

The National Professional Standards for Teachers: Standard 5 Reflective Commentary and Action Plan

Assessment is very important in many respects. It provides a way of gathering what your students understand and what they might struggle with. It also acts as a way of: diagnosing student learning problems, reporting learning progress to parents, providing feedback to students and comparing student ability on small or large scales. It is an important part of teaching and it is very important to get right be consistent on an individual and national scale.

The National Professional Standards for Teachers outlines that a teacher should be familiar with a range of assessment including formal, informal, summative, etc. I believe I have a good understanding of assessment and the different assessments that should be used in the classroom for different purposes.

I use formative and summative assessments to fully evaluate student progress. Formative assessment is assessment that is used to guide the student to better learning without a formal mark as such. Summative assessment is assessment that has a score or a mark that can be used to compare or pass information of learning ability to external bodies, such as parents.

I use quizzes as a form of formative assessment. I use them in different ways depending on what I want to know about my students. I sometimes use quizzes at the start of a topic or new concept to grasp any knowledge or misconceptions student already have. This is important to me as a teacher to know this as then I can alter my teaching program to suit student learning needs and correct any misconceptions students may have. I mainly use quizzes to gather information on what my students have learnt from the lesson or previous lesson. This also makes it a self assessment for me to see where I might not be teaching a concept as efficiently as I would like. In my recent practicum at SHS I found using quizzes very helpful, not just for my own use for student and self evaluation but I found that it was good revision for students and many students responded well to quizzes.

For immediate feedback I like to use questioning as a formative assessment. I like to do this while students are doing an activity to avoid students feeling uncomfortable and so I get a truthful answer. For example I had identified through previous formative assessment which students may struggle and I would go to those students as discretely as possible to find out how well they really understand what I want them to know and if they need any help. I would do the same for a range of student abilities to quickly grasp whether I need to go over it as a class again. This is a good strategy because it provides instant feedback to myself and shows me if the students understand or if I need to go over it again maybe using a different approach to explain the concepts in an easier or better way for students to learn. This instant feedback is important as otherwise the lesson could be a waste of time for the students and me. This could lose student interest and motivation if they really don't understand which could cause potential long term problems for classroom management and environment.

On my practicum I was lucky enough to be asked to write a year 8 chemistry topic test as well as a practical chemistry test for separation techniques. The tests are attached and show my ability to write tests which are balanced and well planned. All tests were overlooked and approved by all teachers who were implementing the test. The topic test covers all outcomes that were agreed upon by the science teachers on the course plan. It consists of both multiple choice and short answer. As it

is important to assess students on a variety of skills a laboratory test was constructed with short answers. Looking back on the topic tests and the student results I would make a few changes to both tests. There were a few questions asking for the definitions of words that I would change as not only did most students get low marks for this area but I believe now, after deliberation with teachers, that definitions do not show understanding but more rote learning.

I was very happy and proud of the questions and how some were more complex than others which would show a student's true understanding while providing questions that most students could answer with confidence. Also I made sure the first question was very achievable giving student's confidence to complete the test. I was told by many mentors that if a student can do the first question it always helps settle the nerves and gives them great confidence in completing the test.

It is most important to provide feedback to students and regularly so they know what they need to improve on or correct misconceptions from being concrete. The National Professional Standards for Teachers suggest that teachers should give effective feedback in an appropriate time frame. After tests I make it my priority to hand back marked assessments with comments to students within a week of the assessment. The quicker the feedback the better for the student's learning progression, while the task is still fresh and relevant in their mind. I try and go through the test as soon as possible but this proved to be difficult due to regular absentees of students and so I had to make sure every student had completed the test before I could go through the test. I also like to give back feedback informally to students as I walk around the room and I always check work not just to see what they have done but how well they have done it.

Overall I believe I am very capable in constructing, marking, evaluating and giving feedback for assessment. Albeit a young teacher I believe I am highly capable in this area and am happy with my ability in this area. I still see there is room for improvement so I can give students an even better learning experience and as fair assessment as possible. When I am employed at a school I will endeavour to make sure that I participate regularly in assessment moderation as I feel I did not do as much as I wanted at SHS. It is also an important thing to do for the students to have fair assessment no matter what class they are in and who their teachers are. I would like to do assessment moderation in term 1 of 2013 so I can be comfortable with my marking and make sure I have a standard I can follow throughout the year and not leave it too late.