

Multiple Windows

Transcript

# Slide 1: Multiple Windows

This module will discuss multiple windows and how to feel confident in the assessment information you obtain about your young students using multiple windows.

# Slide 2: Using Multiple Measures

In previous modules we discussed characteristics of young children that can create questions about the reliability of assessment information. In order to feel more confident about the conclusions you draw from assessment information involving young children, it is important to use multiple windows to observe and understand the child. Multiple windows allows you to see the child from a variety of perspectives – in different situations, at different times, and using different data collection processes. For that reason, it sometimes is also described as multiple measures. Information is more reliable if it is obtained from multiple sources using different methods, and in a variety of contexts. Using multiple measures will make your assessment more accurate, reliable, and valid. In this module we will look at the different windows and how we can use them to assess our students.

# Slide 3: Why Use Multiple Measures or Multiple Windows?

Using multiple measures is one way to improve the quality of your assessment. It is important to gather information in multiple ways to make sure that your assessment of a child are accurate. Using one approach alone typically does not give you reliable information.

The more information you gather about a child, the more valid your assessment will be. Information from a variety of sources that is consistent will make your conclusions stronger. And - if the information is not consistent across sources or in different situations, it will help you begin to think about why that may be the case.

Obtaining multiple measures is important when you must make informed decisions about the child – or when you need to communicate about the child’s progress or functioning to parents or other school personnel. There are many ways to obtain information about your students and just as many ways to record that information. We will be talking more about these later in this module as well as in future modules. Your choice of methods should depend on what works best for you in your classroom situation and what will give you the best information about the child.

# Slide 4: Multiple Assessment Measures

When assessing a student you will need to make decisions on how you will collect the information and in what situations.

First – you should decide who or what sources you will be using. This can include teachers, parents, records, and even other children in the classroom.

You also must determine how you will collect that information. Will you conduct a formal observation using anecdotal notes, interview others, use past assessments, or use student work products that will provide you with needed information? Again, this will vary based on the information you need to gather for a valid assessment of the student; however, information can be obtained as part of the regular routine of your classroom and therefore facilitate your assessment efforts.

Finally, you need to determine where and when you are going to assess –determining appropriate context will help ensure that you are gathering appropriate information.

# Slide 5: The Source of Information

Gathering information from different sources will provide you with a well rounded picture of a student. For example, how a child performs at school may be very different from what he does at home. Gathering information from the child’s parents may provide you with specific information about the child that you have not seen at school. How many times have you heard a parent say, “Well, he can do that at home.”? This gives you new information which may change the way you are teaching the student at school as well as provide with ideas for additional information you may need to better understand the child.

# Slide 6: Methods of Collecting Information

The method of assessment is the “how” or the way information is gathered; the method can be formal or informal.

Formal methods often consist of standardized tests such as screening or achievement tests, or specific types of clinical techniques. Although these methods may provide you with useful information, they usually require the teacher to have special knowledge and expertise in order to administer and interpret the measures correctly.

Informal methods involve normal classroom activities and are directly relevant to classroom decision making and keeping track of progress toward developmental goals. Observing children, collecting work products and eliciting information from parents and children are informal methods to collect information. We will be discussing these specifically in the next few Modules.

# Slide 7: Contexts for Assessment

The context, or setting, is defined by tangible factors in the environment such as the physical space or people who are present. Context has a powerful effect on children and adults; any variations affect the outcome of the assessment and influence the type of behavior and interaction that occurs.

So - keep in mind that context can increase motivation and personal involvement, which in turn, can affect the complexity and maturity of responses. It is the context that determines whether or not a performance assessment is an authentic assessment.

# Slide 8: Examples of Context for Assessment

Many contexts lend themselves to assessment. Some are obvious, for example, the manipulatives area would be ideal to assess fine motor development or the reading corner is a great place to check out literacy skills. However, other contexts can be overlooked. You might not automatically think of a large group as a context for assessment but it can be an appropriate setting if you think that the size of a group might be affecting how a child learns or behaves.

# Slide 9: Guidelines for Selecting Assessment Contexts

Try and choose the context in which the skill most naturally occurs. For example, assessing a child’s cutting skills during an art activity provides a natural context. This is preferable to pulling the child aside and having him or her cut along different black lines. The art activity is motivating, whereas cutting on black lines for no apparent purpose may not be. Additionally, the art activity is a part of the classroom routine, while pulling the child aside requires you to schedule time away from the rest of the class.

# Slide 10: Choosing the Appropriate Assessment Window

How do you choose the appropriate assessment window?

First you need to identify the behavior you want to assess. This will guide your choice of source, method and context. You should make sure to identify the behavior explicitly and be clear about what you want to learn about the behavior. Whenever possible try to use authentic assessment measures.

You should choose the assessment window that maximizes the chances of seeing a behavior. For example, using the playground supervisor to help you assess the gross motor movement of a student makes more sense than asking the reading specialist, since the playground supervisor sees the identified behavior more frequently than the reading specialist.

Finally, using multiple assessment measures or windows help to ensure a richer, more balanced perspective of a child. It improves reliability and validity for the entire process.

Your text provides you with some good suggestions for ways to use assessment windows for large motor and fine motor skills as well as for cognitive, social and language development and a number of other areas.

# Slide 11: Determining the Number of Assessment Windows

There is no formula for deciding how many assessment windows to use – you need to use your own judgment. But here are some guidelines:

To assess progress: At least two assessment windows must be similar. A drawing collected at the beginning of the year should be compared with a drawing collected later, not with a painting. Compare the same set of skills or behaviors in a similar context.

Whether a window is overused depends partly on the total number of appraisals being made. If 5 samples of problem solving will be collected, no more than 2 or 3 of them should come from the same source. If 10 assessments will be made, then 3-4 of the same method are acceptable.

# Slide 12: Variety of Methods to Gather Documentation

Briefly, there are a variety of methods used to gather assessment information. Over the next few modules we will be looking at specific types of methods such as observations, work samples and eliciting responses from students and their parents or teachers.

# Slide 13: Review: Standards and Assessment

Your assessment methods will be linked to the state standards because the standards provide us with a structure for what children should know. Keep in mind that as long as you are familiar with the standards and you are using authentic assessment you can observe progress in multiple standards domains at one time. There is no need to make separate observations for each domain. As an example, while observing a child playing in the block area it is possible to obtain some information about the child in multiple domains. These can be math, social emotional, motor development, and language. So when you are determining the assessment method choose a method that will provide you with multiple information that covers multiple standards.

# Slide 14: Assessment…

Assessment is not about children’s learning, it is about knowing what children have learned and using that information to plan for further learning.

# Slide 15: Curriculum Based Assessment

Another area to be aware of is that of curriculum-based assessment. We will be discussing curriculum based assessment in more detail in modules to come. However, as a brief introduction curriculum based assessment links the processes of planning, teaching and assessment. These three components are interrelated and move in an ongoing cycle. Assessment leads to planning, planning in turn leads to teaching, and teaching leads back to assessment.

# Slide 16: Using Multiple Measures

So, in review, to obtain reliable and valid assessment information, it is imperative to employ multiple assessment windows, or measures. Seeing children from a variety of perspectives, from different sources, in different situations, at different times, and using different data collection processes will provide a more balanced picture of the child and her learning.