How to Create and Use Pre-Assessments

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Definition of Pre-Assessments
Pre-assessments are tools or techniques used to measure which objectives students have mastered prior to instruction.

Purposes of Pre-Assessments
- Differentiate instruction
- Guide whole-group instruction
- Plan learning activities that address varying levels of readiness
- Determine which students have/have not achieved mastery of specific objectives
- Identify problems that might cause students difficulty with mastery of an objective
- Form flexible groups
- Determine mastery level of individuals or small groups

Advantages of Using Pre-Assessment Data
- Determine student mastery and/or learning gaps
- Avoid teaching students what they already know
- Guide instruction to challenge students appropriately
- Use planning and instructional time effectively
- Motivate students to be more involved in and attentive to instruction
- Plan more engaging, relevant and meaningful instruction
- Identify students who have extensive background knowledge in order to form expert groups

"Think Abouts" for Pre-Assessments
- Essential curriculum standard(s) and indicator(s) upon which the pre-assessment will be based
- Clear goals and purposes
- Formal written pre-assessments versus informal checks for understanding
- Alignment with post-assessments

Pre-Assessments Menu
Formal Assessment Techniques:
- Checklists of Skills (e.g. operations with decimals, using parts of speech)
- FCPS Curriculum Quarterly Assessments
- FCPS Curriculum Performance Tasks or CRES Tests
- Instructional Pre-tests (text-based or teacher made)
- Portfolios
- Running Records
- Standardized Tests (e.g. MSA, SAT 10)

Informal Assessment Techniques:

- Every Pupil Response Techniques
  - ➢ Choral Response
  - ➢ Clothesline
  - ➢ Fist of Five
  - ➢ Four Corners
  - ➢ Individual Response Boards
  - ➢ Signal Cards
  - ➢ Speedometer
  - ➢ Thumbs Up
  - ➢ Windshield

- Other Informal Assessment Techniques
  - ➢ Entrance Card/Warm-up
  - ➢ Exit Card
  - ➢ Journal/Free Write
  - ➢ KWL
  - ➢ Matching
  - ➢ Most Difficult First
  - ➢ Observation
  - ➢ Pre or Post-test

Descriptions of these pre-assessment techniques are available at the gifted and talented curriculum link at www.fcpsteach.org.

Strategies to Address Varying Levels of Readiness

- Curriculum Compacting
- Extension Menus
- Learning Contracts
- Higher-Level Questioning
- Independent Investigations
- Tiered Assignments
- Learning Centers
- Flexible Grouping
- Literature Circles
- Anchor Activities

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