Components of a Comprehensive Assessment System

A comprehensive assessment system includes a variety of assessment types that produce either formative or summative evidence of student learning. Formative evidence is used during learning to adjust instruction, while summative evidence is used after learning to report a snapshot of student achievement over a set period of time.

Comprehensive assessment systems assess learning at all levels of the system: individual learners, classrooms, schools, districts, and statewide. Meaningful information is needed from each level to support teaching and learning, but the amount and detail of information shifts at each level. More detailed evidence is produced in the classroom, where the learning takes place, and proportionally less detailed (more general, aggregated) evidence of learning is produced as the distance from the learner increases.

Student Learning

### Classroom

- **Informal Formative Assessments (daily)**: exit tickets, class polls
  - Evidence of learning of lesson-sized learning targets
  - Most useful to teachers and students during learning
  - Have students learned the lesson’s learning target? Where to next?

- **Formal Formative Assessments (weekly)**: quizzes
  - Evidence of retained learning across related lessons
  - Most useful to teachers and students to adjust learning and instruction
  - Have students retained learning from previous lessons?

- **Classroom Summative Assessments (monthly)**: unit tests, performance tasks
  - Evidence of retained learning across lessons and achievement level
  - Most useful to teachers and parents, often used to report grades at certain points in time, like the end of a unit
  - What are my students’ current achievement levels?

### District/School

- **Interim Assessments (2-3 times per year)**: benchmark assessments
  - Evidence of retained learning across units
  - Most useful to groups of teachers and school leaders for longer-term instructional planning
  - Is our curriculum aligned with the standards?

### State

- **Standardized Summative Assessments (once per year)**: state assessments (MCA)
  - Evidence of ability to transfer knowledge of the Minnesota Academic Standards
  - Most useful to school and district leaders to evaluate curriculum and programs
  - Does the retained learning meet state expectations?

To learn more about assessment and data use, visit testing123.education.mn.gov.