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# Formative Assessment, Why Bother?

— Terry Wright and Laura Whitworth  
KLEIN ISD in Spring, Texas —

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# Who are we?

Laura Whitworth:

teacher, math coach, professional developer, believer in making kids feel smart -

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Terry Wright:

teacher advocate, instructional leader, builder of teachers' self-efficacy -

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**A combined total of 53 years in education.**

# Our Loves...



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# Where in the World is Klein ISD?



# Learning Goals:

Identify the difference between formative and summative assessment.

Learn strategies to help students become active participants in improving their own achievement through formative assessment.

# Success Criteria:

We will establish a definition for formative assessment.

We will engage in formative assessment strategies that you can use in your lessons next week.

# How Does the Formative Assessment Process Affect Student Learning and Achievement?

There is a firm body of evidence that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement. We know of no other way of raising standards for which such a strong prima facie case can be made.

- Paul Black & Dylan William,  
“Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment”



# What Formative Assessment Is and Is Not

Work with a partner to complete the card sort activity.

Discuss with your partner whether each strip describes FORMATIVE assessment or if it describes SUMMATIVE assessment.

Place the strips under the correct column title: FORMATIVE or SUMMATIVE.

# Formative Assessment vs. Summative Assessment

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- Purpose is to measure and audit attainment

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- Collaborative
- Fluid
- Teachers and students adopt the role of intentional learners
- Teachers and students use evidence they gather to make adjustments for continuous improvement

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- Rigid
- Teachers adopt the role of auditors and students assume the role of the audited
- Teachers use the results to make final “success or failure” decisions about a relatively fixed set of instructional activities

# What is Formative Assessment?

Formative assessment is an active and intentional learning process that partners the teacher and the students to continuously and systematically gather evidence of learning with the goal of improving student learning and achievement.

The formative assessment process aligns what happens in the classroom - day to day and minute by minute - with three central questions:

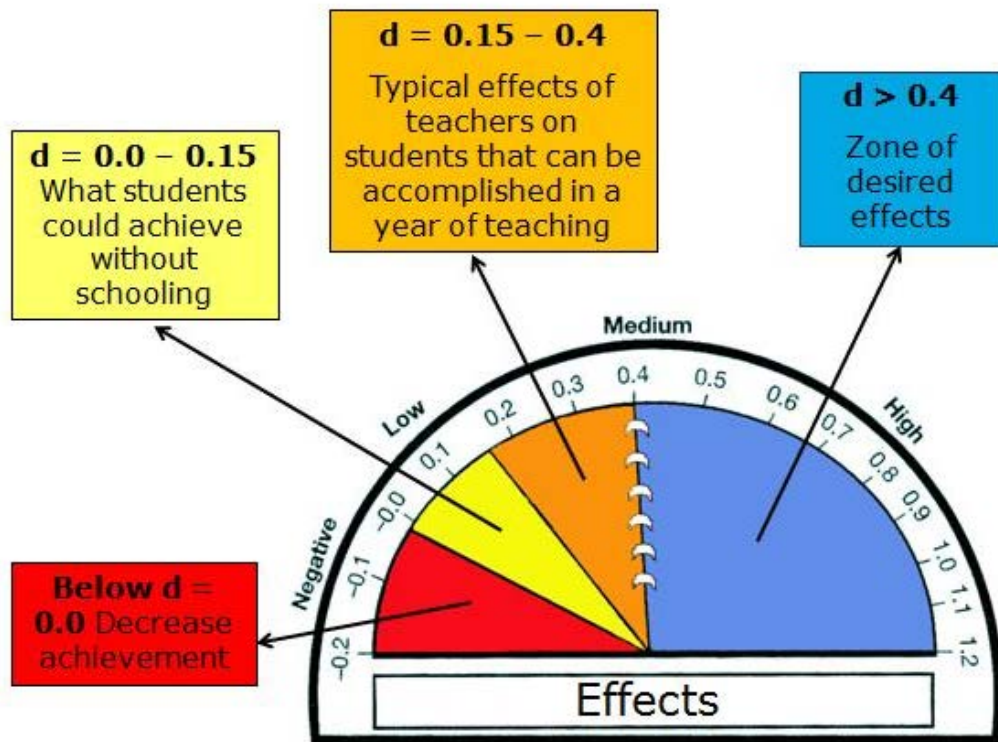
Where am I going?

Where am I now?

What strategy or strategies can help me get to where I need to go?

# Why bother?

## Barometers of Influence



# What is the effect size for formative assessment?



That is equivalent to  
over 2 years growth in  
one year of schooling!

More than doubles the  
typical effects of a  
good teacher.

# 5 Key Strategies for Formative Assessment...

1. Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and success criteria.
2. Engineering effective discussions, tasks, and activities that elicit evidence of learning.
3. Providing feedback that moves learning forward.
4. Activating students as learning resources for one another.
5. Activating students as owners of their own learning.

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# Tasks That Elicit Evidence of Learning



# Card Sorts

*ABCDCards*

Which fraction is the smallest?

A.  $\frac{1}{6}$

B.  $\frac{2}{3}$

C.  $\frac{1}{3}$

D.  $\frac{1}{2}$

(William, *Embedded formative assessment*, 2011)

Which fraction is the largest?

A.  $\frac{4}{5}$

B.  $\frac{3}{4}$

C.  $\frac{5}{8}$

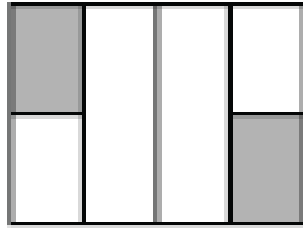
D.  $\frac{7}{10}$

(William, *Embedded formative assessment*, 2011)

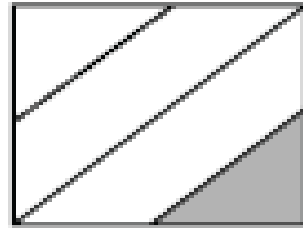
In which of the following diagrams is one quarter of the area shaded?



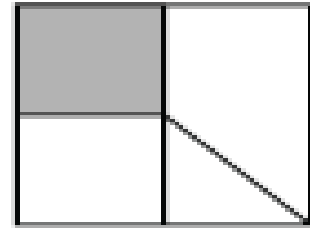
A



B



C



D

(William, *Embedded formative assessment*, 2011)

# Discussions and Activities That Elicit Evidence of Learning

# Agreement Grades

# Agreement Circles

Students stand in a circle as teacher reads a statement.

Students who agree with statement move to the middle.

Students who disagree stand on the circumference.

Students on the inside of the circle stand and face the person on the circumference and students pair/share their thinking.

Teachers ask for students to decide if the discussion changed their minds. If so, students should reposition themselves.

The goal is to get all the students either on the inside or on the circumference.



- A 6 inch by 6 inch rectangle has a perimeter of 24 inches.

**Pick-up the Slip-up**

**749 is equal to:**

A. 749 ones

B. 74 tens and 9 ones

C. 7 tens and 49 ones

D. 6 hundreds and 149 ones

## Pick Up the Sip Up

- A. A parallelogram is always a rhombus.
- B. A square is always a rectangle.
- C. A rectangle is sometimes a rhombus.
- D. A rectangle is sometimes a square.

# Sources for Formative Assessment:

Jeremy Hodgen and Dylan Wiliam (2006), Mathematics Inside the Black Box

Dylan Wiliam, (2011), Embedded Formative Assessment

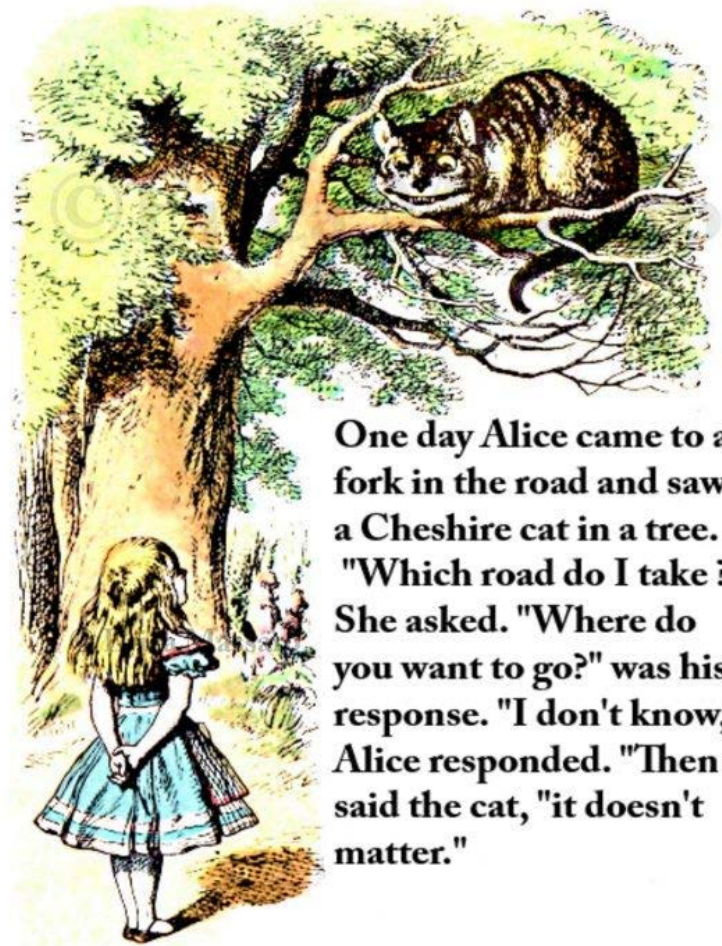
JD. Gawronski, (2005), Mathematics Assessment Sampler Grades 3-5

Leslie Laud, (2011), Using Formative Assessment to Differentiate Mathematics Instruction

Anne Collins, (2011), Using Classroom Assessment to Improve Student Learning

When formative assessment  
is being used effectively  
teachers and students know  
where they are headed and  
which roads will take them  
there!

- Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland



One day Alice came to a  
fork in the road and saw  
a Cheshire cat in a tree.  
"Which road do I take?"  
She asked. "Where do  
you want to go?" was his  
response. "I don't know,"  
Alice responded. "Then  
said the cat, "it doesn't  
matter."