

Arlington Heights District 25

Assessment Terms & Definitions

Screener (also ‘Universal Screener’):

Used to determine whether students may need specialized assistance or services, or whether they are ready to begin a course, grade level, or academic program. Screening is conducted to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. Universal screening assessments are typically brief, conducted with all students at a grade level, and followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to corroborate students' risk status.

Progress Monitoring (also known as Curriculum-Based Measurement: CBM):

Progress monitoring is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction towards a specific goal. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. To implement progress monitoring, the student's current levels of performance are determined and goals are identified for learning that will take place over time. The student's academic performance is measured on a regular basis (weekly or monthly). Progress toward meeting the student's goals is measured by comparing expected and actual rates of learning. Based on these measurements, teaching is adjusted as needed. Thus, the student's progression of achievement is monitored and instructional techniques are adjusted to meet the individual student's learning needs.

Formative assessments:

In-process evaluations of student learning that are typically administered multiple times during a unit, course, or academic program. The general purpose of formative assessment is to give educators real-time feedback about what students are learning or not learning so that instructional approaches, teaching materials, and academic support can be modified accordingly. Formative assessments are typically **not** graded, and they may take a variety of forms, from more formal quizzes and assignments to informal questioning techniques and discussions with students. Feedback should be provided to students in a timely manner.

Summative assessments:

Used to evaluate student learning at the conclusion of a specific instructional period—typically at the end of a unit, course, semester, program, or school year. Summative assessments are graded tests, assignments, or projects that are used to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to learn during the defined instructional period.

***EXAMPLE:** Formative assessments are commonly said to be “for” learning because educators use the results to modify and improve teaching techniques during an instructional period, while summative assessments are said to be of learning because they evaluate academic achievement at the conclusion of an instructional period. Or as assessment expert Paul Black put it, “When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative assessment. When the customer tastes the soup, that’s summative assessment.”*

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Benchmark Assessment: (between State Assessments and Formative Assessments):

Benchmark assessments are assessments administered periodically throughout the school year, at specified times during a curriculum sequence, to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to an explicit set of longer-term learning goals. The design and choice of benchmark assessments is driven by the purpose, intended users, and uses of the instruments. Benchmark assessment can inform instructional planning and decision-making at the classroom, school and/or district levels.

Interim Assessment:

Interim assessments (1) evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic goals, typically within a limited time frame, and (2) are designed to inform decisions at both the classroom and beyond the classroom level, such as the school or district level. Thus, they may be given at the classroom level to provide information for the teacher, but unlike true formative assessments, the results of interim assessments can be meaningfully aggregated and reported at a broader level. As such, the timing of the administration is likely to be controlled by the school or district rather than by the teacher.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment:

An assessment where an individual's performance is compared to a specific learning objective or performance standard and not to the performance of other students. Criterion-referenced assessment tells us how well students are performing on specific goals or standards rather than just telling how their performance compares to a norm group of students nationally or locally. In criterion-referenced assessments, it is possible that none, or all, of the examinees will reach a particular goal or performance standard. (*ie: ACCESS testing, F&P, AIMSWeb, PARCC*)

Norm-Referenced Assessment:

An assessment where student performance or performances are compared to a larger group. Usually the larger group or 'norm group' is a national sample representing a wide and diverse cross-section of students. Students, schools, districts, or even states are then compared or rank-ordered in relation to the norm group. The purpose of a norm-referenced assessment is usually to sort students and not to measure achievement toward some criterion of performance. (*ie: MAP, SAT, CogAT, AIMSWeb, IQ testing*)