

Using assessment of learning information

The following excerpts from Earl & Katz (2006) organise the use of assessment information under the headings of: Feedback to students; Differentiating learning and Reporting.

Feedback to Students

Because assessment of learning comes most often at the end of a unit or learning cycle, feedback to students has a less obvious effect on student learning than assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Nevertheless, students do rely on their marks and on teachers' comments as indicators of their level of success, and to make decisions about their future learning endeavours.

Differentiating Learning

In assessment of learning, differentiation occurs in the assessment itself. It would make little sense to ask a near-sighted person to demonstrate driving proficiency without glasses. When the driver uses glasses, it is possible for the examiner to get an accurate picture of the driver's ability, and to certify him or her as proficient. In much the same way, differentiation in assessment of learning requires that the necessary accommodations be in place that allow students to make the particular learning visible. Multiple forms of assessment offer multiple pathways for making student learning transparent to the teacher. A particular curriculum outcome requirement, such as an understanding of the social studies notion of conflict, for example, might be demonstrated through visual, oral, dramatic, or written representations. As long as writing were not an explicit component of the outcome, students who have difficulties with written language, for example, would then have the same opportunity to demonstrate their learning as other students. Although assessment of learning does not always lead teachers to differentiate instruction or resources, it has a profound effect on the placement and promotion of students and, consequently, on the nature and differentiation of the future instruction and programming that students receive. Therefore, assessment results need to be accurate and detailed enough to allow for wise recommendations.

Reporting

There are many possible approaches to reporting student proficiency. Reporting assessment of learning needs to be appropriate for the audiences for whom it is intended, and should provide all of the information necessary for them to make reasoned decisions. Regardless of the form of the reporting, however, it should be honest, fair, and provide sufficient detail and contextual information so that it can be clearly understood. Traditional reporting, which relies only on a student's average score, provides little information about that student's skill development or knowledge. One alternate mechanism, which recognizes many forms of success and provides a profile of a student's level of performance on an emergent-proficient continuum, is the parent-student-teacher conference. This forum provides parents with a great deal of information, and reinforces students' responsibility for their learning.

References

Earl, L., & Katz, S. (2006). *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*. Retrieved June 1, 2014, from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/wncp/full_doc.pdf