



Focus on Formative Assessment

Module 1: Introduction to Formative Assessment

An AAC Professional Learning Module

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AAC Member Content

To begin, take a moment to reflect...
Where is our assessment focus?

?

**Marks and
Grades**

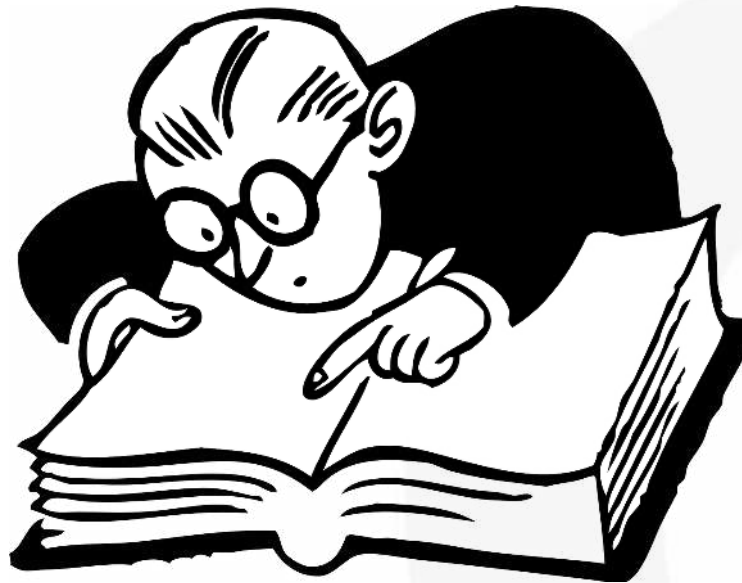
**Growth and
Learning**

As teachers?
Our students?
Their parents?

Maybe it's time to **rethink** our
relationship with assessment!

Next, let's agree on some terms...

The Vocabulary of Assessment



Definitions
brought to you by AAC

Assessment is the process of collecting information about student performance.

This information is what allows us to effectively support student learning!

Evaluation is making decisions about the quality of a response, based on that information.

Evaluation might lead to descriptive feedback, or it might lead to marks.

Formative Assessment is an on-going exchange of information, among students and teachers, about student progress toward learner outcomes.

Formative assessment is **not** used for grading.

Summative Assessment involves collecting information about learning, in order to make judgments at the end of a period of instruction.

Summative assessment should **confirm** what you've already learned through formative assessment.

If it doesn't, look for further evidence.



The research is clear.

Formative assessment

improves learning – not
testing, not report cards, but
feedback!

4 things to help you achieve the profound results promised by research into formative assessment:

- Clarify the learning destination, for yourself as well as your students.
- Provide many opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback.
- Gather on-going evidence of student learning.
- Involve students deeply in the assessment process.

We need to build a **culture of formative assessment!**

4 things to help you achieve the profound results promised by research into formative assessment:



- Clarify the learning destination, for yourself as well as your students.

What learning are you assessing?

What should evidence of that learning look like?

Do you clearly understand what the learner outcomes are asking of students? (**Hint** - highlight the *verbs* in the outcomes!)

4 things to help you achieve the profound results promised by research into formative assessment:

- Clarify the learning destination, for yourself as well as your students.
- ○ Provide many opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback.

Balance this by keeping evaluative feedback, such as grades and comparisons to other students, to a minimum.

4 things to help you achieve the profound results promised by research into formative assessment:

- Clarify the learning destination, for yourself as well as your students.
- Provide many opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback.
- Gather on-going evidence of student learning.

And use that evidence to make **on-going adjustments** to your instruction.

4 things to help you achieve the profound results promised by research into formative assessment:

- Clarify the learning destination, for yourself as well as your students.
- Provide many opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback.
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- Involve students deeply in the assessment process.



Don't let assessment be something that we "do" to students. Ensure they are **partners in the process!**

Formative assessment is a *process*, not a product!

A focus on formative assessment does not just add a few techniques here and there - it organizes the whole teaching and learning venture around learning, and supports teachers in organizing the learning experience of their students more productively.

Black and Wiliam (2003)

Formative Assessment

Clarify the learning destination

Gather on-going evidence of learning

Plan and provide opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback

Involve learners in the assessment process

Ensure feedback leads to changes - for teachers *and* learners!

Oh no! What went wrong?

- You ask students to write an essay examining an event in the news, and relating it to the topic you are currently studying. When it comes time to mark the essays, you find that many students did a good job discussing the event, but not so well on the critical step of linking it to the current topic.
- You ask students to choose two 3-D objects from a collection of math manipulatives, and compare them to each other. Instead, most students simply described each object, without actually comparing them by identifying similarities and differences.

Formative assessment can help you
avoid situations like these!

Formative Assessment

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Clarify the learning destination

Plan and provide opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback

Gather on-going evidence of learning

Involve learners in the assessment process

Reflect back on a time when your students “missed the mark.”

How could the formative assessment process have helped you avoid being disappointed by student responses?

Formative Assessment

Clarify the learning destination

Gather on-going evidence of learning

Involve learners in the assessment process

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Did your students really understand what you were looking for before they began?
Were you clear on that yourself?

Formative Assessment

Clarify the learning destination

Gather on-going evidence of learning

Plan and provide opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback

Were students able to practice the required skills, and get useful feedback along the way?

Did they adjust their efforts based on the feedback?

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Formative Assessment

Clarify the learning destination

Plan and provide opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback

Gather on-going evidence of learning

Did you get the evidence you needed, day-by-day, to help you respond to student needs and misunderstandings?

Formative Assessment

Clarify the learning destination

Gather on-going evidence of learning

Plan and provide opportunities for practice and descriptive feedback

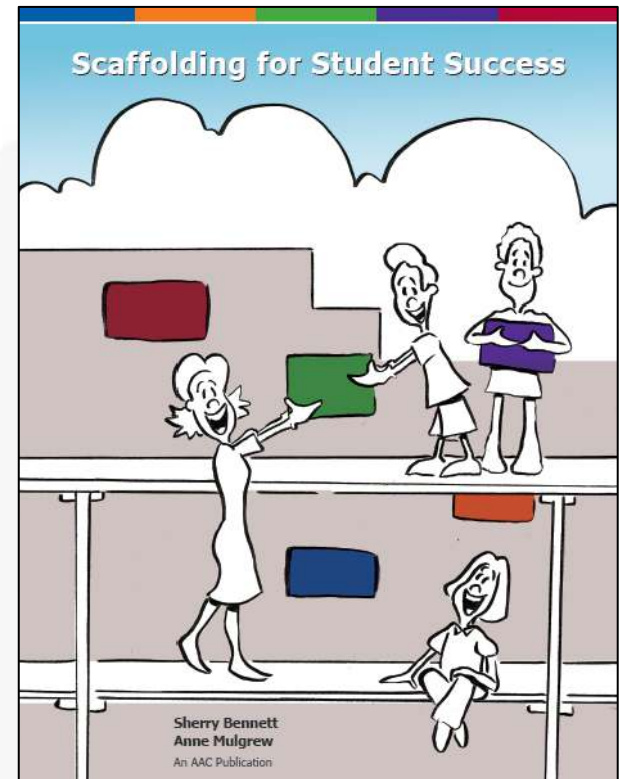
Involve learners in the assessment process

Did you involve your students in all parts of the process?
What could that look like?

Scaffold for Student Success

Our job as teachers is to help students learn, and if they haven't been successful yet, then neither our work nor the students' work is finished.

Scaffolding for Student Success, AAC 2010



A focus on formative assessment can help our students reach the learning destination!

- Clarify the learning destination
- Provide opportunities for practice and feedback
- Gather on-going evidence of learning
- Involve students in the process

Explore each of these steps in greater detail in the next modules in this series.



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