

# The Assessment Process in the Classroom

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**A**ssessment is the process of gathering information on what students do. Assessment may occur when students are in specific situations or when they are given specific tasks. When we assess someone, we are looking for evidence that they know or understand a predetermined concept.

There are a variety of ways to assess a student. In general, they include the following types.

1. In the traditional question and answer test, a student is assessed on how many correct answers he achieves.
2. Observational assessments are done by documenting when and under what conditions a student is actually seen involved in specific skills and behaviors.
3. In performance assessment, artifacts (written work, projects, etc.) or student performances are examined using specific criteria.

Based on guidance from the classroom teacher, paraeducators may assist with the implementation or

gathering of information for some assessments. For example, a teacher may ask the paraeducator to give a spelling test, but it is important that the teacher present and model for the paraeducator exactly how to administer it. Evaluation of test results take into account the manner in which a test is administered, so it is important that the paraeducator follow the teacher's exact guidelines. Some assessments must be administered by certified personnel only (i.e., a licensed teacher or a licensed speech pathologist), while others may be administered only by an individual certified to give that specific test (i.e., a psychologist who is certified to give a personality test or an IQ test). In all assessment situations, appropriate guidelines for administration must be followed.

Evaluation is slightly different from assessment in that it is the process of interpreting and making judgments about assessment data. Evaluation is important because it translates assessment into information that a teacher can use to guide instruction. For example, a teacher should evaluate assessment data from her students to help her understand what they know or have learned, determine which methods of instruction, teaching strategies and techniques have worked with them and, additionally, establish where she should begin future instruction in that content area.

A spelling test is an example of one classroom assessment used in the evaluation process. The spelling words are presented orally, one at a time, and the student writes each word down on paper. Suppose the student writes nine out of ten words correctly. We then know that, upon oral presentation, the student can write down nine words, spelled correctly. The student may, in fact, be able to spell the 10<sup>th</sup> word correctly, but in this instance, he did not. We do not know, however, whether this student can use these words accurately in a sentence.

# *Paraeducator Press Resources on the Web*

We also do not know if this student understands the meaning of these words. On this test, the student may be asked to use the words in sentences and also to write down the definitions for each word. However, if those sentences and definitions were memorized by the student, he still may not fully understand the meaning of the words or how to use them in sentences.

Perhaps, though, we have observed the student using several of the words appropriately in conversation and we have also seen him use these words correctly, multiple times, in a written essay. In collecting the information from the spelling test, the observation during conversation, and the written essay, we have a better picture of a student's knowledge of these several words than if we were to rely only on the information from one assessment source. The use of multiple pieces of assessment data helps a teacher understand what her students are learning and when and if they are able to use what they are learning accurately in natural conditions such as a conversation or written essay.

There are some specific questions you may want to address with the classroom teachers with whom you work. What are the steps in the student evaluation process? What is my role in this process? A paraeducator may, when appropriate and with specific guidance from the teacher, be involved in the assessment process for students. Whether or not the paraeducator is involved, it is important to understand the significance of different types of data being collected on the students in the classroom, not only so that student outcomes are not inadvertently affected, but also so that the paraeducator understands the academic and social-emotional goals for each student. A paraeducator who is informed about the assessment process can alert the teacher to evidence of specific learned skills observed in natural settings during the daily routine, a part of the process which is vital in gaining a complete picture of what a student knows.

## *Reference:*

Doyle, Mary Beth (2002). *The Paraprofessional's Guide to the Inclusive Classroom: Working as a Team*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

## **E**arly Childhood Education:

The Literacy Center is a resource for emerging readers and students who are learning English as a second language. The site targets colors, shapes, numbers, phonemes, writing, and words in four separate languages through interactive games. The concepts are reinforced with both written and auditory cues. The Flash player 5 plug-in is required and a link to download it is provided on the website. Visit the Literacy Center at <http://www.literacycenter.net/>

## History/Social Science Curriculum:

The Learning Page is a site designed to help educators teach history and culture using an online archive of over 100 collections of rare and unique items important to America's heritage. The American Memory Collections contain primary source documents, photographs, films, and recordings that reflect the collective American memory. The site offers tips and tricks, definitions and rationale for using primary sources, activities, lesson plans, and other news and information related to teaching about America's past. You can access The Learning Page at <http://memory.loc.gov/learn>

**Using Data in the Classroom: Lighting the Way**

# YOPP-SINGER TEST OF PHONEME SEGMENTATION

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: (number correct) \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Today we're going to play a word game. I'm going to say a word and I want you to break the word apart. You are going to tell me each sound in the word in order. For example, if I say "old," you should say "/o/-/l/-/d/." (*Administrator: Be sure to say the sounds, not the letters, in the word.*) Let's try a few together.

Practice items: (*Assist the child in segmenting these items as necessary.*) ride, go, man

Test Items: (*Circle those items that the student correctly segments; record incorrect responses on the blank line following the item.*)

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. dog _____  | 12. lay _____   |
| 2. keep _____ | 13. race _____  |
| 3. fine _____ | 14. zoo _____   |
| 4. no _____   | 15. three _____ |
| 5. she _____  | 16. job _____   |
| 6. wave _____ | 17. in _____    |
| 7. grew _____ | 18. ice _____   |
| 8. that _____ | 19. at _____    |
| 9. red _____  | 20. top _____   |
| 10. me _____  | 21. by _____    |
| 11. sat _____ | 22. do _____    |

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