

Preface

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics asked our task force to compile a collection of assessment items that support *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (NCTM 2000). This book, one of four in the series, focuses on classroom assessment in grades 9–12. The other three books, for teachers in grades 3–5, grades 6–8, and grades 9–12, also contain practical examples and samples of student work aligned with the NCTM Standards. Each of those books contains multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response questions designed to help classroom teachers identify problems specifically related to NCTM Standards and Expectations. A helpful matrix that summarizes this information is contained in the appendix of each volume. Because many young children are in the prereading and prewriting stages of development, this Assessment Sampler for prekindergarten through grade 2 does not rely on written student responses. Rather, it emphasizes the need for observations, interviews, and performance assessments as means for teachers to assess their students in the early grades.

The NCTM *Assessment Standards for School Mathematics* (1995) document identifies the role of classroom assessment as one that should—

- provide a rich variety of mathematical topics and problem situations,
- give students opportunities to investigate problems in many ways,
- question and listen to students,
- look for evidence of learning from many sources, and
- expect students to use concepts and procedures effectively in solving problems.

Our task force faced a special challenge. Because not many resources are available for assessing very young children, members of the task force wrote and pilot-tested a variety of assessments. We depended on interviews, observations, and performance assessments as our primary criteria for determining what the young children in the pilot tests knew and were able to do. One advantage to using observations, interviews, and performance assessments is being able to listen to children as they verbalize their thinking. Student reasoning fosters invaluable insights into what students understand and in which areas of mathematics they need more experience. Listening to and observing students working through mathematical tasks give teachers ongoing opportunities to make instructional decisions and refine the structure of their lessons accordingly.

We encourage you to use the items contained in this Assessment Sampler with your own students. As you work toward extending your own classroom repertoire of assessment items, we hope you find the bibliography and resources sections helpful in your pursuit.