubric to students. Second, the expectations should be communicated in nonpejorative descriptions of what performance looks like at each level and reflect a growth mindset. Third, the gradations of quality need to be specifically articulated across levels.

It is preferable for teachers to design rubrics as a group rather than as individuals. Taking advantage of how school teams already work together, as well as ensuring that the appropriate content expertise is represented in the group, is a useful operating procedure for rubric development (Brookhart 2013). There is no rule of thumb for the frequency with which teachers should use rubrics. The use of a rubric depends on the purpose for which it is being used (Brookhart 2013).

Developmental rubrics can improve student performance, as well as monitor it, by making teachers' expectations clear and by showing students how to meet these expectations. When teachers provide students with a rubric of how their work will be evaluated, it should be clear what they need to do to improve in the future. Rubrics can also help support student self- and peer assessment.

If students are involved in the assessment process, they are more likely to develop a learning orientation than if they are solely passive recipients of test scores. They are also more likely to develop the skills of setting goals, managing the pursuit of those goals, and self-monitoring—all important twenty-first century skills (NRC 2012). Active student involvement in the assessment process is a vital element in the development of student self-direction in learning.

## *Feedback*

Even when teachers have used rubrics and provided an evaluative score, students still need feedback about how to improve. Although potentially time-consuming, the payoff for students is that assessment is more transparent, and the students are more oriented to goals and feel more ownership in future learning. Teacher feedback helps students understand where they were successful or not and clarifies what students can do to improve. This approach means that teachers need to spend time with students discussing assessment results and setting goals and strategies for improvement.

Feedback is particularly salient in the context of formative assessment. Students may receive feedback in three ways: from their teachers, from peers, and through their own self-assessment. The purpose of the feedback is to close the gap between the student's current learning status and the lesson goals (Sadler 1989). It is critical that students be given opportunities to use the feedback; otherwise it does not serve the intended purpose.

## *Teacher Feedback*

Three questions provide a frame for feedback to students in formative assessment:

1. Where am I going?
2. Where am I now?
3. Where will I go next?

To answer the first question, both teachers and students need to be clear about the goal or target of the learning and what a successful performance of learning will look like. Answering the second question requires teachers and students to elicit and interpret evidence of learning. In other words, they need to decide where the students' learning currently stands in relation to the goal. Answering the third question guides the student to take next action steps toward meeting the goal. Feedback addresses both the second and the third questions. The teacher provides feedback that indicates to the student where he or she has been successful and provides a hint or cue of what to do next.

## *Peer Feedback*

Peers are also sources of feedback for learning. Peer feedback has advantages, both for those students providing the feedback as well as those receiving it. It involves thinking about learning and can deepen students' understanding of their own learning. Research shows that the people providing the feedback benefit just as much as the recipient, because they are forced to internalize the learning goals and performance criteria in the context of someone else's work, which is less emotionally charged than their own (Wiliam 2006). Quality peer feedback requires the same type of information as teacher feedback: students need to consider the learning goals and performance criteria. Peers need to assess the status of classmates' learning with the same success criteria they use to check their own learning. Additionally, providing constructive feedback is a skill students need to learn, so instruction will need to focus on this as well. It is worth remembering that learners who are adept at giving and receiving feedback to complete learning activities are acquiring important twenty-first century skills (NRC 2012).

## *Self-Assessment*

Teacher and peer feedback are externally provided. When students are involved in self-assessment, they are generating internal feedback. Generating and acting on internal feedback is a form of metacognition and self-regulation. Metacognition is basically thinking about one's thinking, and self-regulation refers to the ability of learners to coordinate cognitive resources, emotions, and actions in the service of meeting learning goals (Boekaerts 2006). In the realm of twenty-first century learning, metacognition and self-regulation are important skills (NRC 2012). The most effective learners are self-regulating (Butler and Winne 1995; Pintrich 2000; Schunk and Zimmerman 2008). Additionally, training students in metacognition raises their performance (e.g., Lodico et al. 1983) and helps them generalize what they have learned to new situations (Hacker, Dunlosky, and Graesser 1998). Because of the importance of metacognition and self-regulation to successful learning, teachers need to pay attention to ensuring students develop these skills in the context of language and literacy learning.

## *Summative Assessments in History–Social Science*

The Moctezuma–Cortés document-based lesson described earlier in this chapter lends itself well to written summative assessments. After students have analyzed the various sources and engaged in a whole-class discussion, they can construct a written response to the question of what happened when Moctezuma met Cortés. This response may be as short as a single paragraph, or it may be a full analytic essay. Students can even conduct additional research to locate additional information on the topic. In each case, students will need to formulate a position, identify relevant evidence from the documents, and explain how the evidence supports their position. This type of summative assessment provides evidence of students' grasp of core aspects of historical understanding: the evaluation of evidence, historical knowledge, and argumentation.

Another assessment that provides information about student mastery of chronological and spatial thinking at the elementary level (HSS Analysis Skills, Chronological and Spatial Thinking 1) and content knowledge of North American history (HSS 5.1–5.5) is the construction of a timeline of events and periods that begin with "American Indians establish settlements in North America" and end with the "Writing of the Declaration of Independence."

A different option would be to have students create an interpretation in response to a standards-based question of historical significance after studying evidence from primary sources. For instance, while studying the origins of the Cold War, eleventh-grade students might be given a variety of primary and secondary sources to answer the question "Why did we fight the Cold War?" Students could consider a number of relevant sources to develop their interpretation, such as a map of a divided Germany, a copy of Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain ("Sinews of Peace") speech and Joseph Stalin's written response to Churchill, published in *Pravda,* a copy of U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall's speech at Harvard, which outlined his plan for reconstructing Europe after World War II, Harry Truman's Address

to a Joint Session of Congress to outline his foreign policy—later known as the Truman Doctrine—and images and newsreels explaining the Berlin Airlift, among others.[1] Students can paraphrase and select brief quotes from the primary sources to illustrate a written argument and complementary oral presentation, using language such as "the evidence suggests," "it seems likely," and "some sources indicate" to signify interpretive decisions made in support of their thesis (HSS 11.9; HSS Analysis Skills, Chronological and Spatial Thinking 3; Historical Research, Evidence and Point of View 1, 2, and 4; Historical Interpretation 1, 2, and 4; CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy WHST 11–12.1, 2, 4–9; CA ELD Standards, PI.11–12.6a, PI.11–12.9, PI.11–12.11).

Less-traditional forms of assessment can supplement formal writing assignments and provide additional insight into student mastery of the standards. Making an argument through the use of technology, for example, offers students an engaging opportunity to demonstrate their understanding, while developing their ability to utilize digital media and work with their peers. Students in tenth-grade World History may conclude their study of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries by constructing an online museum exhibit of the most significant scientific and technological developments in the period between the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions and the end of the twentieth century. Working in small teams, students would first consider a large list of significant inventions, from a variety of fields, such as transportation (for example, the automobile or airplane), medicine and public health (for example, the discovery of penicillin or the widespread use of antibiotics, the modern sanitation system, or pasteurization), energy (e.g., the steam turbine), agriculture (such as the cotton gin, combine harvester, and improved methods of farming), manufacturing (for example, the assembly line), and communication and the dissemination of information (for example, the telephone, radio, television, or personal computer).

Students would then make a limited selection from this list (or through additional research) to develop their own interpretation in response to the question "Consider the individual discoveries, revolutionary ideas, and inventions developed between 1825 and 2000. Which made the most significant improvement in the lives of everyday people?" After making their selection, students then have to

1. Assessment adapted from *The Cold War – A History Blueprint* unit from the California History–Social Science Project (http://chssp.ucdavis.edu), Regents of the University of California, 2014.

defend their choices by clearly explaining the invention or discovery, detailing how this item improved the lives of specific groups of people or individuals, and differentiating the benefits of their selected discoveries from other choices from the original list.

Students would present their argument through a virtual museum exhibit. There are a variety of online tools to support the development of these virtual displays, and exhibits may be constructed in different ways, but each exhibit would need to include relevant visuals, concise descriptions of the individual discoveries, and evidence-based analyses of their individual selections, presented online and in-person through short oral demonstrations. This assessment would thus provide important information about student content understanding (HSS 10.3–10.9), disciplinary understanding (HSS Analysis Skills: Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View; and Historical Interpretation), reading comprehension (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy RH 9–10, 1, 2, 9, 10), speaking and listening (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy SL 9–10, 1, 2–6), and writing (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy WHST 9–10, 1, 2, 4, 6–10).

This lesson can also support and assess English language development, as students work in teams to read and interpret written texts (CA ELD Standards PI.9–10.6a), discuss content using academic English (CA ELD Standards PI.9–10.1, 3, 4), and produce multimedia presentations with written analyses and oral demonstrations (CA ELD Standards PI.9–10.9, 10a, 11a).

## Yearly Assessments

Yearly assessments, such as the Smarter Balanced annual assessments, cover a year's worth of learning and, by their nature, provide more general information about student achievement relative to the standards. They sum up achievement after a year of learning and are therefore most appropriately used by schools and districts to monitor their own annual and longitudinal progress and to ensure individual students are on track academically.

At the time of this writing, California has suspended all statewide assessments in history–social science. The state is in the middle of a transition to computer-adaptive assessments as part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Smarter Balanced provides formative and summative assessments aligned with the

Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts. While history–social science content may be included on those assessments, they are not designed to evaluate student knowledge of the topics and skills included in the History–Social Science Content Standards (see appendix C). If history–social science assessments are developed in the future, they will be a part of a broader system known as the CAASPP.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson has declared his intent to develop future assessments that test student knowledge and skills in other subjects, including history–social science. Assembly Bill 484 (Chapter 489 of the Statutes of 2013) directed the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to report by March 1, 2016, to the State Board of Education and the Legislature on expanding the CAASPP into other subject areas. Those future assessments may include computer-based tests, locally scored performance tasks, and portfolios and may be implemented on an assessment calendar that tests subjects over multiple years or uses matrix and/or population sampling. This measure is designed to keep costs and maximum student assessment time under control.

While the Smarter Balanced multistate consortium is not developing specific history–social science content-area assessments that are similar to the California Standards Test, there will be items on the English language arts assessments that can be seen as an indication of how well students have learned such history–social science skills as expository critique, the development of content-area vocabulary, or the ability to evaluate how well summaries reflect the original text of a document. The Smarter Balanced assessments will include writing prompts that will enable students to demonstrate their historical understanding, including causal relationships and other examples of historical interpretation.

For the latest information about California's statewide assessment system, visit the California Department of Education's Testing and Accountability Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/.

## Conclusion

The use of assessment by teachers is a critical component of students' achievement of the History–Social Science Content Standards and CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy. Only when teachers and leaders have a range of accurate

information about student learning can they be in a position to make decisions that will advance learning. Key to informing the decisions educators need to make is a balanced and comprehensive system of assessment that provides different levels of detail for different decision-making purposes. In such an assessment system, districts and school personnel need to strike the right balance in terms of the range of available assessments to teachers from the state or district, to those adopted by individual schools, to assessments embedded in curriculum materials, to ongoing day-by-day formative assessment practices that teachers engage in during instruction. Assessment operates in the service of learning and involves careful consideration of the decisions that teachers need to make in the school year to ensure student progress, and the assessment tools and processes they need to inform their decision making. In combination with the right assessments for the right purposes, teachers' skillful use of assessment to support learning is critical to ensure that students in California meet the ambitious standards that have been set forth. Moreover, because of the importance of reading and writing in history and the related social sciences, teachers who require their students to both read abstract expository text and write arguments supported by evidence improve student content understanding, literacy, and critical thinking.

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