



Six Steps for Rigorous Formative Assessment



STEP ONE: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The research on student engagement highlights four instructional delivery methods that increase student interest in learning: project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, service learning, and technology-infused learning. Students need to find meaning in the work they are being asked to do in the classroom. Connecting the learning objectives with real-world problems and situations draws students into the instructional activities and feeds their natural curiosity about the world.



STEP TWO: FORMATIVELY ASSESS

Assessing students for learning and during instruction is key to building a foundation for mastery for every student. It is a continuous process that involves the teacher providing frequent, timely, and highly specific feedback tied to the individual learning goals and objectives of each student. Teachers use assessment data to adjust ongoing teaching to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcome(s).



STEP THREE: TEACHER ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

All teachers assess students. However, many teachers do not have either the analytic tools or the time to reflect on their student performance information. As a result, they never get to the point where they are able to use the assessment data to make important and needed changes to their instruction. Teachers that make the time to examine their own practices tend to have much better student outcomes than their peers who do not. Analysis of student data lets teachers know how the instructional plan needs to be adjusted and where more rigor needs to be added to the instructional process to meet the needs of all students.¹



STEP FOUR: STUDENT SELF-ANALYSIS

Keeping students involved in the teaching learning cycle begins with engaging them in the lesson and continues with formative assessment and teacher feedback on their progression toward their learning goals. Another way to maintain student engagement is to teach them the requisite skills to monitor and take responsibility for meeting their goals. Giving students examples of high-quality work and multiple opportunities to review and correct their work builds independent and autonomous thinkers.²



STEP FIVE: CORRECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Corrective instruction is not reteaching the same lesson louder and slower. It is providing a different lesson, using a new instructional delivery method designed to address the gaps in student weakness in the formative assessment process. The use of cooperative learning groups of students that are struggling with the same skill gap is a powerful way to differentiate learning during corrective instruction.³



STEP SIX: RE-ASSESSMENT

Once teachers and students have invested the time in corrective instruction and learning, the students must be given another chance to demonstrate mastery of the skill. This opportunity signals to the students that their continued work toward meeting learning objectives and their personal learning goals is important and valued by the teacher. The re-assessment should be different from the initial assessment and reflect the lesson delivered during corrective instruction.⁴ In addition, giving students another opportunity to show mastery helps determine if corrective instruction was successful.

¹ (Blackburn & Williamson, 2009)

² (Clark, 2012, Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013)

³ (Guskey, 2010)

⁴ (Moss & Brookhart, 2009)

