

What can we expect to get from this module?

This module helps school leaders understand what it means to be “instructional leaders.” Through readings, hands-on exercises, experiential activities, study groups, and action research, participants explore best practice related to assessment and instruction. They are frequently asked to reflect deeply on how their own practice compares to best practice. The sequence of the training is based on a “backward design” model, in which standards drive assessment, which drives instruction.

Who is the training for? This module is designed to be taught to school leaders and potential school leaders. This may include school teams of principals, aspiring leaders, teacher leaders, and others who are members or potential members of the school’s professional development team. **NOTE:** In order for this training to have significant impact, the principal **MUST** be part of the school team being trained. In addition, it is beneficial to also include district staff involved in assessment and instruction.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module. There are no formal prerequisites for this SREB module; it is considered one of the foundational modules for the SREB Leadership Curriculum Module series.

What will we have to do to get the most from this module? Teams must commit to attending three sessions (five days total) as a team, completing prework and homework assignments, and completing a portfolio assignment. Required texts include:

- Wiggins, Jay McTighe. *Understanding by Design*.
- Marzano, et al. *Classroom Instruction That Works*.
- Zemelman, et al. *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America’s Schools*.

Big Ideas in This Module*Introduction: The Opportunity to Make a Difference*

- *If you think the income level or ethnicity of your students means that student achievement will be low or high, think again! 90/90/90 schools prove that effective assessment and instruction makes the difference.*
- *Curriculum standards determine our outcomes, assessments (used properly) chart our progress toward the standards, and instruction is planned to support students in completing assignments.*
- *Teachers need support to improve assessment and instruction practices. A key role of a school leader is to be an instructional leader.*

Best Practices in Assessment

- *The main reason we should grade is to provide useful feedback to students so they can learn from it and improve.*
- *Formative assessment—our focus here—can be described as assessment **for** learning instead of assessment **of** learning.*
- *It is so tempting to choose assessment methods that are “easy to grade,” but best practice tells us that we should choose those methods that best enable us to see if students have a deep understanding of the essential questions.*

Best Practices in Instruction

- *There is a wealth of research on which instructional strategies make the biggest difference in student achievement. From homework to graphic representations to identifying similarities and differences to cooperative learning, we know what works.*
- *Instruction that is proven to increase student achievement has the following qualities: aligned with standards; active student participation; emphasis on higher-order thinking skills and rich, complex ideas; reading and writing in all subjects; complex problem solving; and use of formative assessment to inform teaching decisions and provide student feedback.*
- *The SOLO model helps us analyze teacher assignments and student work to determine whether students are asked for, and demonstrate, deep understanding.*
- *Do you think student achievement would increase if a greater percentage of time in the school day were devoted to learning? Sure, it would! School leaders can help by modeling and teaching classroom management techniques that maximize instructional time.*

Leading Change

- *As a school leader, you have some easy-to-learn and easy-to-use tools and techniques that you can use at your school to facilitate teachers as they learn, practice, and reflect upon improved assessment and instruction techniques.*

Module Design. This is a five-day workshop (2+1+2). It includes prework and homework assignments. Each section is described below.

Prework. The first assignment is four reading selections (less than 50 pages total). There are also study questions to be discussed in class. The second assignment is to complete self assessments on instruction, assessment and curriculum.

Introduction: The Opportunity to Make a Difference (morning of Day One) Participants learn about the importance of instruction and assessment, the relationship among them, the concept of curriculum standards, and the leader's role in making a difference. This is done primarily through a series of group exercises. The activities help participants to develop a rich understanding of the relationship among these concepts. Participants are repeatedly asked to synthesize concepts to develop their own concept maps.

Best Practices in Assessment (rest of Day One and all of Day Two). In this section, participants begin with two activities (evaluation of a sample and a carousel activity) to recall and organize what they already know about assessment and to raise questions. The rest of the section involves presentation of key concepts while participants create and refine posters that generate key points. Throughout the section, the trainer points out how the content supports the indicators for best practice that accompany a self assessment.

Homework. Between Days One and Two, there is a 30-page reading from the Wiggins and McTighe text and an Alfie Kohn article. Both have study questions. After Day Two, participants read about—and prepare a 10-minute presentation on—one of the nine strategies from the Marzano book.

Best Practices in Instruction: Part I (Day Three). At the beginning of the day, participants get feedback on the homework they did looking at assessment practices in a classroom, then this section begins. It is built around the participants' presentations assigned in Day Two. Before they begin, the trainer leads a discussion about quality instruction and the value of research-based strategies. Then, each participant group gives a 10-minute presentation on one of the strategies in Marzano's book, followed by a five-minute Q&A session. Finally, the trainer will make some additional points about differentiated instruction.

Homework. Participants gather data on assessment and instruction practices at their schools, teach faculty one strategy from Marzano, and follow up with observation, coaching and discussion. In addition, participants prepare for Day Four by creating study groups for the Zemelman text and bringing a sample lesson to Day Four.

Best Practices in Instruction: Part II (Day Four—half a day). At the beginning of the day, participants will share insights they gained from their homework assignments. This will help them focus on larger issues around instruction, especially how strategies are chosen for specific subject areas and management strategies to get the most out of the instructional day.

Homework. This includes readings from Glickman, Zemelman, and Hessel and Holloway. These articles emphasize school structures that support effective assessment and instruction. Participants also complete the Group Effectiveness Scale



Leading Change (Day Five). Participants reflect on the various ways school cultures and school leaders suppress or support real improvement in assessment and instruction. They learn about strategies schools have found effective in developing their faculty and working toward improvement. They practice two strategies as they complete some decision-making and planning around how they will begin to effect positive change in their schools.

Summary and Portfolio Assignments (one hour). Participants working as a team must lead the effort to facilitate the creation of an action plan for improving assessment and instruction practices at their schools. Participants submit a portfolio that contains team products as well as individual reflections and narrative.