

# Formative Assessment

## Answers three questions for learners

Where am I going?

Where am I now?

Where to next?

## Begins with a positive, safe learning environment, an environment that promotes ongoing improvement

### Clarity about learning expectations

Teacher:

- Identifies clear learning targets and performance criteria aligned to standards.
- Selects/develops student task(s) aligned to both content and cognitive demand of standards.
- Communicates learning expectations to students.
- Builds relevance of new learning with students.
- Clarifies: Why is this content/skill important to learn?

Student:

- Internalizes learning expectations through discussion with teacher and peers, reviews anchor and exemplar artifacts.
- Connects prior knowledge of topic to expected new learning.
- Finds personal connection and relevance with topic.

### Evidence gathering

Teacher:

- Formulates a plan for evidence gathering (when/how during instruction).
- Probes student thinking to ascertain student understanding and/or misconceptions.
- Administers checks for understanding (individual task, writing prompt, exit ticket, ungraded quiz, etc.).
- Documents student progress.

Student:

- Participates in peer feedback activities.
- Tracks own progress toward learning targets.
- Participates in self-assessment activities.
- Reflects metacognitively on learning successes and challenges.

### Responsive action

Teacher:

- Determines best instructional next step for student learning.
- Provides descriptive feedback and/or additional instruction.
- Groups students as needed for reinforcement/extension of learning.
- Provides time for students to take individual action.
- Moves to summative assessment activities (after responsive action loop is complete).

Student:

- Takes action based on teacher and peer feedback (self-regulation).
- Revisits own progress toward learning targets.
- Requests help as needed.
- Prepares for summative assessment.

Student engages with new learning

# Creative Ideas for Formative Assessments

Methods to Check Student Understanding of Learning Intentions/Target

- **Exit Ticket**-ask students to respond to a quick question that they hand to you as they exit the room. (post it notes work great!)
- **Four corners**-teacher displays a question and four answer choices. Students choose an answer by going to different corners of the room. This will help the teacher determine which concepts are the most difficult for the class. Deepen critical thinking by asking students to explain/defend their answers.
- **Mini-quizzes**-give students multiple quizzes in the same format as the test so they can check their understanding.
- **Musical chairs**-using whiteboards, have students sit in a circle. Ask students a question or have them translate a word. Play some music in the background and as soon as students have the answer, they need to hold their boards in the air. If they have the incorrect response, they should fix it and hold up their board again. The last person to have the correct response loses a spot in the circle and the circle slowly closes in with each round.
- **Padlet**-students respond to questions/polls using their computers/handheld device. Gives teachers instant feedback
- **Parking lot**-allow students to write questions/comments they have throughout the lesson on a post it note and post to a board/wall in the room. Refer to the parking lot throughout the lesson to track student's needs/understanding.
- **Plickers**-students choose the response to a multiple choice question using a card that is scanned digitally and recorded by the teacher.
- **Scale of 1-4:** the teacher evaluates a performance task (like a discussion) on a scale of 1-4. 4= you got it! 3= Almost there. 2=Needs more work. 1=Needs a lot of work
- **Sequence Cards**-give students cut up sentences and have them try to put all of the words in sentences that make sense. This activity can be done individually or in pairs.
- **Snowball fight**-have each students write a question or action statement on a piece of paper. Then, students will ball them up and on the count of three throw them throughout the room. Each student will then pick up a piece of paper from the group and answer the question or complete the action statement written.
- **Stop/Go**- give each student a card with a red light on one side and a green light on the other. As students are learning a new concept, they can flip the card to the stop sign when they need help/more explanation.
- **Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down**-After practicing a skill, ask students how they feel they are doing by showing thumbs up/down. Alternative: students show a scale of 1-5 on their hand.
- **Whiteboards**-students practice writing on a small whiteboard and then hold up their boards and compare their answers with the teacher's answer. Works great for spelling/vocab/verb conjugation/equation solving etc. Can also use flashcards for pair work using the same procedure.

## Regardless of which format you choose, remember.....

- Formative assessment is a cyclical **process**, not any particular test
- It is used not just by teachers but by both **teachers and students**
- Formative assessment takes place **DURING** instruction
- It provides **assessment-based feedback** to teachers and students
- The function of this feedback is to help teachers and students **make adjustments** that will improve students' achievement of intended curricular aims. (Marzano, 2010)