

Formative Assessment Overview

Review Evidence of Meeting Higher Standards

In the 2013-14 citywide instructional expectations, schools are expected to create or revise systems to regularly and collaboratively look for evidence of growth and gaps in student work and teacher practice in order to make adjustments to units, lessons, teaching practices, and school-wide decisions. Schools are encouraged to consider a variety of assessment types in their planning to meet these expectations. The framework below describes the purpose of some assessment types for key points throughout the school year.

Assessment Framework

Baseline assessments gauge students' starting point at the beginning of a year, course, or unit. They provide feedback on where students are on a range of skills prior to instruction. Teachers use this information to plan for supports and extensions in upcoming units and lessons. Baselines are assessments for learning so that the skills and content planned are appropriate for all learners.

Examples: diagnostic, pre-assessments, Performance Series, diagnostic literacy assessments

Checks for understanding within a unit provide teachers with immediate feedback on how students are understanding and integrating new material from daily lessons. Teachers use this information to adjust and differentiate upcoming lesson plans. They are assessments for learning.

Examples: exit slips, short homework assignments, individual white board responses, discussion, observations, conferencing, short quizzes following a series of lessons

End of unit assessments measure students' mastery of key skills, concepts and standards at the conclusion a unit. These assessments can be embedded in curriculum or independent. They are assessments of learning, and can also be used as assessments for learning. By tracking the skills, concepts, and standards that students continue to struggle with, teachers can use this information to plan for additional supports in the next unit. Independent, or stand alone, end of unit assessments provide students with the opportunity to apply the skills, concepts, and standards they learned in the unit to a new situation, whereas, curriculum embedded end of unit assessments may have been part of the unit itself.

Independent Examples: text based writing using a brand new text, solving an open ended problem or question where the student has to make some decisions as to what approach and content from the unit makes sense to use, tasks in instructional bundles on CCL

Embedded Examples: culminating project, lab report, essay based on readings from class, publisher- or teacher-created unit tests

Benchmark assessments gauge students' mastery of key skills, concepts, and standards over time throughout the school year to inform instructional, curricular, and professional development decisions. Effective schools use common benchmark assessments to create a shared measure of student progress across classrooms. These are assessments for learning, and are designed to provide feedback on standards from 2-4 units of study. Teachers use this data and student work to make adjustments to the next series of units in the school year. For example, teachers may look back at the section of curriculum they just taught to check if it provided sufficient opportunities for students to meet the standards assessed and make notes to revise the unit for next year. They may look ahead to see if the upcoming units need to be supplemented with additional opportunities or resources, or they may reorder- some lessons or units. In addition, teachers may use the data and student work from benchmark assessments to reflect on their instructional approach and may decide to adjust how they implement the upcoming units in the curriculum.

Examples: NYCDOE provided benchmark assessments, publisher- or teacher-created benchmark assessments