Planning for Preassessment

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Why Plan?

• Establishes the starting point for learning
• Students can’t learn what they already know
• Match instructional strategies to individual needs
• Saves learning time
• Ensure students have constant challenge
• Proves rationale for your teaching
• Differentiation is not defensible without it
The Naysayers

• Might lower state test scores.
• No time
• What would I do with the data anyway?
• No money for supplemental materials
• I’ve always taught it this way.
Strong preassessments reveal

- Starting point for new learning
- Base of knowledge
- Background experiences
- Interests
- Attitudes
How do you accomplish it?

• Introduce topic
• Initial teaching
• Determine pretest format
• Preassess
• Analysis
• Formation of instructional groups
How might we instruct students?

• Let’s look at three scenarios.

From Data Driven Differentiation in the Standards-Based Classroom (2004) Gregory and Kuzmich
Math Classroom A

• Students are not given a pretest, for they “need” the next unit. Giving a preassessment will be a waste of time. Some students will master the concepts, some will not, but that is up to the students. The teacher is certainly presenting the material so all can learn if they choose.
Math Classroom B

• Preassessment is valuable. The teacher uses an algorithm-based pre and post test. The class does better after the unit than before, so it shows learning occurred.
Math Classroom C

• Small groups of children work on a problem using some skills from the last unit, but also some new concepts. The students have time to work to develop an approach to solve the problem. The teacher moves around the room, taking notes on the process and observing students.
The next step

Determining the proper preassessment
Consider…

• Not always over an entire unit of study
• Can be over a concept or learning objective
• Use in short bursts of time as a formative assessment to determine what and how you will teach next
Questions to Ask

- What do I know about my students NOW?
- What is the nature and content of the final assessment for this unit or section?
- What don’t I know about the content knowledge, critical thinking and process or skill demonstration of my students?
Design the preassessment

• To help us learn what is in the gap between where students are now and what they need to know for the final assessment

• We may not know all information, but we should remember to use what we already have in place
Help is on the way!
Preassessment Tools

- End of unit test
- Open-ended question
- Journal
- Index card
- Mind map
- Inventories
- Letter
- Charts
- Product or performance
- Interview or observation
End of unit test

- Uses your learning objectives
- Find out what child already knows
- If already mastered, can gain time
- Won’t using “THE TEST” beforehand give an unfair advantage?
Tips

• Design the test so it challenges all
• Plan to cover simple to complex
• Mix easy and difficult questions throughout
Open-ended questions

- A prompt to demonstrate prior knowledge
- Students can respond at their level of understanding
- Provides valuable information for differentiation
Journal

• Allows for personal response to student
• Often includes a prompt:
  May describe process
  Give examples
  Provide reflection
Index Card

• One card, one task
• Quick way to sort responses
• Again, uses some sort of prompt
  – Example: 3-2-1 card (Tomlinson, 2003)
    Exit ticket at end of lesson
    3 things learned
    2 questions still have
    1 thing want to learn more about
For immediate feedback-

• Write 2-3 possible choices on a card
• Students put their thumb on their choice and hold it up for teacher to see
• Can assess
  Understanding
  Feelings
  Interests

Chapman and King (2005) Differentiated Assessment Strategies
Sample choices

• I’ve Got It! Love it!
• I’m Clueless! Not a fan
• Understand Happy face
• Still Thinking Straight face
• Shutting down Sad face
Mind Map

• Visual organizer
• Concepts become clear
• Allows a way to add new information
• Use color, space, lines and words
Basic understanding

Mock Trial

- 1 side will win!
- 2 sides
- Lawyers
  - Hard job
- Court
  - Building
- Witness
- Case
- Not Judy

Judge
Deeper Understanding

Mock Trial
- Attorney
  - Direct
  - Cross
- Witnesses
  - Testify
  - Give testimony
- Defense
- Prosecution
- True
  - Based on statement
- Verdict
  - Hears evidence
  - Rules on objections
  - Gives
  - Opens statement
  - Closing argument
Inventories

• Provides a way to see student interest
• Useful when choices are available
Example:

- What do you know about ___________?
- How does _______________ relate to you?
- What do you want to know about ________?
- How do you feel about ______________?
Letter

• Note to parents asking about prior experiences or knowledge
  – Insights into strengths
• Serves to inform as to unit structure
• Especially useful for young children
Chart

K-N-W Chart - Modification of KWL strategy

Knows: Prior skills, knowledge

Needs to Know: current proficiency

Wants to Know: interests, ideas, questions
Content Knowledge Box

• Learn what student’s know
• Identify misconceptions
• Use categories related to a topic
# Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Customs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Food, shelter, &amp; clothing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frayer Diagram

Four sections:
Definition
Characteristics
Examples
Non-Examples
Example of a Frayer Diagram

Definition: A closed plane bound by 3 or more line segments

Characteristics: 3 or more line segments, multiple angles

Examples: square, triangle, rectangle, quadrangle

Non-Examples: circle, arc
Product or Performance

- Music teachers do this all the time
- Demonstrates mastery of concept or task
- May be done with whole class or in groups
- Examples:
  - Create a graph with stock market data
  - Use a microscope to show nucleus of a cell
  - Write a haiku
  - Make a landscape drawing of a park
  - Plot an equation with a graphing calculator
Interview or Conference

• Talk to students about an experience or prior knowledge
Use Readiness of Experience and Willingness

• Student has interest in a task vs. experience in a task

• Scale of 1 to 4
  – New to task
  – Limited experience
  – Knows but may need structure
  – Knows and wants to do

• Modify your teaching style to assist
Tap into Multiple Intelligences

• Visual/Spatial
  Mind map
  Chart
• Verbal/Linguistic
  Interview
  Journal
• Logical/Mathematical
  Demonstration
Things to Consider

Explain the function of preassessment

- Students need to know the purpose
- Parents do also

What do you do with the data?
Once you get the data organized, what next?
Explain Function

• Have to understand how it will benefit all students
• IF used for more than a chance to “move ahead” can be effective for all children-- easier to “sell” preassessment to classroom teachers
Using the data

• Analyze the pretest
• Compare the data to objectives
• Which concepts are mastered?
• Can steps be eliminated?
• Use to form groups
• Give credit for previous mastery
Adjustable Learning Grid

Content or Skill:

Preassessment tool:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need to add:</th>
<th>Need to add:</th>
<th>Need to add:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts in place:</td>
<td>Concepts in place:</td>
<td>Concepts in place:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Degree</td>
<td>Approaching</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Document

• Record a grade for preassessment, if appropriate
• Written record needed
• May use a folder for each child
• Spread sheet or chart
• Use for further reflection or assessment
A word about grading

• Sometimes work used for “practice” and not graded
• Short assessments form next instruction
• May be recorded but not used in actual grade book
• Preassessment grade can be used for grade book, but often better to report out after instruction
The cycle...

• Initial instruction
• Preassess
• Analyze
• Group
• Instruct
• Assess
• … and continue
Remember:

• What is the most powerful difference you expect to see?
• How might you identify these differences in students?
• Use preassessment to increase effectiveness in instruction!
Resources


More references…


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