

# Using assessments informatively and inclusively to support learning

## Formative assessment

A formative assessment is an assessment for the purpose of finding out what students do and do not know.

The goal of these assessments is to provide feedback and instruction based on students' needs and prospective development (Bloom, 1968).

*"The heart of formative assessment is finding the edge of students' learning and helping them to take up possibilities of growth. Assessment isn't formative if it doesn't influence learning in a positive way." - Peter Johnson (2012)*



Can be a specific tool or experience (i.e., writing prompt, observation of children playing) or a consistent practice or commitment (i.e., check-ins to adjust instruction over time).

## Inquiry stance



Formative assessments require teachers to take an inquiry stance.



This means to understand that instruction and assessment are closely related, often even inseparable.



For example, asking questions consistently to understand what children know and what they are ready to learn.



Teachers must always ask meaningful questions to gauge current understanding and levels of performance.

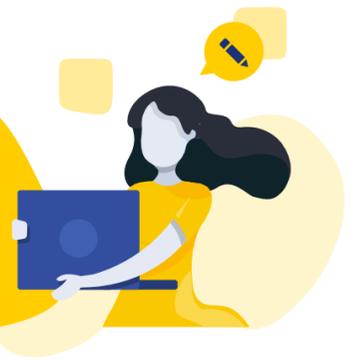
## Inquiry- and equity-oriented formative assessment stance Must involve the following criteria:

Alignment of purpose, analysis, and use of assessment

A collection of assessment practices with various purposes

Broad knowledge base that allows teachers to match formative assessment practices with learning goals and student needs

This study aims to explain how teachers can align their purpose, analysis, and use of formative assessments, as well as how to use diverse methods and tools, to successfully implement them in the classroom.



## Findings

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### Aligning purpose, analysis, and use

- Understanding the assessment's purpose requires clear goals that can be related to content
- Analysis should be done frequently so students can revise and improve their own work
- Often, working with students to decide how assessments are used can be useful for their metacognitive growth

2

### Diversifying methods and tools of formative assessment

- Tools should represent multi-dimensional approaches
- Observation: See beyond assumptions and predictions
- Elicitation: Asking questions to students to gain understanding about the students' learning
- Interaction: Time for readers/writers to discuss their process and work
- Student self-evaluation: Asking students to reflect on their own goals and questions

3

### Teacher knowledge for appropriate use of tools and strategies

- Teachers should have a good understanding of various assessments
- Teachers should have a deep understanding of their subject content
- Teachers also must understand their students and their needs
- Lastly, it is important to know how to turn the results of the assessment into meaningful feedback for students.

