TESTING 123

Updates for teachers from the MDE Statewide Testing Division

November 9, 2020

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Webinar: Science MCA-IV Constructed-Response Question Types

The Science MCA-IV, which is based on the 2019 Minnesota Academic Standards in Science, will first be administered in spring 2024. To prepare for this new assessment, MDE is investigating whether constructed response (open-ended) question types are appropriate for assessing students on these standards. This webinar will provide the reasons why we are exploring constructed response questions. We will also give an overview of the timeline for including them on the MCA-IV, as well as the steps needed to determine the appropriateness of these questions on the new assessments.

The same presentation will be available at two different times:

- Register for Nov. 18 Science MCA-IV webinar; this webinar is scheduled for 3–3:30.

- Register for Dec. 1 Science MCA-IV webinar; this webinar is scheduled for 4–4:30.

Please share these webinar links with district staff who may be interested in assessment of the science standards and this spring's field testing during the operational administration.

Upcoming WIDA Webinars

WIDA Webinar: Managing Students in WIDA AMS

WIDA will host the *Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs for New Test Administrators* webinar on Tuesday, Nov. 17, from 1–2 p.m. [Join the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs for New Test Administrators *WIDA AMS* webinar on Nov. 17](#). The webinar is designed for Test Administrators and will provide an overview of Kindergarten ACCESS, including the following topics:

- Scheduling

- Basics of administration

- Review of training resources

WIDA Webinar Schedule

The *2020-21 ACCESS and Screener Webinar Calendar* document is a list of all of WIDA's planned webinars (with registration links) and is available on the [ACCESS Webinars page](#). WIDA also posts recordings of their webinars on the ACCESS Webinars page for those who are unable to attend the live events.

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Featured Resource of the Month- Assessment Life Cycle Modules

The Minnesota Assessment Life Cycle Course previously only available in the Training Management System (TMS), have now been posted throughout the Testing 1, 2, 3 site to broaden user access. These modules are designed to increase educator understanding about Minnesota Assessments and promote the development of teacher assessment literacy skills.

The course modules can be viewed on Testing 1, 2, 3 on the following pages:

- [Module 1: Minnesota Assessments Overview](#) (Testing 123 > Assess > Statewide Assessments)

- [Module 2: MCA Achievement Level Descriptors & Standard Setting Process](#) (Testing 123 > Plan and Teach > Success Criteria)

- [Module 3: Test Development](#) (Testing 123 > Assess > Statewide Assessments > [under the MCA Development Process expandable tab])

- [Module 4: Test Construction](#) (Testing 123 > Plan and Teach > MCA Test Structure)

- [Module 5: Scoring and Reporting](#) (Testing 123 > Analyze > Access Statewide Assessment Data)

- [Module 6: Test Specifications](#) (Testing 123 > Plan and Teach > MCA Content Resources)

For more information, please contact testing123@state.mn.us with additional questions.

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Upcoming Opportunities

Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence

There is one remaining session in the webinar series about classroom assessments. Registration is required using the link below. Participants earn one continuing education unit (CEU) for each session. All sessions will be recorded and posted for future reference. Please contact Kendra at kendra.olsen@state.mn.us with any questions. If an individual has not attended any previous sessions, they are still encouraged to attend this session if it is of interest.

The series is scheduled to resume again in January with additional webinars designed for school leaders or teachers who want to continue sharpening their assessment and data literacy skills. The additional topics in the series will focus on topics related to statewide assessments including how to use publicly available data from MDE, interpreting and appropriately using MCA scores, and how the MCA is developed.

Note: Recordings of the previous webinars and additional information about upcoming webinars are now available on the Request Professional Development page of Testing 1, 2, 3.

- **Assessment *of* Learning – Summative Assessments for your Classroom**

    o In this webinar, attendees will discuss how to improve alignment of classroom assessments to learning outcomes, increase the rigor of questions on assessments to eliminate student misconceptions, and the extent to which their assessments measure mastery of the standards for an instructional unit.

    o Thursday, Nov. 12, 4–5 p.m.

    o Register for Session 5

Important Ideas and Research in School Assessment and Data

This section of the newsletter is designed to keep educators well-informed on current research and best practices to improve teaching, leadership, and learning in relation to data and assessment in the classroom.

How to Reduce Screen Time When School is Online

In this *Education Week* article, a tenth grader was quoted on the amount of time she's spending on her laptop for distance learning: "I hate it. It gets me so tired. I never really leave the screen all day except for lunch break. I wish we had more assignments that were off the screen." Teachers around the U.S. offered these suggestions:

- *Not all screen time is equal*. A lively class discussion of *Song of Solomon* is much more valuable than solo computer games, the key factors being intellectual engagement and connection with peers and teachers.
- *Some technology is suboptimal*. Teachers may feel pressured to overuse screen time, but should be critical consumers of technology.
- *Start with purpose*. "Think first about your learning goal," says a New Jersey kindergarten teacher. "What experiences do you want to provide? And then consider your options. The screen is only one option."
- *Use choice board grids*. A menu of options can provide structure and agency for students for part of the day.

- *Have chunks of non-screen time during live sessions*. A teacher might introduce a new topic, give students time to work on it away from their screens, and then regroup for questions and reflections.
- *Have students listen to audiobooks, podcasts, and recorded read-alouds*. Students can color or relax as they still listen to high-quality resources.
- *Go low-tech hands-on*. Students can spend time reading print books and other texts, writing in physical notebooks, and using manipulatives that are available in their homes (or can be delivered by the school).
- *Have students write the old-fashioned way*. During class presentations, demonstrations, and activities, students can take notes on paper and share them via photos. This breaks up screen time and utilizes the cognitive advantages of handwriting versus keyboarding.

"Teacher Tips: How to Reduce Screen Time When School is Online" by Catherine Gewertz in *Education Week*, October 5, 2020 (Vol. 40, #10, p. 13).

What is homework's purpose in a pandemic?

In this article in *Education Update*, an English teacher says distance learning has highlighted equity issues and has blurred the distinction between in-class and out-of-class activities. These suggestions are offered for making homework purposeful and productive:

- *Setting the table for success* –Teachers at her middle school agreed they should not assign more than 90 minutes of homework a night and should share their instructional calendars so students don't experience a pileup of different teachers' assignments, projects, and tests.
- *Having a worthy purpose for the work students are asked to do* – "If I assign two chapters of reading with some questions, what am I hoping my students get out of it?" asks Torres. Is it mindless tasks, or is it to prepare for substantive discussion in class?
- *Connecting homework to students' world and to unfamiliar cultures* – During a unit on *Romeo and Juliet*, Torres's students interviewed a trusted adult on their views.
- *Giving students voice and choice* – When her class finished *Romeo and Juliet*, students chose how to show their mastery of the play, including through writing, art, and performance.
- *Using students' time well* – "Copious amounts of homework often strip students of time to just be kids. If you believe homework is necessary, be prepared to share your rationale (and respond to student feedback)."

"What Is Homework's Purpose in a Pandemic?" by Christina Torres in *Education Update*, October 2020 (Vol. 62, #10, p. 1, 4).

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Statewide Student Assessment and Data Analytics

Our mission is to produce reliable data and support its use through a system of tools that promotes equity.

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