Education
Leader

Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT)

PaTTAN
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

Now, more than ever, assessments play an important role in the school improvement process; and, high-quality assessments are essential to understanding the instructional needs of students who are high risk for school failure. Even with clear goals, it is challenging for teachers to design and differentiate instructional lessons to meet the diverse learning needs of today's students. School leaders in both general and special education provide essential supports to classroom instruction by providing all teachers with access to resources that support instruction for all students.

It is necessary for teachers to have ongoing feedback about their teaching effectiveness. Teachers who engage in continual assessment of students' learning will gradually develop an understanding of how students learn from classroom instruction; and, they will begin to perceive direct links between the goals they set, their own teaching, and their students' learning. As a school leader, you are well-positioned to provide the support teachers need in order to attain and maintain consistently high-quality instruction.

Improving Students' Lessons

With the support of school leaders, teachers can improve students' lessons by using the Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT). The CDT is a set of online assessments designed to provide diagnostic information to guide instruction, intervention, and enrichment. It is designed to help teachers identify students' learning strengths and areas in need of improvement. The CDT is fully

The analysis of the CDT assessment helps classroom teachers differentiate instruction, provide timely intervention, and support students in setting appropriate instructional goals.

integrated in the Standards Aligned System (SAS), the Pennsylvania Department of Education's comprehensive approach to supporting student achievement across the commonwealth, and assists educators by providing links to classroom resources (see www.pdesas.org).

CDTs currently available for grades 3 to 12 include:

- Math
  - Math Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
  - Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry
- Literacy
  - Reading Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, Literature
  - Writing Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, Composition
- Science
  - Science Grades 3,4, 5, 6, 7, 8, High School
  - Biology, Chemistry

The CDT reports provide a snapshot of how students are performing in relation to the Pennsylvania Core Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content and the Keystone Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content. The diagnostic reports link to targeted curricular resources and materials, including Voluntary Model

Curriculum (VMC) units and lesson plans found within the SAS system.

The CDT goes beyond focusing only on what students should know and be able to do at a particular grade and course. It also provides a snapshot of how and why students may still be struggling or extending beyond the Eligible Content. The CDT helps to identify and provide suggestions for "next steps" in student academic development.

Conferencing with Students

After each administration of the CDT, one-to-one conferencing is highly recommended to be scheduled with students by their teachers. During these 3 to 5 minute conferences, feedback is provided to students individually. This feedback supports students' understanding of their performance on the CDT and is followed by discussion about their areas of strength and their instructional needs. Students are engaged in a discussion about what they have learned in relation to the goals they set and the instruction that has been most useful to them in making progress toward their goals. This critical step in the CDT assessment cycle supports goal setting and instruction that moves students' learning forward.

Implementing the CDT

School leaders can implement the CDT by:

- Arranging opportunities for professional development for staff

- Promoting shared leadership among general and special educators to encourage the CDT administration as part of the school culture

- Integrating the use of CDT in Individualized Education Program (IEP) development

- Providing resources to IEP teams that support the mastery of grade-level standards

- Developing a schedule for administering the CDT

- Monitoring the administrations of the CDT and providing immediate access to reports

- Observing the process through walk-throughs to see the impact on instruction/one-to-one conferencing

- Observing and participating in data team meetings as an indicator of the educators' use of the CDT cycle

- Providing opportunities for educators to reflect, collaborate and match instruction to student needs

- Designing professional development within the Induction Plan for mentoring of new educators

The graphic on page 5 describes the process of administering the CDT. Within this assessment framework, students receive timely assessment that is used to inform classroom instruction.

The analysis of the CDT assessment helps classroom teachers differentiate instruction, provide timely intervention, and support students in setting appropriate instructional goals.

Supporting the IEP Process

Standards aligned IEPs connect a student's learning to grade level Pennsylvania standards and evaluate a student's progress through the lens of the general education curriculum, standards, assessment anchors, and curriculum frameworks. The CDT is based on Pennsylvania Academic Standards and assesses the Eligible Content in those standards. The CDT is aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards and Keystone Exam Eligible Content and is fully aligned to the Standards Aligned System (SAS).* The CDT supports the IEP process by assessing a student's areas of strength and instructional need, as well as a student's readiness for grade-level instruction.

The CDT contains questions that assess Eligible Content from grades K through high school and may provide information about foundational skills aligned to the course that is being assessed.
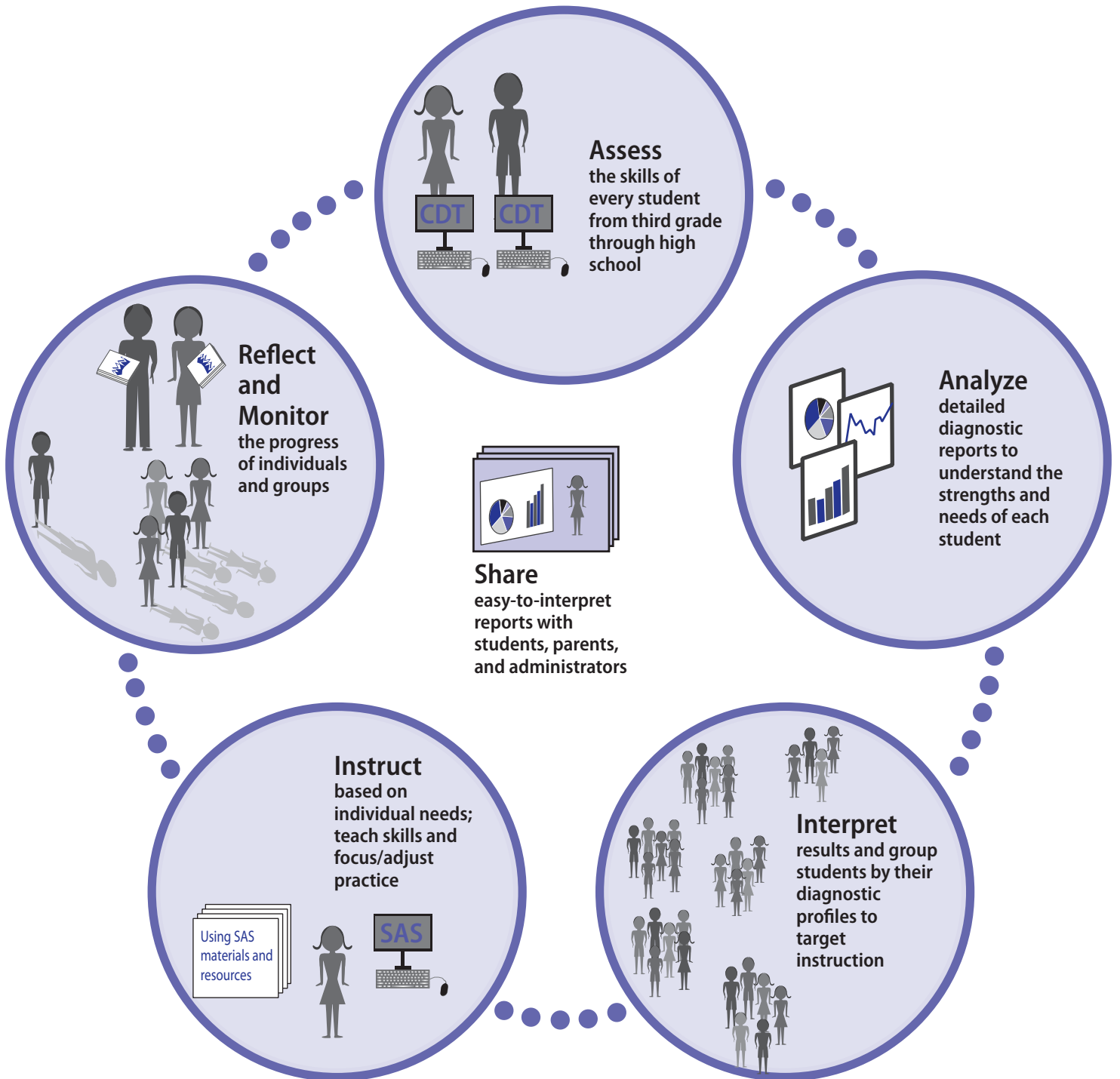
IEP teams can use the information from the CDT to identify areas of instructional need. They can then use this information to create goals that address areas of instructional need that may be below grade level while simultaneously targeting grade-level content within the IEP. While the CDT is not a curriculum based measurement tool, it can be a valuable tool for monitoring student progress relative to standards and learning progressions. As with the PSSA, appropriate accommodations are permitted and are based on decisions made by the student's teacher(s) or IEP team.

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*The CDT is fully integrated within SAS and is located under Assessments on the SAS website www.pdesas.org

The CDT Assessment Cycle
The Teaching and Learning Process Never Ends

Assess
the skills of every student from third grade through high school

Analyze
detailed diagnostic reports to understand the strengths and needs of each student

Interpret
results and group students by their diagnostic profiles to target instruction

Instruct
based on individual needs; teach skills and focus/adjust practice

Using SAS materials and resources

SAS

Share
easy-to-interpret reports with students, parents, and administrators

Reflect and Monitor
the progress of individuals and groups

CDT

CDT

Benefitting Students

The CDT benefits students by:

- Providing students with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills

- Providing specific and timely feedback designed to support student learning

- Building efficacy by bringing students into the process of their own learning

- Promoting goal setting by involving students in the process of learning and monitoring their own progress

- Promoting partnering with educators (e.g., one-to-one conferencing)

- Ensuring that instruction is meaningful and aligns with student learning expectations and needs

Benefitting Educators

The CDT benefits educators by:

- Promoting collaboration among educators, students, parents/guardians, and others

- Providing immediate access to diagnostic reports about student strengths and areas of need

- Promoting understanding of student strengths and areas of need throughout the year

- Promoting partnering with students (e.g., one-to-one conferencing)

- Allowing monitoring of student achievement to guide ongoing planning and instruction

- Guiding individual as well as flexible grouping of students to target instruction

- Providing immediate access to SAS resources to support whole group, small group, and individual instruction

- Providing opportunities to analyze, interpret, and reflect on student results in order to match instruction to student strengths and needs.

- Supporting the four domains of Danielson's Framework for Teaching

Benefitting Parents

The CDT benefits parents by:

- Promoting collaboration and enhancing the partnership among the student, educator(s), and parents/guardians

- Promoting conversation and understanding regarding student strengths and areas of need throughout the year

- Providing the opportunity to view and understand the student's achievement in a visual representation

- Providing access to information linked to SAS resources to support the student's learning at home

Benefitting Administrators

The CDT benefits administrators by:

- Defining an assessment resource for teachers to provide diagnostic information in order to guide instruction and provide support to students and educators

- Promoting shared leadership to encourage the CDT administration as part of the school culture

- Informing the design of future professional development for all faculty and within the Induction Plan for mentoring of new educators

- Accessing, analyzing, and interpreting student reports

- Supporting the four domains of Danielson's Framework for Teaching

- Supporting the four domains of Principal Effectiveness

The CDT provides information that will help guide instruction by providing support to students and teachers. The type of information that the CDT provides is typically not identified through other types of assessments. Therefore, as a school leader, you should make sure that teachers are aware of and have access to this important resource.

The CDT is located on the eDirect website https://pa.drcedirect.com/

For more information or questions regarding the CDT, please contact pacustomerservice@ datarecognitioncorp.com

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tom Wolf
Governor

PaTTAN
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