

# Summative Vs Formative Assessment

## Formative Assessment



✓ It is used to check students' understanding and to plan subsequent instruction.



✓ The information gained from formative assessments guides the next steps in instruction and helps teachers and students consider the additional learning opportunities needed to ensure success.

✓ Formative assessment information must be fed forward into an instructional model that allows for responsiveness to student need.

### Examples of formative assessment



- ✓ Assigning projects and performances
- ✓ Giving writing assignments
- ✓ Giving tests
- ✓ Asking questions

## Summative Assessment



✓ Assessment of learning, or summative assessment, provides teachers and students with information about the attainment of content knowledge.

✓ Summative assessments often result in grades which means that they have a high point value



✓ The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.

### Examples of summative assessment



- ✓ A senior recital
- ✓ A final project
- ✓ A midterm exam
- ✓ A paper

## Why include Formative Assessments in your courses?

*When the chef tastes the sauce it is formative assessment; when the customer tastes, it is summative (Anon)*

From a pedagogical perspective, education's tradition of teaching a course and then evaluating learning at the end using a "high stakes" summative assessment such as a heavily weighted final exam has three significant disadvantages.

- 1) The 'backwash' effect (Biggs 1999) When there is such a significant marks value placed on a single assessment item, students are motivated to learn only what will be on the test and teachers themselves feel pressured 'teach to the test'.
- 2) Feedback to students about performance on exams, final term papers and projects is typically brief and delivered after the learning cycle has ended. However, research has demonstrated that feedback through formative assessment is motivating for students and enhances learning (Black and Wiliam 1998; Taras 2002; Brennan and Williams 2004).
- 3) Vocationally oriented courses are more likely to include the application of procedural 'know-how' that are best assessed through simulations and provide more relevant contexts than handwritten exercises such as a traditional final exam.

## Some thoughts...

*"Price et al. (2008) call for a shift in emphasis from summative to formative assessment, away from marks and grades towards evaluative feedback focused on intended learning outcomes. They argue also for students to become more actively engaged and take greater ownership of their learning. Similar recommendations are made by Boud and Associates (2010) to place assessment for learning at the centre of course design." Williams (2014)*

*Over the last two decades, there has been a shift in the way teachers and researchers write about student learning in higher education. Instead of characterising it as a simple acquisition process based on teacher transmission, learning is now more commonly conceptualized as a process whereby students actively construct their own knowledge and skills (Barr & Tagg, 1995; DeCorte, 1996; Nicol, 1997). Nicol and Macfarlane (2006)*

Nicol, David J., Macfarlane-Dick, Debra. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199-218.

Williams, Peter . (2014). Squaring the circle: a new alternative to alternative-assessment. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(5), 565–577.

# Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

Kind of Evaluation	Name	How It's Done	How to Use	Time Needs
Course Knowledge and Skills	One-Minute Paper*	During last few minutes of class period, ask students to use a half-sheet of paper and write "Most important thing I learned today and what I understood least."	Review before next class meeting and use to clarify, correct, or elaborate.	Low
	Muddiest Point*	Similar to One-Minute Paper but only ask students to describe what they didn't understand and what they think might help.	Same as One-Minute Paper. If many had the same problem, try another approach.	Low
	Chain Notes*	Pass around a large envelope with a question about the class content. Each student writes a short answer, puts it in the envelope, and passes it on.	Sort answers by type of answer. At next class meeting, use to discuss ways of understanding.	Low
	Application Article	During last 15 minutes of class, ask students to write a short news article about how a major point applies to a real-world situation. An alternative is to have students write a short article about how the point applies to their major.	Sort articles and pick several to read at next class, illustrating range of applications, depth of understanding, and creativity.	Medium
	Student-generated test questions*	Divide the class into groups and assign each group a topic on which they are each to write a question and answer for the next test. Each student should be assured of getting at least one question right on the test.	Use as many of the questions as possible, combining those that are similar.	Medium

<http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/cat.html>

