

# Formative Assessment

**If the teacher doesn't change the instruction when needed, it's not formative assessment. It's just activity.**

## **Teacher Reflection**

Ask, yourself, *“Am I teaching so that students will learn or am I teaching just so that I can cover the required material?”* (Rick Wormeli, 2006)

**COVERAGE ≠ UNDERSTANDING**

Memorization does not lead to transference.

## **Student Reflection**

Student reflection is very important.

# “We must save to the hard drive”

- To place information into long-term memory,
  - do something with that information ***soon after being exposed to it for the very first time.***
  - *reflect, respond, record, tell, describe, illustrate, explain, discuss, summarize, draw, use, re-organize, predict, hypothesize, evaluate, and/or judge (Reflect and Make a Connection)*

# Formative Assessment

Assessment **FOR** learning, not **OF** learning

An on-going process used during instruction

*A "snapshot" vs. a "photo album" of assessment  
(Jay McTighe)*

Provides students with feedback

Informs decision-making for future *teacher instruction* and *student learning* tactics

# When and how often should I use a formative assessment?

*Once or twice* during a class period

Midway and at the end of a class period

Every time you switch a topic

At the end of your students “focus” time:

their age + 2

Any time you see you sense uncertainty, or confusion in students

# Questioning Formative Assessment Strategies

Ask a question; have every student respond:

- Make a Connection
- Turn'n'talk
- Stop'n'Jot
- QuickWrite
- One Minute Essays
- Socratic
- Four Corners
- Pinch Cards



# Make a Connection

- After a mini-lecture, class discussion, text reading, video, or PowerPoint...
- Have students *make their own connections and share with the class*
  - Compare two characters, two books, two authors' styles...
  - Note a sequence
  - Predict a future outcome
  - Recognize a cause or effect
  - Make a text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world connection
  - Suggest a character's motivation

# Turn and Talk

## “Whoever explains learns”

David Sousa

- Provide *multiple opportunities* for *students* to explain what they are learning
- Guide assigned “Learning Partners” to interact through a *daily (Turn’n’Talk)*. *If need be, hold partners accountable for staying on task by requiring a written task to be completed by each student*



# Turn and Talk

- This strategy encourages student conversation about what they are learning.
- It calls for students to listen for ten minutes to the teacher's presentation and then to discuss for two minutes with a partner their notes and understanding about the topic.
- This can be repeated several times during a lesson.
- During the last few minutes of the class, the teacher brings all the students back together; students summarize key understandings, and the teacher sorts out misconceptions.
- To support struggling learners: Provide students with an outline to guide their discussion.
- To support advanced learners: Ask students to generate questions and answers that can be used with the entire class for review.

# Stop n Jot

Stop n Jot can be a very useful strategy in order to monitor text that you are reading. It's very simple and doesn't take much time. All you do is take one of the sentence stems listed below and finish it off with your own thought regarding what you have read. By doing this, you are focusing your attention onto the text and self-evaluating to make sure you're not confused.

- **I think...**
- **I can picture...**
- **I wonder....**
- **I predict...**
- **I understand...**
- **I don't get...**
- **If I was (character), I would...**
- **This reminds me of....**
- **I hope...**

# QuickWrites

- QuickWrites involve asking a question, giving people a set amount of time for responding (usually between one to ten minutes), and either hearing or reading the responses. The quickwrite can be modified endlessly, depending on circumstances.
- critical thinking warm-ups: use the quickwrite at the start of a class to get students focussed on a new concept, or the material from last class, or preparatory reading material, etc.
- student-directed quickwrites: have students lead the quickwrite session, having prepared a question in advance and thought through a method for fielding the responses
- class-closers: as with the warm-ups, use the quickwrite to prompt reflection through summary, synthesis, explanation, a question

# A QuickWrite

- Promotes spontaneity and freedom in writing.
- Encourages writing as a habit or practice.
- Promotes critical thinking and focus.
- Gives students time to collect thoughts before verbalizing to others.
- Saves time for instructors since quickwrites do not necessarily have to be read by the latter. Students can respond verbally from their quickwrites (reading directly or using the piece as a touchstone) or get peer response in groups.
- Provides a basis for collaborative peer work
- Students can also DRAW instead of write

# One Minute Essay

- The One-Minute Essay can be used at the beginning (or end) of a class to help students focus on the matter at hand and get them thinking.
- Ask them to summarize the main point of the last class (providing a bridge to the current lesson) or summarize a reading. The point is to get them writing/thinking immediately.
- Have them exchange their One-Minute Papers with a partner and ask for a follow-up quickwrite that synthesizes the views.
- Ask for a few randomly-selected samples and discuss them.
- Look for accuracy, precise language, and conciseness.
- Ask them what do you mean?
- At the end of class, they can be used to summarize the information learned. You can take them up and quickly group students by readiness for the next day or clear up any misconceptions.



# Four Corners (modified)

In a four corners classroom, the instructor thinks of four or more options concerning a particularly controversial topic OR four options about the students level of understanding.

- At any time in the class, students can be asked to choose a corner of the classroom that relates to how well they understand the lesson (I've got it. I have one question. I'm confused. I'm lost) Students then briefly discuss what they understand, what their question is, where they got lost.
- The teacher can ask students to share with the class or quickly visit each corner to see what additional instruction needs to be done.
- This can be used for immediate intervention and for placing students in readiness groups for the next lesson.



# Four Corners (Traditional)

If about a controversial issue, the instructor labels the four corners of the classroom with these options. For example, the options could range from **strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree**.

- The instructor hands out 3 × 5 cards to each student and asks them to jot down their choice on one side of the card and, when asked, to read out their choice.
- After making their choice, students will be required to write out the reasons for their choice on the other side of the card. Students could be allowed four or five minutes to do so.
- The instructor then asks them to gather in the corner of the room that corresponds to their choice.
- In each corner, students form groups of three or four each, to discuss the reasons for selecting a particular choice.
- After two or three minutes of discussion, students could be randomly called on one at a time to give simple, one sentence statements supporting their choice.
- **The instructor then clears up any misconceptions.**

# Pinch Cards

On a large notecard, write four levels of understanding in student friendly terms, one on each corner.

At any time during the lesson, ask students to PINCH their level of understanding on the card and hold them where you can see them.

I could teach  
this.

I've almost  
got it.

I'm a bit  
confused.

I'm lost.

# More Assessment Sources

[Assessment in the DI Classroom](#)

[Formative Assessment and DI](#)

[Checks for Understanding and Status of the Class Techniques](#)

[Best Practices and Assessments For Learning](#)