**New to NCEA: Understanding Assessment**

(Refs: Ministry of Education (1994) Assessment Policy to Practice, Learning Media Wellington, NZQA Te Reo Māori hui whakangungu handout)

There are two major purposes of assessment:

1. To improve students’ learning and teachers’ teaching
2. To award qualifications.

There are three types of assessment:

* Diagnostic assessment – helps the teacher to find out what students know and can do. It is usually carried out at the ***beginning*** of learning
* Formative assessment – is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and occurs ***during*** learning. It is used to to provide the student with feedback to enhance learning and to help the teacher understand what and how the student is learning. It helps to build a picture of a student’s progress, and can answer the question ‘where to next?’
* Summative assessment – is usually carried out at the **end** of a block of study to provide an indication of a student’s achievements. NCEA is an example of summative assessment.

The qualities of good assessment means it is:

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| Valid | The method of assessment does not distort what is being assessed. Assessing only what is intended. |
| Authentic | Produced by the student without assistance from others. |
| Sufficient | Enough evidence to make a confident decision about the student’s repeatable competence. |
| Consistent | Another assessor considering the same evidence would make the same assessment decision. |
| Open | The student knows:   * What is being assessed * When assessment is happening * What evidence and how much is needed |
| Fair | Does not disadvantage any student or group of students. |
| Manageable | Assessment can be done within the time, work patterns and resources available. |
| Part of Learning | Evidence can be found in everyday activities. Setting a special activity might be required to back this evidence up. |