



Principle 9: Plan instruction around content requirements and student needs.

There is little point in spending time on formative assessment unless it leads to modification of teaching and learning plans. In other words, formative assessment is a means to design instruction that's a better fit for student needs, not an end in itself.

On rare occasions, formative assessment will indicate that everyone in the class needs more practice with a certain skill or more engagement with a particular understanding. Much more frequently, however, formative assessment points to a need for differentiated instruction during at least some of an upcoming class period, in homework, or in both. John Hattie (2012) says that

teachers must know where students are and aim to move them "+1" beyond that point; thus the idea of teaching the class as a whole is unlikely to pitch the lesson correctly for all students. This is where the skill of teachers in knowing the similarities across students and allowing for the differences becomes so important. (p.97)

An assessment is really only a formative assessment when teachers glean evidence about student performance, interpret that evidence, and use it to provide teaching that is more likely to benefit student learning than the instruction those teachers would have delivered if they had continued forward without using what they learned through the assessment (William, 2011).

Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). The Bridge Between Today's Lesson and Tomorrow's. *Educational Leadership*, 71(6), 10-14.



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