

Formative assessment helps students & TEACHERS learn

I am scribbling this blog quickly after I reviewing some assessment strategies for a client and would appreciate your thoughts.

Formative assessment is probably badly named – it should be just “learning and feedback” or “learning and constructive feedback” or “in-process evaluation”.

*The general goal of formative assessment is to collect...information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning while it's happening. What makes an assessment “formative” is not the design of a test, technique, or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used—i.e., to **inform** in-process teaching and learning modifications.*

<http://edglossary.org/formative-assessment/>

Formative assessment is usually linked to summative assessment, for example, a draft of an essay; checklist of key concepts to be applied in an assignment; a plan for conducting an assignment; a concept or mind map etc. It assists the student in being successful in the summative assessment because they get feedback on it from the teacher.

Formative assessment helps the teacher understand what the student has learned (and how) and they can then provide relevant support and coaching. It also helps the teacher understand how effective they have been and may mean that they change/improve their practice.

It is not marked, as in graded; but there will be feedback. It may not even be “taken up”, but be referred to in a conversation with the student.

It is an integral part of learning, think of it as assessment **for** learning.

Summative assessment is assessment that takes place at a critical and logical end point or stage in the learning and this includes at the end of a learning cycle or term. It usually assesses student performance against expectations or standards, but should also include constructive feedback so that the student is assisted to learn further. Summative assessment is also **for** learning, not just **of** learning. It is often for high stakes, ie contributes to overall final grade.