

## ALTS Perspective on Standardized Testing

Our team at Assessment, Learning and Technology Solutions enables teachers to accomplish exactly what standardized testing doesn't. In fact, we our software empowers every classroom teacher to custom design their own assessments and assign the most points to what is most important and the least points to what is least important, and points to every gradation of importance in between.

We agree that teachers should prepare their lessons carefully considering how students learn. In this way, advances in brain research, neuroscience and cognitive psychology could be applied to enhance and even increase student learning.

We view instruction and assessment as two sides of the same coin that need to be combined to produce learning. Thus, it becomes imperative for assessments to focus on how students learn, how students remember, and how they access information stored in their memories to solve problems and take assessments. Just as advances in brain research, neuroscience and cognitive psychology are important for facilitating learning, they are also important for doing accurate assessment. The assessment industry needs to consider these advances, in order to minimize the deleterious effects of test anxiety and to ensure that students are given every opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.

The ALTS Assessment Management System™ is built around major findings from brain research, neuroscience and cognitive psychology, and empowers teachers to use a variety of item types and multimedia to engage students both during the instruction process and during the assessment process. Furthermore, we provide resources to ensure there is synchronization and harmony among the materials used for instructional activities and those used for assessment activities.

Seventy years ago when the major mode of instruction was “chalk and talk,” it was appropriate to assess students' knowledge using pencil and paper. With the advances in technology, it is now expected that students will learn through computer-based activities as teachers take on the role of facilitators of learning and use technology to customize learning activities to meet the individual needs of their students.

When instruction is tailored to each student, assessment should be similarly customized. In fact, the term tailored testing is over forty years old and thus no longer new. It is, however, not in widespread use universally. The ALTS Assessment Management System empowers teachers to use assessments in the formative assessment “tutorial” mode with immediate feedback after every question. In this way students can benefit from learning from the feedback provided at the end of each question. Students can also have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes when high quality feedback is provided. A straightforward way of providing high quality feedback occurs when students can compare their answers with the one expected by the teacher in order to obtain full credit. Assessments delivered to students in this manner facilitate learning and are, in effect, both an instructional tool and an assessment tool.

We at Assessment Learning and Technology Solutions (ALTS) empower teachers with information, skills, and tools to accurately assess their students' learning and make valid teaching decisions that enhance student learning. When it comes to testing we replace *standardized* with *customized*! Rather than robbing our students of creative thought, our goal is to challenge them to greater heights.