

Viewing: Understanding Formative Assessment

The Growth Mindset
– Dr. Carol Dweck

A Repair Kit for
Grading
– Ken O’Connor

ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Assessment of student learning is an on-going cycle of gathering, interpreting, communicating and responding to student work. Classroom assessment is no longer something that is done to a student, but rather something, that is done with and for your child based on the professional judgment of teachers. Assessment informs the next steps in learning to evaluate student knowledge and understanding in relation to the learning outcome. Assessment needs to be a reflective process that has meaning for the students so they understand what they need to do (e.g. goal setting) to improve and achieve mastery.

The focus is on “what did I learn” in working toward achieving mastery as opposed to “what grade did I get”? In the outcomes based learning, students are expected to complete schoolwork and are evaluated as such, which raises the standard, as opposed to creating mediocrity. In fact, the experience has been that in outcomes based assessment, students were more engaged and take more responsibility for their learning. Students were able to articulate where they were successful or why there were not successful; discussing opportunities for improvement. When students were provided with authentic and descriptive feedback, this developed a growth mindset; helping them be more successful and ready to take on challenges.

Empowering students happens when we allow students to be involved in their learning and take ownership of their learning. It is way of engaging students so they can be the key drivers. If students only learn to depend on their teachers or parents to “engage” them in learning, how will they adapt when their teacher or parent are not present.

Formative Assessment supports learning – tells you what the student still needs to learn in order to achieve proficiency of learning, while **Summative Assessment** verifies the summary of the learning that has occurred. Not everything a student does is for a mark. Students will complete frequent assessments that are **formative**; providing more practice and will help students improve their learning. Formative feedback inspires student growth, by providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding. It can be given verbally, in written comments or using checklists. It is the practice piece of getting ready for the test of assignment. It will be the **summative** assessment that will count towards the final assessment.

“It is critical that both teachers and students recognize when assessment is primarily for learning (formative) and when it is primarily of learning (summative). Students understand this in band and in sports, when practice is clearly identified and separate from an actual performance or game.

If we follow this analogy, then the final exam for a unit and/or course becomes the big game for the sports team. If you are training basketball players, don't you think that the best way to test their abilities is to have them play a game? In this way the coach sets out the big game as the final exam, and in the same way all of the activities that lead up to that game are meant to help the players prepare for that game.”

~ (Ken O’Connor – the Assessment Network)

Throughout a unit of learning, students and teachers will use a variety of assessments:

- ✓ *Rubrics*
 - ✓ *Labs*
 - ✓ *Tests/Quizzes*
 - ✓ *Performance based products*
 - ✓ *Demonstrations*
 - ✓ *Observations*
 - ✓ *Conversations*
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