



# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT



## WHAT IS IT?

Formative assessment refers to a wide variety of methods that instructors use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



Formative assessments help instructors identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support.

## HOW DO I DO IT

There are many ways to conduct formative assessment (see next section for some ideas). Like any assessment, the assessment needs to align with the learning objectives. Formative assessment are generally ungraded or are very low stakes. In addition to the assessment itself, the instructor would need a plan to adjust instruction or offer academic support. In either of these two cases, the instructional methods for correction need to be different than the original methods.

## GUIDELINES FOR CORRECTION

*Did over 80% of the class meet the desired learning standard?*

**YES**

- Proceed with the Lesson Plan
- For individuals that did not meet the standard, offer extra support to get them to the desired level

**NO**

*Did 50-80% of the class meet the desired learning standard?*

**YES**

Use different activities or guided instruction for different groups of students so they can meet the desired standards

**NO**

*Did fewer than 50% meet the desired standard?*

**YES**

You may need to reteach that section of material using a different approach than before

# EXAMPLES FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

## CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) were developed by Angelo and Cross (1993). There are many varied CATs that can be used. Some examples:

- Minute paper
- Muddiest point
- One sentence summary
- Background knowledge probe

## QUIZZES

These can take many forms from multiple-choice to more open-ended but ideally easy to grade and short. For an added twist, have students complete these individually and then in pairs - allowing students to come to consensus on their answers

## AUDIENCE RESPONSE SYSTEM (CLICKERS)

Audience response systems (ARS) are electronic devices that can capture the entire classes thoughts. ARS allows immediate feedback allowing for on the fly adjustments

## OTHER IDEAS

Write-Pair-Share: Student "Write" a response to a question (30 sec), Pair with a neighbor to discuss (2 min), and Share with the class

Student-generated question: Students generate their own quiz questions and share with their peers to gauge the correctness of the question

## QUICK TIPS



- 1
- 2

**Focus on feedback** – the goal is to improve future performance so the learner needs to know what their areas of improvement are.

Avoid grading formative assessments - the goal is to move away from judgements (summative assessment) and provide feedback. The grade may take away from the more important opportunity for improvement

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Hunt and Pellegrino, *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 89, Spring 2002
- Shute, *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1), 2008
- Kibble, *Advances in Physiology Education*, 31: 2007
- Rolfe et al, *Lancet*, 345: 1995
- William and Black, *British Educational Research Journal*, 22: 1996
- Rushton, *Medical Teacher*, 27(6): 2005

