

Philosophy of Assessment

Objective (TPE 5): Teaching Candidates can demonstrate a strong knowledge base for not only the application of different forms of assessment but are able to articulate why different modes of assessment are important, what their role is in the overall scheme of education as well as individual lesson plans, and how they relate to supporting students and holding them accountable to learning.

Developing a strong Philosophy of Assessment, as well as the skills to engage that philosophy in meaningful ways in the classroom is a lifetime work, particularly in an era where so much is changing in education and technology. Based on your prior experiences, your readings and discussions and activities in class, what is your current philosophy? Use the questions below to process your own understanding and convictions. Significant mention of the different forms of assessment (**summative, formative, diagnostic, peer, self-assessment**) and how they ought to be used is critical. Please write a 3-4 paragraph explanation of your Philosophy below and submit it on Canvas under “Assignments.” (See rubric for how you will be assessed and provide further guidance to your work.)

- 1) What are the main forms of assessment and what is your philosophy regarding the purpose (or the “why”) for these assessments? What forms of assessment (at this point in your developing thought) do you find to be particularly meaningful or useful, and why (**summative, formative, diagnostic, peer, self-assessment**)?
- 2) What is your philosophy of the role of assessments in supporting students and holding them accountable?
- 3) How do you understand the connection between assessment and the objectives or standards you are teaching? How does that effect the way you lesson plan? How do you view the role of Performance Tasks, multiple means of assessment, and school, district, and State tests in your teaching?

Your Philosophy of Assessment:

Assessments are an integral part of the education process. Without assessments we would not be able to have a better understanding of how students are doing and what their areas of strength and weakness are. The main forms of assessment are as follows, diagnostic, formative, summative, peer and self-assessment. Each of these assessments serve a different purpose ranging from assessing a student progress to self-assessing their own work and reflecting. The types of assessments used in a classroom with vary depending on curriculum content, age appropriateness, and several other factors. No two teachers or classrooms are exactly alike so each teacher will implement assessments how they see fit. I believe each form of assessment that will be described below is vital to the education process and knowing why they are used is the first step that needs to be taken before you can implement assessments in the classroom.

The first assessment to address is diagnostic assessments. These are used as a tool to assess a student's area of strengths and/or weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. Diagnostic assessments are typically done three times in a school year to gauge where a student is at in the beginning, middle, and end. This allows for educators to see where their students are starting, how well they are progressing throughout the year, and if they were able to fully comprehend class content in the end. Diagnostic assessments are usually scaled assessments that provide student scores that can be compared to state or national scales. This will give educators and guardians a general sense of how a child is doing compared to others within the same age group. Another form of assessment is formative assessments which is typically occurs regularly throughout instruction and can range from simple thumbs up to check for understanding to assessing their ability to complete a specific activity. Formative assessments are used to assess a student performance against a standard or objective. Summative assessments are like formative in the way that they occur during instruction, but summative assessments focus on measuring a student's achievement at the end of instruction or end of a unit. These are used to better understand a student's performance periodically usually towards the end of a grading period or end of a unit. The last two assessments I want to touch on are peer and self-assessments. These two allow students to reflect on their own work or the work of a classmate. This is an opportunity for students to take greater responsibility of their learning and reflect on their abilities to follow instruction. Students are also able to see how other classmates interpret instructions and how well they perform. Peer assessments are especially great opportunities for classmates to provide feedback for one another.

As previously stated, each assessment serves its own purpose, and it is up to the educator to know which assessment they should be using and what purpose that assessment is serving in the classroom. Personally, I am not a huge diagnostic assessment fan. I understand the purpose and believe it provides a great starting point for getting to know a student's strengths and weaknesses, but sometimes diagnostic and standardized tests do not assess what teachers see students do in the classroom. I, myself was never a great test taker, but I excelled in creative projects that diagnostic assessments did not test for. With that said, most districts still require them to be done and as an educator I would follow the rules and complete them because they do provide valuable knowledge, but I believe they miss out on some skill set areas that are not testable. As for formative and summative assessments, I find these to be incredibly useful and easy to implement. These can be planned out with the lesson planning process and are one of the more useful assessments in my opinion. Checking for understanding throughout lessons or a unit is important because you can catch those students who may need something retaught or need

extra challenges. They also allow educators to see how well students are grasping the standard or objective of a lesson. Formative and summative assessments provide opportunities for myself as a teacher to reflect on my instruction and use the student information to find areas that I may need to improve upon. Lastly, I view peer and self-assessments as mostly grade dependent. They can be super useful and manageable in any classroom if they are age appropriate. Students in kindergarten can self-assess and provide peer feedback, but they cannot go as in depth as a fifth grader would be able to do so. Therefore, knowing your students' abilities is vital because you do not want to give an assessment that they cannot do. It would not be an effective use of assessments. However, when peer and self-assessments are done properly, they give students the opportunity to give feedback and really reflect on their own work which is a good skill for them to learn early on. When students gain the skill to reflect on their own work, they better understand how to take responsibility for their own learning. Overall assessments are a handy tool that every educator should know and can understand how/when to implement them in their own classrooms.