Literacy Connects

*A Content Literacy Newsletter from Regional Professional Development Program-**Issue LII***

The Power of Formative Assessment

During the decade of *No Child Left Behind*, the emphasis on accountability and high stakes assessments to measure learning took precedent over other, less formal types of assessments. Educators became experts in test prep, writing assessment items, and identifying DOK levels, often to the detriment of ongoing formative assessment. While summative assessment (used to evaluate student learning) is still important, formative assessment is a vital part of everyday instruction. The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning, so teachers can provide ongoing feedback to their students. Formative assessment is used by both teachers and students to gather evidence of learning through multiple strategies, to engage students in monitoring their own learning, and to improve teaching and learning based on data and feedback. In short, formative assessment provides teachers with the information necessary to distinguish between what they have taught and what the students have actually learned.

Even though the purpose of formative assessment is to gauge student learning to inform teaching, when and how it is used depends on the lesson objective at any given point during the learning. For example, before starting a lesson or unit, teachers should use pre-assessment strategies to determine what students already know (background knowledge) and what they need to know in order to connect to the new information. During the lesson, teachers use formative assessment strategies to continually check for understanding and guide instruction. After the lesson is completed, formative assessment is used to determine what the students have actually learned. Teachers can then make responsive decisions based on student feedback. They may need to reteach all or part of the concept using an alternate modality, or create differentiated groups, or provide individual remediation. Note: The strategies below are explained in previous Literacy Connects Newsletters and are posted at *rpdp.net—Newsletters—Literacy Connects.*

Formative Assessment Strategies

Before Instruction: To determine what students know and need to know	**During Instruction**: To gauge learning and guide instruction	**After Instruction:** To account for what students learned and make responsive decisions
• Pre-tests—essay, short answer, multiple choice, etc. • ABC Preview/Review • Quick-writes, pair share • Open-ended questions • Graffiti wall, Carousel Brainstorming, Chalk Talks • Diagrams and images • Jot Thoughts • Graphic organizers and concept maps: K-W-L, Venn diagrams, etc. • Anticipation/reaction guides • Share learning objectives, targets and exemplars in advance—have students set goals or make predictions	• Graphic Organizers/Empty Outline • Write/Think-Pair-Share and Quick-writes • Two or three column notes/reflect/question • Sentence Synthesis • Interactive Lectures • Thumbs up/down, etc. • Technology: White boards, clickers, cell phone polls, etc. • Key Points, Give-back • Vocabulary sorts/From New to Known • Students reflect on goals already set, note progress, predict, etc.	• Minute paper/main idea • Exit card/3-2-1 Summary • Sentence Synthesis • Questions and Answer Mix-up • Game show quizzes/review games • ABC Preview/Review • Reflections • Demonstrations of learning: create a product, teach another, write with a purpose • Answer the objective or essential question • Students reflect on goals already set, note progress and growth/metacognition

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