

Things to Remember About Effective Learning Assessments



Both students and teachers can be intimidated by assessments. Assessments are tools that should be used to facilitate learning. Keeping these perspectives in mind should help demystify assessments and, hopefully, reduce the level of stress they create for students and teachers alike.



An assessment is a tool to measure how much of the knowledge and skills a learner has acquired.

Formative Assessment:

- Given during a course
- Provides timely feedback
- Low-stakes outcome

Summative Assessment:

- Given end of a course or learning unit
- Feedback is often minimal
- Usually graded or high-stakes outcome



An assessment has three elements. The teacher makes an *observation* of the student displaying *cognition*, which provides the basis for an *interpretation* of the student's level of understanding.

If a student does well or poorly on an assessment, it is common to assume this tells us something clear about the student's cognition ... but it may be that these results are telling us something about the observation or interpretation of elements instead.



Assessments are a form of communication.



By creating the assessment, the teacher identifies, "These are the important concepts we are addressing in this course."

By taking the assessment, the student replies, "This is what I understand about these concepts."



Through feedback, the teacher says, "These are the concepts that you have mastered. These are the concepts where you have misunderstandings."

Other useful resources, available at <https://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/assessment-literacy>:

- [Integrating Formative and Summative Assessments](#)
- [Why Is It Important to Assess \(Video, PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Map of ILEARN Assessment Development Practices to Classroom Assessment Practices](#)