

# Setting the Stage

The current focus on classroom assessment comes out of changes that have been occurring over many years, in particular during the last decade of educational reform in teaching and learning. Section I of this document provides a context in which to understand these changes, particularly social and historical changes. It also examines how classroom assessment is used for multiple purposes, with special attention to the role of differentiated learning.

## Key Ideas in Section I

- Classroom assessment practices are deeply rooted in societal expectations.
- Classroom assessment plays a major role in how students learn, their motivation to learn, and how teachers teach.
- Quality issues (reliability, reference points, validity, and record-keeping) are important in any classroom assessment.
- Identifying the purpose of any classroom assessment is critical for it to be productive and efficient.
- Planning classroom assessment based on purpose ensures that it will be coherent and effective.
- Teachers can use many different strategies and tools for classroom assessment, and can adapt them to suit the purpose and the needs of individual students.

# Section I