

Become Familiar with Education Standards

EDUCATORS need a way to measure student progress, and education boards need a way to provide schools and teacher accountability and to improve education. One way to accomplish all of those goals is by creating learning standards. In this unit, you will learn about learning standards and how they correspond to student objectives.



Objective:



Describe the philosophy and purpose of learning standards.

Key Terms:



accountability
benchmarks
goals
Illinois School Report Cards
learning standards
performance descriptors
validity

Learning Standards

According to the 1997 Illinois Learning Standards document, **learning standards** are specific statements of knowledge and/or skills within a goal. The standards clearly define the learning needed to reach that goal. Statewide learning standards provide a road map for local and state measures of student progress. The Illinois State Board of Education, which is elected by citizens of the state, is accountable for the education of Illinois students and is responsible for creating learning standards.

ASSESSMENT

Three ways for educators to measure how well students meet standards are classroom, state, and national or international assessment.

Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment measures student progress over time. Teachers can check student progress by observing or questioning students, by reviewing work assignments, or by testing and judging projects and performances (Illinois Learning Standards, 1997).

State Assessment

State assessments, such as the Illinois Scholastic Aptitude Test (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), occur on a larger scale and are designed specifically to check students' performance against the standards across the state. Both measures provide indicators of student progress for all students and districts. Teachers ensure that students have access to and practice with the test-specific content in their classrooms prior to testing.

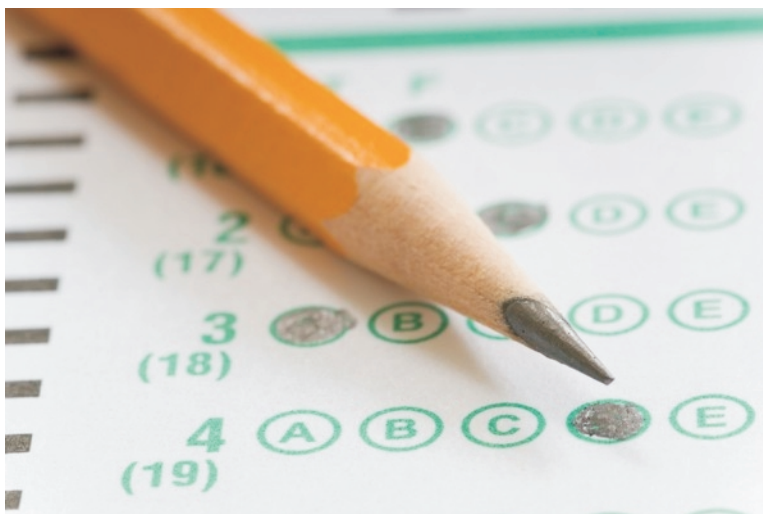


FIGURE 1. Exams are used to compare students' performance against state standards.

National and International Assessment

National and international assessments are conducted through tests such as Advanced Placement (AP) exams, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

TESTING

Each test is intended for a specific use. **Validity** is the extent to which the test results serve the particular uses for which they were intended. For example, achievement tests are used for selection, placement, diagnosis, and certification of mastery. Aptitude tests are often used to predict success in future learning activities and future occupations.

Accountability is the action required by the learning standards for schools and teachers to be answerable for the learning and development of students. Common statewide learning stan-



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Creating Rubrics

One of the ways teachers can assess students' progress to see if it meets state learning standards is by judging projects and performances. Many teachers use rubrics (scoring charts) that list the criteria on which students will be judged.

Visit the following Web site, which allows teachers to create rubrics for a variety of projects. Choose a topic and create a rubric of your own, using the pull-down menus. Have any of your projects ever been graded in this way?

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

dards allow all involved (e.g., legislators, administrators, teachers, parents, and students) to be aware of the common educational **goals**—extensive or wide-ranging statements related to a subject area. Consistent goals, standards, and **benchmarks** or **performance descriptors** (markers used to measure a student's progress over time) provide a basis for measuring progress at the state level.

REPORTS

Illinois School Report Cards are documents posted online by the Illinois State Board of Education that record ISAT and PSAE test results for public schools in Illinois. These test results can affect school and district changes in curriculum, methodology, and funding. To review school report cards, visit <http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getsearchcriteria.aspx>.

GOALS

The goal of learning standards is to improve education. Statewide testing may show gaps in student learning or provide teachers with direction for content areas requiring improvement. Other standards are also beneficial to students. For instance, workplace standards guide the preparation of students to be successful in occupational settings. In addition, technology standards for students, teachers, and administrators help to measure proficiency and set goals for the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes needed to succeed in today's digital age.

Educators are responsible for aligning learning standards with student objectives. First, the teacher should identify a particular student objective. Then, considering the subject area and the lesson content, the teacher should determine the corresponding standards. Many Web sites provide details on specific state and national learning standards as well as workplace and technology standards.



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Locating State and National Standards

To learn about the specific Illinois Learning Standards, visit the following links:

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/Default.htm>

Math: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/math/standards.htm>

English: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/standards.htm>

Physical Development and Health: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/pdh/standards.htm>

To compare the state standards to the national standards, you can visit the following Web site for the National Education Standards:

<http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/index.shtml>

To learn more about workplace standards in specific areas, visit the following Web sites:

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Summary of Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers:

http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/library/com_communications_sumlicen_dcc.shtml

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards:

http://education.uncc.edu/eportfolio/documents/word_files/Standards/naeyc_standards.htm

National Education Technology Standards (NETS):

<http://www.iste.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=NETS>

National Sanitation Foundation:

<http://www.nsf.org/>

Food Service Standards:

<http://www.foodservicewarehouse.com/education/health-safety/prevent-foodborne-illness.aspx>

Summary:



The Illinois State Board of Education adopted learning standards in 1997. The standards clearly define the learning needed to reach those goals. Teachers should use classroom assessment measures to track student progress over time. State assessments and national or international assessments are also used. Learning standards are used to meet three main goals: to measure student progress, to provide accountability of schools and teachers, and to improve education.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What are learning standards?
2. What are three justifications for the use of learning standards?
3. What are some ways in which teachers can check student progress?
4. What are some examples of state assessments?
5. How do the workplace, technology, and society influence the development of learning standards?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



The Illinois State Board of Education adopted the current state learning standards in 1997. Interview a teacher who has been on the job since before the standards went into effect. Ask questions about how the standards changed his or her own teaching style and how he or she thinks the standards have impacted student learning at your school.

Web Links:



Illinois Learning Standards

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/>

Illinois Early Learning Standards

http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/pdf/early_learning_standards.pdf