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Introduction

Good assessment is vital to effective instruction. *Formative Assessment (Years 1–2)* provides clear and effective resources to use for classroom formative assessments. Instructors in all subject areas must vary their methods of assessment to be sure each student clearly understands the content being taught. This is why successful formative assessment is a must in any discipline.

Formative assessment provides feedback on a student’s understanding of the concept being taught. The root word “form” in “formative” reminds the educator that the assessment method should be used to help form the lesson or skill being taught; the formative assessment can help the teacher decide if a student needs more instruction or has mastered the skill being taught and is ready to move on to something new.

Assessment that is formative should be used daily and provide classroom practice over the content being taught. Methods of assessment can and should vary to ensure the teacher is meeting the differentiated learning styles of all students. Teachers should use formative assessment to ensure that all students understand the material to the best of their ability before they are given a summative or marked assessment. Using formative assessment daily can also provide evidence that some students in the classroom are ready to move on to more advanced work. The results of formative assessment allow those students who are skilled in a given area to be able to continue their own individual progress rather than waiting on other students to reach a specific goal.

This book is divided into five sections for quick and easy reference:

- **Pre-teaching:** formative assessment activities to use before a lesson
- **Graphic Organisers:** formative assessment organisers with easy-to-use illustrations
- **Written Response:** formative assessment reactions to use various times during the lesson
- **Collaborative Reflections:** formative assessment activities to use with both small and large groups
- **Technology and Interactive Assessment:** formative assessment activities which integrate technology into the classroom.

Formative assessment is a necessary tool to help student achievement improve in all subjects and at all levels of learning. Good formative assessment allows a teacher to know what needs to happen next in the classroom and to meet the diversity of learning styles of each individual student. Good formative assessment also allows the student to be proactive in knowing where their weakness or strengths are in a particular topic. Self-assessment is key to formative assessment.

Eight Great Ways to Use Formative Assessment

Use pre-assessment formative activities before beginning a unit. Assess where your class is as a whole. Use this information to decide where to begin and to see who might need extra help and who might be ready for advanced work.

Use pre-assessment formative activities to discover students who might need instruction outside the time in the regular classroom. Find time to meet with these students before starting a new unit or send home enrichment activities the student can do at home to help prepare them for the new topic.

Use the formative assessment activities to help form your lesson plans. Do not spend time teaching what your students already know; use the formative assessment activities to help you see which areas need the most focus.

Use formative assessment as rewards. Create incentive charts for students and give stickers to students who do well on the assessments. Have an agreed upon reward as individual students complete their charts.

Use formative assessment to gather information about your students. Find out how much your students remember from a previous year or even a previous unit to help you plan your lessons.

Use formative assessment for participation marks, not completion marks. Formative assessments show the teacher what a student knows at a certain point in the lesson; summative assessments show what a student knows at the end of the instruction.

Use formative assessment to gather information about the various learning styles of the students in the classroom. Use the information to help create differentiated instruction so that all the students can be successful while still adding rigor to the lesson.

Use formative assessment to know when it is time to give a summative or marked assessment. Mastery of formative assessments gives the teacher a clear understanding of when to move to the next topic.

Puppy Power

Use the activity on page 8 to pre-assess each student.

Find out what students already know **before** beginning the lesson.

Materials:

crayons, pencil, scissors, glue and one copy for each student of page 8

Directions:

1. Make copies of page 8 for each student.
2. Explain to the students what they will be studying, but do not teach the lesson. For example, you might state that today the class will be learning about the different senses, but not explain what the individual senses are. Write the topic where all students can see.
3. Tell the students they are going to do an activity about today's lesson. Point out to the students that the topic is written on the board.
4. Pass out the worksheet and the materials needed to complete the activity. Explain to the class the directions they will need to follow to complete the activity.
 - Colour the puppy's house, the puppy's dish and the puppy on page 8.
 - Have an adult help you cut out the five bones at the bottom of the page.
 - On each dog bone, write or draw about the topic being studied, telling what you already know about it. (For the sample topic of the different senses, students might draw an eye or write words like "smell" or "hear".)
5. Tell students it is okay to leave a dog bone blank if they do not know any information. Encourage them to not feel discouraged if all or some of the bones are blank.
6. Have students glue all the dog bones on the dish, even if the bones are blank.

Something extra: Have students complete the bones after the lesson is taught or add new bones to the dish.

