18 ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

IDEAS SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT FOR AND AS LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

This form of assessment is defined as: frequent, interactive assessments of students’ progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately. These assessment strategies help teachers get clarity on what they will be teaching and to assess how well students have learned what they are teaching.

1. **EXIT TICKETS**

   SET SHORT TASKS STUDENTS CAN DO BEFORE THEY LEAVE CLASS. STUDENTS COMPLETE THE TASKS BY WRITING ON SMALL PIECES OF PAPER OR CARDS AND THEN HAND THESE TO THE TEACHER AS THEY EXIT CLASS, IN THE SAME WAY THEY MIGHT HAND OVER A TICKET AT A MOVIE THEATRE AS THEY ENTER.

   THE TASK COULD BE A WRITING ASSIGNMENT, SHORT QUIZ, OR A QUESTION STUDENTS ARE TO ANSWER.

   SOME TEACHERS USE EXIT TICKETS AT THE END OF EVERY CLASS AS A CLOSING ROUTINE.

   TEACHERS CAN GIVE STUDENTS TASKS THAT ARE UNTIMED, SUCH AS “WRITE AS MUCH AS YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS TOPIC UP UNTIL YOU HEAR THE BELL,” TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS STAY ENGAGED UNTIL THE END OF CLASS.

2. **WHITEBOARDS**

   USE SMALL WHITEBOARDS WITH GROUPS OF STUDENTS. ASK QUESTIONS OR GIVE TASKS AND HAVE STUDENTS WRITE THEIR ANSWER ON A WHITE BOARD. STUDENTS THEN ALL HOLD UP THEIR WHITEBOARDS AT THE SAME TIME.

   IF STUDENTS GIVE CONFLICTING ANSWERS, TEACHERS CAN OPEN A DISCUSSION.
### 3 RESPONSE CARDS

Similar to whiteboards, students use small prepared “response cards” to communicate their level of understanding. Cards can have yes on one side and no on the other, or traffic lights with different colours where red means “no” or I don’t understand, yellow means “not sure” and green means “yes” or I understand. During a lesson ask students hold them up in response to teacher questions.

### 4 THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN, THUMBS WIGGLY

You can do things the old-fashioned way by asking students to use their thumbs to indicate their understanding.

- **thumbs up** = “I understand/agree”
- **thumbs down** = “I don’t understand/agree”
- **thumbs horizontal & wigglng** = “Not sure if I understand/agree”

### 5 TURN TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR

After students complete a learning task, teachers can ask them to compare their answer or idea with their neighbour’s (another student) to see if they have the same answer.

If the neighbour’s answers agree, students give the teacher a “thumbs up.” If they don’t, students give the teacher a “thumbs down.”

This simple process helps teachers get a clear picture of how well students are learning, or not.

### 6 PARAPHRASING

Teachers can assess student understanding by asking students to retell what they have learned in their own words, using words other than those they heard or read.
7  GROUP ANSWERS

PUT STUDENTS IN GROUPS AND SET A TASK TO COMPLETE, A QUESTION TO ANSWER, A TERM TO MEMORISE, OR SOME OTHER ASSIGNMENT. REMIND STUDENTS THAT IN GROUPS, EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYONE’S LEARNING. EXPLAIN THAT YOU WILL CHECK WITH ONE GROUP MEMBER (DON’T LET ON WHO) TO CHECK THAT EVERYONE HAS LEARNED WHAT NEEDS TO BE LEARNED. WITH THIS STRATEGY STUDENTS ENSURE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT IS BEING LEARNED. KEEP IN MIND THE IDEAS ABOUT COOPERATIVE LEARNING.

8  THINK, PAIR, SHARE

GIVE STUDENTS A TASK TO DO ON THEIR OWN AND THEN HAVE THEM SHARE THEIR WORK WITH ONE OTHER PERSON TO IDENTIFY SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES. THEN PROMPT STUDENTS TO REVISE THEIR ANSWERS BASED ON WHAT THEY’VE LEARNED WITH THEIR PARTNER. NEXT ASK THE PARTNERS TO SHARE THEIR ANSWERS WITH THE CLASS.

9  QUESTION EVERYONE

TELL STUDENTS TO BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS. RANDOMLY ASK STUDENTS QUESTIONS USING EITHER OPEN OR CLOSED QUESTIONS, DEPENDING ON THE LEARNING. ANOTHER WAY OF USING THIS STRATEGY IS TO TARGET GROUPS OF STUDENTS.

10  HOT POTATO

ASK A STUDENT A QUESTION TO TEST THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CONTENT. IF THEY GET THE ANSWER RIGHT, THEY GET TO ASK ANOTHER QUESTION THAT TESTS ANOTHER STUDENT’S UNDERSTANDING. THE STUDENT ASKING THE QUESTION MUST KNOW THE ANSWER SO HE OR SHE CAN CONFIRM IF THE NEXT STUDENT ANSWERS CORRECTLY. THIS STRATEGY CAN BE USED TWO WAYS - STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO PICK WHO WILL ANSWER THE QUESTION, AT OTHER TIMES THE TEACHER CHOOSES.
SOCCER, HOCKEY, BASKETBALL

Organise the class into two teams. You may let students choose their team based on their allegiance to a particular sporting team or you might assign students to the "green" and "blue" teams.

THE RULES: If a team gets a correct answer the teacher moves the ball closer to the other team's goal by erasing and redrawing the ball. If a member of a team gets an answer wrong, the ball moves toward their own goal. If the ball gets in their zone and they get a wrong answer, or the other team gets a right answer, a goal or basket is scored. You can also play this using the Hot Potato strategy.

GRAPHIC ORGANISERS

Ask students to create graphic organisers. Organisers are a good check of student understanding because in most cases students won't be able to create correct graphic organisers unless they understand the content.

Graphic organisers guide learners’ thinking as they fill in and build upon a visual map or diagram. Graphic organisers are some of the most effective visual learning strategies for students and are applied across the curriculum to enhance learning and understanding of subject matter content. (See "Graphic Organisers and How to Use Them").

GAME SHOW

With a little effort teachers can develop their own version of popular game shows such as Jeopardy, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, Wheel of Fortune or Family Feud. Teachers should divide the class into teams and give each team review time prior to the game.

WRITING

Understanding can be assessed using numerous writing assessments. For example, students can be prompted to write a response to a passage they've read, answer a question with a few sentences, write a letter to an author, write a letter of complaint, write a short story to illustrate a concept that has been learned, and so forth.
15 JIGSAW OR GALLERY WALK

In groups students create a poster that they can display in the room. The poster should demonstrate their knowledge of content covered by a few bullet points, a picture, a metaphor or a graphic organiser.

After the poster has been made, put students into other groups so that each new group includes a member from the group that created a poster. Have the groups rotate around the room, stopping at each poster where whoever created the poster explains it to the rest of their new group.

16 FOUR CORNERS

A quick way to get students moving around the room to demonstrate what they do or don’t know about a topic.

Give students a question and then ask them to move to a corner of the room based on their answer. For example a teacher might pose a multiple-choice question and designate each different corner as A, B, C or D.

17 BELL WORK

Bell work is short tasks for students to do as they walk into class. The task could be a writing assignment, a short quiz, a question that students can respond to in their journals, or some other task.

Teachers need to ensure that students know that they are to start the task when the bell goes at the start of the lesson. After providing sufficient time for students to complete the task, gather student work and discuss it with the class. Some teachers use bell work as a starting routine for every class.

18 QUIZZES OR TESTS

Multiple choice, true or false, fill-in-the-blanks, and short-answer quizzes and tests are used frequently to gauge student performance.

Quizzes or tests can be used with many of the above techniques. Other assessments can be used. What matters is that the chosen method for checking for understanding accurately assesses the specific proficiency and clearly communicates to students and teachers how well students are performing.

The best assessments are easy to use and take little time to implement.