Wyoming City Schools

Empowering Teachers to Differentiate Instruction Using Formative Assessment

MC SUCCESS STORIES
A high-performing district is committed to empowering teachers to differentiate instruction using the formative assessment process, but they needed user-friendly resources to support it.

Wyoming City Schools selected MasteryConnect to support key components of their approach. Read how it helped them:

- meaningfully implement the classroom formative assessment process in real time
- formatively track individual progress for student IEPs
- effectively collaborate around formative assessment data
- communicate actionable data with parents

AN INTERVIEW WITH

- DR. SUE LANG  
  DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

- JASON KNEPP  
  FIRST GRADE TEACHER

- ANDREA BRUNSMAN  
  FIFTH GRADE INTERVENTION SPECIALIST

- KATHY DEMERS  
  ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Wyoming City Schools, a high-performing public district in Wyoming, Ohio, is often ranked among the top public school districts in the country. Educators there are committed to providing all students the opportunity to reach their full potential. The district believes that teachers are fundamental to achieving this vision and classroom formative assessment can empower them to improve instruction and differentiation for students at all levels.

“Trending tests are fine as an overview of student progress,” explains District Superintendent Dr. Sue Lang. “But classroom formative assessment is what drives the day-to-day instruction that moves students forward in their learning.”

After three years of looking for a manageable solution, Wyoming City Schools turned to MasteryConnect.

**Wyoming City Schools**

*Location:* Wyoming, OH  
*Schools:* 5  
*Students:* 1939  
*High-Tech Environment:*
“Our teachers use data to inform teaching and learning, but in a high-performing district it’s sometimes difficult to effectively differentiate instruction,” says Lang. “MasteryConnect empowers teachers to create their own assessments and to honor and improve on these assessments as a means of fine-tuning instruction.”

“Classroom formative assessment is what drives the day-to-day instruction that moves students forward.”
—DR. SUE LANG

THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On a normal day in Jason Knepp’s first grade classroom, his students take a quick pre-assessment in order to identify student levels of understanding. Those who understand the day’s concept then move to self-guided enrichment, while students who are near mastery or need remediation move into targeted instruction.

“I work to create an environment where every child can learn every day,” explains Knepp. “MasteryConnect saves time normally devoted to grading and provides immediate data I can use to adjust my instruction in the moment my students need it.”

Part of what makes the process successful for Knepp is giving daily quick checks for understanding that include mixed item types. One question is always open-answer to provide information about students’ thinking processes.
“I conference with every student every day using quick formative checks I deliver through MasteryConnect,” says Knepp. “When students have completed the multiple-choice portion of the quick check, they come to me so I can check their rubric-scored question, provide instant feedback, and enter their data into MasteryConnect.”

Knepp teaches first grade math and science in a departmentalized model, so he has two classes every day. Using the MasteryConnect Tracker Comparison report, he’s able to compare his two classes’ levels of understanding.

“I have one class that is more mathematically inclined than the other,” explains Knepp. “I use the data from MasteryConnect to adjust my instruction accordingly, and I’m beginning to see the gap close between the two, even as both classes are increasing overall.” A narrower gap not only benefits the students; it benefits Knepp by reducing the amount of planning time needed to differentiate instruction.

Andrea Brunsman is a veteran fifth grade intervention specialist who has worked with students in special education for twenty years. Throughout this time, the state has required her to collect data. But the mandated data was difficult to analyze in order to effectively adjust instruction.

“\textit{I work to create an environment where every child can learn every day.}”

—JASON KNEPP

**TRACKING MASTERY FOR IEPs**
“In the past it was difficult to analyze rubric-based data,” explains Brunsman. “MasteryConnect not only makes it easy to record the data, it also provides transparent and actionable reports I can use to identify my students’ mastery of goals and objectives and adjust instruction based on that data.”

Brunsman uses MasteryConnect as a way to track her students’ individual education plans (IEPs). Using MasteryConnect Curriculum Maps, she creates an individual map with custom standards for each student. From there she generates an individualized Mastery Tracker, where she tracks the mastery of individual goals and objectives, including academic and behavioral goals that require rubrics. “Some of my students have individualized behavior plans,” says Brunsman. “I can easily track these plans using a rubric and the Performance Grader in MasteryConnect.”

“MasteryConnect provides transparent and actionable reports I can use to identify my students’ mastery and adjust instruction.”

—ANDREA BRUNSMAN

Educators at Wyoming City Schools work together to take their instruction to the next level. Vermont Elementary, one of Wyoming City Schools’ three primary schools, is the only elementary with a departmentalized first-grade team, but that doesn’t stop Knepp from collaborating with his colleagues.

“My first-grade colleagues from other primary schools and I deliver common formative assessments through MasteryConnect and look at the data together,” explains Knepp. “When our students score at different levels we can reach across buildings virtually to share best practices and build our professional practice.”
Knepp also collaborates with his team teacher at his school. Although they are departmentalized, there are times when Knepp teaches interdisciplinary units, combining social studies and language arts, for example. Knepp collaborates on his colleague’s tracker, where he can enter language arts assessments that are part of his unit, so the team can track student progress across disciplines.

Brunsman and general education teachers collaborate on trackers in order to better support each individual student’s learning goals. “The general education teachers share data to ensure each child’s needs are being met,” explains Brunsman. “If a student is having trouble with a specific concept in math, for example, I can look at the Item Analysis Report from a recent assessment in my colleague’s tracker to identify and correct misconceptions that may be keeping the student from gaining mastery of that concept.”

Teachers use the Teacher Reports in MasteryConnect regularly to identify students’ levels of understanding and adjust instruction accordingly, but this transparency of data also empowers parents.

Kathy Demers, Assistant Superintendent, explains: “Wyoming City Schools currently uses traditional report cards, but some teachers also use MasteryConnect Progress Reports to initiate conversations with parents.”

**Transparency of data empowers parents.**

Knepp is one teacher who has experienced positive responses from parents. “When sharing a student’s progress report with his or her parents, parents immediately see the value,” says Knepp. “Conversations evolve from ‘what is my child getting?’ to ‘how can I help my child with a particular concept?’”
Wyoming City Schools began implementing MasteryConnect in 2015-2016 as a support for its vision of empowering teachers to refine the formative assessment process as part of the district’s overall approach to assessment. Teachers are already seeing success in their own instructional approaches and in their students’ learning.

“Our vision of what every teacher is able to do in their classrooms is being realized,” explains Dr. Lang. “Teachers are adjusting instruction based on student needs and collaborating with each other to recognize improved ways of tracking students’ progress.”

“*Teachers are adjusting instruction based on student needs and collaborating with each other to recognize improved ways of tracking students’ progress.*”

—DR. SUE LANG

GET MORE INFO

Learn more about how MasteryConnect can help you with standards-based grading, data-driven instruction, formative assessment, and teacher collaboration.

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MasteryConnect provides formative assessment and competency-based learning solutions to educators around the world. MasteryConnect combines professional development with its web and mobile platforms, including Socrative, to help teachers identify student levels of understanding in real time, target students for intervention, and use assessment data to inform instruction. We now serve over 3 million teachers and 21 million students in more than 85% of U.S. districts and 170 countries.

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