



**The educational gains associated with formative assessment have been described as ‘among the largest ever reported for educational interventions’ OECD.<sup>1</sup>**

When teachers do formative assessment effectively, students learn at roughly double the rate than they do without it.<sup>2</sup>

## Unpacking formative assessment

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is now	How to get the learner there
Teacher	Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions	Eliciting evidence of learning	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer		Activating students as learning resources for one another	
Student		Activating students as owners of their own learning	

Adapted from Dylan William ‘Five key strategies for formative assessment’, in Leahy et al (2005)<sup>9</sup>

...students do not always learn what we teach, and we had better find out what they did learn before we try to teach them anything else.<sup>3</sup>

Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited.<sup>8</sup>

Teachers using formative assessments.... interact frequently with individual or small groups of students and involve students in the assessment process, providing them with tools to judge the quality of their work.’<sup>4</sup>

Teachers who use ‘assessment for learning’ involve their students in ongoing self- assessment in ways that reveal to those learners (a) where they are headed in their learning, (b) where they are now in relation to those expectations, and (c) how each student can close the gap between the two.<sup>5</sup>

For feedback to have maximum effect, students have to be expected to use it to improve their work and, in many cases, taught how to do so.<sup>6</sup>

Peer feedback is also valuable because the interchange will be a language that students themselves naturally use and because students learn by taking the roles of teachers and examiners themselves.<sup>7</sup>

### References

- 1 OECD (2017) <http://tiny.cc/FormativeAssessSecOECD>
- 2 William D, <http://tiny.cc/MoreThanClickers>
- 3 Leahy S & William D (2015) *Embedding formative assessment*, p.9
- 4 OECD (2005) <http://tiny.cc/FAlmpLmgSec05>
- 5 Stiggins R (2002) ‘Assessment for Learning’, *Education Week*, Vol. 21, Issue 26, pp 30, 32–33
- 6 Sapier et al (2008) <http://tiny.cc/SapierEtAl08>
- 7 Black P, Harrison C, Lee C, Marshall B & William D (2004) ‘Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom’, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol.86, Issue 1, 8–21, Phi Delta Kappa International
- 8 Leahy S & William D (2015) *Embedding formative assessment*, p8
- 9 Leahy S & William D (2015) *Embedding formative assessment*, p11