Pre-Assessment

"Assessment is today's means of modifying tomorrow's instruction." Carol Ann Tomlinson

Pre-assessments allow the teacher and student to discover what is already known in a specific topic or subject. It is critical to recognize prior knowledge so students can engage in questioning, formulating, thinking and theorizing in order to construct new knowledge appropriate to their level. Pre Assessments should be used prior to starting any new topic.

Some pre assessments are as follows:

KWL Charts - K-what do the students already know? W-what do the students need and want to know? L-what did the students learn? An effective pre-assessment tool and summative evaluation tool to measure the level of understanding at the end of unit. Many teachers use the L part as an open-ended question on an exam allowing the students to share the depth of knowledge that was gained in the unit of study.

Graffiti Wall – with colorful markers and large poster paper, have all students creatively design a Graffiti Wall of things they know about a specific topic of study. Students are then encouraged to add to the wall throughout the unit as they gain new knowledge. A colorful way to display what they know and what they have learned.

Boxing – On a large piece of paper, students draw a box in the centre and a smaller box inside the first box. In the outside box, answer 'what do I know?', in the inside box, answer 'what do I want to learn?'. Now in the outside box, write 'what else do I know?' and 'how does it fit?' In the inside box, draw a visual representation to explain the topic. Finally, in the middle of the box, look at all the information and summarize 'what does that say?'

Yes/No Cards – Students make a card with Yes (or Got It) on one side, No (No clue) on the opposite side. Teachers ask an introductory or review question. Students who know the answer hold up the Yes card, if they don't know the answer they hold the No card. This is very effective to use when introducing vocabulary words that students need as a knowledge base for a specific unit of study.

SA/A/D/SD – Students are given to opportunity to formulate their own views and opinions along a continuum rather than dialectically. Given an issue (similar to those outlined above) students are asked to consider the topic and determine whether they strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (d), or strongly disagree (SD) with the statement. They are then asked to move to the appropriate station in the classroom identified with one of the options. A class discussion follows as students are given the opportunity to outline and defend their positions, refute the arguments of others as well as re-evaluate their own ideas.

Squaring Off – Place a card in each corner of the room with the following phrases: Dirt Road, Paved Road, Highway and Yellow Brick Road. Instruct the students to go to the corner of the room that matches where they are in the new unit of study. Students go to the corner of the room and as a group, discuss what they know about the topic.

Turn & Talk- During a lesson, there may be opportunities to have the students do a turn & talk activity for a few minutes. This allows students to talk about the information presented or shared and to clarify thoughts or questions. This is an effective alternate strategy to asking questions to the whole group and having the same students responding. All students have a chance to talk in a non-threatening situation for a short period of time.

Source:
http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/constructivism/how/preassessment.html

Some additional ideas are:

Teacher prepared pretests
Writing prompts/samples
Questioning
Guess Box
Picture Interpretation
Prediction
Teacher observation/checklists
Student demonstrations and discussions
Initiating activities
Informational surveys/Questionnaires/Inventories
Student interviews
Student products and work samples
Self-evaluations
Portfolio analysis

Game activities
Show of hands to determine understanding: Every Pupil Response
Drawing related to topic or content
Standardized test information
ISM data
Anticipation journals

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment provides information for teachers to adjust teaching strategies and promote further learning. It is ongoing and should be a part of most lessons. When implemented in the classroom, it provides students with an understanding of their own learning and serves to emphasize the learning and teaching process. Traditional summative assessments, like the unit test, evaluate what a student has learned at the end of a unit, but do little to facilitate learning. Skillful teachers take advantage of formative assessments to identify areas that need further teaching and adjust instruction to match the needs of students. It isn't graded in most cases and should be **ongoing.**

Some examples are:

Homework and Quizzes

1. The easiest form of information to collect or analyze about your student's learning is their regular work in the form of homework and quizzes.
2. This information will be richer if you include questions that require students to explain their thinking. It is especially helpful to ask questions that require students to apply their thinking to a new situation that you have not discussed in class. This requires flexible thinking on their part and should reveal how they are thinking better than questions that allow them to say back what they have memorized.

Exit Tickets

1. Give students "tickets" – small pieces of paper designed to look like tickets, but with space for writing.
2. Ask students two questions. One that requires a factual answer about the big idea of today's lesson, but in their own words. A second question should require more explanation of a concept.
3. Give students five minutes at the end of class to write their answers. Their names do not go on these exit tickets.
4. They must give you an Exit Ticket to leave class for the day.

5. Analyze the tickets to learn how many students got the big idea and how they understand it or misunderstand it. Photocopy 4-6 on a single sheet of paper for your portfolio. Select ones that you learned something about your students from that you didn't know before reading the Exit Tickets.

One-Minute Papers

1. Give students an open-ended question and one to three minutes to write their answers.
2. Good questions: What is the most important thing we discussed today? Or What was the most confusing idea presented today?
3. Collect the papers and use for promoting discussion, identifying misconceptions, or confusion.

Concept Mapping

1. Provide small groups of students with a list of about 15 related words that might fit well in an outline.
2. Give them small sticky notes to write the words on.
3. Ask them to create a concept map by moving the sticky notes around on a piece of paper until they have them in the right place.
4. Model for them on the board how to draw connections between words and emphasize that the connections should be labeled with words describing the nature of the relation (leads to, is an example of, sometimes goes with, can't happen without, etc.).
5. Walk around while students are creating their concept maps-ask questions about why they are placing words where they do. Keep in mind that the purpose of this exercise at this point is to find out what they are thinking, not for them to get the right answer. So don't prompt them with correct answers.
6. Collect the papers, analyze them to find out what students know, don't know, and what their misconceptions are. Do not write on the concept maps, though you may want to photocopy one or two for your portfolio. If you do this, select interesting examples that helped you adapt your teaching.

7. Create your own concept map-perhaps on overhead transparency.
8. The next day-hand back the concept maps and show your concept map to the class. Emphasize that
there is more than one way to organize a group of related terms. Ask groups of students to compare
theirs to yours and explain how theirs are different and whether and in what ways they think they
should change theirs.

Problem Solving Observation

1. Give the class a complex problem to solve. Ask them to work in pairs.
2. Good problems will have more than one part and will require students to explain their thinking
to each other. It may be helpful to use problems that require students to show their thinking in
more than one way. Examples of showing their thinking in more than one way might include
graphing, diagramming, explaining how someone with a different perspective might answer the
question, and generating examples.
3. Join one of the groups while they work. Have in mind that you are observing and focus in a
way that you can write down later what you observed. You may find it helpful to jot down 2 or
3 words during this observation to prompt your recall later.
4. Prompt students to explain their thinking to each other. Ask them to say aloud what they are
thinking while they are solving the problem. Prompt them with questions such as "Why" "how
are you deciding to" or "What were you thinking about when you did that."
5. As soon as practical jot down notes about what you observed-especially including notes about
student's problem solving process and what they understand about the process.

Survey Students

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Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are cumulative evaluations used to measure student growth after instruction and are generally given at the end of a unit, topic, course, etc. The goal is to determine whether long term learning goals have been met. It is graded. Summative assessments are not like formative assessments, which are designed to provide the immediate, explicit feedback useful for helping teacher and student during the learning process.

Although there are many types of summative assessments, the most common examples include:

- State-mandated assessments
- District benchmark or interim assessments
- End-of-unit or -chapter tests
- End-of-term or -semester exams
- Projects (Summative projects, like summative evaluations or assessments, come at the end of a teaching unit or grading period. Such projects (research papers, projects, photo journals, memory books, portfolios, etc.) assess skills as well as content. They may cover an entire unit, semester or grading period.)