

Clarifying Formative Assessment.

While there is general agreement among the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) member states, and other groups (such as the Assessment Reform Group in the U.K., and the International Network for Assessment for Learning) concerning the nature and purpose of formative assessment, the term itself is often used in different ways throughout the field of education.

Our aim, here, is to clarify the meaning of and uses of the types of assessment most frequently used in education. By so doing, the FAST SCASS intends to clarify what formative assessment is and is not in order to increase both the understanding and implementation of formative assessment practices in classrooms.

We have identified a modest collection of the labels that are currently used to describe various educational assessment types. Assessment, in our view, includes more than traditional paper-and-pencil testing, although paper-and-pencil tests do, indeed, represent one useful way for educators to arrive at inferences about students' current knowledge and skills. In a context of formative assessment, evidence gathering may range from dialogic conversations that enable teachers to elicit student thinking, to student peer- or self-assessment, to the completion of elaborate, extended-duration tasks.

“Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievements of intended instructional outcomes.”

State Initiatives

Hawaii Formative Assessment Practices and Data Team Projects

Idaho State Department of Education

Illinois Effective Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers—Illinois Program Plan for Implementation

Iowa Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)

Kentucky Leadership Networks and Integrated Strategy Pilot

School Improvement in Maryland

Formative Assessment for Michigan Educators (FAME)

North Carolina’s Formative Assessment Learning Community’s Online Network (NC FALCON) and Summary of the Result of the Pilot Study Using NC FALCON with Pre-service teachers

West Virginia Department of Education-Formative Assessment

Members:

Arkansas, Connecticut, DODEA, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and West Virginia

Associate Members

CTB/McGraw-Hill, Measured Progress, National Education Association (NEA), and Northwest Evaluation



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Distinguishing Formative Assessment From Other Educational Assessment Labels

Identifying labels currently used to describe various educational assessment types to clarify formative assessment

