

Why We Assess

Overview: This lesson introduces the students to assessment and test taking as a positive experience. Assessments should be viewed as an important diagnostic tool to help direct the student's improvement and growth.

Educational Goal: The objective of this lesson is for each student to (1) comprehend assessment and testing as a useful diagnostic tool for improvement and (2) respond to the value of assessments as a diagnostic tool.

Objectives: The student will:

- Cognitive:* — Explain why students should be assessed.
 — Explain who benefits from assessments.
- Affective:* — Participate in classroom discussion.

Skill/Standard Connections: This lesson has connections to the Tennessee KSA – *Do the Right Thing*, and the EFF Standards — *Reflect and Evaluate, Plan, and Take Responsibility for Learning*. (Appendix II)

Teaching Strategy: This lesson introduces assessment and testing as a positive experience. This is an easy topic to start a discussion around because everyone has had good and bad experiences with testing. The lesson starts with a general discussion of the students' previous experiences.

Students will develop an appreciation of the value of assessments and testing by developing a mind map. The key questions will be: (1) *Why take assessments?* and (2) *Who benefits from them?* The students will use a brainstorming technique and the teacher will facilitate their language experience on a whiteboard. The teacher will use previous mind maps to demonstrate the common thread between the students' work with other students' products.



Time: 1 hour

Teaching Materials:

- Whiteboard
 - Lesson Plan
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Student Materials:

- Learner Note Taker

Lesson Plan

Introduction

Teaching Tip



Lead the students through a guided discussion about past testing experiences. Allow the students to completely vent their good and bad experiences. Some of their frustrations might be directed at specific teachers or schools. Since these are adults with real feelings, allow the process to take its course as long as it doesn't get out of hand. The teacher should be a part of the discussion and share his or her good and bad experiences. This way common ground is shared between students and teacher. Once the discussion has seemed to run its course, guide the discussion toward the importance of assessment and testing.

Overview: We are going to take some time to discuss our experiences with test taking. However, we will spend some time discussing why testing is important. I will explain the assessment process. Finally, we will use a brainstorming process to identify the people who benefit from assessment and taking a test.

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1:

What are your past experiences with taking a test or assessment?

Let me start by asking everyone about their previous experiences either in school or outside with test taking or some form of assessment.

Question: What has been your experience with testing?

(Student responses will range from good to bad experiences.)

Main Point 2:

Is taking a test or assessment important?

Now that we have shared our past experiences with testing, let's discuss whether testing is important or not.

Question: Whatever our experiences have been, is testing important?

(Student should acknowledge the importance of testing.)

Question: Why is it important?

(Student responses will vary. Write the responses on the board.)

Main Point 3: Assessment Process

Let's take a few moments to discuss the assessment process within the Knox County system.

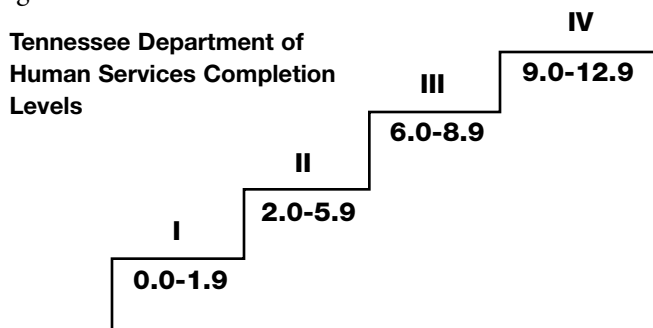
A. TABE (Testing Process):

1. The first step in the testing process is to understand why we assess. This is what we are talking about right now.

2. We will take the TABE Locator in the next hour to see what is the appropriate level test you should take.
3. On Wednesday we start the TABE Testing process. We will not be able to finish the test all in one day, so it will take several days. We test each Wednesday, so next Wednesday we should be able to finish up. This will be your first TABE test, which is a pre-test. Remember, it is okay wherever you are. What we are trying to do with your first test is identify your starting point. As you continue on in the ABE system you will take other TABE tests that will show how you are improving along your educational journey. These follow-on tests are called post-tests. Normally you take a post-test every 100 to 200 hours, depending on your progress and discussion with your teacher.
4. We then will start to do a test review so we can learn from what has taken place. We will actually set some goals and practice the planning process based around your testing.

B. Knox County Adult Education System and Placement

You will remember from the ABE system discussion you had on the first day, that your test scores help determine which ABE level you will be assigned to.



Main Point 4: Who Benefits From Taking a Test or Assessment?

Now that we have had time to discuss and share our feelings about testing and assessments, and also its importance, let's think about who benefits from testing. I also want to show you a brainstorming tool called mind mapping that I will use to capture your thoughts.

Question: Who benefits from testing and assessment?

- Anticipated Responses:** — *Student responses will probably start with themselves.*
- *Develop other beneficiaries to the students taking assessments.*

Teaching Tip

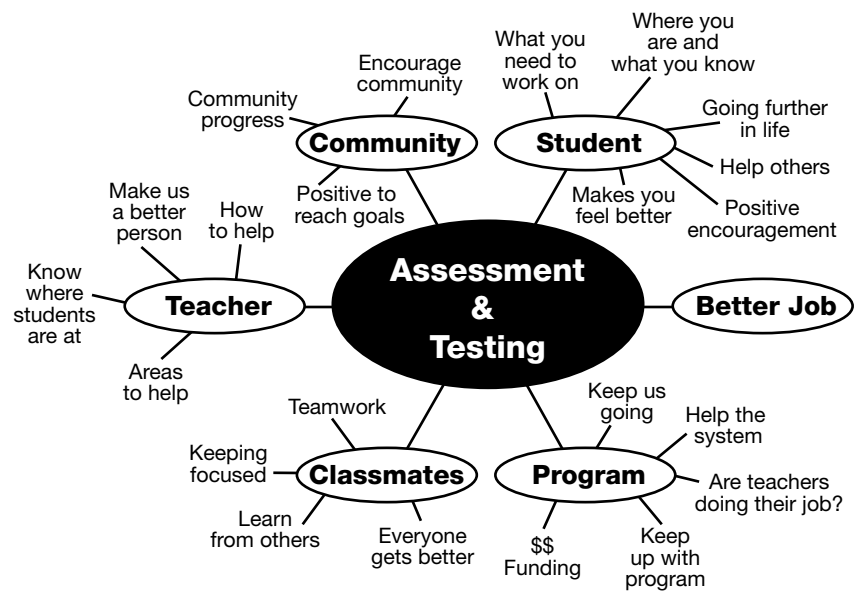


Allow the students to explore the discussion about the importance of testing and assessment. Allow the students the freedom to question its importance. Be aware of the subtle distinctions with the students' negative feelings. Try to separate out bad test administration or a particular person from the actual value of testing. Ultimately, lead the students back to the point of acknowledging that testing is important for the obvious reasons.

NOTE: The testing procedure may be different for your program, change this discussion where needed.

National Report System Completion Levels Used by Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development	
Level 1:	0.0 – 1.9
Level 2:	2.0 – 3.9
Level 3:	4.0 – 5.9
Level 4:	6.0 – 8.9
Level 5:	9.0 – 10.9
Level 6:	11.0 – 12.0

Below is a general format for how a mind map may be developed.



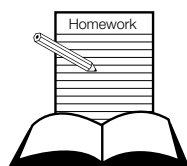
“Who Benefits From Assessment” Mind Map

Some programs may choose to administer the TABE Locator Test at this point.

Teaching Tip



Have the students summarize this lesson using their notes and their own words.



Conclusion

Summary: So let’s review what we have learned about why we assess.

Remotivation: Assessment and testing are important to understanding where we are, where we want to go, and how we will get there. It serves as a diagnostic activity that helps you to get to your goal. It is a helpful, not harmful, activity.

Homework Assignment: *Academic Survival Guide*, use Scriptographic Booklet.

Close: The more we learn about ourselves, the better we will be. Assessment is one of those tools that helps us.

ACTIVITY: Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Locator

Objective: The objective of this assessment activity is for the learners to (1) comprehend which appropriate level of TABE assessments they will take, and (2) to respond to the value of diagnostic assessment.

The students have just completed the “Why We Assess” lesson that provided a better appreciation for diagnostic assessments. Now they will take the TABE Locator Test.

Procedure: The value of the TABE Locator Test is to identify the appropriate testing level and serve as a practice test. At appropriate times, the teacher should provide words of encouragement based upon the students’ efforts and convey a positive attitude towards the value of the assessment.

1. Follow the TABE Locator Test instructions in the *Examiner’s Manual* starting on page 11. Be familiar with the various instructions for preparing for the test, administering the test, and scoring the test.
2. At the end of the test, scoring provides the student with an understanding of how they did on the test. In EFF terms this is providing the student with *access to information*. Allow time for the student to review his or her results: what they answered correctly and what they missed. There is a value in allowing the students to review the questions they missed to see where they made their mistakes. There will be certain items that they do not know, but there will be other items that they missed because of a common test-taking mistake: hurrying their reading or math; misreading a word, sentence, or number; unintentionally skipping a word or number; and various other testing strategies.

Allow the student the opportunity to discover his or her own mistakes during the testing process. The teacher should simply frame the inquiry by asking, “What happened, why, and how can you fix it?” Allow time for the student to respond: “I didn’t take my time, I rushed through worrying about the time, I missed that word or numerical symbol,” and so on. The teacher should just let the student guide his or her own insights on improving. **Allow time for the learners to write down what they have learned about their testing strategies and areas for improvement ONLY, not about test content.**

End the assessment on a positive note, referring to the knowledge and insights gained through taking the TABE Locator tests. Reaffirm that it is **okay** wherever the student is starting the process.