Key Terms for Classroom Level of Assessment

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| **#** | **Words** |  |
|  | Alignment | Refers to whether an assessment item measures any part (ideally, the  most important part) of a content standard. Also refers to how much of a set of content standards an assessment instrument measures. |
|  | Assessment | The process of gathering evidence of student understanding to inform educational decisions and support continued student learning. |
|  | Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment) | Assessment that takes place while instruction is occurring. The information is used to enhance instruction and student understanding during the learning to determine and enhance “next steps” for each and every student. |
|  | Assessment of Learning (Summative) | Summative measures of student achievement used at the conclusion of instruction, when little or no new instruction is anticipated on the content assessed. |
|  | Balanced Assessment System | The use of different types of assessment for different purposes by different users. Can also mean the use of assessments for learning (to guide instruction as it is occurring) and of learning (to measure how much students have learned at the conclusion of instruction). All users have access to relevant assessment information. |
|  | Bias/Fairness | The manner in which a test question is posed that disadvantages some students, due to factors other than their knowledge of the topic being assessed. |
|  | Causation | A demonstration that one variable has a direct and predictable impact on another variable. Note: a correlation between two variables (e.g., poverty and student achievement) does not mean that one variable (poverty) causes the other one (low achievement). |
|  | Cognitive Complexity (Rigor) | The type(s) of mental processing (i.e., thinking skills) required to solve problems and encourage students to question their assumptions while thinking more deeply and showing understanding beyond merely memorization and information recall. This may refer to Bloom’s Taxonomy, or other definitions of thinking skills. |
|  | Coherence | A characteristic of a balanced assessment that ensures all elements of the system are coordinated, *measure the same content and skills derived from the state content standards in a similar manner*, and that the curricula, assessment, instruction and related professional learning are aligned with one another. |
|  | Correlation | A demonstration that two variables move in the same or opposite manner. This does not mean that one variable causes the other. |
|  | Criterion-Referenced Score Interpretation | Relating a test score to a pre-established, absolute standard of performance. |
|  | Depth of Knowledge (Content Knowledge) | A framework that helps teachers and educators understand how deeply students need to know and understand content to answer questions or solve problems. It categorizes tasks by the complexity of thinking required to complete them, rather than their difficulty. |
|  | Grading | The act of classifying student performance on a scale of quality, rank, size, or progression. Their primary purpose is to communicate each student’s level of achievement on the learning outcomes detailed in the standards**.** |
|  | Guaranteed Viable Curriculum | A working understanding of all the resources and materials (including assessments) needed to ensure all students have the same access to and opportunity to learn the same rigorous standards and skills in each grade level and course. |
|  | Interim/Benchmark | Assessments are administered periodically throughout the school year for one or more of the following purposes: predictive (identify learner readiness for success on a later summative assessment); evaluative (to appraise ongoing educational programs); and/or instructional (to supply teachers with individual learner performance data). |
|  | Learning Targets | Clear statements, ideally written in student-friendly language, that provide direction for students as to what learning should occur because of instruction and activities during a particular lesson. |
|  | Multiple Measures | The use of multiple indicators to measure student learning. This data is collected at multiple points in time and is examined within and across subject areas. |
|  | Norm-Referenced Score Interpretation | The comparison of a student or school score to a representative sample of students or schools—the norm group. Scores are interpreted as above or below the average (mean score) of the norm group, such as a percentile rank. |
|  | Performance Assessment | Assessments where students are asked to perform in some manner (e.g., completing an experiment, investigating, singing, acting in a theatrical production, or completing a painting). Performance assessments require a checklist or a rubric for scoring |
|  | Reliability | A statistical determination of the internal consistency, comparability, or stability of an assessment. A necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a summative assessment to be useful. |
|  | Screener | A relatively short test used to determine eligibility of an individual for a program or activity. |
|  | Scoring Rubrics | Often used to score constructed response items, performance tasks, and performance events. A rubric establishes the expectations for performance and delineates what a response must include. Performance levels are described for each dimension or criterion of the performance task. performance event, or constructed response item. |
|  | Success Criteria | Lists, statements, models, or exemplars that tell or show students what they should know, understand, and be able to do at the end of instruction. These criteria identify elements of quality that should be present in student work |
|  | Test | A type of assessment, usually more formal in nature, that is used to determine student understanding at the end of a learning opportunity or time frame. All tests are assessments; but not all assessments are tests. |
|  | Validity | The extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. A  test itself is neither “valid” nor “invalid.” Validity is determined based on the adequacy of the information in support of the intended use of the assessment. |