



Formative Assessment: Best Practices Part I

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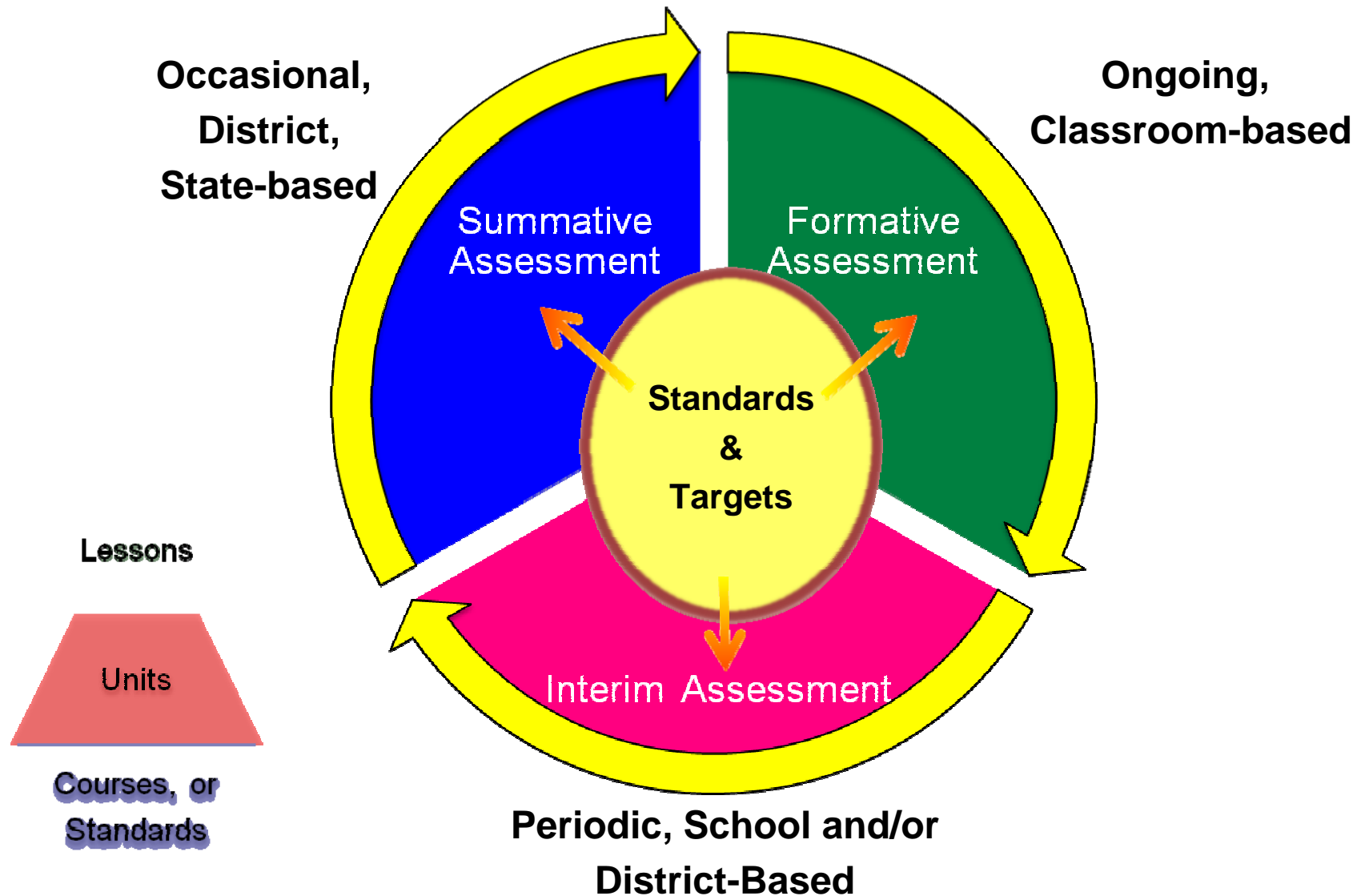
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- Definitions
- Balanced Assessment Systems
- Formative Assessment Best Practices

- **Assessment:** a sampling of student behavior for the purpose of making an inference
- **Formative Assessment:** an *ongoing* assessment *process* that provides *students and teachers* with *feedback* on progress toward *instructional goals*
- **Interim Assessment:** a *periodic* assessment that provides *students, parents and educators* with *information* on *unit attainment or progress* across units.
- **Summative Assessment:** an *occasional* (often annual) assessment that provides *parents, educators, and policymakers* with *information* on *course / standard attainment or progress*

Balanced Assessment System



“To many of today’s teachers, assessment is synonymous with high-stakes standardized tests. But there is an entirely different kind of assessment that can actually transform teaching and learning.”

Margaret Heritage

Formative Assessment

Types of Formative Assessments

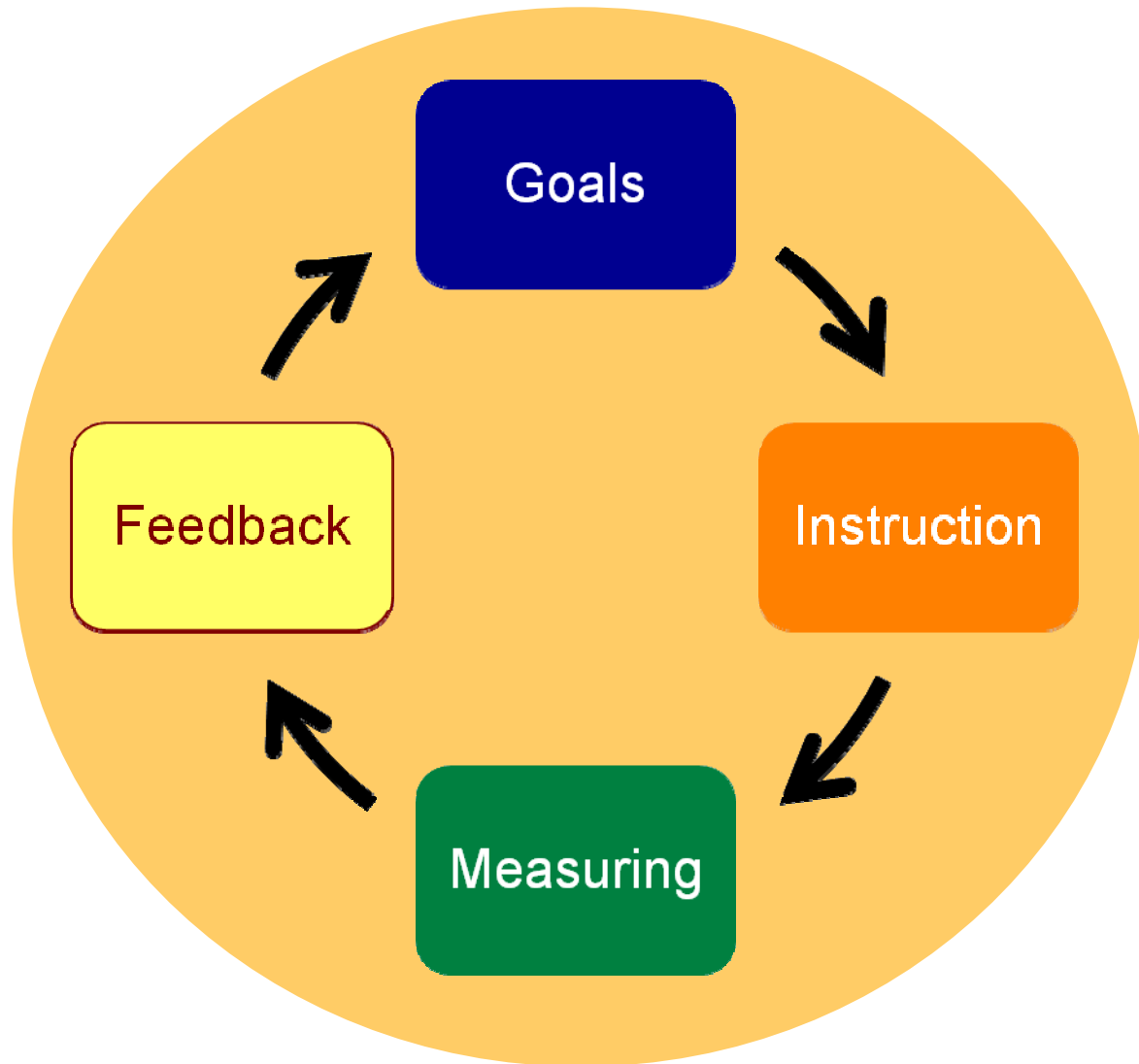
- **Spontaneous (impromptu)**

- Immediate. While teaching, a teacher sees a misunderstanding or misconception and immediately addresses it.
- Not a planned activity. While not planned, a variety of tools are at the teacher's disposal to formatively assess students, e.g., re-teaching, change in instructional venue, asking student to provide an example.

- **Planned**

- Developed before a lesson. The teacher has a learning target or learning outcome in mind and prepares an assessment to examine it.
- Planned feedback mechanism. The outcome for this assessment is planned ahead of time.

Formative Assessment Cycle



Examples

Spontaneous	Planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Q & A during lessons• Observing students during an activity• Responding to students' impromptu conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short Tests and Quizzes• Homework exercises• Observation protocols• In class assignments or activities• In or out of class projects (e.g., science fair, essay)• Simulation (role play) activities• Checklists• Student Conference• Peer and self assessment
<p>Common sequencing: Measuring, Feedback, Goals, Instruction</p>	<p>Common sequencing: Goals, Instruction, Measuring, Feedback</p>

Formative Assessment Best Practices



- Valid: formative assessments measure important concepts, skills, and ideas
 - Aligned to instructional goals
 - Connected to meaningful learning targets & standards
 - Focused on student learning needs
 - Are appropriate measures
- Reliable: formative assessments provide consistent information
 - Means the same thing when used over again
 - Provides actionable results for both teachers AND students

- Connected with Curriculum
 - Part of the instructional process, not distinct from it
 - Not “add-ons” to instruction
 - Connected to lesson plans, learning goals, and meaningful standards
- Not “one-time-wonders”
 - Designed to be ongoing, iterative, “organic”
 - A ***process*** not an event

Learning Goals

- Connected to language learning goals and targets
 - Aligned to standards & curriculum
 - Focused on student learning
 - Clear and explicit in what students are supposed to learn
 - Support instructional goals
- Organized to appropriate learning progressions
 - Appropriately sequenced language functions, vocabulary and grammar
 - Appropriate measures for students' current language proficiency

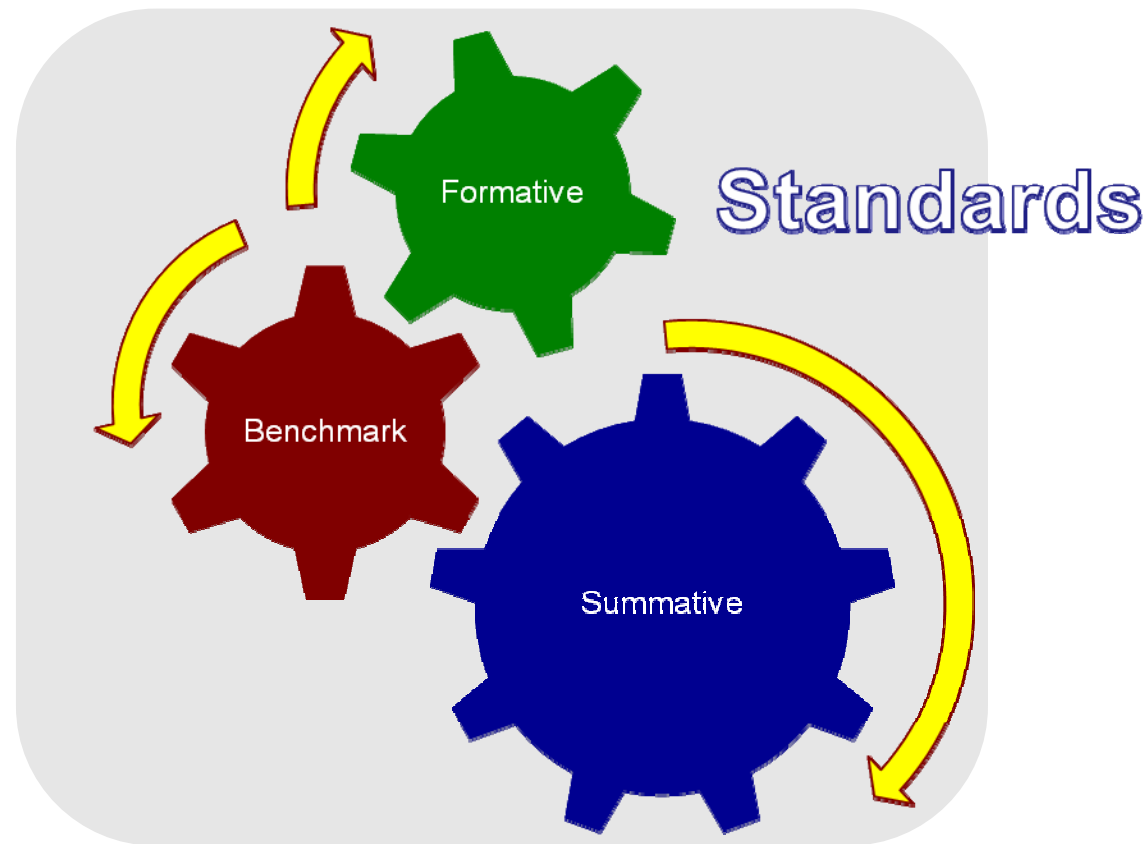
- For teachers
 - Rubrics, checklists, and rating scales have examples of each type of performance.
 - Teachers have a concept of what performance will look like, and if possible.
 - When possible, teachers collect examples of “good” student work.
- For students
 - Students should have access to the rubrics, checklists, or rating scales used to evaluate their work AND training on how to interpret them for themselves.
 - Student should have examples of what “good work” looks like.

- Identify, with sufficient clarity, students' current language abilities and skills:
 - Vocabulary knowledge
 - Grammatical control
 - Comprehension skills
 - Communication skills
 - Discourse capabilities (e.g., functional language abilities)
- Highlight current skills to students

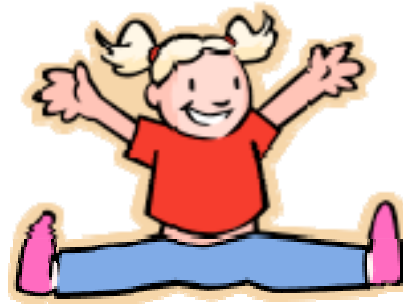
Highlight Future Goals

- Point, with sufficient clarity, to students' future language goals
- Identify the “next step” in students' language learning progression
 - Vocabulary knowledge
 - Grammatical control
 - Comprehension skills
 - Communication skills
 - Discourse capabilities (e.g., functional language abilities)
- Highlight next steps to students

- Formative assessments are associated with other assessments used at the school, district and state level.



- Formative assessments must fit into classroom realities and be easy to administer and score.



Rigorous PD

- Good formative assessment programs are associated with rigorous professional development opportunities.
- A variety of PD approaches are used, e.g., workshops, mentoring.





Formative Assessment Best Practices Worksheet

Formative Assessment Definition: an *ongoing* assessment *process* that provides *students and teachers* with *feedback* on progress toward *instructional goals*



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT CYCLE

There are four parts to the formative assessment cycle. First are instruction **GOALS**. These goals are based on relevant language learning targets, objectives or standards. It is best when these goals are shared by both teachers and students. Next is **INSTRUCTION**. Instruction is based on the pre-set learning goals and objectives. **MEASURING** is the third part of the assessment cycle. Measuring refers to the collecting of information about student learning. Are students meeting instructional goals? Are the instruments that are used to measure student language proficiency sufficient? The last part of the assessment cycle is **FEEDBACK**. This is a very important part of the cycle and often overlooked. What kind of feedback is provided to students? The goal of providing feedback is to promote action, action to set new goals or action to re-teach or re-instruct students to make sure they meet goals.



Formative Assessment Best Practices Checklist

I. Technically Sound				
<i>A. Valid – measure important concepts</i>				
1. Connected to meaningful learning targets & standards	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. Aligned to instructional goals	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
3. Focused on student learning needs	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
4. Appropriate measures of student performance	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
<i>B. Reliable – provides consistent information</i>				
1. Item quality has been examined	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. Information from measure provides actionable results for students & teachers	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
II. Embedded & Ongoing				
<i>A. Connected with curriculum</i>				
1. Part of the instructional process, not distinct from it	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. Connected to lesson plans, learning goals, and meaningful standards	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
<i>B. Not "one-time wonders"</i>				
1. Designed to ongoing, iterative	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. A process, not just an event	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
III. Learning Goals				
<i>A. Connected to learning goals and targets</i>				
1. Aligned to standards and curriculum	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. Focused on student learning	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
3. Clear & explicit in what is assessed	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
4. Supports instructional goals	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
<i>B. Organized to appropriate learning progressions</i>				
1. Based on appropriately sequenced language functions, vocabulary and/or grammar	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. Appropriate measures of students' current language proficiency	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
IV. Examples				
<i>A. For teachers & students</i>				
1. Rubrics, checklists, and rating scales have examples of each type of performance	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
2. Examples of "good student performance" are provided	No	Some	Mostly	Yes
V. Highlights Current Skills				
<i>A. Current Skills</i>				
1. Identifies with sufficient clarity, students' current abilities & skills: vocabulary knowledge, grammatical control, comprehension skills, communication skills, or discourse capabilities	No	Some	Mostly	Yes

Good References

- Heritage, M. (October 2, 2007). Formative Assessment: What do teachers need to know and do? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(2), 140-145.
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