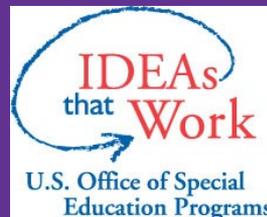


Using Formative Assessment Strategies During Hybrid and Distance Education

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September 24, 2020 @ 5:00 PM ET

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NCEO is supported through a cooperative agreement between the University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) (#H326G160001) and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Office of Special Education Programs. The materials do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or Offices within it. **Project Officer:** David Egnor.

Overview

- Formative assessment strategies to improve learning for students with disabilities during hybrid and distance learning
- Analysis of state website policies and guidance about formative assessment practices in hybrid and remote learning environments

Formative assessment and distance learning

- During distance learning, teachers might be using unfamiliar technology
- They must figure out how to teach students who might struggle to actively engage in online learning
- Students with disabilities and their families might also struggle with the technology
- Distance learning can turn into “completion lists”
- Formative assessment can help mediate some of the difficulties of distance learning

Five Formative Assessment Strategies

NCEO Brief Number 20 • May 2020



Five Formative Assessment Strategies to Improve Distance Learning Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

Distance learning can be very challenging for teachers, as well as for students with disabilities and their families. Teachers are sometimes having to use unfamiliar technologies while at the same time figuring out how to effectively instruct students who may not be very engaged in an online environment. Similarly, students with disabilities and their families may be frustrated by the technology and the demands created by distance learning. Formative assessment is a process that may help improve the distance learning experience.

Formative assessment is important for all kinds of learning. It may be especially important for distance learning, which can easily turn into a "list of things to do" in the minds of students.

NCEO
National Center on Educational Outcomes

NCEO Educator Brief

We will look at five specific formative assessment strategies that can improve outcomes for students with disabilities during hybrid and distance learning.

<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief20.pdf>

Why formative assessment?

- In students' minds, learning can become a list of assignments to complete
- Formative assessment can help students see the evidence of their learning

Why formative assessment for students with disabilities?

- Formative assessment relates to self-regulated learning
- It builds confidence for students with disabilities in their ability to learn difficult material
- Formative assessment can help students with disabilities conceptualize what they are learning
- It helps students with disabilities make the connection between the lesson content and the learning intentions

What is formative assessment?

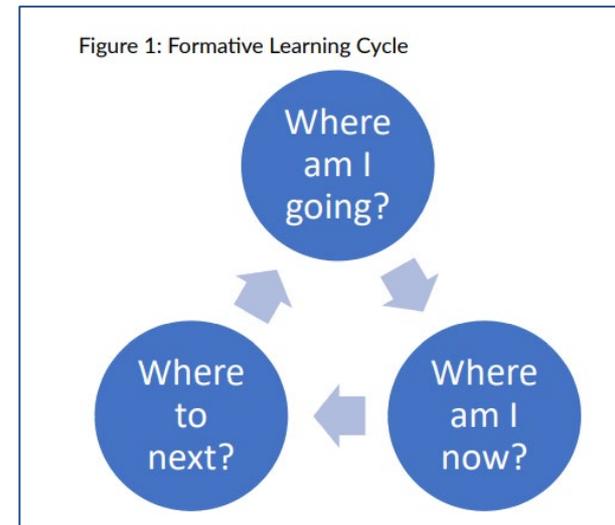
- First and foremost, formative assessment is a process
- It puts students into a formative learning cycle

Figure 1: Formative Learning Cycle



The Formative Learning Cycle

- Begins when students question “Where am I going?”
- Feedback helps students with disabilities figure out “Where am I now?” and “Where am I going next?”
- Dependent upon students intentionally trying to learn something



Five Strategies for Formative Assessment

1. Establish and communicate clear learning targets
2. Establish and communicate clear criteria for success
3. Build in opportunities for students to self-assess or ask questions, based on criteria
4. Give brief, clear, actionable feedback based on the criteria
5. Give students opportunities to revise assignments or re-do similar assignments

Strategy 1. Establish and communicate clear learning targets

- The learning target should identify what students are trying to learn in a specific lesson or assignment
- It should include a student performance aspect
 - What the students will produce in the assignment
- This helps refocus students on the learning and on the question “Why is what I am learning important?”

Strategy 2. Establish and communicate clear criteria for success

- Criteria for success allow both students and teachers to check if students with disabilities are making progress toward achieving their learning targets
- They provide specifics for what students should try to achieve and look for
- Note: These criteria are about qualities, not grades, which helps focus on the learning itself

Strategy 3. Build in opportunities for students to self-assess or ask questions based on criteria

- Formatting the criteria into tools like checklists or rubrics can help students review their work
- Students can self-assess using self-checking quizzes or flashcards
- Intentionally include a reflection point in the middle of a lesson or assignment
- Have students brainstorm questions about the criteria when first introduced to them, and answer the questions using a different explanation than the original

Strategy 4. Give brief, clear, actionable feedback based on the criteria

- Feedback should be precise and help students move forward in the formative learning cycle
- Teachers should use the success criteria to focus their feedback
- Brief feedback is more effective
- If possible, discuss feedback in a dialogue with students

Strategy 5. Give students opportunities to revise assignments or re-do similar assignments

- Feedback is only useful if students have opportunities to use it
- Because much of online learning is asynchronous, students are less dependent on the timing of their classmates' work
- Opportunities to use feedback should be integrated into the assignments

Why these five strategies?

- Integral to the formative learning cycle
- Effective for all students, including students with disabilities
- Appropriate for teachers who are new to using formative assessment as part of their lessons
- Easy to incorporate into distance and online learning

Takeaways

- While not the only strategies for use with formative assessment, these five are essential
- The importance of these strategies is that they:
 - Help students understand their learning
 - Combat a “completion” mindset
- All students, including students with disabilities, should be able to identify what it is that they are learning and how they are doing

Formative Assessment Strategies for Hybrid and Distance Learning: *Across the States*

- NCEO conducted a scan of formative assessment guidance for remote and hybrid learning across the fifty states and the District of Columbia (September 2020).
- All fifty states and the District of Columbia referenced formative assessment practices (or analogous terminology) in their guidance for hybrid and distance learning environments, often in their Continuity of Learning and Re-entry to School guidance.¹

¹ See handout for links to state formative assessment guidance.

State Formative Assessment Strategies for Hybrid and Distance Learning

State Guidance About Formative Assessment Strategies in Hybrid and Distance Learning

State	Links
Alabama	https://www.alsde.edu/Documents/Roadmap%20for%20Reopening%20Schools%20June%2026%202020.pdf
Alaska	https://aklearns.org/smartstart2020-list/
Arizona	https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/communications/files/2020/03/FINAL-DRAFT-AZ-Roadmap-for-Reopening-Schools_6_1_20-1.pdf
Arkansas	http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/divisions/special-projects/statewide-playbook/assessments
California	https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/guidanceonassessments.asp
Colorado	http://www.cde.state.co.us/planning20-21/instructionaloptions#resources
Connecticut	https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/SensibleAssessmentPractices.pdf
Delaware	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FP8xC423LgFyub8ImuPJ9lYKjR9SKhfBxc2lv-yppws/edit link to https://portal.smarterbalanced.org/wp-content/uploads/Back-To-School-Assessment-Playbook_July-2020_FINAL.pdf
Florida	http://fldoe.org/em-response/index.stml . See individual district plans.
Georgia	https://www.georgiainsights.com/uploads/1/2/2/2/122221993/georgias_path_to_recovery_for_k-12_schools_-_v7-30-2020.pdf
Hawaii	http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/School-Reopening-Framework---School-Design.aspx
Idaho	https://www.sde.idaho.gov/re-opening/files/Idaho-Back-to-School-Framework-2020.pdf
Illinois	https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Part-3-Transition-Planning-Phase-4.pdf https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Fall-2020-Learning-Rec.pdf
Indiana	https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/news/indiana-continuous-learning-guidance-final.PDF



NCEO is supported primarily through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326G160001) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Additional support for targeted projects, including those on English learners, is provided by other federal and state agencies, and other educational organizations. The Center is affiliated with the Institute on Community Integration at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

State Terminology Examples for Formative Assessments and Formative Assessment Strategies

Instructionally-embedded formative assessments

Checks for understanding

Curriculum-based formative assessments

Assessments for learning,
not assessments for doing

Diagnostic formative assessments

Formative practices embedded in instruction

Formative practices connected to instruction

Formative tasks

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices

- *Support schools to assess every student in grades preK-12 during the first few weeks of school, using a screener, diagnostic, or formative assessment that can be given online or conducted virtually, to understand where students are academically and inform instructional decisions for teachers, students, and families.*

--- Michigan

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *Formative assessments typically offer immediate feedback, can be given quickly, and are generally specific in meeting students' different needs. This type of assessment can play a vital role in identifying specific learning gaps of each individual student. A priority should be placed on guidance for using, creating, selecting, administering, and interpreting key formative assessments early in the 2020-21 school year.*

---North Dakota

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *For teachers to meet the needs of their students and to close gaps, it is imperative that educators identify and implement evidence-based practices for incorporating formative assessment into their daily instructional routines. The minute-by-minute, daily and weekly use of formative processes provide teachers with the information they will need to make instructional adjustments that moves learning forward for all students.*

--- Kentucky

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *In a remote learning environment schools need to decide what role formative practices and tasks, interim measures, and summative checks play in seamlessly revealing evidence of student learning.*

---Kansas

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *Identify and implement relevant formative assessments that may be specific to at-risk student groups to accelerate student learning.*
---New Mexico

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *Schools must consider how formative assessment and ongoing monitoring of student progress will be documented and maintained and how that documentation will be available to the CSE (Committee on Special Education) and parents, in their preferred language or mode of communication.*

---New York

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *Consider offering projects and assignments prior to the start of the school year that include embedded assessments to provide some baseline data for class groupings and accelerated learning plans.*
- *Use formal assessments sparingly and efficiently to reduce stress. Avoid permanent or long-term ability groupings or placements; hold high expectations and offer scaffolded opportunities for all students to reach and exceed grade-level goals. ---Maine*

Examples of State Guidance about Formative Assessment Practices (continued)

- *School systems need curriculum-based formative and summative assessments that not only inform differentiated instruction, but also help mitigate the kind of confirmation bias that often leads to lowering expectations for what historically disadvantaged students can achieve.*

---Illinois

Tips for Using Formative Assessment Strategies in Hybrid and Remote Environments

- Build a culture of trust.
- Emphasize learning, not just completing an assignment or getting the correct answer.
- Provide quick, specific feedback.
- If student answers incorrectly, say: “Thank you for giving us the opportunity to analyze your answer together.”

Tips for Using Formative Assessment Strategies in Hybrid and Remote Environments

- Allow students to revise work or do a similar activity that demonstrates what they learned.
- Find a balance between under/over assessing.
- Document formative assessment data.
- Encourage students to study and discuss their own data, describing what they have learned.
- Ensure assessments are equitable by differentiating formative assessment strategies based on the way each student learns.

Questions???



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