GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING AND SELECTING QUALITY ASSESSMENTS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

A PART OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

> "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there,"
> observed the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland

Purpose of this Guide

This *Guidance for Selecting and Developing Quality Assessments in the Elementary Classrooms* is intended to assist teachers and school administrators in understanding the critical role that assessments play in the classroom. Assessments are used to gather evidence of learning for a variety of different audiences, including students, teachers, parents, school districts, and state and federal departments of education.

Assessments include a variety of different methods that allow students to demonstrate evidence of learning and can range from observations, student writing samples, performance tasks, to large-scale standardized tests. Decisions about which assessment to select will depend on its purpose and the audience of the data. This guide is not intended to be a lengthy review of all aspects of assessment nor all the different assessments that are available for the classroom teacher, but rather an introduction to understanding how assessments are directly linked to teaching and learning.
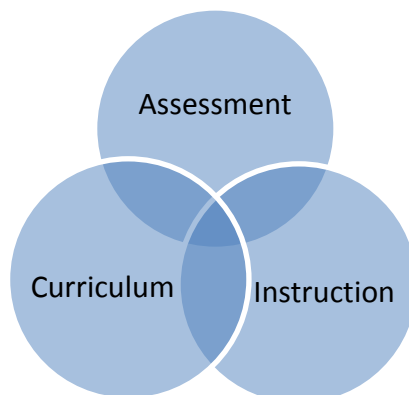
Effective teachers use evidence of learning (assessment) to inform what they teach (the curriculum) and how they teach (instruction).

With this in mind, this guide will provide information on:
- specific assessments appropriate for the 3-5 grade span,
- purpose of the assessments,
- advantages and disadvantages of different types of assessment,
- considerations for a comprehensive assessment system that include daily classroom assessments, local or district developed assessments, and state assessments, when applicable.

Also included at the end of this document is a bibliography of references to help guide you as you delve deeper into the world of assessment!

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A Comprehensive Assessment System

A well-constructed comprehensive assessment system provides continuous, coherent, and high-quality information on student performance that teachers, school leaders, and district and state administrators could use to improve teaching and learning and meet their decision-making needs. At the heart of a comprehensive assessment system is a clear understanding of and alignment to the knowledge and skills and their range of complexity as required by the standards, grade level expectations, and grade span expectations. These standards should be central to all assessments, instruction, and professional development related to teaching and learning.   In a comprehensive assessment system, summative assessments, interim assessments, and formative assessments are utilized in a planned and purposeful manner. Teachers play an important role in a comprehensive assessment system by assessing student performance, developing and reviewing tasks, scoring them accurately and reliably, developing and employing effective formative assessments to track student knowledge and skills over time, interpreting assessment results, and modifying instruction based on assessment results. Diagnostic assessments or language proficiency assessments are not the focus of this resource.
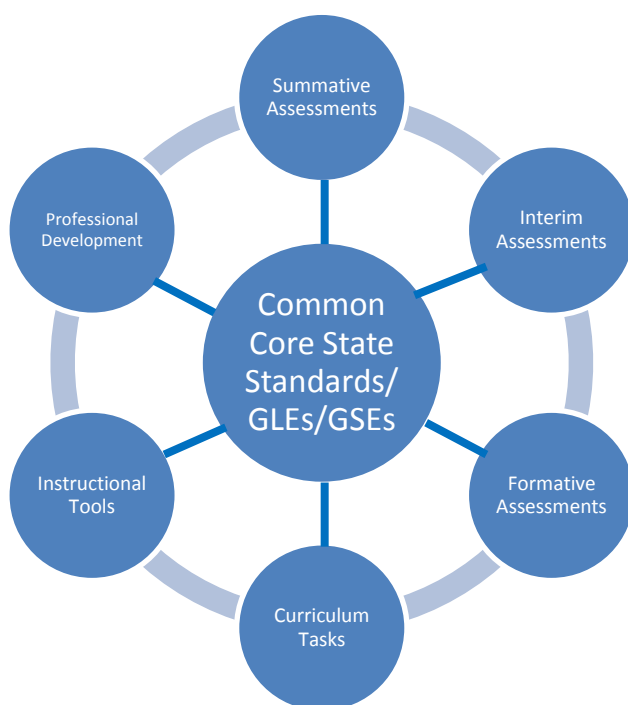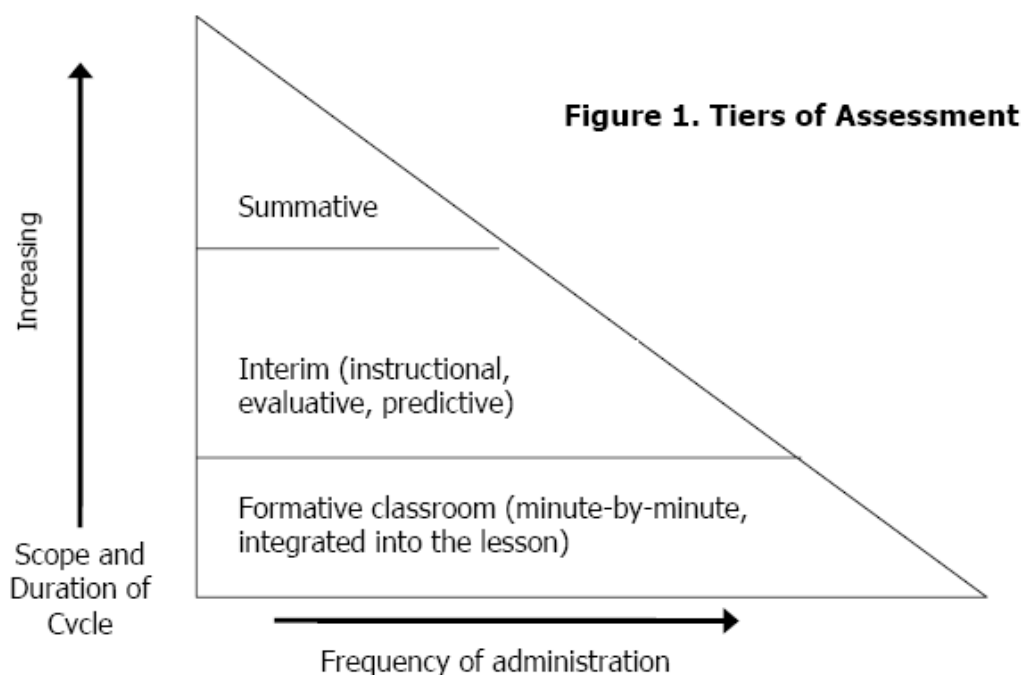
Distinguishing Assessments

Formative Assessment: *A process that teachers and students use to gather information during, as opposed to after, the learning process and to make adjustments accordingly.*

Interim Assessments: *Assessments administered during instruction that are designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of goals to inform decisions in the classroom and beyond.*

Summative Assessments: *Formal assessments that are given at the end of a unit, term, course, or academic year.*

The following illustrates the frequency and scope of assessments. Formative assessment occurs at a **high frequency** and focuses on **specific content**. It occurs regularly during instruction allowing for a descriptive feedback exchange between the teacher and student regarding specific objectives and learning disposition. Interim assessments occur on a **scheduled basis** during a break in the instructional flow. They measure and record learning of **specific content** at particular points in time, but are broader than formative assessment. Summative assessments occur **less frequently** and cover a **wide scope** of content.

Figure 1. Tiers of Assessment

Summative

Interim (instructional, evaluative, predictive)

Formative classroom (minute-by-minute, integrated into the lesson)

Increasing

Scope and Duration of Cycle

Frequency of administration

Source: Policy brief by Aspen/Achieve/Center for Assessment

The following table illustrates the distinctions and different dimensions of each type of assessment. It is not the name or format of an assessment that signifies what type of assessment it is. Rather, its purpose is identified by the ways in which it is administered, interpreted, and how the results are used will help to distinguish the type of assessment. The same assessment can be used in different ways, for different purposes. For example, writing samples can be used formatively throughout the year, and then as a summative assessment at the end of the year. The information below may assist the classroom teacher in determining the assessments to be used in an elementary classroom's comprehensive assessment system.

Dimension	Type of Assessment		
	*"Assessment **for** Learning"*	*"Assessment **of** Learning"*	
	Formative	Interim	Summative
Purpose	▪ Instructional	▪ Most designed for managerial uses ▪ Some designed for instructional uses	▪ Managerial
Implementation	▪ Driven by moment-to-moment decisions; generated or selected by teacher; individualized	▪ Regulated by a set of rules developed in or out of the classroom; teacher-generated or externally generated	
Timing	▪ During instruction ▪ High frequency	▪ After instruction or during a break in instructional flow ▪ Moderate frequency	▪ After instruction ▪ Low frequency
Scope	▪ Narrow; one or very few learning objectives at a time	▪ Moderate; a manageable number of objectives	▪ Broad; comprehensive set of objectives
Audience	▪ Classroom (i.e., students, teachers, and parents)	▪ Administration and/or ▪ Classroom	▪ Public ▪ Administration ▪ Classroom
Feedback	▪ Student ⟷ teacher ▪ Descriptive/narrative	▪ School System ⟶ audiences ▪ Mostly evaluative	▪ School System ⟶ audiences ▪ Mostly evaluative

Talbot, T. (June 2011), *Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Purposes and Implementation*

Assessment in the Elementary Classroom

Assessing students in the elementary grades enables teachers to have the data necessary to determine if their teaching methods are working and how well their students are learning. By assessing the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole, a teacher can judge if his or her instruction of the subject matter has been successful. Assessment results can help answer questions such as whether most students are making adequate progress or struggling, or whether only a small group of individual students are struggling. Using the results of assessments can provide information on whether the teaching methodology is sound, whether changes need to be made, or whether provisions for those few struggling without making major modifications to the instructional plan are warranted. In addition, students at the elementary level need to have a concrete, measurable way to follow their own progress. Assessment expectations and results provide students with a needed indication of knowing if they are succeeding or failing and a way to set achievable goals or make plans to successfully improve their performance.

Creating a comprehensive assessment system for an elementary level (3-5) classroom requires thinking about a host of principles for designing and choosing assessments. The following **principles, objectives, questions, and examples** have been designed to assist the middle and high school classroom teacher with developing a comprehensive assessment system for his or her classroom that provide the necessary information.

A comprehensive assessment system of elementary students includes the following:

<u>Key principles</u> for selecting assessments:	<u>Major objectives</u>
▪ The results of assessments should be **beneficial** for students (e.g., gain services for students with special needs, to inform instruction by building on what students already know, to improve programs, etc.). ▪ The content of the assessments should allow students to demonstrate progress toward important **learning goals** and be aligned with the subject matter. ▪ The selected assessments should fit the identified **purpose**. ▪ A **variety** of assessment types should be utilized to measure student achievement.	▪ To **identify** students at the beginning of the year who may be "at risk" or who may need extra instruction or intensive interventions if they are to move toward grade-level standards by the end of the year. ▪ To **monitor** all students' progress during the year, to determine whether "at risk" students are making adequate progress, and to identify any students who may be falling behind. ▪ To **collect** information about students that will be helpful in planning instruction to meet their most critical learning needs. ▪ To **assess** whether the instruction provided is sufficient to help students achieve the standards by the end of each year.

When considering the selection of assessments for a comprehensive assessment system, there are five key questions to consider:

1. What are the **best types** of assessments to select for measuring the learning?

2. Are the assessment items and/or expectations **aligned** to the standards? Consider whether the assessment will actually measure what it is supposed to measure.

3. Are the assessment items and/or expectations appropriately **rigorous** (DOK levels aligned to standards) and have an appropriate level of difficulty?

4. Are there **multiple opportunities** throughout the quarter, semester, and year to assess students on the same concepts, using different types of assessments?

5. Are the **directions and vocabulary** clear, ensuring that they don't detract from what students know and are able to demonstrate?

When developing and/or selecting the assessments for classroom progress monitoring, it is important to think about these questions, as they will ensure the development and selection of quality assessments. The assessments used by the classroom teacher should be **valid** and **reliable** for the purpose for which it's being used, and **fair** for all students.

A **valid assessment** provides an accurate picture of what students know, understand, and are able to do. It should be aligned to grade appropriate content and the intended level of cognitive rigor.

A **reliable assessment** provides a consistent picture of what students know, understand, and are able to do no matter who scores the assessment.

A **fair assessment** ensures that students are measured only on the basis of the knowledge and skills being measured.

The following assessment approaches are identified as formative; however many of them could be used as an interim or summatively. It is important for the classroom teacher and school administrators to determine the purpose for assessing and which assessments would help reach the expected goals.

Formative Assessment for Classroom Progress Monitoring

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Formative assessment, both formal and informal, as a way to monitor students' progress is one piece of a comprehensive assessment system.

> *The defining characteristic of formative assessment is its interactive or cyclical nature (Sadler, 1988). At the classroom level, for example, teachers collect information about a student's learning, make corresponding adjustments in their instruction, and continue to collect information. Formative assessment can result in significant learning gains but only when the assessment results are used to inform the instructional and learning process (Black & William, 1998). This condition requires the collection, analysis of, and response to information about student progress.*

The following are some examples of classroom assessment methods that can assist teachers in identifying where students are in their learning, where gaps in their knowledge exist, and to help determine how to improve student learning.

1. Observation Checklists

A well-defined checklist identifies learning objectives and behaviors, which may be arranged in categories, and are used to determine whether a student exhibits the behaviors or skills listed. The observations associated with the items on the checklist allow the teacher to have a clear sense of what the student is able to do at a specific moment of time. On an **informal** checklist, a teacher may observe how a student demonstrates physical coordination, science process skills, the concepts of problem solving, or works through the writing process. However, it is important to note that a teacher created checklist is not standardized, and the results are not comparable to a norm.

Checklists can focus on objectives that assess student strengths and weaknesses in:
- oral presentation
- mathematical thinking
- scientific thinking
- social studies concepts
- art concepts
- physical education skills

Teachers can develop their own checklists by identifying skills that are directly aligned to standards to be included, listing target behaviors, arranging the desired actions (and likely errors, if desired), and creating a simple procedure for checking or rating each action as it occurs.

Example 1: Science Process Skills (Grades 3-5)

Criteria	Group 1: Students					
DATE:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identifies relevant evidence to support claims						
Uses data and/or a model to construct and/or support an argument						
Uses fair tests in which variables are controlled and number of trials is considered						
Identifies manipulated/responding variable						
Uses correct measurement units and scales						
Measures accurately						
Uses computation and mathematics to analyze data						
Develops and/or uses models to describe and/or predict phenomenon						
Organizes simple data sets to reveal patterns						
Recognizes patterns to guide organization/ classification and prompt questions about relationships						
Analyzes and interprets data to make sense of phenomenon, using reasoning and/or computation						
Distinguishes among facts, reasoned judgment, and speculation in an explanation						
Generates and compares multiple solutions to a problem						
Communicates scientific and/or technical information orally and/or in various written formats						

Example 2: Physical Education Skills (Grades 3-5)

	Locomotion Skills			
	E-Explore	**P**-Progressing Towards Control	**C**-Control	**U**-Utilization
Student Name	Jumping Backwards and Landing	Hopping	Skipping	Rolling Backwards

Tips for Using and Developing Observation Checklists:

1. Determine specific outcomes that are aligned to standards to observe and assess.
2. Decide what to look for – write down criteria or evidence that indicates the student is demonstrating the outcome.
3. Target the observation by selecting four to five students per class and one or two specific outcomes to observe.
4. Develop a data gathering system – yes/no, checkmark, examples, tally marks, etc.
5. Collect observations over a number of classes during a reporting period and look for patterns of performance.
6. Document all observations.
7. Share observations with students, both individually and in a group. Make the observations specific and describe how this demonstrates or promotes thinking and learning. For example, "Eric, you contributed several ideas to your group's Top Ten list. You really helped your group finish their task within the time limit."
8. Use the information gathered from observation to enhance or modify instruction.

Observations and Checklists	
Advantages	Potential Challenges
▪ Enables teachers to observe and easily check off what children know and are able to do ▪ Easy to use and update ▪ Requires little training ▪ Available whenever evaluation is needed ▪ Flexible and can be used with a variety of assessment strategies ▪ Behaviors can be recorded frequently	▪ Subjectivity involved in the observation ▪ Overlooking behaviors not on the instrument ▪ Less detail about the specific behaviors ▪ Can be time consuming ▪ Some teachers find it difficult to adapt teaching and evaluation behaviors to include checklists ▪ If there are too many checklists, the teacher can be overwhelmed with assessment and record keeping ▪ Teachers may not consider assessments with checklists as valid measures ▪ Checklists may not indicate how well a child performs in all situations

2. Anecdotal Notes

Anecdotal records are a great way to document student behaviors and academic progress over time. The more we know about students, the more we can help them. Observations, along with recording notes, can help teachers determine what students do and do not know. In order to record useful data about student learning, teachers write brief, objective, and focused notes during a lesson as students work in groups or individually, or after the lesson is complete. The teacher should reflect on a specific aspect of the learning (e.g., sorts geometric shapes correctly) and make notes on the student's progress toward mastery of that learning target. The teacher can create a form to organize these notes so that they can easily be used for adjusting instruction based on student needs.

Purpose of Anecdotal Notes:

- Diagnosing a student's difficulty in a particular subject area
- Providing cumulative information on student learning
- Showing the mastering of a standard
- Capturing observations of significant behaviors that might otherwise be lost
- Providing direction for further instruction

Guidelines for Writing Anecdotal Notes:

- Start with a standard and a statement of focus and identify name of the student, date, and content. Recording the focus helps to trigger a recommendation for instruction.
- Be selective in what is written, focusing on one category and observing the student in relation to that focus.
- Keep the notes brief and focused noting the context and any comments or questions for follow-up.
- Keep comments objective making specific notes about student strengths, especially after several observations have been recorded and a pattern has been observed.
- Record only what is observed or heard, dealing only with the facts.
- Record notes regularly, but at different times and different activities to develop a balanced profile of student learning.
- Review notes frequently to ensure that notes are being made on each student regularly and summarize information related to trends in students' learning.

Example: Writing Workshop

Anecdotal Notes				
Day	Alexis	Caleb	Shayna	Joshua
MON	▪ *Shared how she has developed a lead in her writing.*	▪ *Preferred not to share writing with whole group.*	▪ *Stated that she was having difficulty with beginning the opining of her memoir. (Conference scheduled for Wednesday)*	
TUES	▪ *Having difficulty generating ideas for writer's notebook.*			
WED		▪ *Recorded interesting ideas in writer's notebook* ▪ *Did not share with table group.*	▪ *Working on sorting ideas, prioritizing, and outlining.*	
THURS				▪ *Reviewed writing portfolio and evaluated his writing using the checklist for narratives.*

Tips for Using and Developing Anecdotal Notes:

1. Observing students and recording anecdotal notes requires planning and preparation. In order to address the time constraints of the classroom, select which students and which concepts to observe ahead of time. Avoid attempting to observe everybody all at once. Consider dividing the students into four groups with five to seven in each group. Monday through Thursday of each week, observe a different group. On Fridays, observe the students who were absent or require further observation.

2. Prior to observation, establish a standards-based focus. This directs the attention of the teacher to persistently observe what students know and do with regard to specific instructional content. In addition, the verbs within the standards help focus the observation (e.g., *describing* key events or *using* addition to find the total number of objects).

3. Periodically **analyze** the compiled record for each student

   - Analyze approximately every six to eight weeks, focusing on the various standards that were selected to guide the observations.

   - Code the records by marking an **S** to indicate an area of strength, **N** to indicate an area of need, and **I** for point of information. Other coding can be used based on the needs of the teacher and students.

   - Once the records are coded, create a summary list of strengths and needs to detect patterns exhibited by the student and the class.

   - Identify specific instructional strategies to be employed based on the analysis. For example, *provide guidance in writing "hooks" in opening paragraphs*. It would not be sufficient to identify "*needs help in writing*" as this will not help to get at the heart of the students' needs.

Anecdotal Notes	
Advantages	**Potential Challenges**
- Can be used to assess development in all areas: physical, social, cognitive, and emotional - Can be used to learn more about the child as an individual - Can be used to identify interests for the group and/or the individual - Allows for documentation of accurate information - Shows progress and allows for sharing information - Allows teachers to track children's progress over time	- Only records events of interest to/noted by the person doing the observing - Quality of record depends on the memory or skill of the person doing the observing and recording - Incidents can be taken out of context - May miss out on recording specific types of behaviors.

3. Work Samples and Student Portfolios

An on-going assessment technique for students is a systematic collection of **authentic** work placed in a student portfolio. We define **authentic** work as an application of knowledge and skills that reflect situations and problems addressed in the "real" world. Portfolios are valued as an assessment tool because they contain representations of classroom-based performance and supplement instruction. Work samples not only provide reliable information about student achievement of the curriculum, but also provide students with context for assessing their own work and setting meaningful goals for learning. Displaying concrete or digital samples of student work and sharing assessments that illustrate grade level expectations of the outcomes are essential elements of a comprehensive assessment system.

Students should be encouraged to provide evidence of their learning in their work products, including development of thinking through graphic organizers, journals, solved problems that were challenging, problems that have been solved in multiple ways, or problems that the student has extended. Students should state where they see evidence of a strong product or performance and why they think this. Periodically students should select a number of pieces of work that they have analyzed for evidence of understanding and include these work products in a portfolio that provides evidence of their learning over time.

An essential condition of portfolios is that students include written reflections that explain why each sample was selected. The power of the portfolio is derived from the descriptions, reactions and metacognitive reflections that help students achieve their goals. Conferencing with parents, peers and/or teachers helps synthesize learning and celebrate their successes. Some students become adept at writing descriptions and personal reflections of their work without any prompts, whereas other students who have difficulty deciding what to write may be provided sentence starters.

Some examples of authentic work samples for a portfolio can include:

- samples of writing
- art work
- problem solving samples
- science investigations

Example of fourth grade student portfolio writing samples:

A teacher has taught a language arts unit on descriptive writing and engaging leads. This unit also includes goals related to vocabulary use, sentence structure, and grammar. Attainment will be assessed, in part, by the writing of a descriptive lead. The teacher could give a test requiring the students to provide word definitions, identify sentences that are written correctly or incorrectly, and identify sentences that use appropriate shades of meaning. However, paragraph writing is a test of their application of the skills taught, not just their knowledge. The teacher has decided to evaluate just the product because there are a variety of processes that could lead to production of a well-written descriptive paragraph.

Sample #1: October
This is a sample of the student's lead for the story titled "The Trouble" after the first minI lesson on descriptive language. The student uses repetition of a phrase with little description of the events.

1. I remember the time my brothers made a tent with me. I remember the time my brothers got me furious. I remember the time my mom yelled at me. I remember the time.

Sample #2: November
The student was revising his lead for the story titled "The Trouble" and has included additional description is included.

I made a tent three days before summer ended. At my house in adrian. I got really mad because of a big argument I was mad because my brothers were making me angrey.

Sample #3: February
The student demonstrates an awareness of descriptive language, as well as rereading his own work and revising to include descriptive language.

It was Ffriday 2009 and I was ~~awfully~~ scared. We were at ~~freaky Friday~~ I was always scared of the haunted house; it ~~really scared me~~ made me anxious.

Sample #4: April
The student is clearly using descriptive language to "hook" the reader. In addition, capital letters, a variety of sentence types and punctuation is used. The student continues to display that he edits when rereading his own work.

Leads
to listen, AHHHHAHHH I yelped I closed my eyes were they gone? I opened my eyes and gasped.....

Example of Writing Portfolio Questions and Student Reflection:

Writing Portfolio Questions

1. How do you feel about writing?

   I'm getting into the mood of writing more, I think I've improved so this helps me write more.

2. What have you been working on?

   "Memoir"

3. How's that going?

   Going well. I started with a few ideas and once I narrowed it down my feelings began flowing.

4. Is there something in your writing that you feel you should work on more? ** Editing*

   Content --- thinking more deeply.

5. What's worked well for you this year?

   Sometimes I get confused when I'm first learning something but I really listen, ask questions and it seems that my understanding of writing becomes better.

6. What do you want people to know about you as a writer? *That I'm becoming a better writer, I know how to write really good stories.*

7. What's next for your writing?

   Reading my work to my family & friends. Letting people know that I've done a good job.

   I want to continue really thinking carefully when I write.

Tips for Using and Developing Work Samples and Student Portfolios:

1. Determine specific standards, big ideas, and concepts in content areas to monitor and analyze over time.

2. Determine what samples of student work might best illustrate the application of the standard or educational goal (e.g., student created such as writing samples, videotapes, performance tasks, science investigations, interviews, etc.).

3. Develop criteria for students to understand and use when looking at their own or other students' work.

4. Involve students in the selection of materials, in the analysis of their work using established criteria, and in expressing their progress.

5. Use the information gathered from observation to enhance or modify instruction.

In order for student work samples and/or a portfolio to be a valid assessment for student learning it must be a thoughtful collection of materials that documents specific learning over time.

Student Portfolios	
Advantages	**Potential Challenges**
- Assesses what students know and can do and not just what they know in specific areas over time - Provides goals for student learning - Can include anecdotal records, writing work samples, videotapes, etc. - Are adaptable to different levels of assessments, purposes, and types of materials - Can show both where students are and how they got there - Provides information likely to be used to adjust instruction - Can be shared with students, parents, teachers, and administrators	- Can be time and labor intensive - Can be cumbersome to store - Requires carefully-defined criteria for review and scoring - Requires training for reviewers - It can be difficult to control outside influences on the product such as parental assistance and access to resources like computers - Not standardized, therefore stakeholders may not know the nature of the assignment, help that was provided, or the quality of other students in the group (although a scoring rubric can help alleviate this challenge).

4. Running Record for Reading Performance

A running record is an assessment method that allows the teacher to gather information of how a student approaches the reading process. The running record uses standard recording and scoring procedures to accurately and objectively record what a young student says and does while orally reading continuous text. It is considered an authentic assessment because it allows students to read in the same way they are asked to read during their reading groups and within the classroom. Running records allow teachers to:

- Determine what students are doing as they are reading
- Observe the strategies students use while they are problem-solving
- Make informed reading and grouping instructional decisions
- Observe changes over time in a student's learning and reading performance

Student Information Gained from Running Records	Analyzing a Running Record by Sources of Information	Instructional Decisions from a Running Record
• Reading fluently or word-by-word reading • Using single phonemes to sound out words • Attention to meaning • Using first letter cues and not attending to detail in words or ignorning first-letter cues • Not self-correcting errors • Re-reading • Problem Solving	• Meaning (M) - If the student was led by the meaning of the messages of text • Structure (S) - If the student's responses wer e influenced by the syntax or structure of the sentence • Visual Information (V) - If the student was influenced by visual information from the print	• Are the Running Records showing a balance in the use of sources of information (M, S, V)? • Are the students reading at instructional reading level in the classroom program? • Am I using the Running Records to group students who could work together at this moment in time? • Are the Running Records showing a balance in what is being emphasized in the literacy program? • Am I using prompts to support teaching and learning? • Am I looking for evidence the student is comprehensing and asking myself if the student is driven by meaning?

Example of a Running Record (Grade 3)

RUNNING RECORD SHEET

Name: _____Jeanine_____   Date:_____9-30-13_____

School: ____West_____   Teacher:_____Bodin_____

Text Titles	Errors Running Words	Error Rate	Accuracy	Self-Correction Rate
Easy (100%-95%)		1:	%	1:
Instructional (94%-90%)		1:	%	1:
Hard (89%-Lower)	4 31	1:8	88%	1:8

Analysis of Errors And Self-Corrections

Information used or neglected [Meaning (M), Structure or Syntax (S), Visual (V)]

Easy_____

Instructional_____

Hard There are 4 errors and 1 self-correction. The score of 88% accuracy indicates that the book is at a frustration level for her.

TEACHER OBSERVATIONS (Analysis of Errors and Self-Corrections)

In the first error, "el" for "diddle", the child looked at the last part of the word. She did not use meaning or syntax cues. With the next two errors, the child focused on the root word and did not use the "ed" ending to pronounce the word. This error was meaningful with the use of some visual cues; however, the child did not look at the whole word. With "sport", the child went back and self-corrected.

Page		E	SC	Information used E MSV	SC MSV
1	√ -el -el diddle, diddle	I		M S **V**	
2	√ √ √ √ √				
3	√ √ jump √ √ √ jumped	I		M S **V**	
4	√ √ √ looked laughed	I		M S **V**	
5	√ √ √ √ sp sc sport		I		M S **V**
6	√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √				

Running Records	
Advantages	**Potential Challenges**
▪ Details a normal activity in the classroom, giving a more authentic and natural view of a student's oral reading ▪ Reveals many different areas of reading development in one recording ▪ When used periodically can capture progress over time ▪ Assesses text difficulty and ensures that texts are well matched to students ▪ Allows for grouping of students with similar needs ▪ Allows for individual instructional needs	▪ The student may feel "watched", causing discomfort or change in behavior which may invalidate the recording ▪ Because one running record is a snapshot in time it may not reveal what normally occurs in reading behaviors, thus trends over time need to be evaluated ▪ Intense listening by the teacher may cause inability to observe the rest of the classroom

5. Student Self-Evaluations

Self-evaluation is defined as students reflecting on and judging the quality of their work or learning experience, based on evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of improving their work in the future. When we teach students how to assess their own progress, and when they do so against known and challenging quality standards, we find that it can be a valuable learning exercise. Self-evaluation is a potentially powerful technique because of its impact on student performance through enhanced self-efficacy and increased intrinsic motivation. Self-Evaluations occur through a variety of structures such as student-led conferences, journals, rubrics, surveys, organizers, or goal setting activities.

Rolheiser and Ross suggest a 4-stage model for teaching student self-assessment:

Stage 1: Involve students in *defining the criteria* that will be used to judge their performance. These criteria should be a negotiation of an integrated set of personal and school goals. This involvement provides an opportunity to orient students to the learning expectations.

Stage 2: Teach students how to *apply the criteria* to their own work. Since the goals are not entirely the students, they will need to see teacher modeling and numerous examples that illustrate particular categories.

Stage 3: Give students *feedback* on their self-evaluations. This feedback, whether written or oral, will assist students with recalibrating their understanding of the criteria. Having different sources of feedback (e.g., peers, teacher, parent) provides data for comparison that will help students develop accurate self-evaluations.

Stage 4: Help students *set productive and realistic goals and action plans* based on the feedback and self-evaluative data. Without this support, students may be uncertain whether they have achieved the expected learning.

Self-Evaluation	
Advantages	Potential Challenges
- Provides opportunity for students to reflect on their work - Reveals students' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses - Can provide information about academic and non-academic competencies, such as attitude	- Difficult to interpret objectively or without further discussion - Students may either overestimate or underestimate their own abilities

Example 1: Self-Evaluation on Research and Inquiry

Self-Evaluation on Research and Inquiry
Name:
Date:
My Inquiry:
This is the way I learn: Check the following statements that most reflect how you learned in the past inquiry. ____ I need to talk to others about my ideas. ____ I need to have some quiet time alone. ____ I need some time to think before I write anything down. ____ It helps me to draw or chart my ideas. ____ I need some help getting going. ____ I need to move around. Give specific examples of the statement(s) here. When did you do this and how did it help you?
My inquiry tools: Choose the top two tools that helped you the most in this inquiry. Complete the sentence stem to explain how it helped you to achieve your learning goals. Write your two reflections in boxes #1 and #2 below. ____ Writing in my inquiry journal helped me to … ____ My inquiry chart was most useful to me when … ____ My inquiry log was useful because … ____ My inquiry circle helped me to … ____ The inquiry community was helpful to me because/when … ____ Inquiry presentations were useful because …
1.
2.
My inquiry process: This was easy for me because _____. This was hard for me because _____. Something I will do differently next time is _____.

Example 2: Mathematics Problem Solving Rating Scale

Mathematics Problem Solving Rating Scale (Circle your response)		
1 I do not understand the problem	3	5 I can explain this problem
1 I cannot recognize the important and unimportant parts of this problem.	3	5 I can recognize the important and unimportant parts of this problem.
1 I do not know where to start.	3	5 I can solve the problem and explain my solution.
1 This was a difficult problem	3	5 This was an easy problem.
Comments: 		

Example 3: Journal/Learning Log

Name:		
Date:		
Problem	**Work**	**Student Comments (examples)**
(2 x 3) - (9 x 4)	2 x 3 = 6 6 – 9 = ? ? x 4	*Do I add and subtract everything in order or what is in the parenthesis first?* *Oops, this doesn't work – I can't subtract 9 from 6.* *I need help!!*

Interim Assessments

Interim assessments are assessments administered at specified times during a curriculum sequence, to evaluate students' progress of meeting the knowledge and skills relative to standards and grade-level indicators. In addition to progress monitoring, other applications of interim assessments include predicting a student's ability to succeed on a large-scale summative assessment, evaluating a particular educational program or pedagogy, or diagnosing gaps in students' learning. The design and choice of interim assessments is driven by the purpose, intended users, and uses of the instruments. Interim assessments are often created and distributed by government or commercial groups, such as a State Education Agency or a testing company, or are developed locally. Interim assessments may function as an intermediate level between summative purposes and providing affirmation of what has been documented through formative assessment.

While formative assessment is embedded in daily classroom instruction, interim assessment occurs outside of daily classroom instruction. Nevertheless, it should be strategically located and administered within the school's and/or district's curriculum scope and sequence. Interim assessments are often uniform in timing and content across classrooms and schools, and results can be aggregated at the classroom, grade, school, and district levels. These data can then be used to make decisions on how well students are learning, and to determine what action may be needed to accelerate progress toward annual goals.

> ### Scenario:
> *Consider, for example, one district's first quarter mathematics interim assessment. In the first quarter, fifth grade students learned how to add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators, including mixed numbers by replacing a fraction with an equivalent fraction with like denominators. Specifically, students learned about fractions as parts of unit wholes, as parts of a collection, as locations on number lines, and as divisions of whole numbers. The teacher has been using formative assessment to determine student understanding of these concepts and adjusting instruction. An interim assessment that identifies good information for planning instruction would provide data on how well students have learned these concepts and can apply them. Ideally, the assessment would also diagnose challenges students encountered in each focus area. For example, a student has the misconception that to add fractions, the numerators are added together and the largest denominator is selected.   He adds the fractions 1/3 + 1/6 as 2/6.   The selected interim assessment would not include items or concepts not taught, such as the multiplication and division of fractions.*

Teachers can use the results from the first quarter interim assessment to plan subsequent math instruction. When administered across classrooms, grade levels, or content areas, interim assessment results provide teachers an opportunity for collaborative reflection, analysis, and action. Leadership teams and school administrators can also use interim assessment results to plan and target specific program interventions to support student learning.

Types of Interim Assessments

There are a wide variety of privately-created interim assessments available, many of which provide performance targets that teachers can aim for in order to ensure that their students are

on track for meeting grade-level standards by the end of the school year. Examples[1] of widely used interim assessments are the Acuity (Common Core Language Arts and math), GAINS Interim Assessments (reading and math), Writing Roadmap (online assessment for developing writing skills), NWEA MAP assessments (reading, mathematics, language use, science), and the new Rhode Island Interim Assessments[2]. These assessments help to establish performance targets, or "benchmarks" for different points in the school-year (i.e., beginning, middle, and end) that provide progress-monitoring information or predict success in meeting grade-level standards by the end of the year. When administered at the end of the school year, these tests also identify students who will likely have trouble meeting grade-level standards at the end of the next school year unless they receive extra help. The resulting information is used to adjust instruction for personalized instruction or intervention. Some potential drawbacks of privately-created interim assessments include that they are generally not tied to any one curriculum, they often have few items that assess a high depth of knowledge, and they often do not have any constructed-response items.

On the other end of the spectrum are locally-developed interim assessments. These might include using an item bank, such as the Rhode Island Test Construction Tool, to develop grade-level assessments, or writing original items with a content-alike group to create shared benchmark assessments. In general, developing appropriate interim assessments takes time and practice. Some challenges with this task include creating or selecting a sufficient number of items to provide useful information (e.g., more than one item is included per standard assessed), including a variety of item types, and including items that represent a range of depth of knowledge. In addition, when developing interim assessments, clear rubrics that demonstrate expectations for student work must be created. When done well, the resulting assessments can be of high utility and fully aligned with the score and sequence of the curriculum.

Tips for Selecting and Developing Interim Assessments:

1. Interim assessments must be designed to serve their intended purpose. The assessment should be directly aligned to standards, should serve as an instructional planning tool for teaching and reteaching the content, and measuring a range of complexity and problem solving applications that students should know and be able to demonstrate in a specific content area and at a specific grade level.

2. These assessments should provide diagnostic feedback on student strengths and weaknesses to help identify the source of difficulty.

3. Results of the assessment should be consistent regardless of who scores the test or when.

4. The interim assessment should include:
   - Reasonable testing time
   - Reasonable cost
   - Appropriate training for administration
   - Useful score reporting and analysis
   - Clear understanding of how the results fit with other assessments
   - Clear understanding of who will use the results

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[1] Note: The assessments listed here are not necessarily recommendations, but rather are examples.
[2] For more information about the Rhode Island Interim Assessments visit www.ride.ri.gov/Interims

Interim Assessments	
Advantages	Potential Challenges
- Provide feedback on the academic areas that individual students need the most assistance - When created in alignment with standards, they enable teachers to more accurately gauge student performance against grade level expectations	- May not be aligned with standards, state tests, or pacing calendars - Assessments are not given frequently enough to have much impact on instruction - May encourage teaching to the test - May be challenging to create locally at the school- or teacher-level, especially if not using an item bank - Extended scoring time may reduce the value of the assessment data for instruction

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments provide information at the student, classroom, and school levels. When closely tied to curriculum and instruction, summative assessment provides information about a student's achievement of specific learning outcomes. Summative assessments can provide critical information about students' learning at the end of an interval of instruction, as well as an indication of the quality of classroom instruction, especially when they are accompanied by other sources of information.

End-of-Unit Summative Assessments

A well-designed end-of-unit assessment that is aligned to standards provides teachers with information about individual students (identifying any student who failed to meet the outcomes or surpassed the expectations), as well as provides an overall indication of classroom instruction. End-of unit summative assessments should be created prior to instruction to capture and identify both the content and process of learning that represent the desired outcomes. In this way, summative assessments can serve as a guide for directing the curriculum and instruction. Summative assessments may be created by the teacher, a team of teachers, or may be part of a program or kit (e.g., Full Option Science System-FOSS).

Some examples of summative assessments include:

Locally Developed Assessments (selected response, short constructed response)	
Advantages	**Potential Challenges**
▪ Can be tailored to match the course, program, and curricular objectives ▪ Specific criteria for performance can be established in relation to the curriculum ▪ Results can be obtained quickly ▪ Less expensive than commercial assessments	▪ Can be complex and time consuming to develop valid and reliable assessments. ▪ Results may not be generalized beyond the course, program, or curriculum ▪ Vulnerable to student theft and distribution ▪ May hinder curriculum change if it means that the assessment would have to be revised

Performance Assessments	
Advantages	**Potential Challenges**
▪ Can be used to assess from multiple perspectives (e.g., content, writing, problem solving) ▪ Able to assess transfer of skills and integration of content ▪ May promote student creativity and critical thinking ▪ Can be scored holistically or analytically	▪ Must be carefully designed to ensure student learning of curricular objectives ▪ Can be time consuming and labor intensive to design and score ▪ Inter-rater reliability must be addressed ▪ Scoring can be subjective

Capstone Projects Culminating activity that provides a way for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired during their secondary school education experience (e.g., in-depth project, reflective portfolio, community service, internship). Through the capstone experience students demonstrate research, communication, and technology skills including additional 21st century skills.	
Advantages	**Potential Challenges**
▪ Are motivational for students ▪ Can be cumulative and allows for integration of knowledge and skills ▪ Invites external evaluation and self-assessment	▪ Can be labor intensive ▪ Can be difficult to coordinate multiple dimensions of learning and assessments ▪ Require carefully defined criteria for review

Annual Standardized Summative Assessments

Standardized summative assessments (i.e., NECAP, PARCC, NAEP, etc.) are for the purpose of measuring student academic achievement and/or comparing performance trends in a district or individual school by grade level, subject matter, demographic groups, etc. These assessments can assist education reform by tracking the progress and levels of achievement of individuals or group of students.

The state assessments hold school districts accountable for raising student academic achievement and identifying schools in need of improvement. The results of these assessments must be reported widely to the public and used by states to demonstrate whether students are making adequate yearly progress (AYP). School systems are held accountable if increasing numbers of students do not obtain proficiency in each subject area tested. These assessments, however, can be utilized by classroom teachers to 1) revise instruction for the entire class or specific courses, and 2) develop specific interventions for individual students.

Classroom-level reports enable teachers to see how a group of students perform across the curriculum. Even if a group of students has moved on to the next grade by the time the score reports are available, teachers can examine class-level results as a source of information for revising curriculum and instruction for the next class. Teachers can also gather information about their own class by examining the score reports from the previous year. Content areas or subtests in which high percentages of children are performing below average indicate areas of deficiency. Once teachers have noted and prioritized deficiencies, they may consider one or more of the following questions:

- Where/when is this content addressed in our district's curriculum?
- At what point in the interval of instruction are these concepts/skills taught?
- How are the students taught these concepts/skills?
- How are students required to demonstrate that they have mastered the concepts/skills? In other words, how are they assessed in the classroom?

Standardized Assessments	
Advantages	Potential Challenges
- Holds teachers and schools accountable for student learning - Allows for comparison among students from various schools, districts, and states - Focuses on a known set of standards and expectations - Objective in nature; often scored by computers or by trained experts and each question is reviewed to remove bias - Provides an accurate comparison between sub-groups (e.g., ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special needs, etc.) to enable schools to develop programs and services directed at assisting these subgroups	- Evaluates a student's performance on one particular day and does not take into account external factors - May cause teachers to only "teach to the test" - Evaluates the individual performance of students instead of the overall growth of the student over the year - Can create stress on both educators and students - May be wrongfully used for political agendas

Assessment Informs Instruction

A consistent feature of research findings on formative assessment is that attention to the interactive nature of formative assessment can lead to significant learning gains (Black & William, 1998; Herman et al., 2006). Reviews of research on formative assessment processes support the use of questioning, observation, and student peer- and self-assessment. Frequent monitoring of student progress to a determined goal and performance level results in higher achievement for students, particularly when teachers use the data collected to inform their instructional practices (Stecker et al., 2005).

Formative assessment can be most directly used at the individual student level because it measures how a particular student is progressing in the instructional program and identifies where support or enrichment may be needed. Focusing on the individual provides immediate feedback to the student and teacher on the student's progress within the curriculum. Formative assessment may also be evaluated at the classroom level to inform teaching practices because it reveals how many students may be experiencing difficulty. If several students are having difficulty, then perhaps a more general change in instruction is needed.

Interim assessment data can provide teachers with information of what concepts students have learned and the potential to provide follow-up for struggling students. Interim assessments can be analyzed and used to provide feedback to students, to allow for the re-teaching of necessary foundational skills or concepts, differentiating instruction, and rethinking the way in which a concept was taught. Interim assessments can provide a structured and systematic strategy for examining overall achievement and to identify areas of need that may be overlooked in everyday classroom interactions.

Summative assessment informs instructional practices in a different yet equally important way. Critics of large-scale assessments argue that they are disconnected from instruction and are not useful in the instructional process (Shepard, 2001). However, summative assessment can serve both as a guide to teaching methods and to improving curriculum to better match the needs of the students. A primary use of assessment data is in planning curricula. For example, if a school's performance on a state assessment indicates high percentages of students who do not meet standards in writing, then the school could collect more information on its writing curricula, student writing performance (through portfolios or other classroom work), and professional development needs for its teachers. After collecting such information, the school may then review and adopt new writing curricula as well as provide professional development to its teachers in order to support stronger student achievement in writing. Ongoing evaluation of the writing program would be conducted through the use of formative and summative assessment. In this manner, when summative and formative assessments are aligned, they can inform the instructional process and support both the daily instructional practices of teachers as well as the longer-term planning of curricula and instruction.

Assessment entails a collection of procedures that inform the learning process. Formative, interim, and summative assessments each have a place in the larger system of assessment, instruction, and curriculum. When formative assessments are used in conjunction with interim and summative assessment, the potential exists to improve outcomes for all students. Assessments can only serve this purpose, however, when teachers are supported to make appropriate adjustments in their instruction (Herman et al., 2006; Marsh, 2007).

An Example <u>Fourth Grade</u> Comprehensive Assessment System

Assessment Tool	Type of Assessment	Timeframe	Use of Results
Reading Ability and Level ▪ **Running Record** ▪ DRA 2	▪ Formative ▪ Interim/Benchmark ▪ Summative	**Running Record:** quarterly **DRA2:** December, March, June	▪ Determine reading groups ▪ Inform instruction ▪ Share results with administration, students, & families
Writing Samples	▪ Formative ▪ Summative	Throughout the year End of units	▪ Inform instruction ▪ Share results with administration, students, & families
District-wide Writing Interim Assessments & rubrics	▪ Interim/Benchmark ▪ Summative	January & May	▪ Inform instruction ▪ Share results with administration, students, & families
Math Performance Tasks	▪ Formative ▪ Summative	Throughout the year End of units	▪ Inform instruction ▪ Share results with administration, students, & families
District-wide Math Performance Assessments & rubrics	▪ Interim/Benchmark ▪ Summative	January & May	▪ Inform instruction ▪ Share results with administration, students, & families
Anecdotal Records: ▪ Reading ▪ Problem-Solving ▪ Scientific Processes	▪ Formative	Throughout the year – every 4 weeks	▪ Inform instruction
Checklists: • All content areas	▪ Formative	Throughout the year	▪ Inform instruction
* Science Unit Summative Performance Assessments	▪ Summative	End of unit – every 6 weeks	▪ Share results with administration, students, & families
* Social Studies Unit Summative Performance Assessment	▪ Summative	End of unit – every 6 weeks	▪ Share results with administration, students, & families

Portfolio Assessment:
   -Writing
   -Art
	▪ Summative	End of units	▪ Share results with administration, students, & families

* Note: Every LEA will make decisions on which content area assessments are appropriate for use in their comprehensive assessment system.

This fourth grade comprehensive assessment system example includes a **blend of formative, interim, and summative** assessments that measure a **range** of written and performance tasks and observational information. **Various** assessments administered at multiple times during the year allow for monitoring and measuring progress of standards and grade level expectations. In addition, the assessments allow for examining skills in both an isolated manner, as well as through application in a performance task which increases the expectation of **complexity and rigor**.

<u>**Creating a Comprehensive Assessment in your Class**</u>

1) **Take stock** – What types of assessments do you currently use in your classroom, your school, and your district? What are the overlaps? What are the gaps? For example, consider whether all the reading assessments used focus on basic comprehension, but not on text-dependent analysis. There may be overlaps and gaps.

2) **Identify appropriate assessments available** – Determine which assessments can be eliminated and what assessments need to be added. Be sure to consider whether these assessments are the best type to measure the intended learning and whether they are valid and fair assessments (see page 8) for the purpose for which they are being used. To learn more about the different assessments, refer to the reference section on the following pages and to the RIDE website to help you learn more about assessments appropriate to the grade you teach.

3) **Develop an assessment schedule** – ensure that there is appropriate time between assessments to allow for grouping students based on instructional needs, formative assessment built into daily instruction, and time to adjust instruction and provide feedback to students based on the data. Then, considering the type of assessment, determine the appropriate times to implement the assessment.

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