



Formative Assessment

Dimension #7: Formative Assessment to Inform Instructional Practice

Effective assessment practice is evident when teachers...

are able to interpret evidence of learning to determine next steps for students.

▶ Planning Effective Questions

<https://aac.ab.ca/video/planning-effective-questions/>

Video Summary

A high school science teacher discusses how he uses ‘hinge questions’ in class to guide his instructional decisions. Although this video is set in a high school science classroom, the assessment principles from this video are applicable to other grades and subjects.

Key Points

- Effective questions provide teachers with information about how well students have grasped key concepts and skills.
- This information allows teachers to make adjustments to their instruction.

Discussion Questions

- What are the characteristics of effective questions that can provide teachers with information about student learning in real time?
- How could we create time to allow teachers in our school to collaborate and develop these effective questions?

Connections to TQS Assessment Indicators

- generate evidence of student learning to inform teaching practice through a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences
- provide accurate, constructive and timely feedback on student learning



Connections to LQS Instructional Leadership Indicators

- 6 (a) building the capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students
- 6 (c) ensuring that student instruction addresses learning outcomes outlined in programs of study
- 6 (e) demonstrating a strong understanding of effective pedagogy and curriculum
- 6 (g) ensuring that student assessment and evaluation practices are fair, appropriate, and evidence informed

Using the Video to Support Your Own Professional Learning

1. **Review the video:** Review the video: [Planning Effective Questions](#).
 - Use the *Key Points* and *Discussion Questions* to guide your reflection.
 - What connections can you make to your past/current classroom practice?
2. **Engage in background reading and study.**
 - *Assessment Conversations: Engaging with Colleagues to Support Student Learning* (pp. 44 – 46; 55).*
3. **Anticipate challenges.**



Potential Challenge	Potential Response
“How will I know if my questions are effective?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the outcomes when creating the questions to ensure you are clear about what you want your students to know. • Effective questions should give you information about students’ misconceptions or cause students to think. • Consider using group discussion for challenging open-ended questions, especially as concepts are introduced.
“This feels overwhelming. It’s hard to come up with good questions.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start small with one upcoming lesson. Work with a colleague to ‘test drive’ some questions. Anticipate the type of responses students may give, and then fine-tune the questions. • Try the questions out with your students. Their authentic responses will help you fine-tune your questions even further.

As a school leader, provide time for teachers to work together to create purposeful questions.

Using the Video to Support Professional Conversations (Assessment Team and/or Staff/Department Meeting)

1. Encourage assessment team/staff members to focus on the **Key Points** and the **Discussion Questions** as they design assessment experiences for students.
2. Encourage team members to be prepared to share their experiences (successes and challenges) at the next assessment team meeting and/or the next staff/department meeting.



Remember the value of working towards building a culture of formative assessment within your school, beginning with your leadership role. See Section 2 (p. 11) for more information.

* *Assessment Conversations: Engaging with Colleagues to Support Student Learning* is an additional recommended resource published by AAC. It was not funded by this project, and is available for purchase from AAC.