Assessment in the Here & Now

ACSI October 2016

Our Agenda

• A few terms...
• The right tool for the job...
• The HEART of where we are...
• Digging deeper...
• Go tell it on the mountain...

What IS Assessment?

The English word “assessment” is derived from the Latin assidere “to sit beside.”
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION...

- Discuss in your small groups how assessment information is studied by the classroom teacher/ by an administrator in your school.
  Could you make improvements to the study? Is further training necessary for teachers? Does your school need to assign someone to look at the results long term?

**Terminology**

**Formal Assessment**
- Formal assessments have data which support the conclusions made from the test. We usually refer to these types of tests as standardized measures. These tests have been tried before on students and have statistics which support the conclusion such as the student is reading below average for his age. The data is mathematically computed and summarized. Scores such as percentiles, stanines, or standard scores are mostly commonly given from this type of assessment.

**Informal Assessment**
- Informal assessments are not data driven but rather content and performance driven. For example, running records are informal assessments because they indicate how well a student is reading a specific book. Scores such as 10 correct out of 15, percent of words read correctly, and most rubric scores; are given from this type of assessment.

The assessment used needs to match the purpose of assessing...

Formal or standardized measures should be used to assess overall achievement, to compare a student’s performance with others at their age or grade, or to identify comparable strengths and weaknesses with peers. Informal assessments sometimes referred to as criterion referenced measures or performance based measures, should be used to inform instruction.
Formative & Summative Assessment

**Formative**
- Assessment FOR Learning: delivers information during the instructional process, before the summative assessment. Both the teacher and the student use formative assessment results to make decisions about what actions to take to promote further learning. It is an ongoing, dynamic process that involves far more than frequent testing, and measurement of student learning is just one of its components.

**Summative**
- Assessment OF Learning: results are used to make some sort of judgment, such as to determine what grade a student will receive on a classroom assignment, measure program effectiveness, or determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress. Summative assessment, sometimes referred to as assessment of learning, typically documents how much learning has occurred at a point in time; its purpose is to measure the level of student, school, or program success.

The Right Tool for the Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative</th>
<th>Summative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Factor</td>
<td>Rear view mirror: what was learned and at a distance from the learning objective at a particular point in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>At a particular point in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>Graded/reported</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Evaluate progress at specific points in time against curricular goals or standards, program efficacy, student improvement goals, and student placement</td>
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The greatest value in formative assessment lies in **teachers and students** making use of results to improve real-time teaching and learning at every turn.

Stephen Chappuis and Jan Chappuis
The HEART of Where We Are...

FORMATIVE Assessment

Ready-made benchmark tests cannot substitute for day-to-day formative assessment conducted by assessment-literate teachers.
The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. The simplest prescription for improving education must be ‘dollops of feedback.’

John Hattie, Author of Visible Learning

One way to think about transforming formative assessment to informative (or TRANSFORMATIVE) assessing is to think of it as akin to living a wellness lifestyle: preventing health problems before they occur.

In the same way, in its most authentic state, assessment should serve to prevent intervention, not merely react to instruction, and occurs during the learning process, so that it is unnecessary to wait until a student has failed to treat a mistake or failure to learn.
Even though assessments will continue to be labeled *formative* or *summative*, *how the results are used* is what determines whether the assessment is formative or summative.

The Nitty Gritty...What Can I DO Tomorrow??

**Examples of Formative Assessment**

- Observations
- Questioning
- Discussion
- Exit/Admit Slips
- Learning/Response Logs
- Graphic Organizers
- Peer/Self Assessments
### MORE Examples of Formative Assessment...

- Practice Presentations
- Visual Representations
- Kinesthetic Assessments
- Individual Whiteboard
- Laundry Day
- Four Corners
- Constructive Quizzes
- Think-Pair-Share
- Appointment Clocks

### Observations

The more we know about students, the more we can help them. Observations, sometimes called kid watching, can help teachers determine what students do and do not know. There are several instruments and techniques that teachers can use to record useful data about student learning.

### Questioning

- Asking better questions affords students an opportunity for deeper thinking and provides teachers with significant insight into the degree and depth of student understanding. Questions of this nature engage students in classroom dialogue that expands student learning. Questions should go beyond the typical factual questions requiring recall of facts or numbers.
Asking GOOD Questions
Paul Black, a noted authority on formative assessment, suggests that "more effort has to be spent in framing questions that are worth asking: that is, questions which explore issues that are critical to the development of students' understanding."

Discussion
Classroom discussions can tell the teacher much about student learning and understanding of basic concepts. The teacher can initiate the discussion by presenting students with an open-ended question. The goal is to build knowledge and develop critical and creative thinking skills. Discussions allow students to increase the breadth and depth of their understanding while discarding erroneous information and expanding and explicating background knowledge (Black and Wiliam 1998; Doherty 2003).

By activating students as learning resources for one another there is the possibility of some of the largest gains seen in any educational intervention (Slavin, Hurley and Chamberlain 2003).
The teacher can assess student understanding by listening to the student responses and by taking anecdotal notes.

**Exit/Admit Slips**

- Exit Slips are written responses to questions the teacher poses at the end of a lesson or a class to assess student understanding of key concepts. They should take no more than 5 minutes to complete and are taken up as students leave the classroom. The teacher can quickly determine which students have it, which ones need a little help, and which ones are going to require much more instruction on the concept. By assessing the responses on the Exit Slips the teacher can better adjust the instruction in order to accommodate students’ needs for the next class.

**Admit Slips**

- Admit slips are exactly like Exit Slips, but they are done prior to or at the beginning of the class. Students may be asked to reflect on their understanding of their previous night’s homework, or they may reflect on the previous day’s lesson if the question required a longer response time. Exit and Admit Slips can be used in all classes to integrate written communication into the content area.
Learning/Response Logs

- **Learning Logs** are used for students’ reflections on the material they are learning. This type of journal is in common use among scientists and engineers. In the log, students record the process they go through in learning something new, and any questions they may need to have clarified. This allows students to make connections to what they have learned, set goals, and reflect upon their learning process. The act of writing about thinking helps students become deeper thinkers and better writers.

Teachers and students can use Learning Logs during the formative assessment process, as students record what they are learning and the questions they still have, and teachers monitor student progress toward mastery of the learning targets in their log entries and adjust instruction to meet student needs. By reading student logs and delivering descriptive feedback on what the student is doing well and suggestions for improvement, the teacher can make the Learning Log a powerful tool for learning.

Response Logs

- **Response Logs** are a good way to examine student thinking. They are most often connected with response to literature, but they may be used in any content area. They offer students a place to respond personally, to ask questions, to predict, to reflect, to collect vocabulary and to compose their thoughts about text. Teachers may use Response Logs as formative assessment during the learning process.
Graphic Organizers

- Graphic organizers are visual models that can assist students in organizing information and communicating clearly and effectively. Students can use graphic organizers to structure their writing, brainstorm ideas, assist in decision making, clarify story structure, help with problem solving, and plan research.

Common Graphic Organizers

- Venn Diagram
- KWL Chart
- KWLS Chart
- KNWS Chart
- Brainstorming Web
- Alphabowls
- Mind Map
- T Chart
- Decision Making Chart
- Show My Thinking Chart
- Event Analysis Chart for Social Studies
- Map the Character
- Make a Math Connection
- Double Entry Journal
- Sense-O-Gram
- Chain of Events
- Problem - Solution Chart
- Somebody-Wanted-But-So
- Summary Star
- Frayer Model
- Knowledge Rating Scale
- Concept Map
- Word Detective

Peer/Self Assessments

- Peer and self assessment help to create a learning community within the classroom. When students are involved in criteria and goal setting, self evaluation becomes a logical step in the learning process. Students become metacognitive and are more aware of their personal strengths and weaknesses. With peer assessment students begin to see each other as resources for understanding and checking for quality work against previously determined criteria. The teacher can examine the self assessments and the peer assessments and identify students’ strengths and weaknesses.
"When students are required to think about their own learning, articulate what they understand, and what they still need to learn, achievement improves."
(Black and Wiliam 1998)

Some GOOD Self/Peer Assessment Tools
- The Mirror
- As I See It
- Windshield Check
- Signals

Practice Presentations

Just as in sports, practice before a classroom presentation is vital. Through practice and peer review, students can improve their presentation skills and the content of the presentation itself. The practice presentation should take place a few days before the final presentation due date. Students run through their presentations with the audience, their peers, evaluating the performance based on the previously established rubric criteria.
Visual Representations

There are several forms of visual representation, or nonlinguistic representation, but one that offers assessment data for the teacher is the use of drawing. Graphic organizers can be used as visual representations of concepts in the content areas. Many of the graphic organizers contain a section where the student is expected to illustrate his/her idea of the concept. The Mind Map requires that students use drawings, photos or pictures from a magazine to represent a specific concept. The Verbal and Visual Word Association (VVWA) asks students to illustrate a vocabulary term. Both of these offer the teacher a quick way of assessing student depth of understanding regarding a specific concept and the ability to adjust instruction immediately to address student needs.

Kinesthetic Assessments

• These examples of the formative assessment process require students to incorporate movement to demonstrate their understanding of a topic or concept. Although usually connected with the Arts (dance, playing a musical piece) or physical education (dribbling a basketball, serving a volleyball), kinesthetic assessments can be used in the core content classrooms to furnish teachers with insight into their students’ understandings and misconceptions concerning a concept. Kinesthetic assessments are a good way to add movement in the classroom and allow teachers to determine the depth of student learning to inform their instructional decisions.

Kinesthetic Assessments to Try

• Math Graphing Example
• ELA Grammar Example
• Instrumental Music Example
• Debate Circles
• Inside-Outside Circle
•
**Individual Whiteboards**

Individual slates or whiteboards are a great way to hold all students in the class accountable for the work. They actively involve students in the learning and are a terrific tool in the formative assessment process because they give the teacher immediate information about student learning. When students complete their work and hold their whiteboard up, the teacher can quickly determine who is understanding and who needs help and adjust his/her instruction accordingly.

**Laundry Day**

Laundry Day is a strategy in the formative assessment process mentioned by Cassandra Erkens in her article entitled "Scenarios on the Use of Formative Classroom Assessment" (2007). This is a strategy where students evaluate their own learning in preparation for a chapter or unit test. They group themselves in the classroom around four different kinds of laundry detergent: Tide, Gain, Bold and Cheer. In their chosen corner they will work on activities to enrich or improve their understanding of the required content. The teacher can readily assess the students' level of understanding of the basic concepts covered in the unit or chapter. The teacher provides support as needed, as well as help being provided by students who are sure they have mastered the content.

None of the work generated during this time counts as a grade, but students are scaffolded to increase their chances of success on the upcoming test.

**Four Corners**

Four Corners is a quick strategy that can be used effectively in the formative assessment process for gauging student understanding. It can engage students in conversations about controversial topics. The four corners of the classroom can be labeled as Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Present students with a statement, like "All students should wear uniforms to school," and have them move to the corner that expresses their opinion. Students could then discuss why they feel the way they do.

The teacher can listen to student discussions and determine who has information to support their opinion and who does not.

Another way to use Four Corners is associated with multiple choice quizzes. Label the corners of the classroom as A, B, C and D. Students respond to a teacher-created question by choosing the answer they feel is correct. They must be able to give a reason for their answer.
Constructive Quizzes

• Periodic quizzes can be used during the formative assessment process to monitor student learning and adjust instruction during a lesson or unit. Constructive quizzes will not only furnish teachers with feedback on their students, but they serve to help students evaluate their own learning. By using quizzes to furnish students with immediate feedback, the teacher can quickly determine the status of each student in relation to the learning targets, and students can learn more during the discussions that immediately follow the quizzes, instead of having to wait until the next day to see the results of the assessment in the form of a meaningless grade on the top of a paper. The teacher should use the results of these quizzes to adjust instruction immediately based on student outcomes.

Think-Pair-Share

• Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1981) is a summarization strategy that can be used in any content area before, during, and after a lesson. The activity involves three basic steps. During the "think" stage, the teacher tells students to ponder a question or problem. This allows for wait time and helps students control the urge to impulsively shout out the first answer that comes to mind. Next, individuals are paired up and discuss their answer or solution to the problem. During this step students may wish to revise or alter their original ideas. Finally, students are called upon to share with the rest of the class. Teachers can use this activity in the formative assessment process as they walk about the room listening to student conversations.

Appointment Clocks

• The Appointment Clock is a simple strategy in the formative assessment process that can be embedded within a lesson. The teacher directs students to find three people with whom to schedule appointments at the quarter hour, the half hour, and the 45-minute mark. The teacher begins the lesson and provides information to move students to higher-order thinking. The teacher determines the stopping point and asks students to meet with their quarter hour appointment to discuss their thinking about a couple of questions the teacher has posed. The teacher walks around and listens to the conversations taking place between partners, noting any misconceptions or misunderstandings. The teacher uses this information to adjust instruction by redirecting the next segment of the lesson. Students meet with their half hour appointment and the teacher conducts the same informal observation and adjusts the third section of the lesson. Students continue this process until the lesson is complete. By structuring a lesson in this manner, the teacher is able to determine the current level of understanding for the class and for individual students, and make immediate adjustments to instruction to assist students in their learning.
Digging Deeper

What do the results tell us?

Ready-made benchmark tests cannot substitute for day-to-day formative assessment conducted by assessment-literate teachers.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Sharing Assessment Information
Know and Grow a Culture

What to Share with Whom

Assess Yourself

- List comprehensive testing in classroom/school
- Determine if it is meeting your needs/student needs (does it further student learning?)
- Research possible changes (if necessary)
- Research training for teachers to enhance their assessment literacy
Develop a PLAN

• Look at your calendar in terms of assessment
• Create assessment windows and plan for it
• Provide training for teachers