



May 2019

What Makes NGSS Assessments Different? Our Top Takeaways

Have you wondered why some plants can grow in a darker environment and others can't? Why antibiotics don't work like they used to? Why we use salt to keep roads from getting icy in the winter?

If students are given the opportunity to learn science, they should be able to answer these kinds of questions, not just rattle off the definition of photosynthesis or describe Darwin's work with finches. This shift--from learning about and restating to engaging in sense-making to figure something out--is the hallmark of new science assessments. So what should we be looking for in student tasks that can help ENSURE that we're measuring what is most important about student learning?

Here are our top takeaways:

1. Tasks must ask students to make sense of a phenomenon or address a problem.
2. Tasks must actually require students to use grade-appropriate parts of each of the dimensions, together, as they sense-make.
3. It's not enough for tasks to just be unbiased--they also have to give students multiple access points, multiple ways to show what they know, and opportunities to make their own ideas an important part of completing any task.
4. Learning contexts and the ways student responses are going to be used matters--and different approaches to assessments can help make sure that any given task is actually designed to support its intended purpose.

When experts were evaluating and annotating tasks, we

collaboratively developed the [Task Screener](#) to help guide anyone looking at three-dimensional tasks through the set of criteria and indicators we want to see in tasks we're giving students. We also identified some [non-negotiable features of new science assessments](#) and developed some [models for assessing sense-making with the three dimensions](#) based on what we saw in tasks.

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From the Data Quality Campaign: Show Me the Data 2019

State report cards should provide parents and the public with meaningful information about students and schools. But when this resource is



missing data, hard to find, or difficult to understand, families and communities are left in the dark. For a third year, DQC [examined report cards](#) from all 50 states and the District of Columbia to see how well state leaders are using their most public-facing resource to empower the public with quality information.

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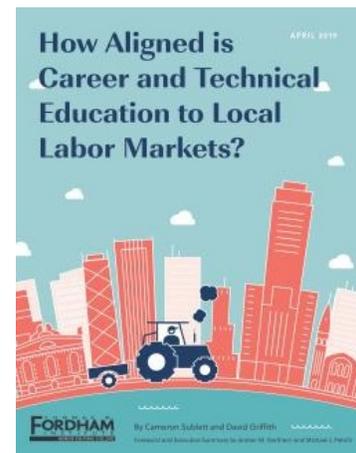
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From the Fordham Institute: How Aligned is Career and Technical Education to Local Labor Markets?

A [new report](#) from the Fordham Institute examines whether students in high school CTE programs are more likely to take courses in high-demand and/or high-wage industries, both nationally and locally. The study links CTE course-taking data from the High School Longitudinal Survey to employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and finds that overall, many fields that support a significant number of U.S. jobs see little CTE course-taking in high school, suggesting the potential for greater alignment in these areas. Students



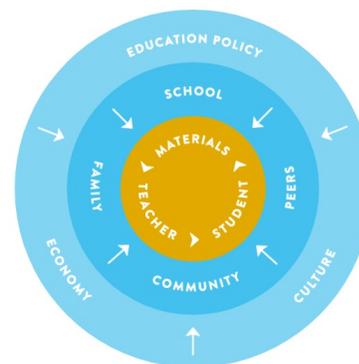
are also more likely to take courses in fields that support more local jobs, but less likely to do so when those jobs are high-paying, suggesting that today's CTE is

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From EdReports: Why Materials Matter

A new [interactive feature](#) from EdReports explores the research that demonstrates why high-quality instructional materials are so important for student success. Research shows that students learn primarily through their interactions with teachers and content. This instructional core is the foundation for ensuring all kids are college and career ready and have the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in school and beyond. Visit the [EdReports website](#) to learn more about why materials matter so much.



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What We Read in April

- From the Aspen Institute: [No Longer Forgotten: The Triumphs and Struggles of Rural Education in America](#)
- From the Data Quality Campaign: [To Meet Education and Workforce Goals, States Must Equip Every Classroom with a Data-Literate Teacher](#)
- From Education Next: [Social-Emotional Learning: What It Is, What It Isn't, And What We Know](#)
- From Education Week: [Mismatch Seen Between New Science Tests and State Requirements](#)
- From Getting Smart: [What if the Future of Work Starts with High School](#)
- From NGSS Now: [April 2019 NGSS Now Newsletter](#)
- From The 74: [Social-Emotional Learning Is Vital - but Needs to Be Measured Correctly and Can't Usurp Academics, Panelists Say](#)



Let's Partner

Is your district or state looking for support in the design, selection, and implementation of science tasks for instruction and assessment?

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All students should graduate from high school

ready for college, careers, and citizenship.

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