

Trends in Assessment and Current Issues in Education

EDUC 450 Glossary of Terms

Glossary:

Achievement Test: formal tool used to measure student proficiency of a subject area already learned

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): is a measurement defined by the United States federal No Child Left Behind Act that allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine how every public school and school district in the country is performing academically according to results on standardized tests

Advanced: above grade level and expected level of performance

AIMSweb: AIMSweb provides a complement to the summative (high stakes) assessment/evaluation model prevalent in education today. The AIMSweb formative assessment model helps to identify at risk students as early as possible, and also those students whose reading levels are not progressing satisfactorily.

Assessment: is part of the educational process in which a teacher may gather, examine, and share information about the skills, abilities, and achievements of individual students. The teacher may use assessment information to set new goals for learning, create expectations, and determine future outcomes. Assessments are used to improve student learning, as well as to make decisions pertaining to curriculum, instruction, and program review.

Average Performance Range: The Praxis tests use a range of scores earned by the middle 50 percent of the examinees taking the test as the average performance range. It provides an indication of the difficulty of the test.

Common Core Standards: define the knowledge and skills students should gain throughout their K-12 education in order to graduate high school prepared to succeed in college or entry-level careers or workforce training.

Criterion Referenced: formal measure that evaluates a student on specific subject area information in comparison to a set standard, criterion referenced data does NOT compare one student to another

Curriculum Mapping: scope and sequence aligned to state standards and benchmarks

Diagnostic Assessment - form of pre-assessment that allows a teacher to determine students' individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. It is primarily used to identify student difficulties and to guide lesson and curriculum planning.

DIBELS: The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing early literacy skills from kindergarten to sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. The test is administered one-on-one and has national benchmarks set for each skill at each grade level. Subtests include: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and Retell Fluency (RTF).

Differentiation Instruction: Teachers responding to variance among learners in the classroom in an effort to create the best learning experience possible. Teachers take professional action based on assessments to learn about each child in their classroom in order to differentiate instruction. To meet the needs of diverse student populations, many teachers differentiate their instruction to help each child learn.

Disaggregated Data: filtering data and placing students and their scores into sub-groups

Essential Learning – benchmarks and learning targets critical for future success

Feedback: communication given in a timely manner that directs attention toward intended learning targets.

Formal Assessment: systematic assessments with strict procedures for administration and scoring. These are often used to comply with issues of accountability, report card or progress reports, and curriculum effectiveness.

Formative Assessment: is an assessment FOR learning to measure progress during any part of an instructional episode. The collection of data through on-going daily lessons or units of study helps the teacher and student analyze achievement and assists students in the learning process.

Goals: broad, general intentions of the long term purpose to which a student, teacher, or school can visualize and work toward

Grade Level Equivalency: expected level based on formal and summative assessments

Graphic Organizer: visual representation of a concept or of relationships between concepts

Informal Assessment: checks that help professionals gather pertinent information about a student in the normal classroom environment.

Examples of informal and formal assessment from Jan Chappius, author of *Seven Strategies of Assessment For Learning*, (Page 5), “*In the classroom we assess **formally** through assignments, tests, quizzes, performances, projects, and surveys; or **informally** through questioning and dialogue, observing, and anecdotal note taking.*” Chappius adds that whether we are engaged in formative assessment is not dependent on the type of assessment we use, but rather how the teacher and students’ use the information.

Journal Writing: written reflections that permit teachers to informally gauge student learning through their thinking processes, formation of ideas, and development of skills.

Mean: the arithmetic average of a set of scores

Median: the middle score (or midpoint of a set of numbers arranged from lowest to highest) that separates the lower half and the upper half (if the set of contains an even number of scores, the median is the average of the middle two scores)

Mode: is the most common score in a set of numbers

Next-Step Feedback: Identifies a correction, describes a feature of quality needing work, points out a problem with a strategy or process, offers reminders, makes specific suggestions, or poses a question to lead student in the intended direction.

Norm Referenced: formal standardized evaluation used to compare a student to other peers in the same age group and aids in developing curriculum options

North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA): the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA), the statewide assessments that measure student performance against the state’s challenging content and achievement standards in select academic subjects and grades. The NDSA consists of general, criterion-referenced assessments for all students in grades 3-8 and 10 in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, and in grades 4, 8, and 11 in science.

<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/90/20182019AllTestWindows.pdf>

Novice: below grade level or expected level of performance

NWEA (MAP): Northwest Education Association has created this assessment and manages the data. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are state-aligned computerized adaptive reading and math tests that reflect the instructional level of each student and measure growth over time.

Objectives: narrow, precise intentions focused on the measureable, specific effort or action necessary to accomplish a targeted outcome

Observation Assessments: identify the performance of students completing various activities and tasks, using anecdotal records or items such as checklists for record keeping

Partially Proficient: slightly below grade level but meets some elements of grade level work

Percent: a ratio of a number to 100 expressed using the percent symbol (%)

Performance Based Assessment: informal measure used to assess a student's ability to complete a task that is specific to a topic or subject area

Percentile Rank: shows the percentage of students in a group (either national or local) whose scores fall at or below the given student's score. The score range is between 1 and 99. If a student scored in the 50th percentile, 50 percent of the scores in the norm group were at or below that score on the same test.

Possible Score Range: The lowest to the highest score possible on any edition of the test

Portfolios: collection of student work used to monitor progress and demonstrate success

Power School: internet-based administrative program that helps measure student achievement and assign grades

Power Standards: critical standards that identify three needs: (1) need for state testing; (2) need for future classes; (3) need for future life uses

Professional Learning Community (PLC): characterized by the collaborative work of educators to continuously seek, share, and act on their learning in order to improve their practice for the purpose of improved student outcomes (Astuto, 1993).

Proficient: at grade level and meets expected level of performance

Progress monitoring: tracking achievement levels based on formal and summative assessments

Reflection: process of looking back in order to learn and make improvements for the future

RIT scores (Rasch Unit): unit of measure that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement.

Reliability: tendency of individual scores to be consistent from one edition of a test to another

Rubrics: a set standard rating scale used to determine performance abilities on a single task

Scale Scores (SS): A student's performance on a test, measured on a scale that is usually created by the test vendor. Scale scores on the ACT, for example, range from 1 to 36. Scale scores on the SAT range from 200 to 800. Scale scores are used in ranking students scores compared to their peers.

Self-Assessment – the student's ability to self-reflect and monitor learning

Smarter Balanced Assessment: assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards (CCSS).

SQ3R – reading method that helps students understand the meaning & organization of textbook reading. **Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review** (*The BIG 6: 1 task, definition; 2 information seeking strategies; 3 location & access; 4 use of information; 5 synthesis; 6 evaluation*)

Summative Assessment – is an assessment OF learning used at the end of an instructional episode. The collection of data occurs at a specific completion point. The data is often used by schools and programs to make curriculum decisions.

Standards based assessment – formal evaluation such as a criterion-referenced or norm-referenced test that measures student progress toward meeting goals or standards previously established

The visual below compares traditional grading with standards-based grading practices.

Traditional Grading System	Standards-Based Grading System
1. Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects, etc.). One grade/entry is given per assessment.	1. Based on learning goals and performance standards. One grade/entry is given per learning goal.
2. Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.	2. Standards are criterion or proficiency based. Criteria and targets are made available to students ahead of time.
3. Use an uncertain mix of assessment, achievement, effort, and behavior to determine the final grade. May use late penalties and extra credit.	3. Measures achievement only OR separates achievement from effort/behavior. No penalties or extra credit given.
4. Everything goes in the grade book – regardless of purpose.	4. Selected assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) are used for grading purposes.
5. Include every score, regardless of when it was collected. Assessments record the average – not the best – work.	5. Emphasize the most recent evidence of learning when grading.

Adapted from O'Connor K (2002). *How to Grade for Learning: Linking grades to standards (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Standard Deviation: The square root of the variance. The standard deviation, like the variance, is used to measure how much a variable tends to vary from its average. (a measure of how spread out the scores are)

Standard Error of Measurement: often used to describe the reliability of the scores of a group. An examinee's score on a single edition of a test will differ somewhat from the score the examinee would get on a different edition of the test- the more consistent the scores from one edition of the test to another, the smaller the standard error of measurement.

Standard Error of Scoring: For tests in which the scoring involves human judgment, this statistic describes the reliability of the process of scoring the examinees' responses. The more consistent the ratings assigned to the same responses by different scorers, the smaller the standard error of scoring.

Standardized Testing: has a set of uniform procedures for the administration and scoring, and these must be followed to ensure standard, valid conditions. Standardized testing includes a set of norms, compares students to others at the same age, and evaluates for reliability and validity.

Stanine Scores: nine-point standard scale with a mean of five and a standard deviation of two. (1 is low, 9 is high)

STAR Reading: an online assessment program developed by Renaissance Learning for students in grades K-12. The program's efficiency is an advantage for students to complete the assessment and educators to get a report that analyzes reading comprehension and understanding of vocabulary.

Success Feedback: Identifies what is done correctly, describes a feature of quality present in the work, and points out effective use of a strategy or process.

Validity: The extent to which test scores actually reflect what they are intended to measure. (*The Praxis Series* tests are intended to measure the knowledge, skills, or abilities that groups of experts determine to be important for a beginning teacher.)

Value Added Assessment: A measure of school, grade, or classroom progress in student achievement that is created using value-added analysis.

Value-Added Analysis: The use of statistical techniques to measure the contributions of schools, grades, or classrooms to student achievement. Value added measures overall school, grade or classroom progress in student achievement, over time, by taking into account current and past student performance and student characteristics.

Variance: A measure of how much a variable tends to vary from its average. It is equal to the average squared difference between a variable's individual values and the variable's average value. If most students score very close to the district average on a test, then the variance of test scores across the district is low. If, on the other hand, most students score either much higher than or much lower than the district average, then the variance of test scores is high.