

Formative assessment

Types of assessment

All learning objectives should be tested formatively, followed by feedback, and then tested summatively.

| Formative assessment | Feedback | Summative assessment |
|--|--|--|
| Gives an indication of student progress | Identifies level of progress, and steps for improvement | Grants or denies access to the next level/course/job market |
| Reflects the current level of performance | Bridges the gap between current level and expected level of performance | Assesses actual level of performance against the expected level of performance |
| Steer students' learning towards achieving the learning objectives | Pinpoints extent to which goals have been met, and what to do to reach the next level of achievement | Collects evidence on the extent to which the students achievement of the learning objectives |
| Should not contribute (significantly) towards grade | Gives a preview of final grade, based on current performance | Used to determine grade, or pass/fail |
| Safe place for learning, experimenting, and making mistakes without significant consequences | Indicates what went well and what worked. Also gives indication of what to do differently, and how | Measures success learning efforts at the end of the process |
| Indicates to lecturer where teaching went right/wrong | Gets quick student feedback | Provides results of teaching efforts and course improvements |

Table 1: Distinction between formative and summative assessment, and the role of feedback

Work with a purpose

Don't over-evaluate – keep the number of ECTs in mind. Limit it to 1 formal formative assessment for every 2.5 ECTs. Within these time constraints, plan ahead well to ensure that the assessment will be efficient and have a great impact on your students' learning. The formative should provide the students with a strong foundation, before they take on the summative assessment. Class discussions and 'feedback' on those discussions only

suffice as a learning activity. Formative assessment should be documented in some way, so that your students can reuse it when preparing for the graded assessment. If the formative assessment does not count towards the grade, then how do you get the students to complete them? The same way you get your students to attend your lectures, even though participation might not be compulsory.

They must be valuable enough for the student to feel the need to participate. Have them do something that is meaningful. Clearly communicate the purpose and specific goals, and how to reach those goals. **They should clearly see how their participation will help them do well in the summative assessment.** Follow up with feedback on how well they did, and what they still need to achieve to successfully complete the graded assessment.

Ideas for formative assessment

Scaffolding: The formative assessments can be **on each other over a period of time**. One big project can be broken up in smaller chunks, receive feedback on each part (each forms a milestone), and have time to implement the feedback (before handing in the final completed project/resubmitting the same part/submitting the next part that builds onto the previous part). This works well, for example, with theses, reports, design projects and construction projects. The formative assessments are used to teach the students how to do something, and the summative is the end-result.

Mock-ups: The formative is a **replica of the summative assessment**. The student practice completing an assessment with the same question format or criteria, using the same medium/platform (paper/oral exam/digital tool). Here, the formative assessment familiarises the student with the testing method, so that they can focus on demonstrating their knowledge during the graded assessment, instead of sorting out distractions, such as technical difficulties.

Bite-size samples: Include multiple, but **very small and quick to complete formative assessments**. This is ideal for, for example, courses where students have to learn how to draw. Keep the exercises very small, and follow it up with a quick peer assessment, and a reflection on the deliverable and feedback by the student. It would be a good idea to combine this with Option 2, so that the students can also see how their new skills would come together when completing the summative assessment.