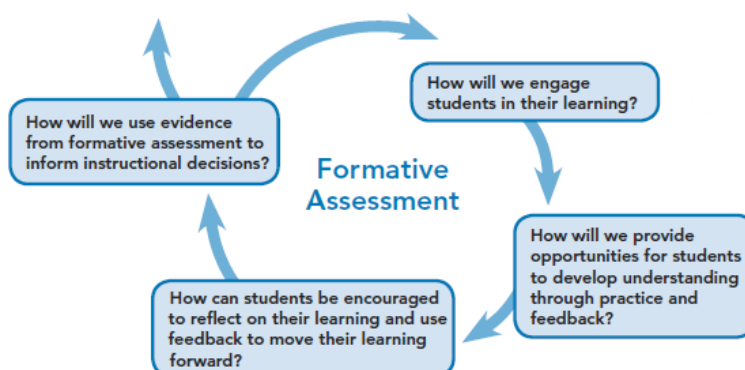


Technology & Assessment: Digital Feedback Tools



The **Formative Assessment** section on the AAC Key Visual can help us understand the place for (and power of) feedback in the learning process. **Feedback is the key** component of formative assessment, and its importance in the learning process cannot be overstated!

The Importance of Feedback for Students:

When **students** receive **specific, descriptive, and timely** feedback, they are **able to close the gap** between where they are trying to go and where they are currently, in relation to the learning goal. In other words, feedback **at the right time** and **at the right level** moves learning forward. Not all feedback is created equal, however.

Quality feedback needs to be:

- focused on **criteria**
- **accurate, constructive, and timely**
- **collaborative**, with the learners deeply involved in the process
- designed to **improve student learning**
- designed to **inform next steps for teacher**
- **descriptive** rather than evaluative
- **differentiated** to support the learners at their level

Ask yourself

“**WHY** am I giving this feedback?”, and “**WHAT** will students do with it when they receive it?”

Students should be provided with the opportunity and time to make adjustments to their work based upon the feedback they receive, and they will need time to do so **before** a summative judgment is delivered.

Food for Thought

Ruth Butler's article in the [Journal of Educational Psychology \(1987\)](#) observed, the only type of **feedback** that **helps students** to improve and to stay motivated, is **comments**. Butler (1987) notes that providing **marks** as feedback **does not result in gains in performance** and **only motivates the top students**.

So... Where's the DIGITAL part of this post?!

Okay...so now that we've discussed the properties of quality feedback, let's take a look at some of the fantastic digital tools available for giving feedback:

- 1) **Blogs:** What I love about blogs is the ability to provide feedback that is visible to others besides the intended recipient. This benefits not only the recipient of the feedback, but other viewers as well. In a classroom context, this means that students who view the work/feedback of their peers also have an opportunity to **internalize the success criteria themselves**. My only caution here is that **the context needs to be safe** for this to take place, so ensure that the feedback is directly related to the criteria for the task, and is **formative** (not summative/no grade attached).
- 2) **Google docs:** When students share their work in Google docs, they can choose to allow collaborators to comment on that work. Teachers or classmates can highlight portions of the text and **insert typed comments**. The recipient of the feedback can make adjustments to their work as needed and mark the comment as "resolved" when ready. The ability to **collaborate in real time** is a key feature of Google docs, allowing collaborators to provide feedback, make adjustments, ask clarifying questions, etc. to improve their work.
- 3) **Kaizena** (GAPE/Chrome app): Kaizena is a web app that allows you to leave **audio comments** on Google Docs. You enable this by creating a Kaizena profile, a place where your students or peers can go to request your feedback by selecting a document and placing it in one of the "boxes" you set up with your profile. Have a look at the [Kaizena Blog](#) for more details on how to enable sharing.
- 4) **Online Collaboration Tools:** There are a plethora of online student collaboration and feedback tools to explore. Based on the interests, ages, and abilities of your students there are many options for collaborative feedback tools. [Common Sense Education](#) often reviews and consolidates school appropriate lists of digital resources targeted for education contexts on their website. [Top Picks for Collaborative Tools: Common Sense Education.](#)

Remember

A clear understanding and implementation of **formative feedback** can have a **powerful effect on student learning**. There are many digital tools available for providing feedback, but as is the case with most things, the quality of the feedback – not the quantity – is critical. Using a digital feedback tool for

the sake of using a digital feedback tool may not be an effective method to provide feedback. Feedback needs to truly 'feed' something. Feedback should move students' learning forward, or provide the teacher insights on where to go next with the learning.

Looking for More Feedback Resources?

- Susan Brookhart is the author of the outstanding book, [How To Give Effective Feedback to Your Students](#), available for purchase from ASCD.
- Grant Wiggins has a great article on [Seven Keys to Effective Feedback](#) in the September 2012 Educational Leadership magazine, which focused on Feedback for Learning.
- Bryan Goodwin and Kirsten Miller's article, [Research Says/Good Feedback is Targeted, Specific, Timely](#) (also published in the September 2012 Educational Leadership magazine) makes an interesting connection between how **frequent feedback in video games** is what sustains a child's interest.
- [The Power of Feedback](#) by John Hattie and Helen Timperley (Review of Educational Research, 2007 77:81)

**Note: All the links provided in this resource are for convenience only; AAC does not guarantee the content or accuracy of the sites.