



# Fact Sheet: The ASSISTments Platform

Teacher assign questions and get live reports

[www.ASSISTments.org](http://www.ASSISTments.org)

Director: Prof. Neil Heffernan (nth@wpi.edu)



The ASSISTments platform is a free web-based system that allows teachers to write individual ASSISTments (composed of questions and associated hints, solutions, web-based videos, etc.). The word “ASSISTment” blends tutoring “assistance” (see image on right) with “assessment” reporting to teachers (see image below). It supports all subjects (i.e., Math, English etc.) and due to federal grants, has a huge repository of math content. In math, this gives teachers fine grained reporting on roughly 140 skills in 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics. More generally, the system is a great tool to help teachers practice the process of formative assessment because the teacher gets an instant report on student learning. It supports districts using common assessments, homework, and daily classwork.

Teachers face a dilemma. They are being asked to assess students more often, but every minute of class time spent on assessment is a lost minute of instruction time. ASSISTments solves this dilemma by letting students get individual

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Welcome to Assistments Project Web Portal - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://www.assistment.org/portal/index.jsp". The main content area displays a math problem involving two triangles, ABC and DEF. Triangle ABC has side lengths  $x$ ,  $2x$ , and  $8$  inches. Triangle DEF is congruent to triangle ABC. The problem asks for the length of side DF in triangle DEF. Below the problem, there are scaffolding questions: "Which side of triangle ABC has the same length as side DF of triangle DEF?" and "What is the perimeter of triangle ABC?". The scaffolding questions have multiple-choice options. A "Submit" button is visible. Below the submit button, there is a "buggy message" that says: "No. You might be thinking that the area is  $1/2$  base times height, but you are looking for the perimeter." Below the buggy message, there are two hint messages: "Perimeter is defined as the sum of all sides of a figure." and "The perimeter of triangle ABC is the sum of all its sides." The original question and scaffolding questions have answer boxes with the correct answers: "23" for the original question, "AC" for the 1st scaffolding question, and "Perimeter" for the 2nd scaffolding question.

A screen showing a student getting “tutoring” to help the student figure out how to solve a question.

feedback while they are assessed and still preserving a record for the teacher of who could get a problem correct with no assistance. In addition, teachers can use it for differentiating instruction by assigning special problem sets that allow students to get the practice they need until they reach mastery.

There is a large research base (20 peer reviewed papers) behind ASSISTments. Since 2003-04 the number of students using ASSISTments has been doubling each year. In 2009-10, there were 7,500 students using and 100 teachers in 35 school districts in MA and ME. Districts interested in training and support using ASSISTments, should contact Professor Neil Heffernan.

Assistment » Teacher » Reports				
Student/Problem	#4517	#8842	#4674	#78
Problem average	45%	89%	95%	29%
Knowledge Components	Venn Diagram	Venn Diagram	Venn Diagram	Venn Diagram, Percent Of
Common Wrong Answers (percent of incorrect answers)	126 (20%), 4 (15%)			0 (18%), 8 (13%), 657 (12%)
Student 1	✗ 126	✗ 400	✓ 43	✗ 0
Student 2	✗ 126	✓ 72	✓ 43	✓ 243
Student 3	✓ 130	✓ 72	✓ 43	✗ 657
Student 4	✗ 612	✓ 72	✓ 43	✗ 24300

An Item Report showing who got which question (i.e., columns) correct, as well as what the common wrong answers were.