

DMV Discussion

Overview:

This presenter-led discussion demonstrates the value of the two kinds of driving tests given at the Department of Motor Vehicles: a multiple-choice test about the laws related to driving, and a performance test in which a person must actually drive. Participants discuss which test is most important, and how they might feel knowing that a new driver had only been tested in **one** of these ways. This leads to the conclusion that different kinds of tests assess different kinds of knowledge—and that both kinds are important. Participants learn that current educational practice strives for balance in a variety of testing methods. The presenter goes on to introduce the broader concept of assessment (which includes a wide variety of methods for assessing students' knowledge).

In another five minutes, the presenter can briefly communicate additional information about current assessment practices. These include:

- 1) The concept of **continuous assessment**—that student progress should be continuously assessed in small ways throughout a unit of study, rather than solely during tests that happen at the end of each unit. Good teachers assess student knowledge regularly in the course of class and homework. This provides the teacher with timely information about what specific learning needs the student and the class have so the learning opportunities can be adjusted appropriately;
- 2) The **relationship of assessment to curriculum and instruction**; and
- 3) That **assessment information is important to different audiences for different reasons** (teacher, student, parent, school, community, nation).

Use:

Provides a brief but powerful introduction to the importance of **multiple measures** and the limits of any one assessment method. Works well as a stand-alone piece, with small or large audiences. Can also be used effectively to launch any session about assessment.

Lots of value for only a 10-15 minute time investment.

Key Concepts Addressed from Public Understanding Framework:

Multiple Measures
Purpose of Assessment

Time Frame: 10-15 minutes

DMV discussion (10 minutes)
Optional—Additional Information about Current Assessment Practices (5 minutes)

What You Need:

For the presenter:

- o 1 each of the following four overhead transparencies
 - “Two Kinds of Tests” transparency
 - “Current Practice and Understanding” transparency
 - “Relationship between Assessment/Instruction/Curriculum” transparency
 - “Multiple Purposes of Assessment” transparency
- o overhead projector
- o extension cord (optional)

Getting Ready:

Before the Day of the Workshop:

1. **Make overhead transparencies.** Make one of each of the four overhead transparencies listed above.

Immediately Before the Workshop:

1. **Set up overhead projector.** Set up overhead projector at the front of the room near where you will stand.

DMV Discussion (10 minutes)

1. **Briefly discuss the DMV testing example.** Begin by referring to the “Two Kinds of Tests” overhead transparency. Ask participants to spend just a few minutes discussing the two questions at the bottom of the handout with 1 or 2 people sitting near them. After several minutes, get the group’s attention. Ask for several volunteers to share some of what they discussed.
2. **Different kinds of tests assess for different kinds of knowledge.** Summarize by saying that each kind of test is more

appropriate for finding out a different kind of knowledge. In the case of driving, it is hard to imagine not testing in both ways, for both kinds of knowledge. Show overhead transparency #2.

Current Practice and Understanding

- Different kinds of “tests” assess for different kinds of knowledge.
- It is best to create a balance of different kinds of tests so that we can test for a broader range of student knowledge.
- All of the different kinds of tests are currently referred to more generally as “assessment.”
- Assessment should occur before, during, and after learning.

3. Balance of testing methods. Say that one of the current practices in education, new since when we were children, is to create a balance of different kinds of tests so that we can test for a broader range of student knowledge. For instance, it’s important to find out that children know their math facts (like driving laws); it’s equally important to find out that children know how to think critically and solve complex problems (like driving itself).

4. Defining assessment. Say that all the different kinds of tests are currently referred to more generally as “assessment.” This is the first of the educational jargon words that you will define today.

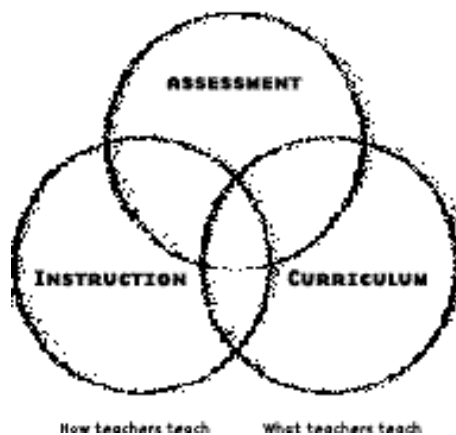
Parents sometimes wonder where the “tests” are nowadays. Because teachers focus on using a variety of methods to inform them about students progress, it’s not always clear what the test is and when it is occurring. Modern “tests” don’t always look like tests.

Optional Presentation of Additional Information about Current Assessment Practices (5-10 minutes)

- 1. Continuous Assessment.** Mention that another current practice in education is for assessment to occur continuously in small ways throughout a unit, rather than just in a long test at the end of a unit. This ensures that information learned through assessment informs the teacher of how best to modify the learning experiences to address areas students are not mastering. It also gives the teacher a fuller picture of each child's abilities and needs. A good teacher is constantly assessing students' progress through daily and weekly home and class assignments, using informal and formal opportunities for assessment. It's not useful to know what you didn't learn at the end of the unit, when you're ready to move on. This information is needed when there is still time to address it.
- 2. Share relationship between Assessment/ Instruction/ Curriculum.** Explain that historically testing was used as a way to select the best students to go on to a very limited number of spots in secondary and post-secondary education. The IQ test was originally developed to choose the best and the brightest to go on to college. In a situation of limited educational resources, this made sense. However educational resources are no longer as limited. Thus the purpose of assessment needs to change.

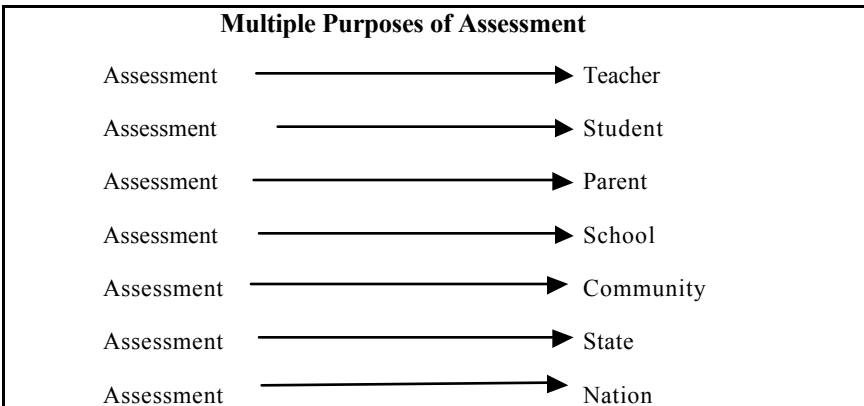
Show overhead transparency #3.

Relationship between Assessment/Instruction/Curriculum



Briefly define two more educational jargon words: instruction (how a teacher teaches) and curriculum (what a teacher teaches). Explain that assessment provides important feedback to a teacher about instruction (how she should teach) and curriculum (what she should teach). A good teacher modifies what and how she teaches according to what her students have learned.

3. Share multiple purposes of assessment. Show overhead transparency #4.



Say that assessment information is important for the teacher, the student, the parent, the school, the community, and the nation. Point out that you've already discussed how a **teacher** uses assessment information to measure progress and inform her future actions.

Students need assessment information so they can know what they know and where they need to focus their efforts. Providing assessment information to students helps them internalize standards.

Parents want assessment information in order to be informed of how their child is progressing and how they can be of assistance.

Schools, communities, states, and the nation need assessment information to know how our students measure up to standards and to other students. It informs where help and additional resources are needed. The kind of assessment a teacher uses depends on the use of the information—who it is for. Different kinds of assessment situations are better for providing different kinds of information.

Two Kinds of Tests

After a person learns to drive, he or she goes to the Department of Motor Vehicles to be tested. There, the person takes two different tests to demonstrate his or her capability to be a licensed driver.

One test is a multiple-choice test. The person must correctly answer questions about the laws related to driving.

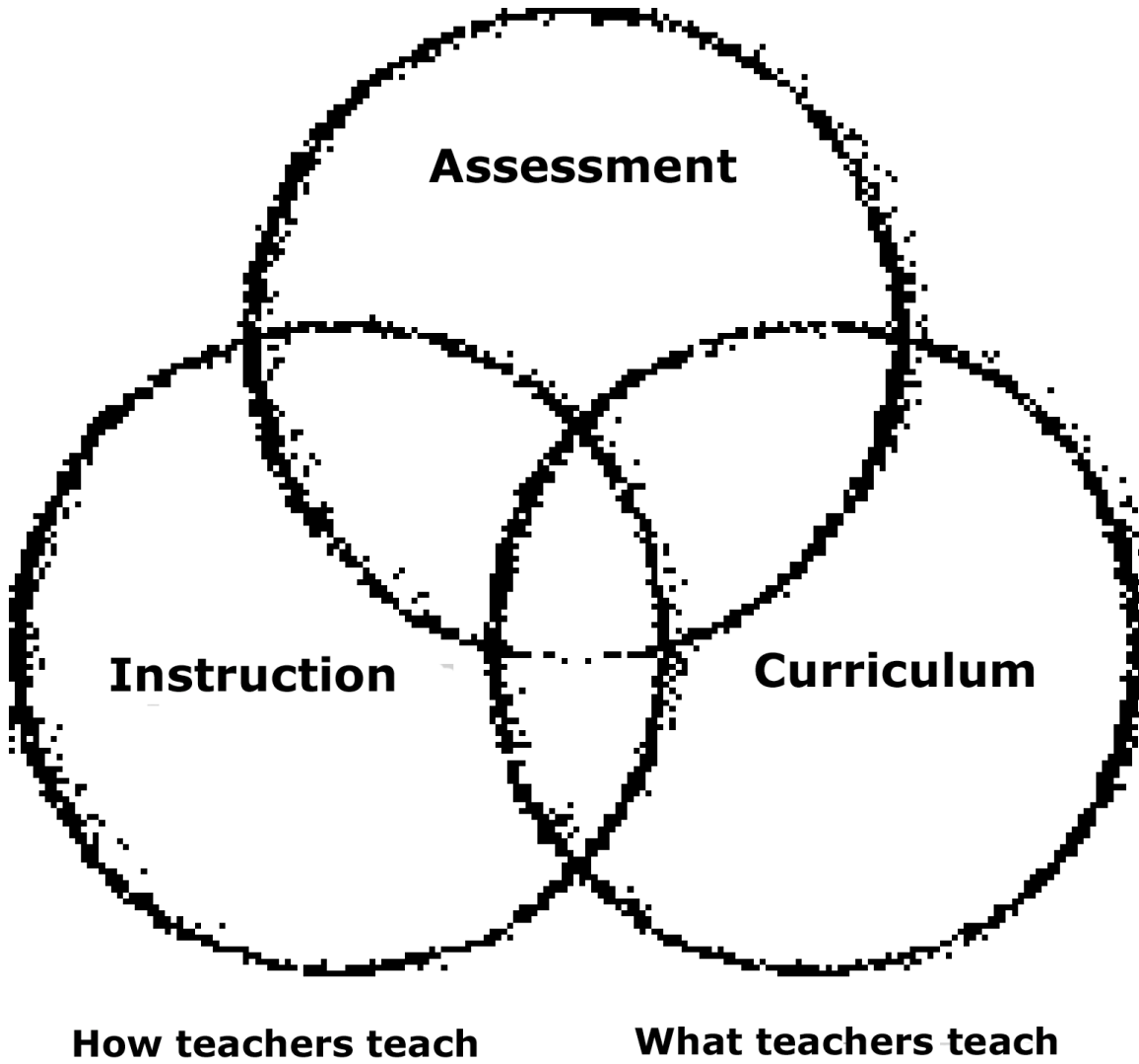
The other test is a performance test. The person must skillfully drive a car in a variety of road situations.

- Which test is most important?
- Would you feel confident in knowing that a new driver had only been tested in one of these ways?

Current Practice and Understanding

- Different kinds of “tests” assess for different kinds of knowledge.
- It is best to create a balance of different kinds of tests so that we can test for a broader range of student knowledge.
- All forms of “tests” are currently referred to more generally as “assessment.”
- Assessment should occur before, during, and after learning.

Relationship between Assessment/Instruction/Curriculum



Multiple Purposes of Assessment

Assessment → Teacher

Assessment → Student

Assessment → Parent

Assessment → School

Assessment → Community

Assessment → State

Assessment → Nation