

What are Formative Assessments?

Formative assessments are: **For Learning** - The purpose of formative assessment is to enhance learning not to allocate grades. Summative assessments are designed to allocate grades. The goal of formative assessment is to improve; summative assessment to prove. **Embedded in Instruction** - Formative assessments are considered a part of instruction and the instructional sequence. What students are taught is reflected in what they are assessed.

Formative assessments are part of instruction designed to provide **crucial feedback** for teachers, students and parents. Assessment results inform the teacher of what has been taught well and not so well. They inform parents and students of what students have learned well and not learned so well. As opposed to a summative assessments designed to make judgments about student performance and produce grades, the role of a formative assessment is to improve learning. As opposed to benchmark tests that are used to predict student performance on other tests (most often state assessments), formative assessments are intimately connected to instruction.

They produce: **Non-threatening Results** - Formative assessments are scored but not graded. Students mark their own work and are encouraged to raise questions about the assessment and the material covered by the assessment. **Direct and Immediate Feedback** - Results of formative assessments are produced "on the spot;" teachers and students get them immediately. Teachers get a view of both individual and class performances while students learn how well they have done. **Structured Information** - Teachers can judge success and plan improvements based on the formative results. Students can see progress and experience success. Both teachers and students learn from the assessment results. **Ways to Improve** - Summarized formative results provide a basis for the teacher to re-visit topics in the unit if necessary. Individual student responses provide a basis for giving students additional experiences in areas where they performed less well.