

Formative Assessment Strategies

Summative vs. Formative Assessments

“The only way we can properly judge where we are is relative to where we want to be....“

- ▶ Summative assessments aim to “summarize” what students have learned at the end of a learning sequence.
- ▶ Summative assessments’ only purpose is accountability → was the information learned? Yes or no.
- ▶ Summative test data in the form of state accountability tests arrive too late for planning instruction. Thus many school districts have developed “interim or benchmark” assessments.
- ▶ Interim and benchmark assessments provide too little detail for effective use in on-going instructional planning. They are still endpoint assessments → end of a marking period or mid-term assessments after 4 months of instruction.

In contrast, formative assessments are much more multi-purpose.

- ▶ Formative assessments aim to illuminate how knowledge and skill is being formed and while it is still malleable, adjust where necessary.
- ▶ Formative assessments have 3 key purposes: 1) diagnostic – helpful in identifying gaps to identify starting points for instruction); 2) corrective – helpful in correcting misconceptions, procedural knowledge, or skill development; 3) self-regulative – helpful in supporting students to shift learning tactics and improve cognitive routines.
- ▶ Formative assessments are only as good when accompanied by a clear learning progression toward an identified standard.
- ▶ Formative assessments inform teacher decision making as well as student decision making.

Assessment of learning (snapshot) → assessment for learning (video streaming)

Formative assessments are only as effective as the complementary decision-making ability of teachers.

