Step 3 – Measurable Outcomes and Assessment Plan

Prior to planning the instructional experience, establish how learning is going to be measured.

Conditions Required of Formative Assessments

1. The assessment instrument or event is designed so that it aligns directly with the content standards to be learned.

2. All of the instrument or event's items or tasks match what has been or will be taught.

3. The instrument or event provides information of sufficient detail to pinpoint specific problems, such as misunderstandings, so that teachers can make good decisions about what actions to take, and with whom.

4. The results are available in time to take action with the students who generated them.

5. Teachers and students do indeed take action based on the results.

Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning

Where Am I Going?
Strategy 1: Provide students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target. Strategy 2: Use examples and models of strong and weak work.
Where Am I Now?
Strategy 3: Offer regular descriptive feedback. Strategy 4: Teach students to self-assess and set goals.
How Can I Close the Gap?
Strategy 5: Design lessons to focus on learning target or aspect of quality at a time. Strategy 6: Teach students focused revision. Strategy 7: Engage students in self-reflection, and let them keep track of and share their learning

How To Make Targets Clear To Students

1. Identify the word(s) an/or phrase(s) needing clarification. Which terms will students struggle with? Imagine stating the target in its original form to your class. Then envision the degree of understanding reflected on faces throughout the room. At which word did they lose meaning?
2. Define the term(s) you have identified. Use a dictionary, your textbook, your state content standards document, or other reference materials specific to your subject. If you are working with a colleague, come to agreement on definitions.
3. Convert the definition(s) into language your students are likely to understand.
4. Turn the student-friendly definition into an "I" or a "We" statement: "I am learning to_____"; or "We are learning to_____." Run it by a colleague for feedback.
5. Try the definition out with students. Note their response. Refine as needed.
6. Let students have a go at this procedure occasionally, using learning targets you think they could successfully define and paraphrase. Make sure the definition they concoct is congruent with your vision of the target.

Characteristics of Effective Feedback
1. Directs attention to the intended learning, pointing out strengths and offering specific information to guide improvement. 2. Occurs during learning, while there is still time to act on it. 3. Addresses partial understanding. 4. Does not do the thinking for the student. 5. Limits corrective information to the amount of advice the student can act on.

Design Rubrics to help students to know the success criteria.

Teach students to self-assess and set goals.

Self-assessment and Goal Setting with Selected Response and Constructed Response Tasks

Match to Content Standards

The items on a formative quiz or test should match the learning targets you are teaching. If it's not clear which learning target an item is intended to assess, rewrite the item or delete it.

Highlighting

Figure 4.5

FOR EXAMPLE

Self-assessment and Goal Setting with Pretest Results

Fraction Study — Plan of Action

Fraction Study Targets:

- I will use factors to rewrite fractions in lowest terms.
- I will use common denominators to compare, order, add, and subtract fractions.
- I will use the relationship between fractions and mixed numbers to add, subtract, multiply, and divide fractions.

Lesson Targets	Pre-assessment Results					Plan of Action
	# Right	# Wrong	Simple Errors	👍	👎	
Fractions to Lowest Terms						What is your strength?
Fraction Multiplication						What is your specific target (weakness)?
Fractions to Mixed #						
Mixed # to Fraction						Who will help you reach your target?
Order/Compare Fractions						
Fraction/Mixed # Addition						
Fraction/Mixed # Subtraction						
Mixed # Multiplication						
Fraction/Mixed # Division						

Source: Adapted with permission from Paula Smith, unpublished classroom materials, Naperville Community Unit School District 203, Naperville, IL, 2009.

Common Formative Assessments: An Overview

by Larry Ainsworth

What Are Common Formative Assessments?

- Periodic or interim assessments collaboratively designed by grade-level or course teams of teachers
- Designed as matching *pre-* and *post-*assessments to ensure same-assessment to same-assessment comparison of student growth
- Similar in design and format to district and state assessments
- Items should represent essential (Power) standards *only*
- A *blend* of item types, including selected-response (multiple choice, true/false, matching) *and*

constructed-response (short- or extended)

- Administered to all students in grade level or course several times during the quarter, semester, trimester, or entire school year
- Student results analyzed in Data Teams to guide instructional planning and delivery

What Are the Guidelines for Designing Common Formative Assessments?

1. Identify and vertically align Power Standards in content areas for each grade level and course, preK–12.
2. Determine important topics to assess with common formative assessment; locate the Power Standards that match those topics.
3. "Unwrap" the Power Standards for those topics to pinpoint concepts and skills students need to know and be able to do.
4. From those "unwrapped" Power Standards, determine Big Ideas that represent the integrated understanding students need to gain.
5. Collaboratively design common formative *pre-* and *post-* assessments—aligned to one another— that assess student understanding of the concepts, skills, and Big Ideas from the "unwrapped" Power Standards.
6. Include both selected-response and constructed-response items.
7. Review items to determine if student assessment results will provide *evidence of proficiency* regarding the Power Standards in focus; modify items as needed.

What Are the Benefits of Using Common Formative Assessments?

- *Regular and timely feedback* regarding student attainment of most critical standards, which allows teachers to modify instruction to better meet the diverse learning needs of all students
- *Multiple-measure assessments* that allow students to demonstrate their understanding in a *variety of formats*
- *Ongoing collaboration* opportunities for grade-level, course, and department teachers
- *Consistent expectations* within a grade level, course, and department regarding standards, instruction, and assessment priorities
- Agreed-upon *criteria for proficiency* to be met within each individual classroom, grade level, school, and district
- *Deliberate alignment* of classroom, school, district, and state assessments to better prepare students for success on state assessments
- Results that have *predictive value* as to how students are likely to do on each succeeding assessment, in time to make instructional modifications.

Source: Larry Ainsworth & Donald Viegut, *Common Formative Assessments: How to Connect Standards-based Instruction and Assessment*

(Corwin Press, 2006).