Formative Assessment Strategies for the Student-Centered Classroom

Formative assessment is an essential element of student-centered classrooms. Teachers who use formative assessment techniques can identify students’ current levels, differentiate their instruction, and help all students achieve standards-based learning outcomes.

During this presentation, participants will:

• discuss the concept of formative assessment and review strategies teachers can use to check for understanding, track student progress, and increase student learning

• reflect on your own teaching practices and gain ideas you can implement immediately in your classrooms
Tabitha Kidwell

Tabitha has taught languages and trained teachers on five continents. She was an English Language Fellow in Indonesia from 2011-2013, and has completed English Language Specialist positions in Indonesia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.

She is interested in language teacher education, innovative TESOL methods, and the role of culture in language teaching.

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Formative Assessment Strategies for the Student-Centered Classroom
Session Overview

• Build a shared understanding of assessment-related terms

• Examine the formative assessment cycle

• Discuss four principles of formative assessment and how they can be applied in the classroom:
  1. Clear learning targets
  2. Frequent checks for understanding
  3. Track individual student progress
  4. Differentiate instruction
What do you think about when you hear the word Assessment
Assessment is...

- all of the methods and tools that educators use to measure students’ educational needs and learning progress.
- NOT only traditional tests.
- both formative and summative.
**Formative Assessment**
- Takes place **during learning**
- Primary purpose is to **identify students’ current level**
- Can be **graded** or **ungraded**
- Also called **“assessment FOR learning”**

**Summative Assessment**
- Takes place **after learning**
- Primary purpose is to **determine what students have learned**
- Usually used to give a **grade**
- Also called **“assessment OF learning”**
Formative Assessment is...

all of the methods and tools that educators use to get information about student progress and help them learn.
Examples of Formative Assessment

- Asking comprehension questions
- Grammar or vocabulary exercises
- Pair and group work
- Student presentations
- Drafts of writing
What activities do you use to get information about student progress during the learning process?
Recent Trends in Education

Student-centered

Standards-based
Formative Assessment

Where are students now? (Current ability levels)

Where are students going? (Expected learning outcomes)
The Formative Assessment Cycle
Fitri’s lesson on Compliments

1. Discussion about compliments
2. Brainstorm: Items you could compliment
3. Example compliments
4. Volunteer dialogue
5. “Do you understand?”
6. Written exercise

What are some weaknesses of this lesson?
Principle 1:
Provide Clear Learning Targets

Competency from Indonesian Curriculum:
Compose oral and written texts expressing and responding to compliments, paying attention to social functions, text structure, correct linguistic elements and context.

Learning Targets:
I can give spoken compliments.
I can respond orally to compliments.
I can give compliments in writing.
I can respond to compliments in writing.
I can explain when to give compliments in different social contexts.
I can identify the linguistic elements used in compliments.
Using Clear Learning Targets in the Classroom

Lesson Introduction
Your learning target today is: “I can give spoken compliments.”

Lesson Activities
Focus only on giving spoken compliments.
• Teacher modeling
• Guided practice
• Independent practice

Lesson Conclusion
Did you meet today’s learning target?
Principle 2: Frequent Checks for Understanding

Comprehension Questions
• Students show their understanding through their response

Hand Signals
• Thumbs up/down
• Number of fingers
Principle 2: Frequent Checks for Understanding

Name Cards
• All students need to be prepared to answer

Rapid Response
• Every student shares an answer
Principle 2: Frequent Checks for Understanding

Warm up/Exit Tickets

• At the beginning or end of a lesson, students respond to a question

Whiteboards

• Each student writes answers on a white board and shows it to the teacher
• Try making your own white boards!
What strategies do you use to check students’ understanding?

- Comprehension Questions
- Rapid Response
- Hand Signals
- Name Cards
- Warm up/Exit Tickets
- Whiteboards
Using Frequent Checks for Understanding in the Classroom

Teacher Modeling

You’re wearing blue shoes.
I love your shoes!

Guided Practice

What a ____ bike!
Your bike is____.
I like your ___ bike.

Independent practice

Your shirt is very pretty.
I like your neat handwriting.

NOT a compliment
WEAK compliment
STRONG compliment
Principle 3: Track Individual Student Progress

Exercise A

Learning Target: I can respond to compliments in writing.

Directions: Write a different response to each of these statements.

1. I love your new shoes! ____________
   Thank you. Me too.

2. Your kitten is so cute. ____________
   Thank you.

3. Wow! What a beautiful jacket! ____________
   Thanks.

4. Your paper is well-written and clear. ____________
   Thanks a lot.

5. You speak English so well! ____________
   Thank you very much.

Analyze Student Performance

Use Checklists
## Tracking Individual Student Progress in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
<th>Student C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can give spoken compliments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can respond orally to compliments.</td>
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<td>I can give compliments in writing.</td>
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<td>I can explain when to give compliments in different social contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can identify the linguistic elements used to give and respond to compliments.</td>
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*Guided Practice*

*Independent Practice*
What is... DIFFERENTIATION?
Principle 4:
Differentiate Instruction

Struggling Students: Extra Support

Advanced Students: Extra Challenge
Differentiating Instruction in the Classroom: Extra Support

Fitri’s next lesson

Some students continue practicing
• More examples
• More practice
• More feedback
Differentiating Instruction in the Classroom: Extra Challenge

Fitri’s next lesson

Some students plan a community service project

• Write compliments on sticky notes and place them around the school
• Continued self-directed practice
Summary: Principles of Formative Assessment

1. Clear Learning Targets
2. Frequent Checks for Understanding
3. Track Individual Student Progress
4. Differentiate Instruction
What idea (or ideas) from this webinar will you try in your classroom?
References


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Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. What formative assessment approaches have been successful where you teach?

2. Do you share learning targets (goals) with students? Why or why not?

3. Which approaches from today’s webinar (tracking checklists, tips for defining learning targets, understanding checks like name cards, whiteboards, or hand gestures, etc.) might you use or adapt in your classes?