

## **Assessment**

### ***Assessment and Instruction are Inseparable***

In a differentiated classroom, assessment is ongoing and diagnostic. Assessment is to provide teachers data on students' readiness for particular ideas, their skills, their interests, and their learning profiles.

Assessment is not what comes at the end of a unit to find out what students learned; rather, assessment is today's means of understanding how to modify instruction. By thoughtfully using assessment data, the teacher can modify the content, process, or product according to students' needs.

### ***10 Basic Purposes of Assessment***

1. Selecting, clarifying and evaluating educational objectives
2. Planning instruction
3. Evaluating student work
4. Reporting and comparing student progress
5. Counseling
6. Motivating and encouraging students
7. Giving special recognition to students
8. Selecting students for special programs or instruction
9. Evaluating program effectiveness
10. Holding schools accountable

### ***Formative Assessment***

Formative assessment is information and data, which is used to improve, modify or revise a program, curriculum or unit of instruction in order to enhance student learning. This type of evaluation is helpful in guiding ongoing classroom instruction.

### ***Formative assessment may come from:***

- Small - group discussions with the teacher and a few students
- Whole class discussion
- Journal entries
- Portfolio entries
- Exit cards
- Skill inventories
- Pretests
- Homework assignments
- Interest surveys
- Etc.

### ***Informal Assessment***

Other forms of assessment are more informal. Some informal assessments may be drawn from typical classroom activities. Other times it will be difficult to show student progress using actual work, so teachers will need to keep notes or checklists to record their observations from informal classroom interactions. Sometimes informal assessment is as simple as stopping during instruction to observe or to discuss with the students how learning is progressing.

#### ***Informal assessment may come from:***

- Group or individual projects
- Experiments
- Oral presentations
- Demonstrations
- Performances
- Assignments
- Reports
- Discussion groups
- Etc.

It is important to use a variety of forms of assessment. Particular activities or topics will inspire excellent performance in some students and frustrate others. Including a variety of types of assessments will ensure that students are provided with ample opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and that teachers have the information they need to construct a complete, balanced assessment of each student.

Assessment yields an emerging picture of who understands key ideas and who can perform targeted skills, at what levels of proficiency, and with what degree of interest.

Assessment should always have more to do with helping students grow than with cataloging their mistakes.

According to the National Excellence Report, gifted students often know 35% - 50% of the curriculum before they ever begin the school year. Dr. Joseph Renzulli calls one strategy for linking assessment and instruction curriculum “compacting.” This is a process by which students are pre-tested for mastery. Those who already know the material to be studied don’t need to do the assigned work. Instead, they are allowed to pursue another activity. Compacting involves identifying the content or skill area and/or the standard or benchmark, pre-assessing, documenting mastery, and providing alternate activities for students who have mastered the material.