

Common Assessment Questions Across the Tiers

Assessments should be able to answer specific questions in order to help guide problem solving efforts and in alignment with evidence--based instructional practices.

Some of those questions are (but not limited to):

Tier 3 --- Assessments at Tier 3 are intended to be very frequent and assess more micro-level skills to address significant learning challenges or barriers to reaching success at Tiers 2 and/or 1. The frequency of assessments used at Tier 3 for monitoring progress should be based on the intensity of needs of the student and matched accordingly. A general rule of thumb: the more a student is behind Tier 1 expectations of performance and/or the less responsive a student is to previous interventions attempted, the more frequent and varied the assessments should be to ensure matched instructional supports to “catch-up” to grade level expectations. Many of the questions posed at Tier 2 are applicable to Tier 3, except the focus at Tier 3 is typically at the individual student focus. Additional questions to ask:

1. Is the student appropriately matched to the intervention plan(s) developed for the student?
2. Does problem-solving address the “whole student” in that likely both academic and behavioral needs are significant?
3. If the student is demonstrating positive response to the interventions(s), then is the student also demonstrating improvements in their Tier 1 assessment performance? If not, why not? What next goals/needs should be targeted? Does the student need Tier 3 services anymore (they may still need Tier 2 services)?
4. If the student is not progressing, is fidelity a concern? Does this student need a long-term (2 or more years) plan for “catching-up” to grade level standards (including transition plans between grades)?

Tier 2 - Assessments at Tier 2 are likely to be varied for different student needs.

The frequency of assessments can be as low as once a month to as frequent as once a week depending on the needs of the small group of students and the assessment parameters. In addition, assessments of behavior at Tier 2 may occur each period or each day. Just as with Tier 1, Assessments at Tier 2 should be able to answer specific questions such as (but not limited to):

1. Which students require supplemental instruction or practice based on an analysis of their current needs in relation to Tier 1 standards of performance?
2. How should students receiving supplemental instruction be grouped together for small-group instruction (e.g., based on skill/content/subject area of need)?
3. Which students will be provided with a standard protocol approach to address common and recurring concerns for which there are ample evidence-based options for intervention/instruction?
4. Which students will need modified interventions or more in-depth problem solving (particularly problem analysis) in order to ensure an appropriate match between the instruction/service supports and the students’ needs?
5. Which students are demonstrating a positive response to the supplemental instruction/intervention being provided to them? Which are demonstrating moderate to poor responses to instruction/intervention (remember to check fidelity first for those not progressing)?
6. Are the majority of students within a given supplemental instructional group demonstrating a positive response to the instruction (i.e., is Tier 2 effective)?
7. What modifications are needed to increase student positive responses to instruction/intervention at Tier 2?
8. Which students may need more intensive services? And, which students may be ready to either address other areas of need or transition back to receiving Tier 1 instruction only?

Tier 1 - Assessments at Tier 1 typically include both formative and summative measures and may occur as frequently as daily or weekly such as classroom mini-skill assessments (to assist with lesson planning) to quarterly benchmark assessments and/or end-of-year summative measures, end-of-course exams, etc., to monitor progress of all students and evaluate effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction and supports.

1. What percent of students are meeting grade level expectations and/or are “on---track” for promotion/graduation?
2. Is Tier 1 instruction for each grade level content or subject area effective (i.e., approximately 80% or more students are proficient or making significant growth)?
3. How effective have improvement plans (i.e., SIP) been at increasing the growth of all students in addition to reaching higher percentages of students reaching proficiency in content and subject areas?
4. Which students demonstrate significant gaps between their current performances on Tier 1 assessments in relation to grade level expectations of performance for a given point in time?
5. What is the relationship between Tier 1 formative classroom assessments or benchmark assessments and performance on summative measures (e.g., SOL, end--- of---course exams, etc.)?