



Book Review

Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools Through Student-Engaged Assessment by Ron Berger

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Leaders of Their Own Learning by Ron Berger provides tools to develop student-engaged assessment practices which include case studies, protocols and videos to support educator implementation of these practices in their classrooms.

Through a series of case studies, the author illustrates how student-engaged assessments develop student ownership of learning. One of the case studies describes the process used to prepare students to make successful presentations.

Karen MacDonald, language arts and social studies teacher at King Middle School in Portland, Maine – Maine’s 2014 Teacher of the Year (and my college friend) and her colleagues create an atmosphere where students feel safe, supported in taking risks, and prepared to participate in a presentation of their work. When students are engaged in assessing their growth in learning, they gain a deeper sense of their progress, become more independent learners, set academic goals and monitor progress, identify strength and weaknesses, and become self-advocates.

The author views the skills embedded in student-engaged assessment, including reflection and self-assessment, use of feedback, goal setting, revision and presentation, as integral to meeting the rigorous demands of the Common Core State Standards.

The book outlines eight practices to engage students

in making academic progress, which include:

- Development of learning targets, which are written for and owned by students, and begin with the stem “I can...”
- Checking for understanding during daily lessons, which embeds assessment into instructional practices.
- Using data with students, which helps students learn to use their classwork and interim assessments to help them analyze their strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve their work.
- Models, critique, and descriptive feedback, which provide students with good examples of quality work.
- Student led conferences, which gives students a leadership role in communicating their progress to their families.
- Celebrations of learning, which have student exhibitions of high quality work in a culminating grade level event.
- Passage presentations with portfolios, which require students to document and communicate evidence of their learning.
- Standards based grading in which grades are determined through evidence based assessments of the student learning targets.

These practices would serve to support the efforts in Connecticut to move to a personalized learning system.

to the successful operation of the school district.

- Board members and Superintendents will always carry out their respective roles with the highest levels of **professionalism, honesty and integrity**.
- Board members recognize that they represent the **entire** community and that they must ensure that **the** community remains fully informed on school-related matters.
- Superintendents and Board members recognize that the Superintendent serves as the Board of Education's **agent** and will, in that role, **faithfully apply** the policies and contract adopted by the Board.
- Board members adhere to the principle that they shall confine the Board's role to **policy-making, planning and appraisal** while the Superintendent shall **implement** the Board's policies.
- Board members and Superintendents both recognize that they serve as a part of an educational team with **mutual respect, trust, civility and**

regard for each other's respective roles and responsibilities.

- Board members are committed to the concept that the strength of the Superintendent is in being the **educational leader** of the school district.
- Board members and Superintendents practice and promote **ethical behavior** in the **Boardroom** as a **model** for all district employees.
- Board members and Superintendents consider and decide all issues **fairly and without bias**.

Right now, CAFE and CAPSS are deeply involved in a process to update our Governance Statement and Team Assessment documents, found on both the CAFE and CAPSS websites. We are in a time of increased accountability and adherence to the best practices and, we hope to give you some new and higher voluntary standards. We hope you will think about these once you receive them.

In addition, CAFE stands ready to continue its work in helping Boards develop their goals and better