



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT CHARACTERISTICS

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT . . .	WHY?
Highlights the needs of each student	When we focus on the needs of our individual learners, we become responsive in our practice and design learning experiences driven by student needs. Additionally, we stay away from viewing students as being or needing to be at the same place in their learning.
Provides immediately useful feedback to students and teachers	Learners continue to grow when supported both in the moment as well as over time. The need for immediate feedback and long-term feedback can establish a mutual understanding of growth within and throughout the learning journey.
Occurs as a planned and intentional part of the learning in a classroom	When intentional and purposeful assessment occurs, it brings a greater meaning to the learning process for students. Learners can see the connection between their performance and their progress, which will allow them to continue their growth.
Focuses on progress or growth	Rather than focusing on numbers, data, or scores, formative assessment can both provide insight into the immediate response to learning as well as seek to understand growth over a longer period of time. By examining progress, we eliminate deficit thinking and channel conversations with learners in positive ways.



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Supports goal setting within the classroom curriculum	Formative assessment encourages students to play a shared role in the learning process. Equally important, having a role in goal setting inspires students to make connections to the curriculum and their own learning goals.
Answers questions the teacher has about students' learning	When teachers have the power to investigate student performance, this investigation creates a ripple effect into stronger curriculum design principles, promotes responsive teaching practices, and ultimately affords a more intimate relationship between student and teacher.
Reflects the goals and intentions of the teachers and the students	Reflection invites conversation, questions, and change. Formative assessment places students in the forefront of decision making as opposed to what might be required of a predetermined, standardized assessment.
Relies on teacher expertise and interpretation	Teachers have a holistic knowledge of each student that external examiners or scorers do not have. The teacher is well positioned to make meaningful sense of formative assessment data and to take action that results in students' growth.
Occurs in the context of classroom life	Formative assessment should have an organic feel that weaves within the fabric of the learning environment rather than feeling separate and possibly intrusive to the flow of learning.



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Focuses on responsibility and care	Rather than focusing on accountability, a focus on responsibility and care for our students communicates their importance to both the learning environment as well as the process.
Informs immediate next steps	Responsive teaching understands the continuous progress and performance of students. In addition, this monitoring informs curricular design decisions, supports individual student needs, and evokes frequent self-reflection on professional practice.
Allows teachers and students to better understand the learning process in general and the learning process of particular students	Formative assessment allows for the transferring of learning as well as the ability to take next steps as a learner. Without a sense of trajectory or progression it's hard to envision these essential next steps.
Encourages students to assume greater responsibility for monitoring and supporting their own learning	Empowering students to participate in their own learning cultivates a sense of agency and intrinsic motivation that stretches the boundaries of learning. Rather than eliminating students from this process, invite them to have a voice in continuing their learning journey.
Considers multiple kinds of information based in a variety of tools or strategies	When teachers consider multiple kinds of information, they have an opportunity to view students' progress holistically rather than needing to depend on a single snapshot. Using a variety of tools and strategies can also provide a depth of knowledge around the individual needs of every student in order to design meaningful and important learning experiences.