

Florida-Achieves! The portal to FOCUS & FCAT Explorer

FOCUS: FCIM—Newest Assessment Tool for Teachers

The FOCUS: FCIM Web site, part of the Florida-Achieves Web site, launched its multi-grade mini assessment classroom tool in the spring of 2005. The Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) is part of an eight-step process designed to dramatically improve student achievement.

This eight-step process breaks improvement into four parts of an instructional cycle called Plan-Do-Check-Act. Two essential steps of the cycle—calendar development and administration of assessments—are supported by the FCIM Web site.

Each mini assessment offers a quick, five-question assessment on a particular benchmark or focus. In addition, the FOCUS: FCIM Web site offers a retest option for each benchmark or focus. These assessments are designed to give teachers an instructionally sound tool for analyzing student strengths and weaknesses. The FOCUS: FCIM Web site also includes a teacher's desk with a calendar for scheduling assessment periods and tools for monitoring student progress.

FCIM offers assessments for grades 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, and 3 in reading and math. Grades 5 and 4 will be completed by the end of October. This Web site is free and available for use by all Florida public school children and their teachers.

To see the FOCUS: FCIM Web site and learn more about the mini assessments, use your FCAT Explorer sign-in name and password to sign-in at focus.florida-achieves.com. Or you can go to www.florida-achieves.com and sign-in there.

IMPORTANT:

- FCAT Explorer training and practice required before using the FOCUS Mini Assessments.
- **DO NOT** add duplicate students to FOCUS for the purpose of using other grade level assessments, the data will be invalid for school and district use.
- The FOCUS and FCAT Explorer Web sites offer tools to help teachers and administrators make the most of these free, benchmark-based programs.
 - On both the teacher's and school administrator's desks, PowerPoint presentations and users manuals are available for download. These materials can be used for teacher training, parent workshops, or mentor and tutor training.
 - To access these tools, teachers and administrators should click on the Tools/Resources tab from their teacher/administrator desk.

Dashboard:

At a glance: An overview of the class/ students/upcoming events/open assessments

Class Options: Import existing FCAT Explorer classes, create new classes using the FCAT Explorer database of student names, delete classes, rename classes, add students (adding students in FOCUS, adds them to the data base of FCAT Explorer, DO NOT add students already enrolled- with new passwords and usernames.)

Assessments: Choose the items you wish to assess.

Reports: Class and Individual reports.

Calendar: Set assessment dates, type of assessment: FOCUSED Instructions, First Assessment, Second Assessment, Other

Tools and Resources: Review the 5 question mini-assessments with answers (student view) Links to other resources

Best Practice Guidelines Offer Tips for Effective Use:

FCAT Explorer Support Services team members have developed a set of Best Practice Guidelines to help you use FCAT Explorer practice programs as effectively as possible. The guidelines offer tips and suggestions in the following areas:

- Starting a New School Year
- Getting Your Students Started
- Signing On
- Exploring Your Teacher's Desk
- Monitoring Student Progress
- Getting Familiar with the Student Site
- Helping Students Succeed
- Exploring in the Classroom
- Encouraging After-School Use
- Getting Technical Assistance

To access the guidelines, click the link at the end of this page. On subsequent visits, you can click Educator Resources on the home page—you'll find the FCAT Explorer Best Practice Guidelines link under the School Resources column.

Support Services team members developed the FCAT Explorer Best Practice Guidelines based on discussions and interactions with public school teachers throughout Florida. If you have additional ideas or suggestions to offer, click CONTACT US from the FCAT Explorer home page or your FCAT Explorer Teacher's Desk. You can also give your ideas to a Support Services team member by calling 888.750.3228 toll-free.

The [FCAT Explorer Best Practice Guidelines](#) will be updated as Support Services team members collect new ideas and insights from you and other teachers, so check it out from time to time!