



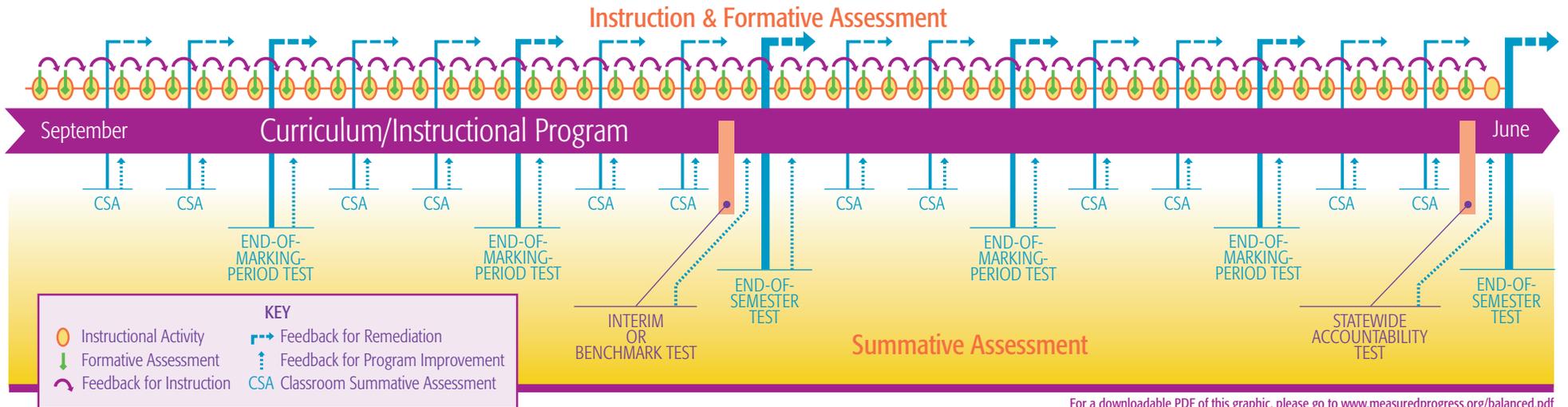
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# A Balanced Assessment System: A Different Perspective

Traditionally, instruction, assessment, and remediation are represented graphically as a circular process. Through all my musings about the correct uses of different types of assessment, I came to question that model. The school year is linear, so it's more appropriate and realistic to view assessment as part

of the curricular/instructional time line. This graphic depicts where different types of assessment, both summative and formative, might fit in a balanced assessment system. Both forms of assessment are aligned with curriculum, which is derived from an established set of content standards. Formative

assessment is embedded in and informs instruction, while various summative assessments inform remediation and program changes. Used correctly, both kinds of assessments improve teaching and learning, which should be the ultimate purpose of testing.



For a downloadable PDF of this graphic, please go to [www.measuredprogress.org/balanced.pdf](http://www.measuredprogress.org/balanced.pdf)

## Classroom Formative Assessment

- ◆ Includes instructionally embedded activities, e.g., observation, homework, quizzes, questioning
- ◆ Usually constructed locally
- ◆ Yields rich diagnostic information
- ◆ Happens while material is being taught
- ◆ Leads to instructional decisions
- ◆ Isn't used for grades

## Classroom Summative Assessment

- ◆ Occurs after material is taught
- ◆ Includes unit tests or other graded performances
- ◆ Can be constructed locally or provided with curriculum materials
- ◆ Counts toward grades
- ◆ Isn't diagnostic

## Interim and Benchmark Summative Tests

- ◆ Can be used as an early warning of performance on later high-stakes test
- ◆ Often constructed by external sources
- ◆ Can cover some or all of school year curriculum
- ◆ Provide broad domain or sub-domain coverage (not diagnostic)
- ◆ Subtest and subgroup results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation

## Statewide High-Stakes Accountability Tests

- ◆ Provide broad domain or sub-domain coverage (not diagnostic)
- ◆ Constructed by external sources
- ◆ Subtest and subgroup results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation