



Questions for Classroom Discussion

Testing Time

- **What are the main purposes of testing (or “assessing”) students?**
 - ⇒ Consider the need for students to be graded on the material that has been taught, as well as the need for parents to be given information about how their children are performing in school
 - ⇒ Consider the need for a teacher to know the strengths and weaknesses of students so that he or she can adjust instruction accordingly
 - ⇒ Consider the need to compare schools with other schools and local areas with other areas so that everyone is ready to compete for jobs (or college) after graduation

- **What are different kinds of tests that can be given to students?**
 - ⇒ Consider the broad definition of “student assessment” - *something that measures student understanding and progress*
 - ⇒ Consider “informal tests” such as homework, observations, group work, and other activities that students perform on a daily basis
 - ⇒ Consider “formal tests” such as essays and standardized tests that students take under strictly controlled conditions

- **What are the limitations of different types of assessment, and what must be done to overcome these?**
 - ⇒ Consider how some students might perform better on different types of tests (even when the content is the same), and how many students are not “good test takers”
 - ⇒ Consider the testing environment, and why you can sometimes gather better information in a “loose” environment when students are relaxed... and sometimes the opposite is true
 - ⇒ Consider how using a variety of informal and formal assessments throughout the year can help minimize the limitations of testing and provide a better picture of student understanding and progress