

CSAI RESOURCES

# Lesson Planning with Formative Assessment

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THE CENTER ON  
**STANDARDS &  
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IMPLEMENTATION**

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# Agenda

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# Formative Assessment Lesson Planning

**ASSESSMENT**  
Formative assessment practice

## Formative assessment: An enabler of learning

Formative assessment can be a powerful day-to-day tool for teachers and students. Margaret Heritage explains

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IS OFTEN MISCONSTRUED. Realistically, it is conceptualized as a “test” or an “instrument” that is more fine-grained and administered more frequently than other types of assessment. This formulation misses its documented power for improving student learning. When formative assessment is conceived as a practice implemented by teachers, in collaboration with their students, then its promise as an enabler rather than an evaluator of learning can be realized.

**1** The essential purpose of formative assessment as a practice is to move students learning forward while their learning is still in the process of developing. This stands in contrast to other forms of assessment, which evaluate learning after a period of teaching. Formative assessment practice operates as a feedback loop in which both teachers and students can play active, distinctive, yet complementary roles in enabling learning by consistently working to build and consolidate student understanding and skills during the course of a lesson.

**2** The teacher’s role  
Formative assessment is only effective when teachers are clear about the intended learning goals for a lesson. This means focusing on what students will learn, as opposed to what they will do, which is often where teachers are tempted to start. To achieve maximum transparency for students, teachers share the learning goal, or actively create it with students, at the beginning of the lesson. In addition, teachers communicate the indicators of progress toward the learning goal or determine them in collaboration with the students. These indicators serve as signposts for both teachers and students about progress during the lesson.

**3** Power and responsibility in the classroom is not just the teacher’s prerogative, but is distributed to

**4** With clarity about the goal and indicators, teachers can then decide how they will gather evidence of emergent learning. There is no single way to collect formative evidence because formative assessment is not a specific kind of test. For example, teachers can gather evidence through interactions with students, observations of their tasks and activities, or analysis of their work products. However, there are two important points about evidence collection. First, whatever method teachers use to elicit evidence of learning, it should yield information that is actionable by them and their students. Second, evidence

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**7** collection is a systematic process and needs to be planned so that teachers have a constant stream of information tied to indicators of progress. At the same time, of course, teachers will also be collecting evidence “on the fly”—those unplanned, spontaneous moments when students do or say something that give an indication of where they are in relation to the lesson goal.


**Feedback**  
Feedback is a crucial component of formative assessment, and has two aspects. First, feedback obtained from planned or spontaneous evidence is an essential resource for teachers to shape new learning through adjustments in their instruction. If teachers use evidence effectively to inform their instruction, it will render previous

assessment information out of date: student learning will have progressed and will need to be assessed again. Instruction can again be adjusted to make sure that learning is on track. For this reason, a constant stream of evidence from formative assessment is necessary during lessons.

Second, feedback that the teacher provides to students is also an essential resource so the students can take active steps to advance their own learning. In reality, the feedback to students can be understood as instructional action. As the evidence illustrates on feedback suggests, teacher feedback is most beneficial when it assists students to understand their current learning status and provides hints, suggestions, or cues for them to act on. It is this, rather than offering general praise or total solutions, that enables students to assume a degree of responsibility for their learning.

The teacher’s role also involves helping students develop the skills to make metacognitive judgments about their learning in relation to the goal being aimed for, and to establish a repertoire of strategies to regulate their own learning.

**The students’ role**  
**8** The students’ role in formative assessment begins when they have a clear conception of the learning target, just as the teacher



Write 3 tips to teachers on how to write good lesson plans.



***Where  
To Next?***

  
**Take  
Responsive  
Action**

  
**Close  
the Gap**

**Start**

  
**Identify  
the Gap**

  
**Interpret  
Evidence**

***Where Am  
I Now?***

  
**Elicit  
Evidence  
of Learning**

  
**Develop  
Success  
Criteria**

***Where Am  
I Going?***

  
**Determine  
Learning  
Goals**

  
**Create  
Building  
Blocks**

# Lesson Planning Starter

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Math lesson

ELA lesson



# Try It Out!

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**Name the 50 states and capitals.**

Write a Learning Goal and Success Criteria for this standard.

# Self-Assessment

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# Homework (optional)

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- Bring a lesson that you would like to work with tomorrow
- Have state standards ready

