

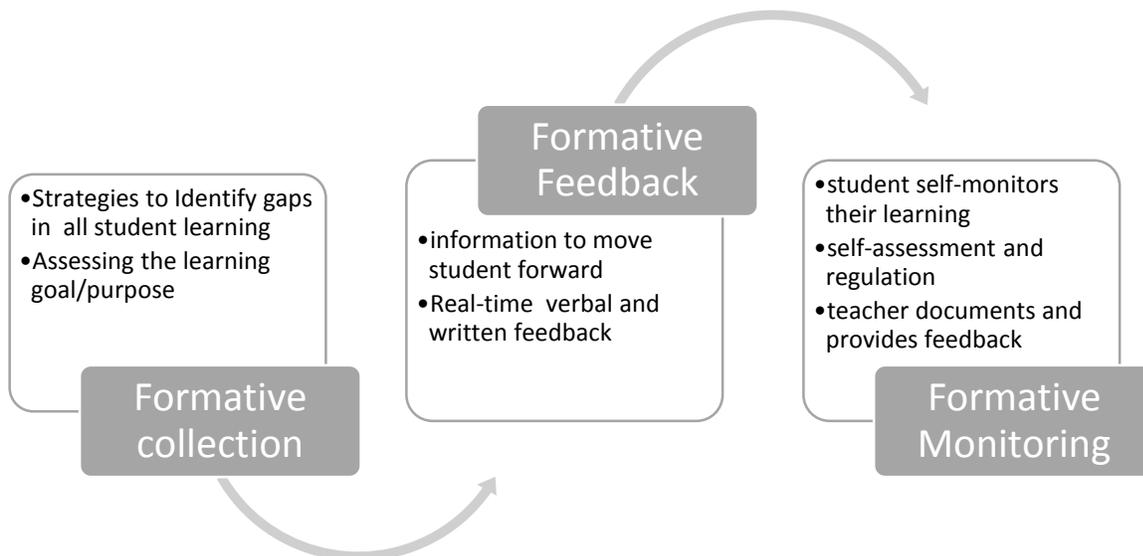
The Power of Formative Assessment

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Formative assessment is a rigorous pedagogy that can yield results preparing students for the mandated summative assessments. With all of the emphasis on these high-stakes tests, formative assessment allows for a deeper and more powerful way to track student learning, progress and growth. Moreover, when formative assessment is in classroom practice, differentiated instruction is a natural outgrowth.

In 1998, Black and Wiliam defined formative assessment as “encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.”The term *formative assessment* has built within it by nature, the merging of instruction with assessment. Shepard, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Rust (2005) discuss that the assessments are carried out during the teaching process for the purpose of informing and improving teaching or learning. Inherent in the word “formative” is formation, thus the forming of learning during instruction.

Formative assessment model below is driven by **collection of student data, feedback to students and having students self-monitor their learning.**



Formative Collection: During the instructional process, teachers are observing and noticing students’ reactions, responses, and decision making within problem solving along with many other behaviors within the continuum of the learning process. Collecting data on students

learning relies heavily on being “clip-board ready” as a teacher. This means that the teacher is always in the mode to observe and document important information about the student. This takes place during all aspects of instruction including read-alouds, guided reading, language and literacy centers and independent reading and writing. The data collected will be based on the needs of the students and the purpose of the lesson.

Formative Feedback: As teachers collect data on students, “real-time” feedback is necessary in order to move students forward in their learning. Feedback that is formative, is more than a compliment of “good job” and provides just the right information for the student to continue their learning, move forward and/or fill in a gap of any missing information. Feedback of this nature should be given frequently to students and parents as well.

Formative Self-Monitoring: The most critical dimension in the formative assessment process is the formative monitoring by students of their own learning. When students take responsibility for their own learning process and are aware of what they know and don’t know, it influences and has a powerful impact on their overall student achievement. Inherent within the formative assessment model are students becoming owners of their own learning. This ownership requires students to reflect on and monitor their learning during instruction.

References:

Black, P. & Wiliam, D., (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5 (1), 7-73.

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