

Assessment Strategies

Purpose of Assessment

- What concept, skill, or knowledge do I want to assess?
- What should the students know or be able to do?
- On what levels are the students performing?
- On what levels would I like them to be performing?

Mastery of Content

- Where are the gaps in learning?
- Are there questions (concepts or performance tasks) missed by most students?
- Did a large percentage of students miss the same questions?
- Was the question poorly worded?
- Did the question use vocabulary or language that was not understood?
- Was the material sufficiently taught?
- Does there appear to be a content problem?
- Does there appear to be a teaching problem?

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments are administered to students periodically to determine what students have learned. These assessments usually offer at the mid-point or at the conclusion of a unit of study. Examples of summative assessments are used to: end-of-unit tests, district benchmarks, end-of-semester exams, and state assessments. Summative assessments are used to:

- Glean information for a portion of the grading process
- Determine grades for report cards
- Determine accountability for schools
- Measure student learning in relation to content standards
- Help evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs

Summative assessments usually occur too late to make timely and necessary adjustments to the learning process; thus, a formative assessment is needed.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments are information-gathering activities that take place during the actual teaching of concepts or skills. These assessments help individualize instruction and promote learning. Formative assessments provide timely information to both teachers and students. Teachers use formative assessments to adjust instruction and to plan effective strategies that meet students' learning needs; whereas, students use the results to measure their progress in learning. Such information serves as evidence to adjust instruction immediately during the teaching and learning process. Teachers use formative assessments to:

- Obtain information for planning purposeful, effective instruction
- Gather current information about students' learning needs.
- Diagnose and correct misconceptions in students' understandings.
- Define and correct instructional errors

- Determine the next steps in the learning process that help students acquire targeted skills.
- Adapt instructional approaches to appeal to the learning preferences of students
- Inform students and parents of academic progress without using grades.
- Ensure that students achieve standards-based learning goals.

Formative Assessment Strategies

- Establish and convey clear outcomes for student learning
- Use formative assessment tools frequently throughout the learning process to gather student data about learning and to inform instruction.
- Align assessment techniques to instruction and to the needs of students
- Track mastery of concepts, and use data to know when to reteach or to find a different way to introduce content/skills
- Associate formative assessment with practice; use the data to monitor student progress, making informed instructional decisions
- Build an environment where students feel safe giving and receiving constructive feedback
- Facilitate a collaborative classroom atmosphere without competition
- Collaborate with students and offer suggestions for improvement
- Close learning gaps by sharing specific, descriptive feedback about the learning task
- Keep feedback appropriate for the individual; use language that is simple for the student to comprehend
- Use feedback not only to correct or clarify misunderstandings/errors, but to affirm quality work or approximations toward the learning objective
- Give feedback to reinforce specific student behaviors by naming the product or task
- Expect student to take responsibility for their learning and to become active participants in the assessment process
- Help students set short-term goals to achieve outcomes and track their personal progress
- Demonstrate for students how to become assessors of their own learning (self-assessments, conferencing, portfolio)
- Provide students a rubric or checklist of criteria to use in determining the successful attainment of goals or standards; ensure students understand the rubric/criteria so they become effective assessors of their own learning
- Provide students with questioning stems; encourage students to ask questions of peers and of themselves to develop self-assessment skills
- Provide frequent opportunities for students to dialogue with each other about conceptual understandings; facilitate discussions on how to improve.
- Invite students to discuss and critique each other's work based on set standards or criteria
- Utilize multiple assessment techniques to gain a more comprehensive picture of each individual student and to formulate accurate feedback
- Use a variety of formative assessment opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning or understanding (discussions, group work, projects, skit, panels, interviews, songs, poetry, performance tasks, essays, review games, classroom observations, anecdotal notes)
- Gather evidence of student learning (observation, recorded notes, work samples)
- Observe and interact with students to determine their levels of understanding and comprehension
- Use recorded observations or anecdotal notes to provide feedback that corrects misunderstandings in learning

- Use questions as feedback to help students think about their work
- Discuss what students need to do to improve when comparing their work to task criteria or rubrics
- Use questioning prompts that generate discussion or promote student/class interaction; challenge students to actively discuss and evaluate their learning
- Adjust instruction or affirm understanding by studying evidence of student learning
- Pause often during instruction to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of skills/concepts
- Pause periodically during instruction to connect learning to everyday life
- Stop frequently to pose questions that require students to think about what they understand and what they do not understand
- Have students maintain interactive content-area journals to document their learning and to use as evidence in self-assessments
- Use homework and quizzes as formative assessments, maintaining a focus on learning rather than on grading
- Use a variety of formative assessment techniques to check for student understanding
 - Have students write their understanding of vocabulary terms or concepts prior to and following instruction
 - Interview students individually or in groups to determine their thinking or reasoning as they solve problems
 - Have students face partners and summarize the main ideas from a discussion, assigned reading, or direct instruction
 - Direct students to complete a few problems representative of prior instruction and check answers
 - Ask student to write a brief response to an open-ended question that pertains to the lesson taught
 - Move about the classroom to observe students as they are working individually or in small groups
 - Hold one-on-one conversations with students to determine their levels of understanding
 - Provide students with common misconceptions about a concept, theory, or process, ask them to explain why they agree or disagree
 - Present student with analogies or similes for completion
 - Ask students to use hand signals to indicate their understanding of a concept
 - Administer multiple-choice quizzes to allow students to select best answer responses and justify their answers