



ALN RESOURCE

Purposes for and Essential Characteristics of Interim Assessment

This chart lists the twelve purposes of interim assessments described by Perie, Marion, and Gong (2009), organized into the three broad categories described in a companion Learning Point entitled “*Interim Assessment: What are some key characteristics?*” available from the Michigan Assessment Consortium at michiganassessmentconsortium.org/resource-bank. Within each broad category, sub-categories indicate more specific assessment purposes. Finally, the chart describes some essential characteristics of interim assessments built for these specific purposes.

Please note: This table provides an overview of this information and not a checklist. Matching assessment purpose with test characteristics is an issue of validity and requires more work than can be summarized in this table.

Assessment Category: Achievement Monitoring (PAGE 1 of 2)	
Assessment Purpose	Essential Characteristics
Determine how well the student has learned the material to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content Large range of standards assessed so that all students receive an estimate of how well they have mastered the content they have achieved
Provide aggregate information on student achievement at a school or district level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content Large range of standards assessed so that all students receive an estimate of how well they have mastered the content they have achieved
Provide specific feedback on where there are gaps in a particular student’s knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content Large range of standards assessed so that all students receive an estimate of how well they have mastered the content they have achieved Items constructed such that incorrect or incomplete responses provide useful information on student misconceptions Test reports designed to highlight what students know and don’t know to help students adjust their learning strategies
Diagnose and provide corrective feedback to help a group of students get on track to succeed on the summative assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong statistical correlation between results on the interim assessment and the summative assessment Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content Large range of standards assessed so that all students receive an estimate of how well they have mastered the content they have achieved. Items constructed such that incorrect or incomplete responses provide useful information on student misconceptions Test reports designed to highlight what students know and don’t know to help students adjust their learning strategies
Motivate and provide feedback to students about their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large range of standards assessed so that all students receive an estimate of how well they have mastered the content they have achieved Items constructed such that incorrect or incomplete responses provide useful information on student misconceptions Test reports designed to highlight what students know and don’t know to help students adjust their learning strategies

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Purposes for and Essential Characteristics of Interim Assessment, *continued*

Assessment Category: Achievement Monitoring (PAGE 2 OF 2)

Assessment Purpose	Essential Characteristics
Ensure that teachers are staying on track in terms of teaching the curriculum in a timely manner (i.e., pacing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content ■ Test administration scheduled so that it follows closely the temporal requirements of the pacing guides
Provide a more thorough analysis of the depth of students' understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content ■ Large range of standards assessed so that all students receive an estimate of how well they have mastered the content they have achieved ■ Items constructed such that incorrect or incomplete responses provide useful information on student misconceptions
Determine whether students are prepared to move on to the next instructional unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test constructed so that it focuses measurement on the prerequisite skills of the next unit that are contained in the current content

Assessment Category: Prediction

Assessment Purpose	Essential Characteristics
Predict students' performance on a summative assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong statistical correlation between results on the interim assessment and the summative assessment <p>Note: A test might have strong statistical correlation with a summative assessment but not have face validity, e.g., it might not look like it measures the same thing as the summative assessment</p>
Determine whether students are on track to succeed on the summative assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong statistical correlation between results on the interim assessment and the summative assessment ■ Sufficient alignment (both breadth and depth) with the curriculum to provide accurate information about how well students are mastering the content ■ Test items of varying difficulty so that all students can get an estimate of how well they're mastering the content

Assessment Category: Program Evaluation

Assessment Purpose	Essential Characteristics
Determine whether one pedagogical approach is more effective in teaching the material than another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adequate alignment (both breadth and depth) with the content ■ The assessment must be equally sensitive to the instructional methods of both pedagogical approaches
Provide information to help the instructor better teach the new group of students by evaluating the instruction, curriculum, and pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test items of varying difficulty so that all students can get an estimate of how well they're mastering the content ■ Items constructed such that incorrect or incomplete responses provide useful information on student misconceptions

Reference: Perie, M., Marion, S. & Gong, B. (2009). Moving toward a comprehensive assessment system: A framework for considering interim assessments. *Educational measurement: Issues and practice*, 28(3) pp. 5-13.

Companion MAC Learning Point available at michiganassessmentconsortium.org/resource-bank.

The Michigan Assessment Consortium's Assessment Learning Network (ALN) is a professional learning community consisting of members from MI's professional education organizations; the goal of the ALN is to increase the assessment literacy of all of Michigan's professional educators.