

Assessment has assumed major significance in educational settings. Responsible and appropriate implementation of any broadly used assessment program requires a clear understanding of the assessment instrument, proper training in its use, and an understanding of the cultural, economic, social, emotional, psychological, physical, and mental issues of the students.

"The testing is a by-product of the learning experiences, not the impetus for learning." - David James, *The Journal of College Admission*, Summer 2002.

What is Assessment?

Any activity used to measure knowledge, skills, or performance.

Assessment may take many forms:

- Standardized tests
- Teacher-made tests
- Performance criteria
- Portfolios
- Observations
- Applications

And can be:

- Paper and pencil
- Computerized format
- Demonstration

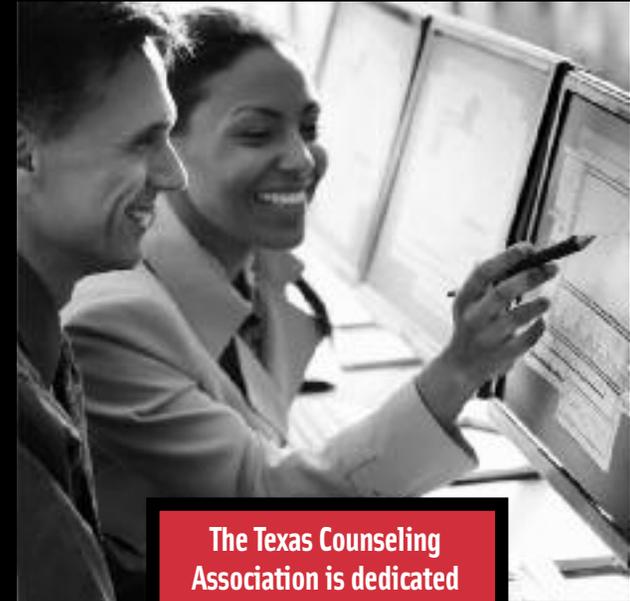
Contact Information

Texas Counseling Association
1204 San Antonio, Suite 201
Austin, TX 78701
800-580-8144 OR 512-472-3403
Fax: 512-472-3756

1204 San Antonio
Suite 201
Austin, Texas 78701



POSITION STATEMENT: ASSESSMENT IN TEXAS SCHOOLS PRE K-16



The Texas Counseling Association is dedicated to providing leadership, advocacy and education to promote the growth and development of the counseling profession and those who are served.

The Texas Counseling Association

I T ' S A B O U T P E O P L E

www.txca.org

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNSELOR'S ROLE IN ASSESSMENT

The professional counselor adheres to professional standards regarding assessment and provides explanations as to the nature, purpose, and results of the assessment.

The professional counselor's role is to:

- interpret tests and other appraisal results to students, parents, and school personnel;
- promote the use of multiple sources of student data as assessment tools for the purpose of educational planning;
- ensure that the uses of student assessment records are for the benefit of students and individuals working with those students;
- assist students in test preparation, such as:
 - test-taking skills
 - managing test anxiety
 - test-taking strategies
- maintain appropriate confidentiality of student assessment results; and,
- utilize counselor's training and knowledge in the principles and modalities of assessment and human growth and development.

Summary

Assessments are important and valuable to the educational process. They help:

- signal what students should be learning,
- identify gaps in children's knowledge and skills,
- highlight the unequal achievement among racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups,
- provide campuses and districts with data to adapt instruction.

Interpretative assessment data assists educators to determine progress and address specific student needs. This is done as "a part of the whole" as



educators understand that students bring to the classroom many needs, interest, abilities, and talents. Penalizing schools/districts based on students' single-test scores disregards these variables with children. Using multiple measures is critical and essential when life-influencing decisions are being made about students. In turn, multiple measures provide a more accurate portrait of the student, as well as a school/district.

Who Benefits from Assessment?

Parents want:

- Educated children
- Accurate information about students
- Development of skills and talents
- Accurate data

Business wants:

- Educated workforce
- Skilled workers
- Reading/Comprehension Skills
- Mathematic Skills
- Reasoning/Critical Thinking Skills
- Social/Interpersonal Skills
- Technology Skills
- Communication Skills
- Application of Skills

When assessment is misused it can be harmful to both the individual and the system using the assessment.

What are appropriate uses of assessment?

- Documentation of Student Progress
- Assessment of Curriculum Results
- Identification of Strengths and Weaknesses of Student Learning
- Validation of Effective Teaching and Learning

Assessment misuse includes:

- Using a single type of measure to assess an individual's knowledge,
- Assigning significance beyond the design of the instrument,
- Failing to consider the merit of other available information,
- Failing to consider the impact of test results on the individual,
- "Teaching to the test" practice,
- Failing to consider different learning styles,
- Focusing on lower levels of cognitive domain rather than emphasizing critical thinking skills,
- Failing to recognize that test are imprecise, at best, and,
- Failing to recognize that a student's achievement test should measure what the school has taught

