

## Diagnostic Assessments

**Definition:** A variety of assessment tasks that are used to determine students' level of knowledge, skills, and understandings at the beginning of a course, grade level, unit and/or lesson. They test the students on what they already know. These tests allow the instructor to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of the students.

**Applications:**

- Build on student strengths
- Clarify misconceptions
- Adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of the students
- Introduce new or unknown concepts

**Occurrence:**

- Before a course, grade level, unit, and/or lesson

**District Tests:**

- Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT)

**Classroom Examples:**

- Initial writing prompts
- KWL charts
- Running Records
- Informal Reading Assessments
- Pre-tests
- Surveys
- Journals

**Evidence of Effective Use:**

- Teachers are able to identify individual and class strengths and weaknesses
- Teachers can identify and correct misconceptions
- Teachers can explain how classroom instruction has been adapted to meet the needs of the students

## Formative Assessments

**Definition:** Formal and informal assessments that are used throughout a unit or course of study to monitor student progress so that teachers can adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of their students

**Application:**

- Monitor student progress
- Adjust instruction to maximize student achievement
- Provide effective and timely feedback
- Reveal students who need remediation
- Predict performance on summative assessments

**Occurrence:**

- Frequent intervals after small units of instruction; throughout instruction

**District Tests:**

- Recognizing Student Achievement (RSA)

**Classroom Examples:**

- Student self-assessments
- Written Responses
- Exit Tickets
- Questioning
- Conferencing
- Observations
- Rubrics

**Evidence of Effective Use:**

- Teacher can state the types of formative assessments used regularly to gauge student progress
- Teacher can explain how they have revised instruction based on assessment results
- Teacher provides feedback to students
- Teacher can show examples of revised student work
- Teacher can describe student strengths and next steps

## Benchmark Assessments

**Definition:** Evaluations of student learning progress used to determine whether the students are on track to performing well on future assessments

**Application:**

- Explains how the student is progressing towards demonstrating proficiency on grade level standards
- Supplies information to adjust instruction
- Indicates if the curriculum is helping students achieve grade level standards
- Predicts future performance

**Occurrence:**

- Throughout the school year
- Throughout the learning continuum

**District/State/National Tests:**

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next)
- Easy Curriculum Based Measures (easyCBM)
- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
- English Language Arts Reading Assessment (ELA Reading)

**Classroom Examples:**

- Common Assessments

**Evidence of Effective Use:**

- The teacher can explain how the students are progressing towards grade level standards
- Teacher can describe learning adjustments to instruction towards grade level standards
- Teacher can state which students are on course to being proficient on the state test

## Summative Assessments

**Definition:** Formal assessments used to measure what students have learned at the end of a defined period of instruction

**Application:**

- Measure student achievement at the end of a unit of study
- Determine learning priorities for the students
- Evaluation of group instruction or curriculum effectiveness
- Could be used to predict future success with other courses or standards

**Occurrence:**

- After instruction is completed
- At end of a course or at the end of a large amount of instruction
- Infrequently

**District/State/National Tests:**

- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)
- Keystone
- WIDA Access for ELLs
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
- American College Test (ACT)
- Advanced Placement Exams (AP)
- Performance Tasks
- Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC Essay)
- English Language Arts Writing Assessment (ELA Writing)
- Math Unit Assessment
- Science Module Assessment

**Classroom Examples:**

- End of unit tests
- Final Exams
- Culminating Projects
- Portfolios

**Evidence of Effective Use:**

- Teacher can state their grade level and classroom areas of focus for meeting student academic needs
- Administrators can state the instructional focus for each grade level and the school
- Administrators and teachers can communicate the strengths and weaknesses identified in assessment data for their school, grade level, and classroom
- Teachers can state which students need additional instruction in specific Core standards