Linking Formative Assessment to Instructional Decisions: Taking a Closer Look
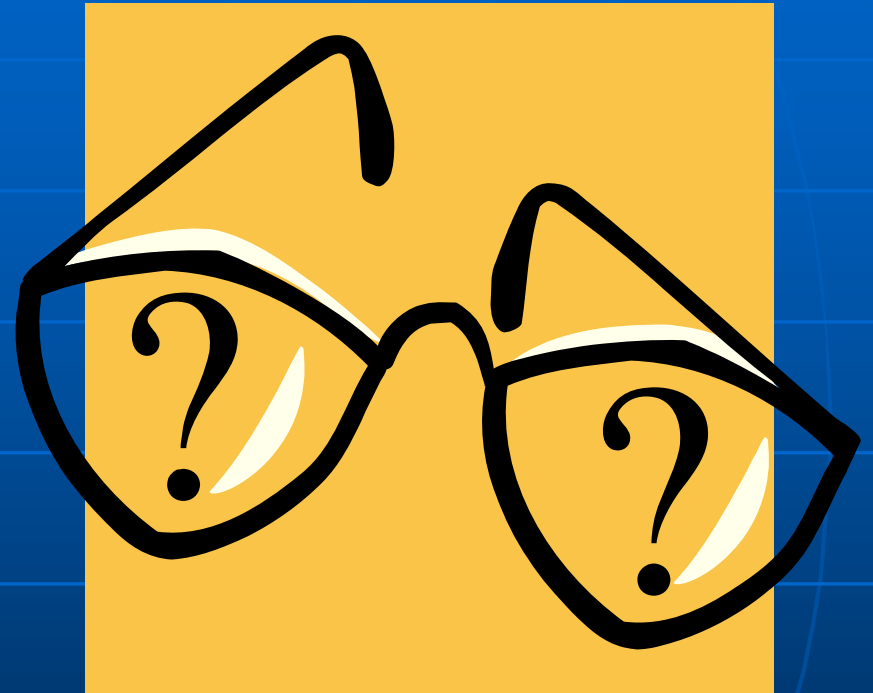
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Formative Assessment

- Some assumptions
- A few sample tools
- Trying out some assessment strategies...
- Thinking ahead – how might this assessment information be used?

Why take formative assessment seriously?

- **There is ample evidence that the changes involved in teacher practices <u>will raise the scores</u> of students on normal conventional tests.**

- **The changes have been shown to be <u>feasible</u> for teachers to implement successfully.**

- **The changes can be made in <u>small increments over time</u>.**

Assessment for Learning: Putting it Into Practice, Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam (2003)

Some assumptions ...

- Formative assessment is important – at all grade levels & in all subject areas!
- Content breadth and depth, and skills, processes, and strategy use are all considerations.
  - A variety of formats and modes of response can be used, depending on the purpose.
  - Teacher/Student Roles will vary depending on the purpose.

Some assumptions…
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- Assessment needs to be efficient, and integrated with classroom instruction and routines as much as possible.
- Some sort of management system should be in place for:
  - Exploring & planning what approaches/ tools are appropriate to use
  - Tracking progress over time

Varied & *Complimentary* Approaches

- Planning and Selection of Assessment Tools & Strategies
- Observation (Systematic & Ongoing)
- Eliciting Responses
  - Verbal, Written, Performance, etc.
- Student Self-Assessment & Peer Assessment
- Individual vs. Class/small group assessments

Every assessment, regardless of its purpose, rests on 3 pillars:

- A model of how students represent knowledge and develop competence in a subject domain;

- Tasks/situations that allow one to observe student performance; and

- An interpretation method of drawing inferences from the performance evidence.

Knowing what Students Know, Pellegrino, et al.

Some Examples: Observation

- Systematic Observation
- Ongoing/On-the-Spot Observation

How might the assessment information be useful?

- **<u>What does the teacher know?</u>**

  (How does the student represent knowledge or demonstrate competence?)

    - **D**escribe … what the student did/said.
    - **I**nterpret … what the student knows.
    - **E**valuate … whether what is known demonstrates competence.

How might the assessment information be used to promote learning?

- **<u>What could the teacher do next</u>?**
  - What patterns might be seen?
  - What instructional decisions might be made (short/long term)?
  - Where is the student along a learning continuum? (e.g., prior knowledge)
  - What differentiation might be useful?
  - Other?

Some Examples: Eliciting Responses

- Verbal
- Written
- Performance

Some Examples: Shifting Roles

- Student Self-Assessment
- Peer Assessment

Some Examples: Individual vs. Group

- **Every Pupil Response**
  - Increases student engagement
  - Efficiently assess lower-level skills, objectives, and information
  - Provides immediate assessment information
  - Wait time is important... after asking the question (at least 3 seconds) & again <u>after</u> responses are made
- **Cooperative Learning Structures**
  - Send-a-problem/question (application)
  - Value line, Stand Up & Share, Fist 5, Corners (low consensus questions, deeper discussion or explanation, concept development)

We need to ask:
Will this question/item/set of items/task…

- Support learning progressions & increase understanding (developing schemas)?

- Encourage deeper thinking and ability to transfer learning? (Novice vs. Expert)

- Lead to more meaningful inferences about what students know & what the teacher needs to do next?

Planning and Selection of Assessment Tools & Strategies

- Year-at-a-Glance Classroom Planning
- Off-the-Shelf Assessment Review
- Local Assessment Review Comment Sheet
- Others?