**Research Perspectives on Assessment**

**Black and Wiliam’s Perspective on Formative Assessment**

One of the most frequently cited sources on formative assessment is Black and Wiliam's (1998) meta-analysis published in an article titled "Assessment and Classroom Learning." In this article, Black and Wiliam present a review of 250 articles or chapters about formative assessment published over a nine-year period. The authors maintain that at the heart of effective teaching and increased student achievement is the skillful use of formative assessment. When used well, formative assessment provides students with focused feedback. And focused feedback allows students to improve their understanding of important skills and concepts.

In their study, Black and Wiliam found that students whose teachers were skillful in using formative assessment achieved in approximately six months what would otherwise take a year. Furthermore, these students retained what they had learned. And they exhibited their learning on standardized as well as classroom assessments.

**Marzano’s Perspective on Effective Assessment**

Based on his interpretation of the related research, Robert Marzano (2007) concluded that the frequency of assessments is positively correlated with higher academic achievement and that assessment items tightly aligned with clear learning goals are best. Marzano also found that combining challenging learning goals with effective feedback is critical to school success.

Marzano’s recommended action steps for school improvement include:

1. Implement an assessment system that provides timely (at least once per quarter) feedback on targeted knowledge and skills;
2. Redesign report cards to more fully and accurately represent student learning;
3. Establish a small number of specific, challenging goals for the school as a whole;
4. Establish specific goals for individual students.

**Reeves’ Perspective on Links between Assessment and Achievement**

In 2004, Douglas Reeves documented the success of the “90 90 90” schools (Reeves, 2004). These were schools in which 90 percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, 90 percent were members of ethnic minorities, and 90 percent met or exceeded state academic standards. Now he is documenting “100-100-100” schools in which 100 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, 100 percent are 100 percent are members of ethnic minorities, and 100 percent score proficient or higher not only in state reading tests but also in assessments of math, science, and social studies.

Reeves found that:

* Highly successful schools used performance assessments.
* They brought teachers together to score students’ work collaboratively.
* They typically used a single rubric across all disciplines to score students’ writing. Rubrics provided targeted feedback to students and allowed them to assess their own writing.
* In most of the successful schools, teachers conducted weekly assessments of student progress. Teachers used results from these assessments to help students improve.

**References**

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