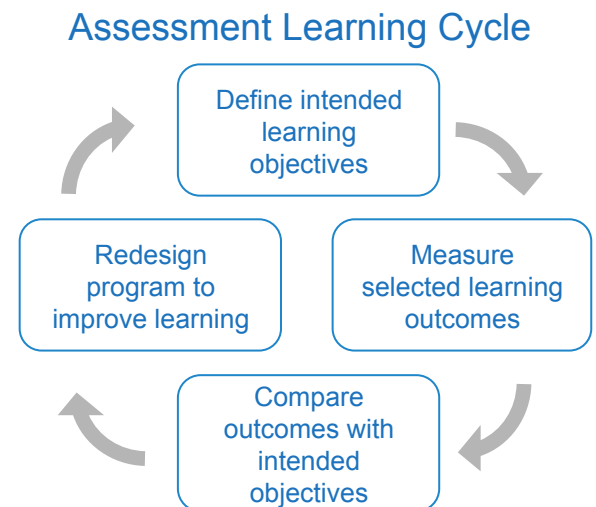


What is Formative Assessment?

Assessments that Guide Learning

Formative assessment is when teachers continually check in with their students based upon goals and learning targets they have set. This is different from summative assessments like unit tests, ISTEP, NWEA, etc. Summative assessments are meant to be a one-time measure of students' abilities in a certain subject area. Summative assessments are also graded to indicate whether students have mastered skills and standards.

Formative assessments are typically not taken as a grade that reflects if a student has mastered a skill or standard. These assessments are informal and are meant to provide both the student and teacher with specific feedback. Teachers can know exactly where a student is in his/her learning. They can know whether a student is understanding a skill or concept and adjust their teaching and support accordingly to meet the needs of each student. Students can know exactly how they are doing, what they have learned, and what they still need to learn before waiting until the end of a unit.



Formative Vs. Summative Assessment

Formative Assessment

Used to check students' understanding and to guide and plan learning

Guides the next steps in instruction and helps teachers and students consider the additional learning opportunities needed to ensure success

Allows for responsiveness to student need.

Examples of Formative Assessment

- Book Logs
- Stop-and-Jot Writing in the Midst of Reading
- Reading Reflection
- Writing Sample

Summative Assessment

Used to provide teachers and students with information about the attainment of content knowledge and certifies the learning

Often result in grades which means that they have a high point value

Evaluates student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.

Examples of Summative Assessment

- Standardized State Assessments
- End of Unit Tests
- Final Projects
- Published Writing from an Entire Unit of Study

What do Formative Assessments look like?

Formative assessments can take many shapes and forms. It depends on what feedback the teacher is seeking to gain from each assessment. They can be as informal as asking students to give them a thumbs up or down to indicate if they have understood something, to a bit more organized such as exit tickets at the end of a lesson.

Below is a list of formative assessments commonly used in the classroom.

Hand Signals	Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal or process. Thumbs Up or Thumbs down, 5 Fingers 1-5 scale
Stop-and-Jot	During a lesson or independent reading students jot down their thinking or respond to a question.
Turn-and-Talk	During a lesson students discuss their thinking or respond to a question with a partner. The teacher listens and observes student conversation and sometimes records notes or transcribes conversations.
Concept Map	Graphical organizers that allow students to see relationships between concepts through diagramming key words representing those concepts.
Exit Ticket	Written student responses to questions posed at the end of a class or learning activity or at the end of the day.
Journal Entry	Students record in their journal their understanding of the topic, concept or lesson taught.

Teachers also use reading and writing conferences and anecdotal notes from these conferences to help guide instruction.

Resources

Below is a link to some further reading on formative assessments and why they are important in the classroom.

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may07/vol64/num08/Assessment-Through-the-Student's-Eyes.aspx>