



Assessment in Action

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.

▶ Balancing Formative and Summative Assessment

<https://aac.ab.ca/video/balancing-formative-summative-assessment/>

Video Summary

A teacher discusses how the assessment purpose (formative or summative) determines how the assessment evidence is used. 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

- The assessment purpose determines how the assessment evidence will be used.
- Summative assessment evidence is used to make a judgment regarding student performance.
- Feedback is most effective during formative assessment, with benefits for both teachers and students.

Discussion Question

- In preparation for an upcoming summative assessment, where might opportunities for formative feedback be integrated into the instructional sequence?

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: [Balancing Formative and Summative Assessment](#).
 - Use the *Key Points* and *Discussion Question* 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. 55).*
3. Anticipate challenges.



| Potential Challenge | Potential Response |
|--|---|
| <p>“How do I get my students to stop asking, ‘Is this for marks?’”</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First consider if students understand why they are being asked to complete an assignment. Formative assessment should help students to be successful with summative assessment. • Focus on incorporating meaningful and informative ‘real-time’ methods of formative assessment such as the use of mini-white boards in a lesson. Students are more likely to engage in this low-risk type of formative assessment, while you gather valuable information about where they are at in their learning. |
| <p>“I have to report formative assessment in my digital gradebook. How much formative assessment do I need?”</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While it may be helpful to track student progress during formative assessment experiences, formative assessment as defined by Dylan Wiliam is the “day-by-day, minute-by-minute” interactions that teachers have with their students. It is not necessary to put a grade on most types of formative assessment. Work within your jurisdiction policy, but also consider that you don’t need to limit formative assessment to only that which you are required to record. |

As a school leader, work with your school and jurisdiction leaders to discuss how the requirements within your reporting program can be best managed in order to keep the focus of formative assessment on the conversations between teacher and student.

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 Question** 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.