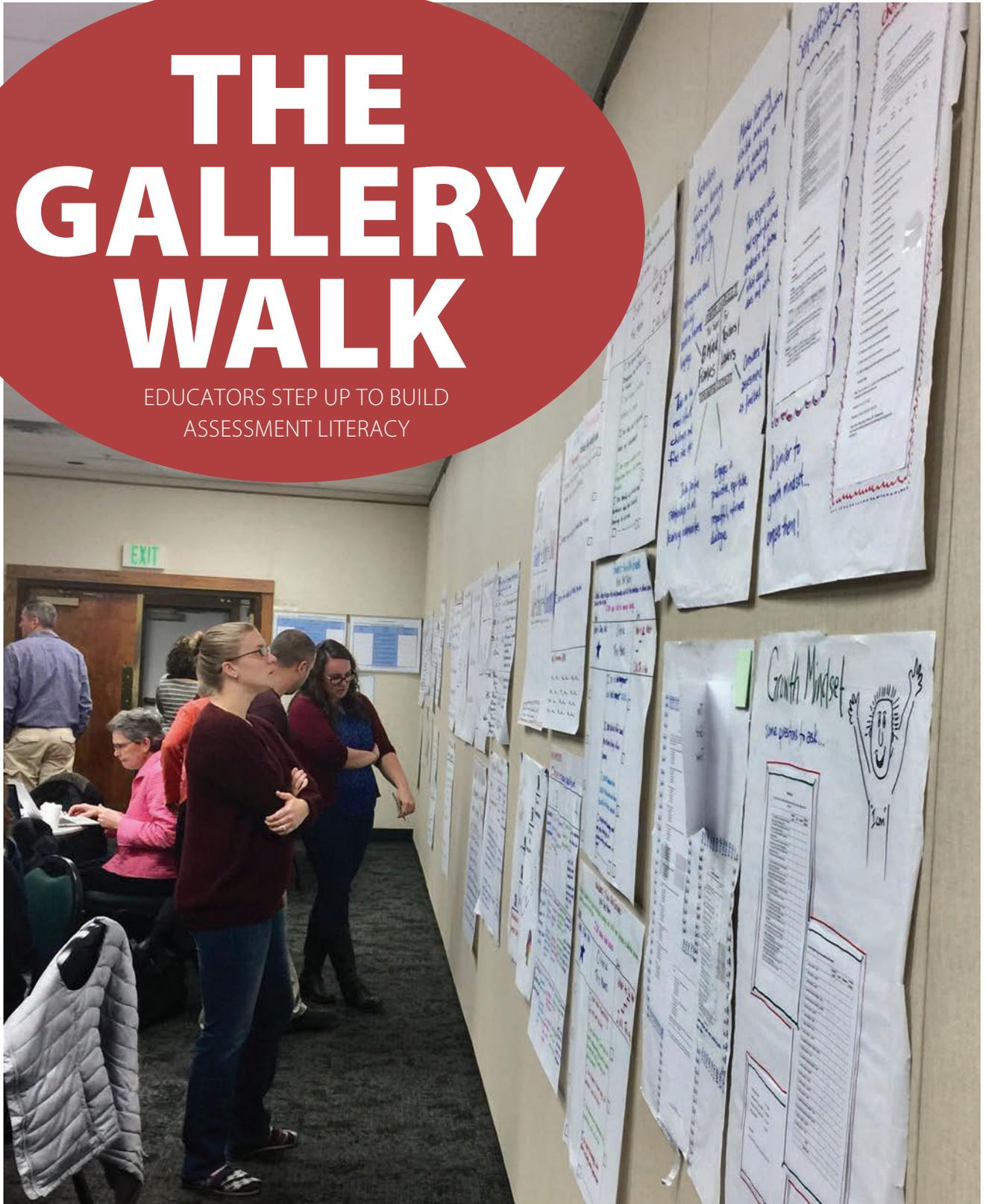


THE GALLERY WALK

EDUCATORS STEP UP TO BUILD ASSESSMENT LITERACY



Photos by ANDREA JARVIS

Amy Robinson, foreground, an elementary teacher from Elm Street School in Mechanic Falls, Maine, joins other participants experiencing the gallery walk during an assessment literacy event sponsored by the Penobscot River Education Partnership in Brewer, Maine. Some of the participants engage in dialogue with colleagues at the gallery, while others have gravitated to tables to complete prompts electronically.



Teams reflect on the gallery walk experience and plan next steps. Teams of teachers and administrators from 19 districts as well as a team from the University of Maine attended the two-year event series.

BY ANITA STEWART McCAFFERTY AND JEFFREY BEAUDRY

If you were given a two-hour time block for professional development on a Friday afternoon just before the school district is to go on a week-long vacation, what kind of professional learning would you offer to maintain adult learners' interest and meet their learning needs? Your audience includes 175 K-12 teachers and administrators from a school district in Maine, and your topic is assessment literacy. How would you make the best of a challenging situation?

We chose an interactive immersion *gallery walk* to present information about foundational classroom assessment literacy concepts and skills. A gallery walk is a discussion technique that gets learners out of their seats

and invites them to become active participants in the learning process. We added new strategies to engage small and large groups of adult learners and their mobile technology.

The gallery consists of images, graphics, and text on posters of various sizes with embedded hot links, QR codes, and stations for hands-on activities. Participants move through the gallery to interact with, reflect on, and discuss ideas with peers. Participants are encouraged to bring their electronic mobile devices so they can take photos of posters that resonate with them, access QR codes for more information, tweet about something they're learning or thinking about, or access an established Google Drive for more templates, samples, and exemplars.

In addition, the gallery is arranged in stations or sections that are clearly delineated. In this case, the various sections focused on strategies of assessment *for* learning and the keys to quality classroom assessment.

OUR APPROACH

The gallery's core message is that sound classroom assessment literacy is at the heart of learning. To help students fulfill their learning potentials, educators need strong skill sets in assessment *for* learning strategies. These strategies include establishing clear learning targets; providing descriptive feedback; helping students self-assess, set goals, reflect, and track their learning; using learner-friendly rubrics; and so on.

IDEAS

Sound skills in classroom assessment *for* and *of* learning are a prerequisite for effective standards-based education; for assessing student growth (for example, using student learning outcomes and student learning objectives) as part of teacher and principal evaluation; and for meaningful implementation of curriculum.

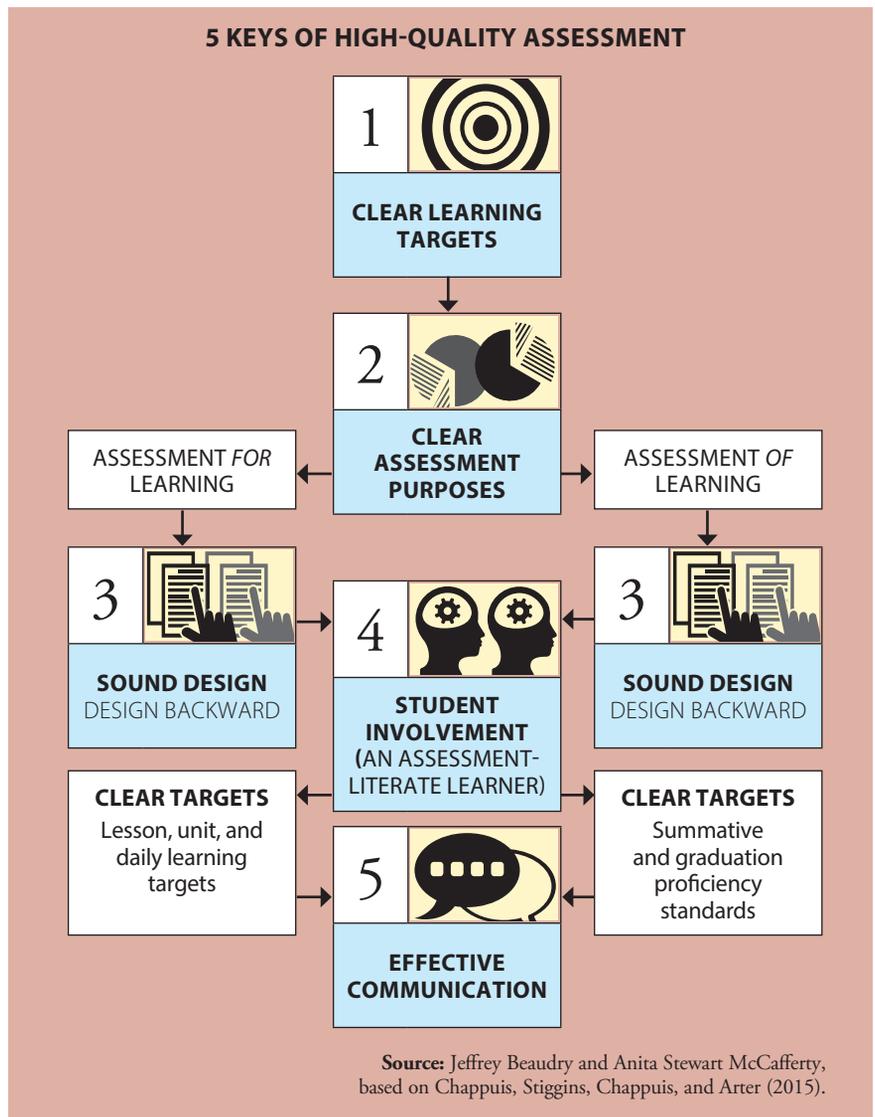
Our approach familiarizes participants with five keys of high-quality assessment (Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, & Arter, 2012), as well as seven strategies of assessment *for* learning (Chappuis, 2015). Consequently, we have called the approach 5 + 7 High-Impact Strategies = Assessment Literacy.

The five keys (at right) include:

1. Clear learning targets;
2. Clear assessment purposes;
3. Sound design;
4. Student involvement (an assessment-literate learner); and
5. Effective communication.

The seven strategies of assessment for learning (p. 51) center on three guiding questions:

- **Where am I going?**
 1. Clear learning targets (teacher clarity).
 2. Models of strong and weak work with rubrics (success criteria and examples).
- **Where am I now?**
 3. Timely, descriptive feedback that directly affects learning.
 4. Student self-assessment and goal setting.
- **How do I close the gap? What are my strategies to get there?**
 5. Teachers use evidence of student learning to determine next steps.
 6. Focused practice and revision.
 7. Student self-reflection,



tracking, and sharing learning and progress with others (for example, with peers).

In addition, Hattie (2009, 2012) underscores the role of high-impact strategies for teaching, learning, and assessment. The relative impacts he assigns to the various strategies are represented by effect sizes (ES =) that we have laid over the assessment framework (p. 51) and have clearly marked on posters and accompanying electronic resources.

We ask participants to consider two essential assessment literacy questions

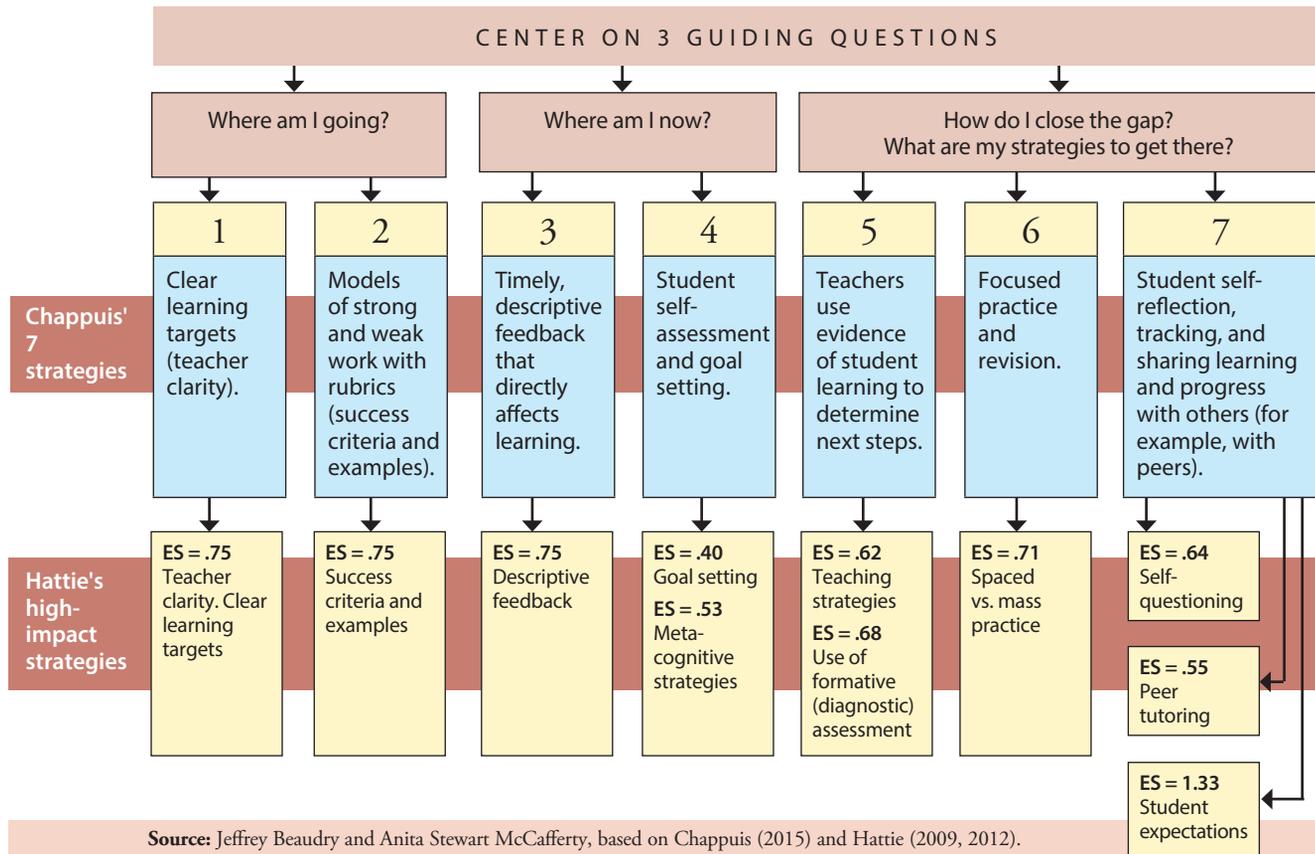
during the gallery experience:

1. How can you apply new strategies using the five keys of high-quality assessment?
2. How can you apply the seven strategies of assessment for learning to your teaching practice?

A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STRATEGY

The 5+7 gallery consists of more than 80 posters with accompanying interactive learning stations and spaces. For example, the effective descriptive feedback portion of the gallery features a table on which various items are

7 STRATEGIES OF ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING



displayed, such as pliers, a paintbrush, a squishy ball, ribbon, chopsticks, a key, a paperclip, a puzzle, a flashlight, and duct tape. Participants are asked to select one item that represents the way they like to receive professional feedback and then talk with colleagues about those items and about what they represent symbolically to them. This is a fun way to engage educators in thinking about receiving and giving feedback. Table prompts help guide the conversation.

In the self-assessment, goal setting, and reflection portions of the gallery, participants use sticky notes to self-assess their understanding and application of the assessment for learning strategies, as well as indicate — and commit to — a strategy to explore more deeply. Then they apply the strategies and tools to their own contexts through “now you try” icons

that provide them with hard copy and electronic templates and exemplars.

Participants travel through the gallery with sticky notes, which they use to jot down their thoughts on what they’re learning and observing. They then place the notes on various posters for others to consider. Participants also carry a gallery passport, which includes the following reflection prompts for each of the seven strategies and five keys: *A question I have... I noticed... One thing I would like to try.*

The gallery passport and sticky notes are formal tools to encourage participants to slow down, take notes, reflect on their learning, and plan action steps. For example, some participants realize they do very little to teach students to self-assess their progress in meeting complex standards. Consequently, they will often create a goal for clarifying the next steps they

need to take to teach and practice self-assessment and goal setting with their students.

Additional stations include a book and article station for those who prefer to read more about particular classroom assessment concepts or strategies and a listening/viewing station that includes video clips specifically created for this professional learning purpose that further explain 5+7 ideas.

Another component of the interactive gallery walk is a feature we call pop-up sessions, an opportunity for participants to engage with presenters in minilessons around specific strategies or tools, such as the next steps rubrics or concept mapping. The presenters, as well as other teacher or administrator leaders, volunteer to present these sessions. Pop-up sessions generally last 10-15 minutes. Participants sign up for offerings and add suggestions for topics.

IDEAS

The pop-up sessions occur during the gallery walk and provide direct instruction for those who prefer that learning style.

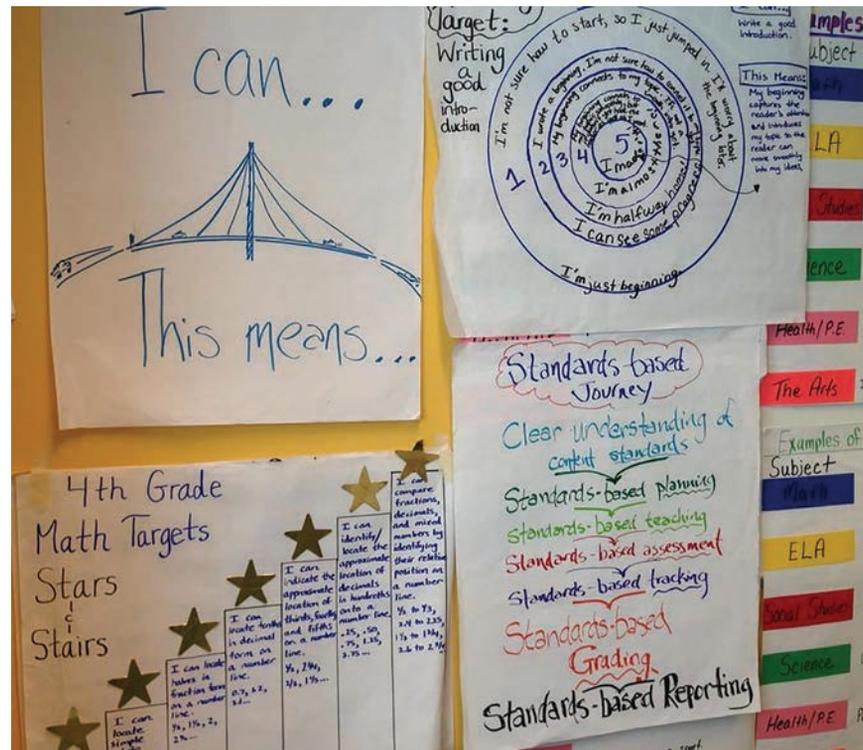
To aid learners during and after the interactive gallery experience, we provide a host of resources, including a 5+7 Google Drive with subfolders of supplemental materials. Using VoiceThread, we created a virtual gallery experience by photographing the gallery and adding narration, comments, and video clips. We invite gallery participants to use the virtual gallery to revisit their experience, extend the dialogue, and refresh their learning over time. We also use Twitter and hashtags specific to the content or context to share the experience with participants' personal learning networks and to extend the conversation over time and beyond physical boundaries.

In designing this kind of professional development, we chose movement over sitting, sharing with colleagues over listening to experts, imagery over words, and short written reflections over no reflection. Our aim is to demonstrate a differentiated approach to professional learning that places the educator in an active role, while providing human and material resources to facilitate each learner as he or she takes the next step in learning more about classroom assessment (or the specific topic of the gallery experience). Educators deserve to engage in professional learning that models effective learning strategies in a "do as I do" manner, not a "do as I say" manner.

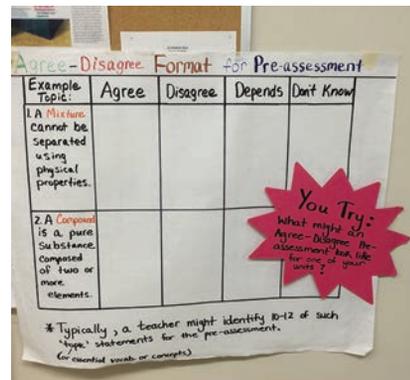
WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAD TO SAY

One of the challenges of professional development is to expose participants to complex concepts and models in an engaging and efficient way. We seek to balance the complexity of conceptual frameworks with the need to learn in digestible chunks.

Over the past two years, we have



Above, part of the gallery focused on teacher clarity/clear learning targets.



Left, an example of the interactive prompts (e.g. "You Try") found throughout the gallery walk.

used this strategy repeatedly for varied professional learning opportunities and in graduate courses. We have offered it for K-12 professional development days, early release workshops, summer institutes, summits, conferences, and regional partnership leader sessions. We have used it with graduate students, STEM educators, arts educators, administrators, and teacher leaders.

We have created gallery walks for 20 participants as well as for a few hundred, with the walks ranging from 45 minutes to 2½ hours. In all cases, participants have reported an increased understanding of assessment literacy

concepts and overall satisfaction with the professional learning opportunity.

We use a series of closed and open-ended questions to gauge the effectiveness of the gallery walk. We ask participants to respond to five writing prompts on an exit ticket. The open-ended writing stems include the following: *I used to think... Now I think... One thing I will try... What I liked best about the gallery... One thing to improve about the gallery...* We carefully analyze the data and refine and improve each subsequent gallery experience.

Some participants have noted that the sheer size of the gallery can be overwhelming. As a result, we have created smaller, more concise galleries when introducing a complex topic for the first time. Other feedback has led us to more carefully label posters and

organize them into strategy clusters. We created posters with condensed information, which now serve as markers for each strategy.

For example, the poster for the strategy of descriptive feedback is an information-rich display. Other posters in that same cluster list effect sizes and design steps for that strategy. The goal is to find a balance between information scarcity and overload. Using the same visual icon on handouts, electronic resources, and posters about the same concept is another organizing feature we have added to the gallery.

ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EXPERIENCE

Let's revisit the Maine school district we mentioned at the beginning of this article. From the start, district leaders announced that assessment literacy would be a major professional development theme. All teachers and administrators in the district viewed the interactive gallery.

Based on a follow-up survey of teachers to determine interest in future professional development, we scheduled a three-part series and two summer professional development days on assessment literacy for 35 teachers who volunteered for the offering. We found that teachers readily identified with and incorporated two of the assessment for learning strategies: clear learning targets and self-assessment and goal setting.

Teachers used the models in the gallery walk to create their own versions of stars and stairs (the star indicating what the student is doing well and the stair indicating the steps the student needs to take to improve) and of our new assessment tool, the next steps rubric. School district leadership, including the superintendent, attended many of these events, marking a visible commitment to the focus on assessment literacy.

Although we provided the initial

professional development experiences, teachers became leaders as they designed workshops to share with other teachers in district, regional, and statewide events. In the year following the initial gallery walk, the school district engaged a core group of teachers as "assessment pioneers."

Eight teachers, a high school administrator, and the curriculum coordinator met with us to delve deeper into the application of assessment strategies in their classrooms and hone their assessment leadership skills. The "pioneers" then were tasked with educating others in their departments and schools about what they learned. They took advantage of professional learning community time, as well as faculty early release time, monthly meetings, and professional development days to accomplish the task.

Interestingly, our assessment gallery has become well traveled in Maine. Each group of teachers that has engaged in the immersive experience tries various strategies and tools in the classroom and then creates a gallery item to add to the experience for others.

For instance, teachers might work collaboratively on creating a stars and stairs learning progression, a concept map, a visual representation of a standard, or a self-assessment tool. As a result, the gallery has expanded exponentially. The digitized version is available to participants through Google Drive. Thousands of educators have viewed it and regularly share their own applications of the resources by dropping examples in the "share your creation" folder. Hundreds of teacher-created examples now occupy the drive.

WALKING THE WALK

The gallery walk is a continuous design process that reflects our best understanding of assessment literacy as well as our understanding of adult learning as it develops over time. We

are always finding fresh areas of interest — such as diagnostic/hinge questions, visual thinking strategies, and grit and self-control surveys — as we develop the gallery and add new posters.

By creating new posters and technology-rich add-ons, we're continually adding new ideas to 5+7 High-Impact Strategies = Assessment Literacy. The gallery of poster papers is relatively easy to move, set up, take down, and store. The physical gallery adds an old-school feel to our cadre of professional learning strategies and helps create a 360-degree immersion in the topic at hand.

Coupled with technology and social media, the interactive immersion gallery walk creates a professional learning experience that employs sound principles of learning and provides an entry point for a plethora of interests, learning preferences, and professional growth.

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