

TESTING

Teachers should prepare students to succeed. In preparing students for tests, teachers should provide tips on how to study. For instance, students sometimes confuse the definitions of complementary and supplementary angles. Teachers might suggest the “c” in complementary comes before the “s” in supplementary as 90° comes before 180° . Teachers should also take the time to help students differentiate between problems that look alike. For example, while students might learn several different methods of factoring, they may not be able to determine an appropriate method of factoring when a mixture of problems is presented. Students have to be taught how to recognize differences and when to apply the appropriate method.

Teacher-made tests should reflect what is taught and valued in mathematics education. For example, while many teachers say mathematics is a language, this may not be reflected on their tests. If we value students’ ability to verbalize their knowledge, then definitions, identifications, and procedures should be part of tests. In addition, manipulation of data, open-ended questions, problem solving and appropriate use of technology should be included on tests. Also, to encourage students to review and reinforce previously learned material, teachers should make their tests cumulative.

Tests are formalized vehicles to not only evaluate student learning, but should also act as an assessment tool. As such, tests provide students a blueprint to increase their knowledge. Teachers should use test information, particularly questions answered incorrectly, as one way of increasing student performance. Addressing these deficiencies can increase student achievement.