How to Create and Use Pre-Assessments

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Definition of Pre-Assessments
Pre-assessments are tools or techniques used to measure which objectives students have mastered prior to instruction.

Purposes of Pre-Assessments
• Differentiate instruction
• Guide whole-group instruction
• Plan learning activities that address varying levels of readiness
• Determine which students have/have not achieved mastery of specific objectives
• Identify problems that might cause students difficulty with mastery of an objective
• Form flexible groups
• Determine mastery level of individuals or small groups

Advantages of Using Pre-Assessment Data
• Determine student mastery and/or learning gaps
• Avoid teaching students what they already know
• Guide instruction to challenge students appropriately
• Use planning and instructional time effectively
• Motivate students to be more involved in and attentive to instruction
• Plan more engaging, relevant and meaningful instruction
• Identify students who have extensive background knowledge in order to form expert groups

“Think Abouts” for Pre-Assessments
• Essential curriculum standard(s) and indicator(s) upon which the pre-assessment will be based
• Clear goals and purposes
• Formal written pre-assessments versus informal checks for understanding
• Alignment with post-assessments

Pre-Assessments Menu
Formal Assessment Techniques:
• Checklists of Skills (e.g. operations with decimals, using parts of speech)
• FCPS Curriculum Quarterly Assessments
• FCPS Curriculum Performance Tasks or CRES Tests
• Instructional Pre-tests (text-based or teacher made)
• Portfolios
• Running Records
• Standardized Tests (e.g. MSA, SAT 10)
Informal Assessment Techniques:

- Every Pupil Response Techniques
  - Choral Response
  - Clothesline
  - Fist of Five
  - Four Corners
  - Individual Response Boards
  - Signal Cards
  - Speedometer
  - Thumbs Up
  - Windshield

- Other Informal Assessment Techniques
  - Entrance Card/Warm-up
  - Exit Card
  - Journal/Free Write
  - KWL
  - Matching
  - Most Difficult First
  - Observation
  - Pre or Post-test

Descriptions of these pre-assessment techniques are available at the gifted and talented curriculum link at www.fcpsteach.org.

Strategies to Address Varying Levels of Readiness

- Curriculum Compacting
- Extension Menus
- Learning Contracts
- Higher-Level Questioning
- Independent Investigations
- Tiered Assignments
- Learning Centers
- Flexible Grouping
- Literature Circles
- Anchor Activities

Bibliography


