
Balanced Assessment System



Office of Educational Accountability

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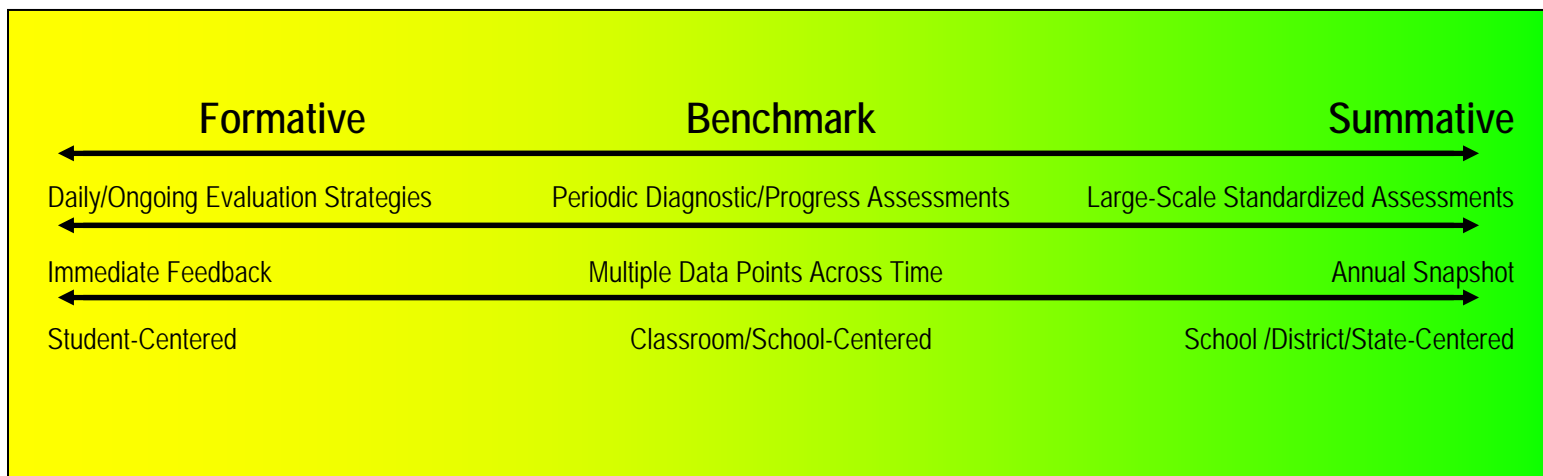
Assessment is an integral part of instruction, providing information about how well students are progressing toward state standards. Standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are interwoven in the learning process, and each informs the others. Standards are the *what* – they define what we expect students to know and be able to do. Curriculum is the *how* – it defines a body of learning experiences that are designed to reach the standards. Instruction is the *in what ways* – it provides the specific learning experiences and ways of differentiating those experiences to scaffold student learning. Assessment is the *how well* – it gauges the attainment of learning to inform instructional practices and curriculum. A balanced approach to assessment includes a continuum of strategies within a range of frequency and purpose.

Formative assessment occurs continuously in the classroom, both within and between lessons. Information is used to adjust teaching strategies. Students receive frequent and meaningful feedback on their performances. Examples of formative assessment strategies include teacher observation, discussion, questioning, and non-graded class work. The focus of formative assessment is to determine what learning comes next for a student.

Benchmark assessment occurs within, between, and among instructional units. Information is used to identify strengths and gaps in curriculum and instruction. Grade-level curriculum may be refined, and teachers may modify instruction for student groups based on their progress. These assessments might be teacher-developed or district-developed products, or they may be purchased commercially. When using a commercial product, it is important to examine the types of questions used and the links to state standards. Examples of benchmark assessments include midterm and end-of-unit assessments, district-wide assessments such as 6-Trait® writing, specific reading inventories, or products such as MAP®, SCANTRON®, or ThinkLink™. The focus of benchmark assessment is to determine how student groups are progressing or how well a program is working.

Large-scale assessment occurs annually or less-frequently. Information is used to develop strategic, long-term evaluation of curriculum and programming based on trends over time, and to monitor state, district, and school progress. Assessment instruments and procedures are standardized so that comparisons can be made across student groups. Examples of large-scale assessment include the WKCE®, WAA-SwD®, ACT®, SAT®, NAEP™, and AP® exams. The focus of large-scale assessment is to determine how schools, districts, and states are progressing.

These assessment strategies provide information at differing intervals and for different purposes. Each one provides a different perspective, and one cannot take the place of another. Together, they provide a balanced approach to assessment that informs decisions at the classroom, school, district, state, and national levels. Balanced assessment handout available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/dacnwltrs.html>.



BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

	FORMATIVE	BENCHMARK	SUMMATIVE
PURPOSE	Informs instruction <i>What learning comes next for this student?</i> <i>How am I monitoring my own learning?</i>	Diagnoses student level and/or monitors progress <i>How are students progressing?</i> <i>How well is this program working?</i>	Monitors national, state, district, school, or classroom progress <i>How are they progressing? How do they compare?</i>
TYPE	Ongoing formative strategies “in the moment”	Benchmark or diagnostic periodic/interim tests	Large-scale, standardized assessment
KEY FEATURE	Assessment <i>as</i> and <i>for</i> learning	Assessment <i>of</i> learning (on-grade or off-grade)	Assessment <i>of</i> learning
FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Teachers, Teaching Teams • Parents • Schools, Districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State • Federal • Higher-Education • Researchers • Students • Teachers • Parents • Schools, Districts
FREQUENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs within and between lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs within, between, and among instructional units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs annually or bi-annually
USE OF RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within instructional activity, information is used to change or to adjust teaching • Student receives frequent and meaningful feedback on performance • Teacher engages student in the monitoring of student learning • Teacher decides if the student needs remediation or enrichment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-level or content-based professional learning communities use data to identify strengths and gaps in curriculum and instruction • Grade-level course curriculum may be changed, refined • Teachers may modify instruction for student groups based on their progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School or district teams develop strategic, long-term evaluation of curriculum and programming based on trends over time • States monitor school and district progress • U.S. Department of Education monitors state performance
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how to gauge student progress toward a standard and how to scaffold instruction to reach that goal • Teacher reflection on what types of formative strategies are currently employed in the classroom • Implementation of new strategies • Opportunities to practice and to perfect usage 	<p>If teacher-developed, school-team-developed, or district-developed products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of learning outcomes based on state content standards • Development of assessment items & test <p>If using a commercial product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn features of the instrument and how content links to district curricula and state standards. • See Progress Monitoring Tools Chart www.rti4success.org <p>Using local products <i>or</i> commercial products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregation & interpretation of data • Discussion of results • Sharing effective strategies across teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and interpretation of large-scale assessment trends over time • Data disaggregation and progress evaluation at the building level and at the grade level • Opportunities for revising district or school instructional practices and curricula
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback • Open questioning, exit tickets • Self and peer assessment • Observations • Discussions • Ungraded class work 	<p>Teacher, school-team, or district-developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graded class work • Midterm and end-of-unit assessments • District assessments; e.g., 6-Trait® rubric <p>Commercial Products (not exhaustive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP, SCANTRON, ThinkLink, etc. • Reading inventories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-Course Exams • WKCE • WAA-SwD • NAEP™ • ACT®/SAT® • AP® Exams