California Assessment of
Student Performance and Progress

Grades
3 • 4 • 5

Teacher Guide

to the Smarter Balanced Assessments

English Language Arts/Literacy

Acknowledgments

The *Teacher Guide to the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments: English Language Arts/Literacy, Grades Three, Four, and Five* was developed by California Department of Education staff, with support from the California Teachers Association, the California Federation of Teachers, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and WestEd. It was designed and prepared for printing by

Contents

Introduction

The purpose of the Teacher Guide is to deepen teachers' understanding of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, their alignment with the California Common Core State Standards (CA CCSS), and their intended connection to classroom learning. The

information from a wide array of resources and resource sites, including:

- California Common Core State Standards
- *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework* (*ELA/ELD Framework*)
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- Smarter Balanced Test Blueprints
- Smarter Balanced Practice Test Scoring Guides
- Smarter Balanced Communication Tools
- Smarter Balanced Digital Library

The ELA guides are organized by grade span to highlight the changes in expectations as students move through the grade levels. They explain how student skills and knowledge are assessed and reported through collecting and scoring evidence. It also provides examples of the range and types of items that appear on the assessments and the multiple resources that are available to teachers, students, and parents to "de-mystify" the assessments.

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System.

The new Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are different from the previous tests included in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program in several ways including:

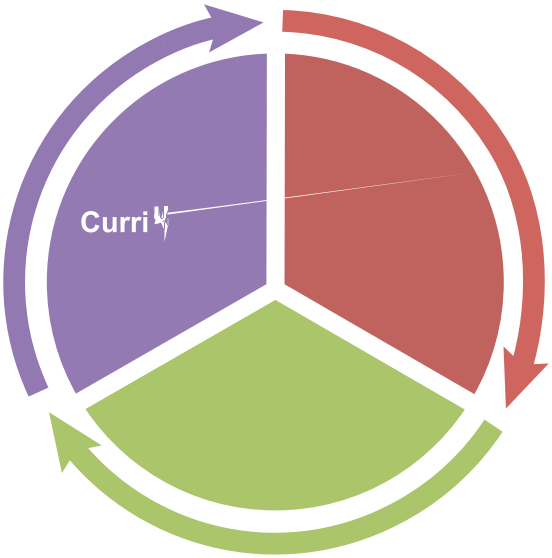
- Designed to measure the expectations embodied in the CA CCSS adopted by the California State Board of Education in August 2010

- Emphasize deeper knowledge of core concepts and ideas within and across the disciplines along with analysis, synthesis, problem solving, communication, and critical thinking
- Include a greater variety of item types
- precise measurement across the full range of achievement
- operation of the assessment system

Section One: Purpose of the Guide—Resource for Planning Learning Events to Implement the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools for Kindergarten through Grade Twelve Public Schools

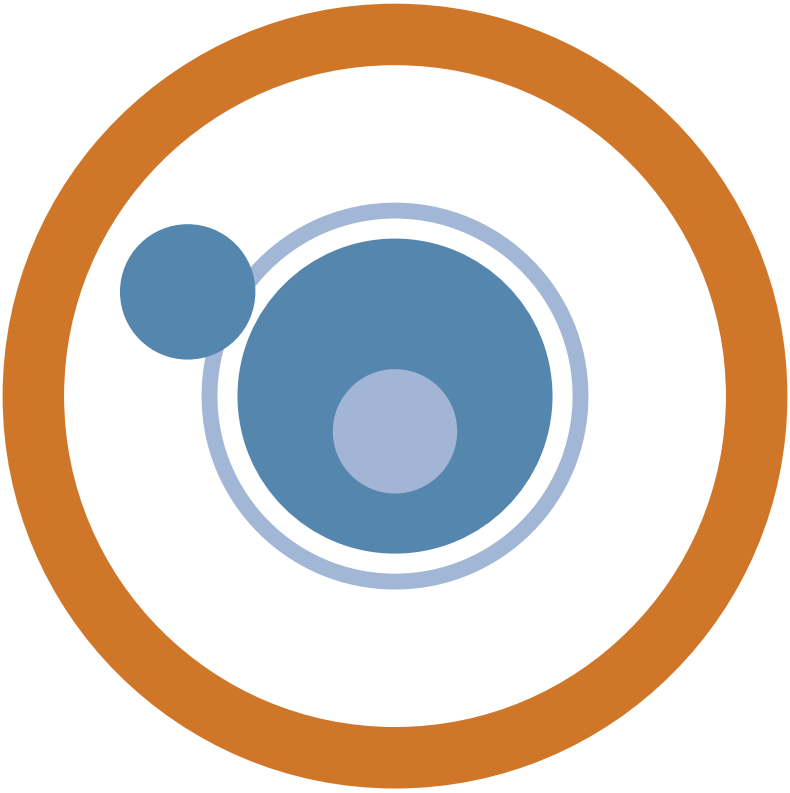
These Teacher Guides are intended to be a resource for classroom teachers as they plan learning activities that fully implement the California *ELA/ELD Framework* using assessment feedback from the Smarter Balanced system of assessments.

Figure 1. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Feedback Loop



English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

Figure 2. Circles of Implementation of ELA and ELD Instruction



and critical reading, writing, and listening are given substantial and explicit attention in every discipline. Among the contributors to meaning making are language, knowledge, motivation, and in the case of reading and writing, the ability to recognize printed words and use the alphabetic code to express ideas.

Language Development

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The Smarter Connection

Smarter Balanced test questions allow students to show that they know the nuances of language. Questions mChat

Content Knowledge

Content knowledge is a powerful contributor to comprehension of text and has a powerful reciprocal relationship with the development of literacy

The Smarter Connection

Informational text resources are source documents in the performance assessment tasks that test the ability of students to read new material and comprehend it. Students use the source documents to evaluate the quality and reliability of the information, and the claims of the authors. Using this information, students respond to a writing assignment that could be narrative, explanatory/ informational, or opinion/ argument. The writing is evaluated using rubrics for organization/purpose, elaboration/evidence, and conventions.

strides in meaning making, language development, effective expression, and content knowledge. At the same time, attention to those themes provides the very reason for learning about the alphabetic code and propels progress in the foundational skills. (See the *Resource Guide to the Foundational Skills of the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* Located on the CDE's Curriculum Frameworks Web page at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/[2] under the Implementation Support tab.

Learning in the 21st Century

Skills for living and learning in the 21st century are inextricably linked with achievement of the ELA and ELD standards. Among these skills are the four "C's" (critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, and collaboration skills), social and cross-cultural skills and global competence, and technology skills.

2 Executive Summary (September 2015), ELA/ELD Framework for California Public Schools, K–12, page 5

Students develop	when they...
Critical thinking	

Section Two: Understanding and Using Smarter Balanced Test Design Principles to Support Classroom Learning Events

This section describes the evidence-centered design of the Smarter Balanced assessments and the hierarchical approach to item development. There are examples of how the test developers and teachers use evidence to accurately assess the learning required by the CA CCSS. Connecting the use of evidence-centered design and classroom learning activities allows a strong connection between Smarter Balanced results and resources.

Understanding the Fundamentals of Smarter Balanced Design

Knowing how the Smarter Balanced assessment system is developed, particularly how items are developed can be helpful in understanding how to make the best use of the assessment resources and results. This knowledge should facilitate increasing the intentional connection between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The diagram and charts on the following pages describe the structure of Smarter

An ELA, grade four example is used here. While it is certainly not necessary to memorize this information, having a working knowledge of item development can facilitate use of

Smarter Balanced assessments in resources listed at the end of this document.

To illustrate the importance of evidence-centered design, Figure 3 displays the relationship among the overall claims, sub-domain assessment claims, assessment targets, and academic standards. This relationship is important, not only in the design and development of Smarter Balanced items, but also in the interpretation and reporting of scores, as well as the development of the achievement level descriptors.

The Smarter Connection

The Smarter Balanced evidence-centered design clearly establishes the relationship among the content domain, assessment claims, assessment targets and academic content standards.

This claim/target/standard relationship is clearly articulated through the steps of the evidence-centered design model that Smarter Balanced

step in the evidence-centered

the assessment claims that will be made about the domains. Claims are arguments derived from evidence about college and career readiness; Smarter Balanced claims are statements about what a student knows and is able to do. In the Smarter Balanced system, there are two kinds of claims: an "overall claim," corresponding to performance on the entire assessment of English language arts/literacy or mathematics, and four

assessments.

After carefully analyzing the CCSS and thinking about what students must know and be able to do in order to be prepared for college and career paths, Smarter Balanced

mathematics that focus on what students are expected to be able to do at each grade level.

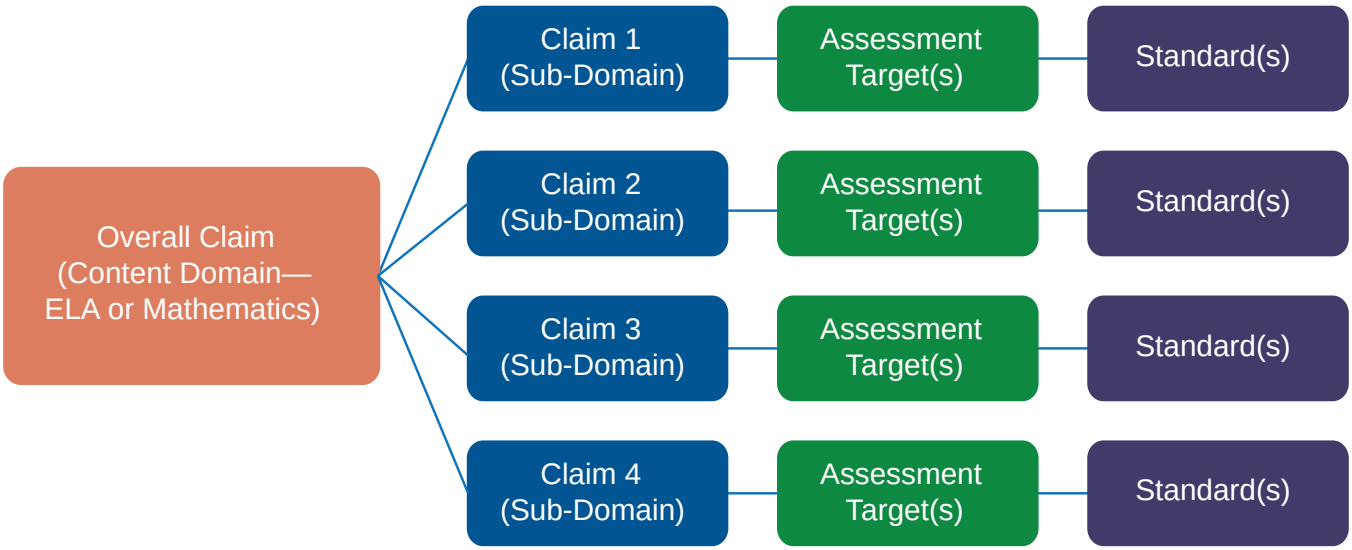
identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that form the content domain. In the Smarter Balanced system, the KSAs that are intended to be measured are called

should be able to demonstrate within the domain. A large number of assessment targets are measured in the Smarter Balanced assessment system.

of information that need to be collected from students to allow meaningful information to be gleaned about the student's achievement of the assessment targets. The information Smarter Balanced elicits from students is considered to be evidence that can support or refute a claim about the student's achievement of the assessment target.

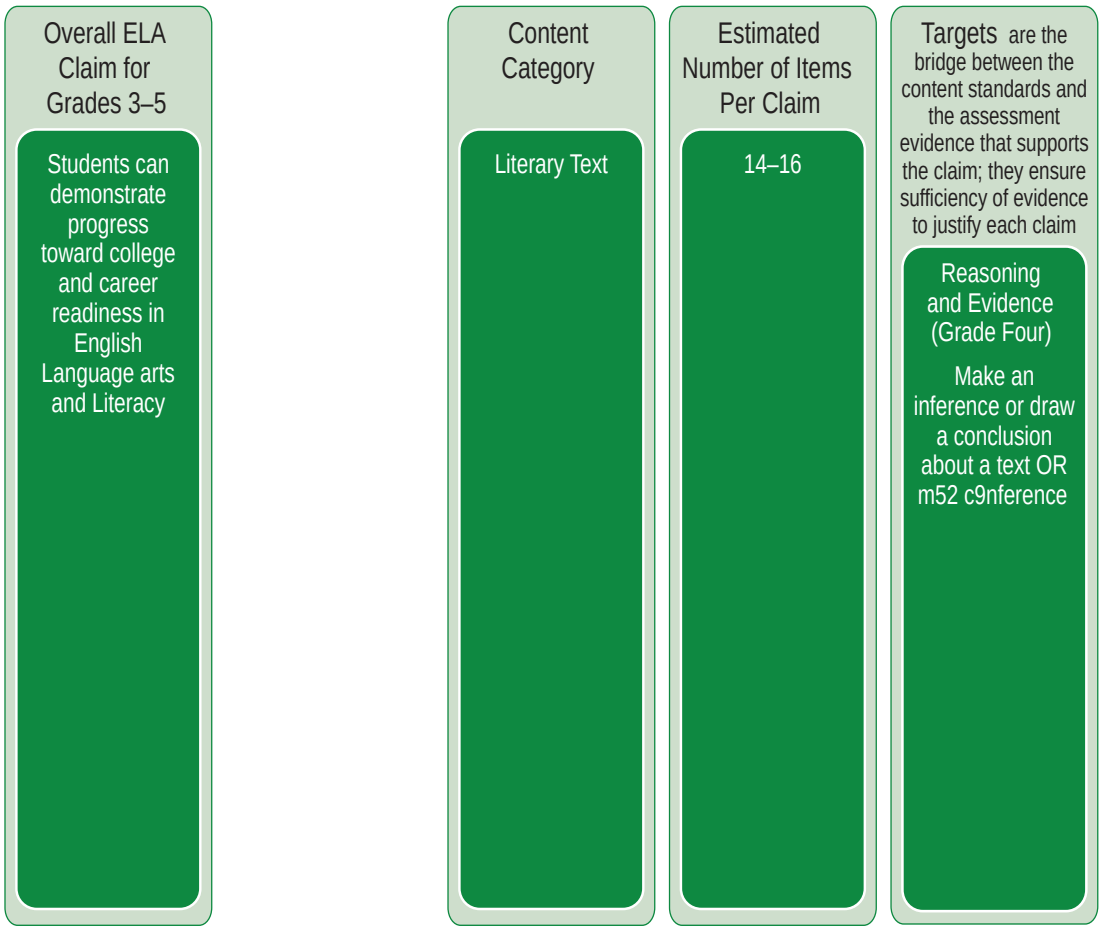
developing items or tasks that will elicit the evidence regarding the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities that is articulated in the standards.

Figure 3. Relationship Among Overall Claims, Sub-Domain Assessment Claims, Assessment Targets and Standards



illustrates how the domain overall claims, sub-domain assessment claims, assessment targets, and standards are connected, both in test development and reporting of scores. Recognizing the hierarchy makes the analysis of Smarter Balanced results easier to understand and emphasizes the importance of using the different levels of scores as contributors to a much larger picture.

Figure 3a. Anatomy of a Test—The Hierarchy of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Example – English Language Arts—Grade Four



a rich resource of information that include the following:

- Intended claim (of what is being measured)
-
- Types of reading passages used
- Types of items allowed
- Types of accommodations allowed
- Depth of knowledge, and
- Statements of evidence required of students

Often teachers want to know, “How good is good enough?” To give guidance to item writers, Smarter Balanced developed Range Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) for each grade, claim, and assessment target. These descriptions of what students should be able to do at each level of performance may guide the development of classroom rubrics and operationalize the expectations from the assessments. An example for Reading Literary Text follows:

Grade 4 Range ALD

Claim 1: Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.

Target 4: **Reasoning & Evidence**—Use supporting evidence to justify/explain their view; theme; author's message).

Level 1. Students should be able to use supporting evidence to minimally justify/explain their own inferences in texts of low complexity.

Level 2. Students should be able to use supporting evidence to partially justify/explain their own inferences in texts of moderate complexity.

Level 3. Students should be able to use supporting evidence to adequately justify/explain their own inferences in texts of moderate to high complexity.

Level 4. Students should be able to use extensive supporting evidence to justify/explain in depth their own inferences in texts of unusually high complexity.

Figure 4. Item Specification Reading Claim 1, Target 4, Reasoning and Evidence

Claim 1: Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.	
Target 4: Reasoning & Evidence—Make an inference or draw a conclusion about a text OR make inferences or draw conclusions in order to compare texts (e.g., characters, setting, events, point of view,	
Clarifications	Items require students to analyze a text (or texts) by making inferences or drawing conclusions about characters, setting, events, point of view, or themes, etc. Additionally, students will apply key evidence from the text(s) to support and explain their inference(s)/conclusion(s).

Stimuli/ Passages	Each text must include explicitly and implicitly stated details that can be used to make inferences and provide conclusions. Refer to *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: English Language Arts & Literacy Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) and Performance Task (PT) Stimulus* 6 S H F L ¿ F D W L R Q located on the Smarter Balanced Development and Design Web page at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/ under the Item on literary text types.
Dual-Text Stimuli	When a dual-text set contains one literary and one informational text, the literary text (text #1) is the primary focus, and the set of items must include items from the literary stimulus as well as items written across both texts. The informational text (text #2) must only be used as a foundational piece for the literary text, and no items can be written for only the informational text. If both texts are literary, items may be written to either or both. All dual-text stimuli sets should contain between 25–40 percent items written across both texts. When developing items from dual-text, Task Model 5 (short text, constructed response [WR]) should be written using the Appropriate Stems for Dual-Text Stimuli only to ensure students will have the opportunity to respond in writing to information from both texts. Between 25–40 percent of all other items written in the dual-text set should be written across both texts. The title of each text should be included in the stem when more than one text is used. Dual-text is considered long text.
Accessibility	Refer to the *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* located on the Smarter Balanced Accessibility and Accommodations Web page at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/accessibility-and-accommodations/

Smarter Balanced Assessment Evidence Statements Describe Learning Expectations

Item and Task Types Collect Evidence in New Ways

The Smarter Connection

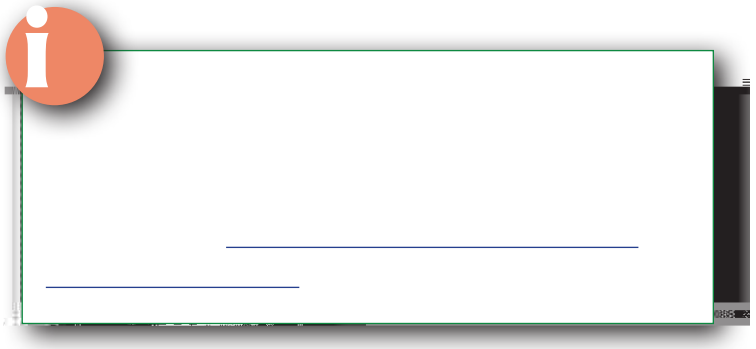
The new Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments elicit greater, more precise evidence of a student's knowledge, reasoning, and understanding.

California's previous state tests relied almost exclusively on multiple-choice questions, which are easy to score, but somewhat limited in their ability to assess higher-order thinking skills.

Item types and tasks include, but are not limited to:

Three major types of supports and accommodations that are available on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are as follows:

- Universal tools, such as highlighting, digital notepads, zooming in/out, embedded



Section Four: Using Smarter Balanced Score Reports to Analyze Data and Improve Learning

The third step in the feedback loop is to analyze the student data trends to evaluate the learning that has occurred by the students. Teachers compare the curriculum intended for learning by students with the curriculum actually learned as evidenced by the results on multiple measures, including the Smarter Balanced assessments. Teachers look at multiple sources of data, including individual results and class data to understand the "big picture" of student learning.

For Smarter Balanced results, each student's score is placed on a continuous scale that is able to show growth from year to year. With class-level data, teachers may identify strengths and gaps of understanding in the content areas which can lead to adjustments in the teaching and learning cycle.

The Smarter Connection

What do the results on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (summative and interim) indicate about student strengths and needs?

The Smarter Balanced assessments are designed to assess student learning at a point in time, using technology to eliminate accessibility barriers and maximize the opportunity for students to show what they know. The computer adaptive software is a critical design

positive evidence of knowledge that leads to an accurate score for each student.

Computer Adaptive Testing: Appropriate Assessment for Each Student

questions on the basis of student responses. For example, a student who answers a question correctly will receive a subsequent question that is more challenging, while an incorrect answer will generate a less challenging question. This approach represents

students receive the same test items, and provides teachers and schools with a more accurate way to evaluate student achievement and measure progress over time.

Practice Tests and Training Tests Available for Teachers, Students, and Parents

Teachers are able to use sample student responses and the Smarter Balanced Practice

For more information, please see the CDE

students within the grade span. Once teachers

standard" and "above standard" responses, they are able to plan learning progressions for students to help them move from "where they are" to "where they need to be" to improve their performance.

Note: It is important that all students gain familiarity with the keyboard and are able to type text of short-to-medium length (for constructed-response items) as well as a full-length essay (for the ELA PT).

Overall Score and Achievement Level—

The tables for Smarter Balanced scale score ranges, which include the scale score ranges for ELA and mathematics by content area, grade level, and achievement level, are posted on the CDE's Smarter Balanced Scale Score Ranges Web page at _____

_____

standards. If groups of students, on average, have not met or nearly met the standards, then teachers may consider the types of learning events, practice, and opportunities available for students to apply those deep understandings.

used in the interpretations of these claim results. It is recommended that other evidence be considered along with the claim level as decisions are made about curriculum and instruction.

Use Group-Level Data to Identify Trends in Curriculum Strengths and Gaps

At the end of the school year it is time to take stock of the successes in student learning. The tight alignment of the Smarter Balanced assessments to the *ELA/ELD Framework* makes the assessment results a valuable resource to begin an inquiry, a thoughtful deliberate discussion about how we can maximize the appropriate use of these results. The questions on page 33 can help guide a discussion of what the results show about student and group performance and the implications for building on student strengths and meeting student needs with curriculum resources.

Assessment Target Reports

Assessment Target Reports are a new resource for administrators and teachers. These reports show the relative performance of groups of student1 0.124sessment theget R

The following chart lists the icons used to show the relative performance of students on the target versus the whole test.

Icon	Target Level	Description
	Better than Performance on the test as a whole	This target is a relative strength. The group of students performed better on items from this target than they did on the rest of the test as a whole.
	Similar to performance on the test as a whole	This target is neither a relative strength nor a relative weakness. The group of students performed about as well on items from this target as they did on the rest of the test as a whole.
	Worse than performance on the test as a whole	This target is a relative weakness. The group of students did not perform as well on items from this target as they did on the rest of the test as a whole.
		Not enough information is available to determine whether this target is a relative strength or weakness.

The Assessment Target Report is generated for groups of students and is not available for individual students. Assessment targets for which there are at least 10 items available in the Smarter Balanced item pool are included on the Assessment Target Report.

These Assessment Target Reports may help validate other evidence of deep understanding collected during classroom instruction. A data-inquiry process using this target group-level data can be helpful at the classroom level, grade level, school level and districtwide to understand the successes and needs of students. Remember that these target results are relative to the total test score; therefore, recognizing the overall achievement level will be important in considering instructional strategies that address strengths or weaknesses.

Section Five: Conclusion—Putting It All Together

As teachers build their understanding of the intent of the standards and the relative quality of the evidence of student understanding, they increase their capacity to make adjustments in daily classroom learning events to help students move forward to meet and exceed expectations.

evidence of student understanding. As teachers interpret this evidence, instruction may be adjusted to optimize learning. Learning is accomplished when students demonstrate and apply the knowledge and skills of the standards. Students take an active role in their learning by using rubrics for self-assessment and peer assessment. Students collaborate with teachers to plan next steps to move up the learning progression and apply what they know to new situations to solve real-world problems.

Using the formative assessment process in conjunction with the Smarter Balanced resources, tools, and results, can maximize the use of assessments and assessment data in the teaching and learning cycle.

Below are additional Smarter Balanced resources that can support and enhance teaching and learning.

Digital Library

- Assessment Literacy Module: Understanding the Formative Assessment Process https://www.smarterbalancedlibrary.org/content/understanding-formative-assessment-process

WestEd Web Site