

Assessment in IGCSE Mathematics

Session 1: Handout 1.19

Formative diagnostic tests

The purpose of this document is to enable teachers to focus on key points in producing a good formative test.

To be successful students must see the test as an aid to learning rather than a test to show others what they can or cannot do. It should not create anxiety nor require revision.

The focus of the test should be on one specific area and if this type of assessment is carried out regularly and cumulatively, the need for revision before the exams is greatly reduced.

Planning a test

- Make the questions context free to diagnose the mathematics rather than the problem solving skills.
- Set questions which cover the ability range of the class starting with the easier questions leading to the more challenging ones.
- Keep the test short and concise.
- Marking – must be easy to mark, best to award 1 or 0 for each question.
- Students need to be involved in the assessment and review process.

Feedback

- Take care to be supportive and not damage self-esteem.
- Need to enable the student to take responsibility for the next steps in terms of setting learning targets and working towards them.
- How are you to record the results? - simple grid showing responses to questions - right, wrong, not attempted could be recorded.

Follow-up task

- Pick a topic of your choice that you have either taught or will be teaching shortly.
- Devise a short formative test and mark scheme.
- Use the test with a class.

Evaluation

- Did the test show areas of weakness in the class as a whole?
- Was it a useful method for deciding on future work?
- Could you think of ways of enriching your teaching in any problem areas?
- What were the students' reactions? Do you think that you could now involve them more in their own learning process?