



Planning on Using Informal Assessments?

Incorporating informal assessment techniques into your daily classroom routine is a valuable practice that benefits you and your students, especially those students with a language-based learning disability. According to data collected during the evaluation of a “project-based learning model” of classroom instruction, using informal assessment:

- Organizes learning so it is visible and can be documented.
- Identifies what is valuable to the teacher, the school, the students, the state or region (based on frameworks and standards), the parents, and other members of the community.

<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/AssessPBL.html>

The guidelines below will help you to get started evaluating your students using a variety of informal assessment techniques.

Step One- Take Inventory

Landmark School recognizes three different learning styles. They are; visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. Other researchers recognize that there may be a variety of other learning styles, but it has been our experience that, although every student is different in his or her learning needs, all students learn better either visually, auditorily, or kinesthetically, in addition to any combination of each. Take inventory so that you get to know your students and their learning styles better and immediately so that you can accommodate certain needs from the beginning. Use this link to access the [Landmark School Outreach Program](#) resource page and locate the Learning Style Checklists from previous issues of Spotlight on Language-Based Teaching.

Step Two- Identify

When you have taken inventory of each student's learning style you have identified how each student learns best. Now you can tailor your instruction to help your students master the material more effectively. Even if you have a multitude of learning styles and combinations of learning styles among all the students in your class, you have a better idea of who understands what and when, and you might even teach material in each modality to ensure that everyone understands. Furthermore, when assessing a student who learns best auditorily for example, perhaps the best way he or she will be able to show you

what he or she knows, might be by taking a test orally or through verbal questioning and cueing.

Step Three- Accommodate

Now that you know how each student in your class learns best, use strategies, tools, and techniques that will help them master the material more effectively. In addition to the various strategies for classroom instruction located in the resource section of the Landmark School Outreach Program website, we would like to provide you with [Landmark School's Six Teaching Principles™](#) that teachers apply to their daily instruction. Following these guidelines often helps each student learn the material more effectively.

Step Four- Assess

So you have been using various teaching strategies, tools, and techniques in your class. How are you going to know that the material or skills you are teaching are being learned by your students? Of course, assessment. Most of you are not qualified to administer the various formal assessment tools; however, you probably have access to those scores. Students on IEP's are typically tested on a yearly basis on pre-determined dates. Once a student has been assessed, you can review his or her scores, identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and alter your instruction. In addition, applying various and frequent informal assessment techniques to your daily instruction is valuable in determining how each student learns best, and what he or she is understanding. The following websites contain useful informal assessment techniques.

http://www.cidde.pitt.edu/fds/lrn_assess_5example.htm

<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/assess-1.htm>

<http://www.isothermal.edu/talc/assessment/Classroom%20Assessment%20Techniques.doc>

Information in the websites listed above is from:

Angelo, Tony and Patricia Cross, [Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers](#), 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993

Step Five- Report

Through assessment and daily instruction, you have gained valuable information about your students. In IEP meetings, it is your responsibility to accurately report your knowledge of the student to the team. Most likely, you are also required to write quarterly or semester progress reports. Reports are another platform that allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the student and provide important information that might adjust or amend future education plans for that student.