

Teacher Tips for Assessing Rate and Level of Learning

“The instruction provided to identified students shall address their assessed levels of learning and accelerated rates of learning.”

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LEVEL of learning is the student’s instructional level in the curriculum, the place where the student will be successful but encounter knowledge and skills not yet learned or mastered.

RATE of learning is a measure of the pace at which a student successfully progresses through the curriculum after being placed at the appropriate instructional level.

Assessing Rate and Level

Working definition of assessment: A process for gathering information regarding students’ performance that will present a broader, more genuine picture of student learning.

In each subject/course, students can be pre-assessed on the knowledge and skills that will be learned in the subject/course. The purpose of this pre-assessment is to find out what students already know and are able to do in order to avoid repetition and give the student access to advanced and/or accelerated content. Acceptable practices for gathering evidence of level and rate include:

Observations

- Oral language discussions
- Interviews
- Journals
- Math manipulative activities
- Student process in problem solving
- Placement recommendations
- Interest surveys
- Behavior
- Student self-observation
- Guided practice
- Parent information
- Specific data from previous teacher

Work Samples/On-going Assessment

- Daily work
- Presentations
- Student self assessment
- Work quality/level of sophistication
- Peer evaluations of performance or products
- Writing samples
- Reading aloud
- Student portfolios
- Research reports
- Student survey of books already read
- Developmental continua

Tests

- Pre/post tests
- Reading checklist/inventories
- Writing assessments
- Information reading inventories
- Standardized tests/state assessments
- Math contests
- Skill checklists

If the student’s documented level and rate assessments in any area of curriculum do not warrant modifications beyond the regular curriculum, than differentiated services are not needed.

Documentation can be a teacher’s grade book or a student’s working file.

Teaching Tips

LEVEL:

Review placement recommendations and specific data from previous teachers.

Collect additional information to determine academic areas needing modification.

Use assessment data to determine instructional level in each area.

Many factors influence assessment. Do not depend on just a few indicators.

Compare students to your objectives rather than grade level. How well are they progressing in what you plan to teach?

Be sure to look at skills and behaviors as well as mastery of content.

Set criteria ahead of time for acceptable levels of accomplishment (know what good looks like). Be able to explain to parents how decisions were made.

Maintain a working file of student work.

Document the assessments used to determine each student's level of learning in the academic programs.

RATE:

Gifted students generally learn faster than other students; however, rate of learning is not smooth and even. Students seldom progress in a neat and well-sequenced manner; instead, they may remain in one phase for a length of time and then move rapidly through other phases. Each student is a unique individual with different life experiences; no two developmental pathways are the same.

Based on your experience, how does this student compare with other of his/her age in the number of repetitions he/she requires to learn a new concept?

Use your professional judgment about the rate of learning. No valid test exists. Learning is far more rich and varied than can be measured on a test.

Collect evidence in a working file. You will be held responsible for your professional opinions about rate and level. Have sufficient evidence to support your decisions.

Document the assessments used to determine each student's accelerated rate of learning in the academic programs.