The Teacher Interface

*A new Use for an Old Tool*

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In August, we published a special issue of the Instructional Data Warehouse (IDW) newsletter showing how, in the absence of an updated Teacher Interface, the ChAP Report could provide rerostered individual student histories for all teachers. If you didn’t receive that newsletter, just email Jane Boyd (jboyd@mail.nasboces.org) to receive a copy of that newsletter and all future IDW mailings.

As we explained in the August newsletter, the updated Teacher Interface will not be available until later this fall. Until we switch over to the 2012-13 Teacher Interface, the 2011-2012 Teacher Interface has been updated with teachers’ 2012 test results allowing teachers to see individual student results from last year. Also, at this time, most Grade 4-8 teachers have already received (or will shortly be receiving) their growth scores from SED. As will be illustrated on the next few pages, the Teacher Interface will allow teachers to carefully review the individual student assessment histories of all students who contributed to their mean growth scores.

This will allow teachers an important look at individual student progress. The state-provided growth reports teachers receive show a subgroup breakdown, but individual student progress from year to year is not found on any state reports currently given to teachers.

*One word of caution about the Teacher Interface. When created last November, the student rosters on the Teacher Interface were frozen for all teachers. That means that changes after November (additions or deletions from the roster) are not reflected. Thus, when viewing Teacher Interface report this fall, the teacher-student linkage may not be 100% accurate if a student was transferred out of the class subsequent to November 2011.*

It is important to note that, for some, the teacher-student linkages may not be identical to the linkages used for the state-provided teacher growth reports. Therefore, it is important to note that the Teacher Interface is an informal report used to advise and inform teachers; it is not a measurement tool. Certainly, any student who is listed on the Teacher Interface, who was not actually on the teacher’s roster, should be ignored.
Now let’s review the opening page that a teacher, who taught fifth grade last year, will see when signing on to her interface page.

To see these fourth grade scores, simply click on the “Total Students” column, and a listing of student scores will appear. To see student scores on the fifth grade assessments given at the end of the 2011-12 school year, you must first click on the drop down menu next to “Select Assessment Year,” and choose 2011/2012. Clicking on the “Total Students” column will, once again, produce a full list of fifth grade scores. As indicated on the report above, the teacher might want to view only those students at Level 1 or Level 4. That too is possible with a single click.

It is also possible to view the entire test histories (Child Assessment Profile—ChAP Reports) of all students in the class. By doing so, the teacher can see the full assessment history of a student before coming into the class, and then see the assessment result at the end of the school year with that teacher. To see a list of all ChAP reports, the teacher should click on any assessment name, and, when the pop-up menu appears, click on “Child Assessment Profile (ChAP) Report.”

The teacher may want to change the report to a PDF version to easily scroll through (or print) each student page. To do so, click on the drop-down menu to the right of the first ChAP report page, and select “View in PDF format.” This file can also be saved on the teacher’s network drive or a flash drive.

This before and after view—before and after each student has spent a year of instruction with an individual teacher—is an important review for a teacher. Ideally, when teachers received their mean growth percentile reports from SED, they would have also received a report which detailed each student’s individual growth, allowing teachers to see not just the mean growth of students as an aggregate, but how each student progressed individually.

In conversations with officials from SED, I was assured that by approximately November 1st, teachers will have access to these individual growth scores. Until that time, however, teach-
ers will be able, using the Teacher Interface of the IDW, to review at least the scale scores and the Level scores for each student on last year’s roster. This will include the most recent assessment score as well as all previous assessment scores.

But by looking just at student test histories alone, many insights can be gleaned. As an example, if performance level scores are rising overall, this is surely a sign that students have made solid progress in during the 2011-12 instructional year. A teacher can take pride in a solid effort but also look to review those students who stayed at level or regressed and look for the reasons why. Especially important are patterns of success or regression. It may be that high level 2 students advanced to level 3 while students at high level 3 made little progress at all. The teacher should reflect on teaching and grouping practices to better understand the relationship between instructional practice and test results.

One word of caution—small increases or decreases in scale scores are not necessarily indicative of changes in student learning. Scale scores are not perfectly aligned from year to year so that, for instance, a scale score of 685 in grade 4 does not necessarily show growth when compared to a scale score 680 in grade 3. But large changes in scale score, especially in the range between 650 and 700, are indicative of a change in student performance.

In addition, teachers will be receiving Gap Reports from their supervisors and will see, question by question, how their students performed when compared to other students in Nassau County. Although the questions themselves are no longer available, the topics are still linked to the Gap Reports, and teachers can see how their students performed in comparison to others. Topics on the math exams are particularly helpful and concrete, but even the ELA exams allow teachers to see how students performed on the constructed response questions when compared to the multiple choice questions. The constructed response questions also allow disaggregation between for the listening section of the assessment and the reading section.

As always, IDW personnel are available to provide telephone assistance and in-district training for any district seeking to learn best practices for the IDW. Call Fred Cohen at 608-6640 or Jane Boyd at 608-6612 to schedule a training session or if you have any Instructional Data Warehouse questions.