

# COURSE SYLLABUS

**Course:** Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading

**Presenters:** Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Dr. Tammy Heflebower

**Hours:** 45

**Required eBook:** *Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* (Robert J. Marzano, Marzano Research Laboratory, 2010)

## Course Overview

For educators to design instruction that advances all their students' achievement, they must be able to design assessments that fully illuminate what their students are learning. To grade their students fairly and productively, educators also need to know how to track student progress through detailed descriptors of the essential skills and knowledge their students must learn. Most educators struggle with these issues, however; grades can be inconsistent from teacher to teacher, department to department, or student to student and teachers cannot always adequately communicate to parents how their children's grades are determined. Marzano Research Lab's expert presenters cofounder and CEO Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Vice President Dr. Tammy Heflebower walk course participants through the research and theories that support what kind of feedback, assessment, and grading students need to help them learn; how to construct those assessments; how to create rubric-based scales to inform both formative and summative assessments; and how to monitor and affect their students' progress. Interviews with teachers and students, classroom footage, workshop activities, presentation, and the accompanying text bring to life this critical subject for educators who aspire to provide the kind of responses and guidance to their students that keep them highly engaged in their learning and making steady progress toward meaningful and purposeful achievement.

## Presenters' Bios

**Dr. Robert J. Marzano** is the cofounder and CEO of Marzano Research Laboratory in Denver, Colorado. Throughout his forty years in the field of education, he has become a speaker, trainer, and author of more than thirty books and 150 articles on topics such as instruction, assessment, writing, and implementing standards, cognition, effective leadership, and school intervention. His books include: *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*, *Making Standards Useful in the Classroom*, *District Leadership That Works: Striking the Right Balance*, *Designing and Teaching Learning Goals and Objectives*, and *On Excellence in Teaching*. His practical translations of the most current research and theory into classroom strategies are internationally known and widely practiced by both teachers and administrators. He received a bachelor's degree from Iona College in New York, a master's degree from Seattle University, and a doctorate from the University of Washington.

**Dr. Tammy Heflebower**, EdD, is vice president of Marzano Research Laboratory. She is a consultant with experience in urban, rural, and suburban districts throughout North America. Dr. Heflebower has served as a classroom teacher, building-level leader, district leader, regional professional development director, and national trainer. She has also been an adjunct professor of curriculum, instruction, and assessment courses at several universities.



## Course Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- The distinctions between formative and summative assessment
- How to employ feedback and formative assessment to facilitate students' learning
- How to develop summative grading systems that are consistent, reliable, and valid

## Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:

- Design multiple assessments that inform instructional design
- Clarify learning goals for their students
- Develop rubrics, or proficiency scales, to guide students' learning
- Track students' progress through research-tested methods
- Assess students for grades with consistent, reliable, and valid methods

### Unit 1: Introduction and Overview of Assessments

In this unit, Solution Tree CEO Dr. Robert J. Marzano and Vice President Dr. Tammy Heflebower introduce the goals of the course, survey the relevant research, and define critical essential vocabulary, including feedback, formative assessment, and learning progressions. They discuss the role of assessment in grading and lay the groundwork for translating theory into practice.

#### Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- How the research should inform teachers' assessment practice
- Key terminology related to assessment and grading
- A range of assessment types and uses

#### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Facilitate criterion- rather than norm-referenced assessments and grading
- Evaluate their current assessment practice and begin to implement changes that advance student achievement
- Distinguish between types and uses of assessments
- Articulate their grading philosophies



## Unit 2: eBook: Introduction

Participants read “Chapter 1: Research and Theory” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format..

## Unit 3: The Anatomy of Formative Assessment and the Need for a New Scale

In this unit, expert presenter Tammy Heflebower argues for the need for a new assessment and grading scale. She describes proficiency scales—i.e., detailed descriptions of learning goals along a continuum—how to develop proficiency scales, and how to use them to be precise about learning goals and to engage students in their use. She also explores how to align activities and assessments from the foundation of proficiency scales. Classroom footage and interviews with teachers practicing the use of such scales further illustrate this unit’s content.

### Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Why we need a new scale
- How and why to develop proficiency scales
- How to use proficiency scales in instruction
- The importance of aligning activities with assessments

### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Develop proficiency scales
- Employ proficiency scales in the classroom
- Align activities with assessments

## Unit 4: eBook: Formative Assessment and Changing Scales

Participants read “Chapter 2: The Anatomy of Formative Assessment” and “Chapter 3: The need for a New Scale” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format.

## Unit 5: Designing Assessments

In this unit, Dr. Heflebower walks participants and her workshop attendees through the process of back-mapping existing assessments to proficiency scales and continues her consideration of how to incorporate scales into instruction. She also details how to design quality assessments, both obtrusive and unobtrusive, and how to generate assessment banks for teachers’ own and their colleagues’ use. As



in the previous unit, classroom footage reveals theory translated into practice.

### **Objectives**

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- What back-mapping is
- How to incorporate proficiency scales into instruction
- What constitutes quality in assessment types
- The uses of an assessment bank

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Back-map existing assessments to proficiency scales
- Incorporate proficiency scales into instruction
- Design quality assessments
- Create an assessment bank

## **Unit 6: eBook: The Craft**

Participants read “Chapter 4: Designing Assessments” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format.

## **Unit 7: Tracking Student Progress**

In this unit, participants study four methods for tracking student progress in order to select the one (or a combination) most conducive to furthering their students’ learning. Classroom footage and interviews detail the process of topic mapping one school has implemented, which has resulted in tangible improvement in student achievement, relationships between colleagues, and relationships between students and their teachers. Dr. Heflebower and her workshop participants also help explore the perspectives of various stakeholders in shifting to a standards-based system.

### **Objectives**

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Four methods for tracking student progress
- How one school has implemented a standards-based system
- The effects of a standards-based system on students and teachers
- Different perspectives on a shift to a standards-based system

### **Student Learning Outcomes**



After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Choose an appropriate method for tracking student progress, one that advances their students' learning
- Begin to implement a standards-based system in their classroom or school

### **Unit 8: Grading and Reporting**

In this unit, Dr. Heflebower, her workshop attendees, and practitioners from several schools help participants consider the complex and controversial issue of grading. Participants will develop answers to why they grade; how they can improve their grading practice to make it more fair, valid, and productive for students; and how to determine summative grades in a standards-based system.

#### **Objectives**

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The key issues around grading
- How to determine fair, valid, and consistent summative scores

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Improve their grading practice to make it fair, valid, consistent, and productive for students (and those invested in their grades)
- Implement a standards-based grading system

### **Unit 9: eBook: Monitoring and Grading Strategies**

Participants read “Chapter 5: Tracking Student Progress” and “Chapter 6: Grading and Reporting” in the *eBook of Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading* and address relevant issues in a reflection question format.

#### **Methods of Instruction**

- Videos (presentations consisting of lecture, interviews, and classroom footage)
- eBook (chapters and exercises from the eBook)
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the video presentations where participants are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations and eBook content)



## Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org).

## Passing Requirements:

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, quizzes, and any midterm and/or final), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

- Quizzes 40% of total grade
- Reflection Questions 60% of total grade

## KDS Self-Assessment Rubric:

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
<b>Quizzes</b>	100% Correct	80% Correct	60% Correct	0-40% Correct
<b>Reflection Questions</b>	Participant provides rich detail from the content of the course in his or her responses Participant makes his or her responses to the questions personally meaningful	Participant includes appropriate content from the course in his or her responses Participant makes thoughtful comments in direct response to the questions	Participant includes some content from the course, usually appropriate, in his or her responses Participant answers the questions directly, not always fully	Participant includes no content from the course in his or her responses Participant does not address the questions posed