

Assessing Student Performance

In order to administer any good assessment, you must have a clearly defined objective of what you want to assess. Therefore, you must ask yourself several important questions:

- What concept, skill, or knowledge do I want my students to know in this subject?
- At what level do I expect my students to be performing?
- What type of knowledge is being assessed: memory, reasoning, or a process?

Concepts, skills or knowledge:

Determine your goals and objectives for each subject. What do you want your student to learn about this subject? If you are using a traditional textbook, be certain to review the table of contents. Although a textbook may prove to be very useful and easy to use, please note that some textbooks may include too much, or inappropriate information, or it may not fit your needs exactly. So, determine beforehand what it is that you would like your student to learn in the textbook.

If you are not using a traditional textbook, then articulate the skills or performance level you desire your children to attain in this subject. For instance, in order to determine the objectives of a physical education course, first decide if you want to have cardio vascular and endurance objectives, or do you want them to develop strength? Perhaps you would instead rather that they develop a specific physical skill. Articulate beforehand exactly what objectives you would like to develop. Then you can determine at what level you expect them to perform and how you will assess their performance.

The next step in assessing performance will be to determine what type of knowledge you will be assessing. Let's examine three types of knowledge you may assess.

Memory: Do you want your student to simply recite back to you the correct answers? Most traditional tests weigh this type of knowledge heavily. It's very black and white and easy to determine how many right answers they had in relation to the number of wrong answers they gave. Using this approach will yield a percentage by which you can determine a grade. You should decide beforehand how much weight their daily work counts in relation to a test. Some teachers only count test results in determining a grade. Others count daily work half the score and tests the other half. Still, other tutors don't test their students at all but determine their grade through their daily interactions. But memory knowledge doesn't have to be the only method of assessing. You may want to also take other aspects into your evaluation; such as reasoning and the process of learning.

Reasoning: When your students answer questions or write an essay, do they think about what they are learning? Are they mentally engaged in linking information that they are learning to what they already know? Do they ponder and reflect on the information and apply it to their own life? Are they putting forth effort to understand the material, or are they doing as little as possible just to pass the course? If reasoning is important to you and appropriate for the age of your students, then determine how much weight this knowledge will have in your student's assessment. What percentage of your assessment will reasoning have in the child's grade for the course? You can determine this through personal interaction with them and how thoroughly they write their answers to the questions at the end of the chapter. One of the most beneficial opportunities to show reasoning ability is in written essays and research papers. An example of assessing written work is found in the appendix of this handbook.

Process: Another aspect of knowledge you may want to assess is the process of learning. Is the student engaged and putting forth their best effort to learn? Are they

organized in their process of learning? Can they break down large objectives into small daily tasks? Is their written work neat and orderly? Are they able to focus their attention to the task at hand, or does their mind wander and they become distracted? Do they put forth effort into subjects that they do not have a natural interest? How much weight do you want the process of learning to be included in their evaluation? Determine which processes are to be included in the objectives for the course, and decide how much weight they will receive in your evaluation.

You may wish to allow your students to participate in this process of defining the objectives they should know in this subject. Ask your students to name the elements of the task that they would use to determine how successfully it was completed. Having clearly defined criteria will make it easier for you and them to remain objective. When your students are involved in the process of determining the criteria for a course, they will know exactly what is expected of them. They will be learning how to set their own goals and will be much more motivated to achieving those objectives, rather than having someone else's objectives be imposed on them.

Methods of assessment:

There are several methods you can use to determine the degree to which your student has been successful or unsuccessful in meeting their objectives. One approach that is very popular in the field of education today, is to create rubrics. A rubric is a rating system that is used to determine the level at which a student is able to perform a task or display knowledge of a concept. With rubrics, you can define the different levels of proficiency. By using your objectives, a rubric would specifically articulate the grade a student would receive based on the level they performed their task.

Other methods of assessment:

- *Checklist Approach:*
When you use this method, you have to itemize the objectives specifically you would like to see achieved and then you only have to indicate whether or not these certain elements are present in their performance.
- *Rating Scale Approach:*
When teachers use this, they indicate to what degree the standards were met. Some teachers will use a numerical scale. For instance, one teacher may rate each criterion on a scale of one to five with one meaning "skill barely present" and five meaning "skill extremely well executed." Or you can decide on a percentage of points that skill will carry and add up the points to determine a grade based on the percentage chart found at the end of this section.
- *Narrative/Anecdotal Approach* When teachers use this, they will write narrative reports of what was done during each of the performances. From these reports, teachers can determine how well their students met their standards.

While it is a standard procedure for teachers to assess students' performances, you may wish to allow students to assess them themselves. We do that especially on the TEACH Character Development Summary.

PERCENTILE SCORING

BASED ON 100% ACCURACY IN MASTERY OF THE MATERIAL

100-90%	A	Excellent Achievement, Outstanding Mastery, Superb
89-80%	B	Above Average, Commendable, Attractive
79-70%	C	Average Achievement, Adequate, Ordinary
69-60%	D	Below Average Achievement. Mediocre, Fair, Disorderly
59% below	F	Failure to Sufficiently Master Material, Unacceptable, Undone, Slothful, Disarray

The following criteria can be adapted for evaluating written work. Assign points to each section that add up to 100 and evaluate the written work based on your assessment.

Elements of Writing (Check for errors)

- a. Grammar—sentence fragments, run-on sentence, subject verb agreement, pronoun case and antecedent, adverb and adjective properly placed and used, verb forms, etc.
- b. Mechanics—legibility, word division, capitalization, italics, abbreviations, numbers, etc.
- c. Punctuation—comma, semicolon, apostrophe, quotation marks, period, and other marks
- d. Spelling and Diction—misspellings, plurals, hyphenation, confusable, and informal words, slang, jargon, idioms, omissions, etc.

Content (Check for usage)

- a. Introduction—strong or ineffective, thesis or statement of purpose
- b. Body Structure—shows unity and logical thinking, proper subordination of thoughts, coherence, parallelism, shifts (mood, voice, tense, etc.), clarity, variety of sentence patterns, etc.
- c. Paragraphing—logical arrangement, good transitioning, concise, topic supported, consideration of method or style, etc.
- d. Definite Conclusion—thesis or purpose statement reworded, effective end

Total Points: