

Effective assessment practices

In 1996 the document *Principles for assessment and reporting in NSW government schools* was provided to schools to assist schools in reviewing their assessment and reporting policies. This document provides the following definitions:

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning. (page 1)

The following table identifies different forms of assessment, from the very formal to the everyday. Each type of assessment described below can contribute valuable information about student learning.

	Anecdotal opportunities to collect evidence of learning	Systematic opportunities to collect evidence of learning	Formal assessment tasks that are used for reporting purposes
Purpose	To monitor student progress on learning on a regular, day-to-day, manageable basis so that students will experience success in their learning. It also provides immediate information for planning or modifying teaching and learning activities.	To provide meaningful feedback to all students about their learning and what they need to do to improve. Enable students to monitor and improve their own learning. It also provides information for planning or modifying teaching and learning activities.	To collect valid and reliable evidence that can be used to report about students' levels of achievement of the outcomes, at key points in a course. It also provides information for planning or modifying teaching and learning activities.
Documentation and recording	May be noted in daybook but is commonly planned "in the head" and delivered verbally. Does not result in a recorded assessment judgement but may contribute to a holistic assessment judgement.	Is specified in the unit of work or course plan but does not necessarily involve written student handouts. May result in a recorded assessment judgement.	Is thoroughly documented and provided in advance to students. Includes focus outcomes for assessment, student requirements, assessment criteria.
Timing and frequency	Lesson-by-lesson activity on an ad hoc or needs basis occurring many times with a number of students every day.	Occurs at regular monitoring points throughout the design project.	Generally occur less frequently and are informed by the school's assessment and reporting policy.
Teachers role	Teacher monitors students achievement and offers feedback, to some individuals or groups that seek or need feedback.	Teacher identifies a variety of opportunities to systematically collect evidence about student achievement of outcomes in the design project. Expectations about behaviour and performance have been clearly stated to all students.	Teacher must systematically plan a small number of different types of tasks across the course that samples achievement of the outcomes.

