

Assessment Purposes and Types

Assessment = Getting to Know Students

Broadly speaking, the term **assessment** is focused upon the gathering of information to further student learning. In this way, assessments are much more than tests and quizzes. Teacher observations and questioning of students are critical methods for assessing student learning, as are class discussions/activities, projects/presentations, journals/reflections and assignments/homework.

In this context, the term **evaluation** is concerned with measurement against a standard. Using various assessments within a defined time period, teachers form an evaluation of a student's abilities, skills and knowledge in relation to preset standards and assign an overall grade to student performance and behavior.

Assessment Purposes

Screening—to identify potential problems in learning development; to ensure that learning development is on target

Diagnostic— to identify particular skill, knowledge, and ability strengths and/or weaknesses in specific areas of learning; to determine the nature of special needs and establish program eligibility

Instructional—to inform, support, and monitor learning improvement

- **Benchmarking** assessments are tests administered at defined intervals throughout the school year to give teachers immediate, formative feedback on how their students are performing.
- **Progress Monitoring** assessments are quick probes that provide teachers with on-going information about students' response to intervention. The goal of these assessments is to provide teachers with data to answer two questions: Is the student making progress towards a grade-level expectation or long-term goal? Is the student making progress towards mastery of a targeted skill?

Program Evaluation/Accountability—to determine the efficacy and value of specific programs for compliance and program improvement

Assessment Types

Common Assessment

An assessment given by two or more instructors to collaboratively examine the results for:

1. shared learning
2. instructional planning for individual students
3. curriculum, instruction and/or assessment modifications

Formative Assessment

An assessment FOR learning

1. strives to increase student achievement
2. diagnoses a student's strengths and weaknesses by providing results unique to the students
3. provides data throughout a unit or course of study that allows tailoring of instruction and motivation for improvement
4. informs students about themselves and helps them learn how to take charge of their own progress
5. assumes the teacher's role is to promote student success
6. reflects knowledge, skills and understanding that underpin standards

Summative Assessment

An assessment OF learning

1. strives to document student achievement
2. diagnoses a program's strengths and weaknesses by providing comparable results
3. provides summative results at the end of a unit or course of study for grading purposes
4. informs other stakeholders (teachers, parents, administrators, community members) about the achievement of students
5. assumes the teacher's role is to gauge/evaluate student success
6. reflects the standards themselves

It isn't the method that determines whether an assessment is summative or formative; it is how the results are used.

