

Course – 131
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What Are Formative Assessments?

Formative assessments are evaluations of someone's learning progress in a classroom.

Common formative assessments include:

- Quizzes
- Games
- Projects
- Presentations
- Group activities

Formative assessments work great when they're used on a regular basis. That regularity could be based on a calendar (every Monday, every Thursday, etc.) or [your lesson plans](#) (every unit).

They're also more flexible than summative assessments. You don't always have to use pencil and paper to get a feel for your students' progress.

Instead, you can use in-class games, group presentations, and hands-on activities to evaluate student progress.

Ultimately, the formative assessments you use are up to you. After all, no one knows your classes better than you.

So if you'd prefer to get an overview of how well your students are learning, you can use a group-style assessment like a game.

If you want to know where each student struggles, you can use an individual assessment like a quiz.

This flexibility is perfect for [keeping students engaged](#) in your class. It lets you stick to a syllabus while mixing up the exact task each student has to perform.

That way, you don't fall into a predictable routine of teach-test-teach-test.

Instead, you have a varied routine of teach-game-quiz-teach-presentation-project or another interesting format.

By the time your course ends, you'll have a full understanding of how students are learning as you teach a subject.

Then, you can keep all of your grades to look for patterns among different class sections.

Is there an area where students seem to do worse than others? Could you adjust a lesson and shoot for better results?

Naturally, you'll never get a class that's straight A's from top to bottom.

But you can still design your classroom assessments to work for as many students as possible!

Formative Assessment Examples

[Formative assessments](#) are excellent opportunities to let your students flex their creative muscles.

Even if a student isn't much of a writer or artist, they can still have a little fun with these assessments.

1. Make an ad

Have your students create an advertisement for a concept they just learned. Use visuals and text to really sell an idea.

This makes students apply what they've learned into a creative exercise, which helps with long-term retention.

2. Idea comparisons

Instruct students to lay out the main ideas of a new concept they learned. Then, have them compare that concept to another to see where they agree and disagree.

In addition to helping students remember these concepts, this exercise makes them apply previous knowledge to a new format so they can remember it better in the future.

3. Misconceptions

After you introduce a concept to students, introduce a popular misconception about it. Have students discuss why the misconception is false and where it may have started.

This exercise makes students think critically about what they've just learned while showing them how to debunk misinformation.

How Do You Track Formative Assessments?

You can track formative assessments in one of three ways.

First, you can track them by **grade**. This gives you a specific, concentrated view of how a student (or group of students) learns.

On the downside, graded assessments are sources of stress for students. So if you want to make a unit fun or loose, graded assessments may not work well for you.

Second, you can track them by **feel**. This is more based on your teacher instinct, allowing you to pick which students need additional support based on your observation.

On the downside, you can't "show" this information to [your administrators](#). If you have certain standards to meet throughout a marking period, you won't be able to prove you've fulfilled those standards without grades.

Finally, you can track formative assessments with **student data**. This is non-graded information that may reflect how your students are learning, such as questions they've frequently answered incorrectly or subject areas where they've had trouble.

(After all, not everything has to be a grade!)

With all of that said and done, let's jump into summative assessments.

What Are Summative Assessments?

Summative assessments are evaluations of what someone has learned throughout a course.

Common summative assessments include:

- Tests
- Final exams
- Reports
- Papers
- End-of-class projects

Summative assessments almost always take place at the end of a course unless a teacher decides to break a course into more manageable chunks.

They're often cumulative, and they're used to evaluate [a student's long-term information retention](#).

In summative assessments like final exams, you can include questions from the first week or two of a course to ensure students retained introductory information.

In other assessments like papers, your students can pull from a full marking period of learning to apply to a topic.

Either way, your students have to do some serious reflecting and critical thinking to bring together the information from an entire course.

This is a great way to ensure students retain essential information from one course to another. So if you teach introductory courses, summative assessments are perfect to set students up for success in their *next* classes.

That's important because a student's success in your classroom is just one step for them.

When you prepare them for the next step, you make it easier for them to succeed in the future as well.

In that way, summative assessments serve two purposes.

First, they evaluate what someone learned while they've been in your class.

Second, they evaluate how prepared someone is to go to the next academic level.

Combined with the rest of a student's performance in class, summative assessments are excellent ways to gauge progress while ensuring long-term information retention.

Summative Assessment Examples

Summative assessments are traditionally more structured and standardized than formative assessments.

Still, you have a few options to shake things up that go beyond a pen-and-paper test.

1. In-depth reports

Instruct students to choose a topic that resonated with them in class and report in-depth on it. This is a great opportunity for students to take an idea and run with it under your supervision. These reports often showcase a student's interest, and you'll be able to evaluate a student's engagement level in the class by how they approach the report.

The goal is a passionate, intelligent, and comprehensive examination of a concept that matters to a student.

2. Cumulative, individual projects

Have your students pick a project to complete. This project should somehow reflect what they've learned throughout the course.

Projects are great for any practical application class from health science to physics. Creating a cross-section of the human heart, designing a diet, or creating a protective egg-drop vessel are all fun ways students can show off their knowledge of a topic.

3. Personal evaluation papers

Require students to apply principles from your class to their personal lives. These papers are excellent fits for psychology, nutrition, finance, business, and other theory-based classes.

In a nutshell, personal evaluations let students look at themselves through a different lens while exploring the nuances of the principles they learned in class.

Plus, it lets students do something everyone loves — talk about themselves!

Now that you have a few ideas on summative assessments, how can you track their success?

How Do You Track Summative Assessments?

While everyone has their own ideas on this topic, **grades** are the best way to evaluate someone's success with a summative assessment.

How you grade is ultimately up to you. Presentations are great ways to grade someone based on a number of factors, including soft skills like public speaking.

Written exams or project-based assessments are ideal to see a student's full-scope understanding of your class after a marking period.

Whatever you choose, stick to a consistent grading scale so you can identify your own strengths and weaknesses in the classroom as students complete your course.

What's More Important: Formative or Summative Assessments?

Many [new teachers](#) have this question — are formative or summative assessments more important?

In a perfect world, they're equally important. Formative assessments let students show that they're learning, and summative assessments let them show what they've learned.

But American public education values summative assessments over formative assessments. Standardized tests — like the SATs — are great examples of high-value summative assessments.

It's rare to find the same emphasis on formative assessments. That's because formative assessments act like milestones while summative assessments show the bottom line.

We encourage teachers to look at these assessments as two sides of the same coin. Formative and summative assessments work together flawlessly when implemented properly.

With all of that in mind, you only have one question left to answer.
How are you going to [add these assessments to your curriculum?](#)

In a nutshell,

Formative assessments are quizzes and tests that evaluate how someone is learning material throughout a course.

Summative assessments are quizzes and tests that evaluate how *much* someone has learned throughout a course.

In the classroom, that means formative assessments take place during a course and summative assessments are the final evaluations at the course's end.

Diagnosis Vs. Prognosis

Difference Between Diagnosis and Prognosis

1. Definition

Diagnosis: Diagnosis is a medical term for the determination of the patient's disease from its signs and symptoms.

Prognosis: Prognosis is a scientific prediction of the likely development of a disease and its outcome.

2. Basis

Diagnosis: The diagnosis is based on patient's medical history, a clinical examination and if necessary – on special studies.

Prognosis: The prognosis is based on the knowledge of the typical course of a certain disease, the physical and mental state of the patient, the accompanying diseases (if any), the prescribed treatment, and other case-dependent factors.

3. Time frame

Diagnosis: The diagnosis concerns the current condition of the patient.

Prognosis: The prognosis concerns the future development of the patient's condition.

Characteristic	NRT	CRT
Type of interpretation	Relative (percentile)	Absolute (percentage)
Type of measurement	To measure general language abilities or proficiencies	To measure specific objectives based language points
Purpose of testing	Spread students out along a continuum of general abilities of proficiencies	Assess the amount of material known, or learned by each student
Distribution of scores	Normal distribution of scores around a mean	Varies, usually non-normal (students who know all of the material should all score 100%)
Test structure	A few relatively long subtests with a variety of question contents	A series of short, well defined subtests with similar question content
Knowledge of questions	Students have little or no idea what content to expect in questions	Students know exactly what content to expect in test questions

Differences	CRT	NRT
Test Characteristics		
Underlying Purposes	Foster learning	Classify/group students
Types of Decisions	Diagnosis/progress/achievement	Aptitude/proficiency/placement
Levels of Generality	Classroom Specific	Overall global
Students Expectations	Know content	Don't know content
Score Interpretations	Percent	Percentile
Score Report Strategy	Score with Answer	Score without Answer
Logistic Dimensions		
Group size	Small	Large
Range of Abilities	Homogenous	Heterogeneous
Test Length	Smaller	Larger
Time Allocated	Shorter	Longer
Cost Involved	Teacher constructed	Fee involved

Digital Curriculum: The Easy Way to Use Assessments

You can spend hours and hours of your free time developing assessments by hand.

Different Types of Tests

Tests are structured in several distinct ways. Each type requires a different strategy, so here are some tips on how to approach several common test types:

Multiple Choice/Objective Tests

- Read the directions very carefully. You might be asked to select the one incorrect option, or to choose more than one answer.
- Be sensitive to the wording of the question and answers. Is the wording extreme or moderate?
- Eliminate first any answers that are obviously wrong.
- Choose the best answer. Try not to second guess yourself.
- If you are stuck, select "all of the above", if that is an option. The purpose of the exam is to teach and to test, so "all of the above" is correct slightly more often than you might expect.

True/False

- On True/False tests the statement must be 100% true. A difference of just one word could make a difference in the answer, so read carefully.
- Key words in answers that are usually false: no, never, none, always, every, entirely, only.
- Key words in answers that are usually true: sometimes, often, frequently, ordinarily, generally.
- When in doubt, guess "true". You have a 50% chance of being right, and since the purpose of the exam is to impart accurate information, tests tend to be weighted slightly toward true answers.

Math and Science Problems

- Read the problem carefully to discern precisely what the question is asking. Be able to state the problem in your own words.
- List the "knowns," implied "unknowns," and the parameters of the problem using your own notation. What relationship do the assembled facts have? Do any formulae jump to mind? If so, write them down. Even if you do not ultimately use them, having a reference page can help as you decide how to proceed.
- Draw any appropriate diagrams or illustrations.
- Does the problem remind you of something from your text or lecture notes? If so, what was the case then? Does it apply to this problem?
- Mentally round the numbers in the problem so that they are friendlier to work with. A relationship between two numbers might suggest itself if you view .00000199 and .00000398 as simply 2 and 4.
- A problem can often be broken down into several smaller problems done in sequence. Rather than asking, "How can I get from A to D in one move?", outline the steps between

A and D. Even if you can only work out how to get from A to B, you have still solved one third of the total problem..

- Sometimes you can solve a problem by working backwards. Using the previous example, if you have solved for B, but still cannot find C, see if you can solve another part of the problem by working backwards from D to C.
- If you get stuck, move along and go back to the problem after attempting the others. Never erase your work. You don't know what might be useful to you later, and you may get partial credit for some work.
- If you go back to a problem and still cannot solve it, circle the work that you want the instructor to grade (assuming you have more than one approach on the page). Cross out the superfluous work, leaving it still readable.
- Check your work. Be certain your answer is in the proper form. Ask yourself, "Does the solution make sense? Is it reasonable?"

Short Answer

- Use your initial survey of the test to determine how much time to spend on each response.
- Consider how much space is provided and how many points the question is worth.
- Short answer responses require no introduction and should be brief and to the point.
- Do not fall into the trap of elaborating on a short answer question because you feel confident of your response. Answer succinctly and continue onward.

Essays

- Consider exactly what the question is asking. Are you asked to analyze, interpret, or describe? Be certain that your response is framed appropriately.
- Think before you write. Take a moment to construct a brief outline of your response. This will save you time in the long run and help you to keep your essay on task.
- If the essay asks you to answer multiple questions, be certain to address each systematically. Weigh your responses evenly unless the question specifically requests otherwise. If you answer one half of the essay in three pages and the other half in one paragraph, you might only receive 60% credit for the entire essay.
- Get to the point. Avoid wordy, rambling sentences by using brief transition words (e.g. accordingly, similarly, finally).
- Avoid personal opinions. Your answers should be factual and cite supporting evidence unless otherwise requested.
- If you are running out of time and haven't already made an outline, list the remaining points you wish to make in your essay. You might get partial credit for these concepts even if they are not presented in essay form.
- Check your spelling and grammar when you are done.
- As you proofread your essay, ask yourself whether you have answered the question(s). If you have not, what points might you briefly insert or elaborate upon to bring the essay into focus?

Open Book Exams

Open book exams are sometimes given when a student needs to refer to charts or other materials in the text. You must prepare for an open book exam as thoroughly as you would for a closed book exam. You won't have time to reread and look for formulas during the test. Number and index your textbook so that the parts to which you may need to refer are easy to find.

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) was a process of assessment, mandated by the [Right to Education Act](#), of India in 2009. This approach to assessment was introduced by state governments in India, as well as by the [Central Board of Secondary Education in India](#), for students of sixth to tenth grades and twelfth in some schools. From this the smaller classes student would have a practice to face the exam of board in younger age.

The main aim of CCE was to evaluate every aspect of the child during their presence at the school. This was believed to help reduce the pressure on the child during/before examinations as the student will have to sit for multiple tests throughout the year, of which no test or the syllabus covered will be repeated at the end of the year, whatsoever. The CCE method was claimed to bring enormous changes from the traditional *chalk and talk* method of teaching, provided it is implemented accurately.

As a part of this system, students' marks were replaced by grades which were evaluated through a series of curricular and extra-curricular evaluations along with academics. The aim was to decrease the workload on the student by means of continuous evaluation by taking number of small tests throughout the year in place of single test at the end of the academic program. Only grades were awarded to students based on work experience skills, dexterity, innovation, steadiness, teamwork, public speaking, behaviour, etc. to evaluate and present an overall measure of the student's ability. This helps the students who are not good in academics to show their talent in other fields such as arts, humanities, sports, music, athletics, and also helps to motivate the students who have a thirst of knowledge.

semester system

A semester system is **an academic term**. It is division of an academic year, the time during which a college holds classes. It also might be applicable in the schools and universities. Usually, a semester system divides the year in two parts or terms. Sometimes, it might be trimester or quarter semester.

Mainly there are two systems, adopted in universities - semester system and annual system. In annual system, exams are conducted after one educationalist year, while in semester system; exams are conducted after five or six months. There are many differences between annual and semester.

Manisundaram who was the Syndicate Member of the University of Madras in the mid-1960s when the then vice-chancellor, **A.L. Mudhaliar**, introduced the semester system only for engineering programmes as a pioneering project.

A semester is a calendar that divides the academic year into 15 - 17 week terms. There are generally **two semesters** per academic year: Fall (beginning in August or September) and Spring (beginning in January).

Usually, a semester system **divides the year in two parts or terms**. ... Literally, semester means six-month period. In India this six-month system is generally followed. In schools we find the year divided in between two (often three) major examinations in and around the vacations.

Measurement refers to the process by which the attributes or dimensions of some physical object are determined. One exception seems to be in the use of the word measure in determining the IQ of a person. The phrase, "this test measures IQ" is commonly used. Measuring such things as attitudes or preferences also applies. However, when we measure, we generally use some standard instrument to determine how big, tall, heavy, voluminous, hot, cold, fast, or straight something actually is. Standard instruments refer to physical devices such as rulers, scales, thermometers, pressure gauges, etc. We measure to obtain information about what is. Such information may or may not be useful, depending on the accuracy of the instruments we use, and our skill at using them. There are few such instruments in the social sciences that approach the validity and reliability of say a 12" ruler. We measure how big a classroom is in terms of square feet, we measure the temperature of the room by using a thermometer, and we use an Ohm meter to determine the voltage, amperage, and resistance in a circuit. In all of these examples, we are not assessing anything; we are simply collecting information relative to some established rule or standard. Assessment is therefore quite different from measurement, and has uses that suggest very different purposes. When used in a learning objective, the definition provided on the ADPRIMA for the behavioural verb measure is: To apply a standard scale or measuring device to an object, series of objects, events, or conditions, according to practices accepted by those who are skilled in the use of the device or scale. An important point in the definition is that the person be skilled in the use of the device or scale. For example, a person who has in his or her possession a working Ohm meter, but does not know how to use it properly, could apply it to an electrical circuit but the obtained results would mean little or nothing in terms of useful information.

Assessment is a process by which information is obtained relative to some known objective or goal. Assessment is a broad term that includes testing. A test is a special form of assessment. Tests are assessments made under contrived circumstances especially so that they may be administered. In other words, all tests are assessments, but not all assessments are tests. We test at the end of a lesson or unit. We assess progress at the end of a school year through testing, and we assess verbal and quantitative skills through such instruments as the SAT and GRE. Whether implicit or explicit, assessment is most usefully connected to some goal or objective for which the assessment is designed. A test or assessment yields information relative to an objective or goal. In that sense, we test or assess to determine whether or not an objective or goal has been obtained. Assessment of skill attainment is rather straightforward. Either the skill exists at some acceptable level or it doesn't. Skills are readily demonstrable. Assessment of understanding is much more difficult and complex. Skills can be practiced; understandings cannot. We can assess a person's knowledge in a variety of ways, but there is always a leap, an inference that we make about what a person does in relation to what it signifies about what he knows. In the section on this site on behavioural verbs, to assess means to stipulate the conditions by which the behaviour specified

in an objective may be ascertained. Such stipulations are usually in the form of written descriptions.

Evaluation is perhaps the most complex and least understood of the terms. Inherent in the idea of evaluation is "value." When we evaluate, what we are doing is engaging in some process that is designed to provide information that will help us make a judgment about a given situation. Generally, any evaluation process requires information about the situation in question. A situation is an umbrella term that takes into account such ideas as objectives, goals, standards, procedures, and so on. When we evaluate, we are saying that the process will yield information regarding the worthiness, appropriateness, goodness, validity, legality, etc., of something for which a reliable measurement or assessment has been made.

For example, I often ask my students if they wanted to determine the temperature of the classroom they would need to get a thermometer and take several readings at different spots, and perhaps average the readings. That is simple measuring. The average temperature tells us nothing about whether or not it is appropriate for learning. In order to do that, students would have to be polled in some reliable and valid way. That polling process is what evaluation is all about. A classroom average temperature of 75 degrees is simply information. It is the context of the temperature for a particular purpose that provides the criteria for evaluation. A temperature of 75 degrees may not be very good for some students, while for others, it is ideal for learning. We evaluate every day. Teachers, in particular, are constantly evaluating students, and such evaluations are usually done in the context of comparisons between what was intended (learning, progress, behaviour) and what was obtained. When used in a learning objective, the definition provided on the ADPRIMA site for the behavioural verb evaluate is: To classify objects, situations, people, conditions, etc., according to defined criteria of quality. Indication of quality must be given in the defined criteria of each class category. Evaluation differs from general classification only in this aspect. To sum up, we measure distance, we assess learning, and we evaluate results in terms of some set of criteria. These three terms are certainly share some common attributes, but it is useful to think of them as separate but connected ideas and processes.