

Module 2: Formative Assessment: High-quality discussions between school leaders and teachers about formative assessment processes

Micro-Course 3:

Supporting teachers to accelerate learning using formative assessment processes in the classroom



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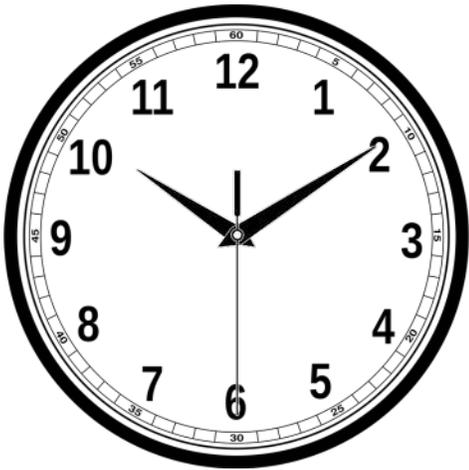
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Warm-Up

If you were to **ask teachers** what they need in order to use **formative assessment** information to monitor/adjust their instruction and improve student learning, **what do you think they would say they need the most?**

What Do Teachers Need Most

- This is a complex question and one that likely varies within and across schools and districts.
- However, it is likely that teachers will mention something about: time...

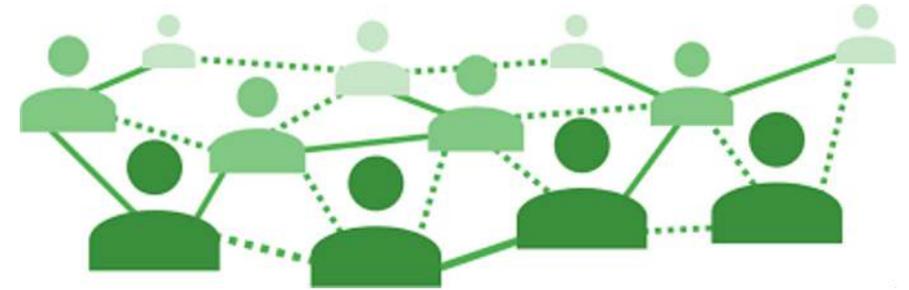


Time to do what? *to make sense of the data; to collaborate and discuss with other grade level/content area teachers; to confer with students; other...*

School Structures

There are many school structures that can provide teachers with more **TIME** to collaborate, work together, and process student thinking together.

- ★ common planning time
- ★ professional learning communities
- ★ grade level meetings
- ★ professional development sessions



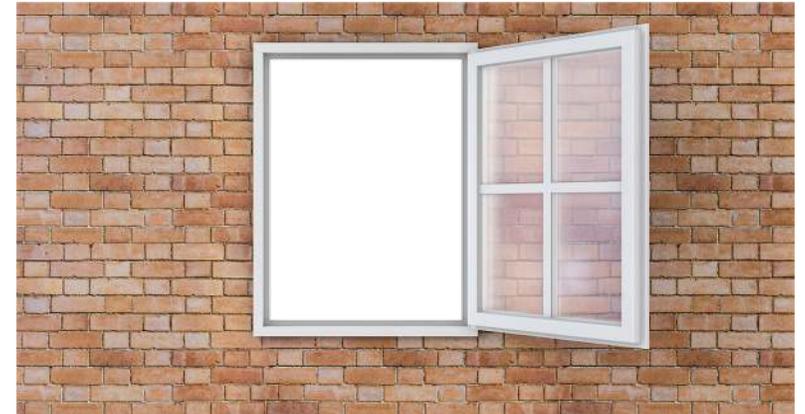
Tools & Resources

In this module, we are going to discuss a few tools and resources that can be used by school leaders to support teachers in using formative assessment information to monitor/adjust instruction and improve student learning.

1. Student work analysis protocol
2. Formative assessment discussion tool for school leaders
3. Professional learning about the art of conferring with students

Student Work Analysis

- Student work **provides a window** into how students construct meaning of key concepts and skills.
- By analyzing and interpreting student work through a clear and systematic process, **teachers can improve instructional decisions** for individuals and groups of students, and ultimately impact student achievement.



Student Work Analysis Process

Download Tool: [Student Work Analysis Protocol](#)

Quick Sort

Discuss & Create
Rationale

Diagnose Student
Strengths &
Weaknesses

Identify Next
Instructional Steps

Quick sort
student work
without scoring
into high,
average, and low
proficiency
groups.

Discuss with
colleagues and
write rationale for
placing student
work in each pile.

Diagnose student
strengths and
needs.

Identify next
instructional
steps for whole
class and/or each
level.

Discussion Tool for School Leaders

School leaders can use this tool in at least two ways.

1. During **classroom observations** to focus attention on one or more of the embedded formative assessment strategies. The key questions can be used as prompts for school leaders, **highlighting the types of evidence to look for** during the classroom observation with respect to each of the formative assessment strategies.
2. During **informal discussions** or **professional development** with a teacher or groups of teachers about the types of formative assessment practices they use in their classrooms related to each of the five embedded formative assessment strategies. The gathered information could be synthesized and shared across teachers in a school (or district) to **promote innovation and best practices**.



Formative Assessment Process Discussion Tool for School Leaders

Instructions: School leaders can use this tool in at least two ways. First, school leaders can use this tool during classroom observations to focus attention on one or more of the embedded formative assessment strategies. The key questions can be used as prompts for school leaders, highlighting the types of evidence to look for during the classroom observation with respect to each formative assessment strategies. Second, this tool can be used by school leaders during informal discussions or professional development with a teacher or groups of teachers about the types of formative assessment practices they use in their classrooms related to each of the five embedded formative assessment strategies. The gathered information could be synthesized and shared across teachers in a school (or district) to promote innovation and best practices.

Embedded Formative Assessment Strategies ^[1]	Key Question	Observed or Discussed Formative Assessment Practices
Sharing learning intentions and success criteria	<i>Is it clear what students are trying to learn? Has the teacher illustrated what success, or hitting the target, looks like?</i>	
Engineering effective discussions, tasks, and activities that elicit evidence of learning	<i>How does the teacher use strategic questions, readiness pre-assessments, tasks/activities, and/or other formative assessment techniques to identify student learning progress before, during, and/or after instruction?</i>	

See Module 1 for Additional Details

Each of the five embedded formative assessment strategies is explained.

Formative Assessment Process Discussion Tool for School Leaders

Instructions: School leaders can use this tool in at least two ways. First, school leaders can use this tool during classroom observations to focus attention on one or more of the embedded formative assessment strategies, highlighting each formative assessment strategy in informal discussions. Second, school leaders can use the types of five embedded formative assessment strategies and shared

The key questions are listed on the slides for each strategy in gray boxes.

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Potential observed or discussed practices are provided for each of the five embedded formative assessment strategies.

What might a teacher do?

Another Supporter

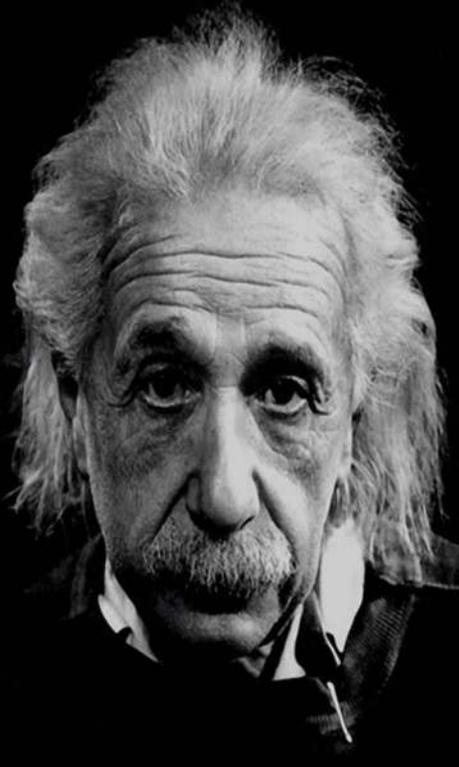
Overly prescriptive grading policies can work at cross purposes with formative best practices. Examples of what to do/not do:

- Do not: Require teachers to enter a certain number of grades/week or quarter for each student.
- Do: Encourage teachers to provide written comments on assessments used for formative purposes rather than grades. And not include formative assessments in gradebooks!

Professional Learning about Art of Student Conferalls

“I am neither clever nor especially gifted. I am only very, very curious.”

-Albert Einstein



Conferring is a conversation with a purpose. We center our actions on **genuine curiosity** toward **student thinking** instead of focusing on students’ behavior, the assignment, or the answer.

Munson, J. (2018). *In the moment: Conferring in the elementary math classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Conferring as Formative Assessment Data



Figure taken from Munson, 2018, p. 7

The Conferring Process

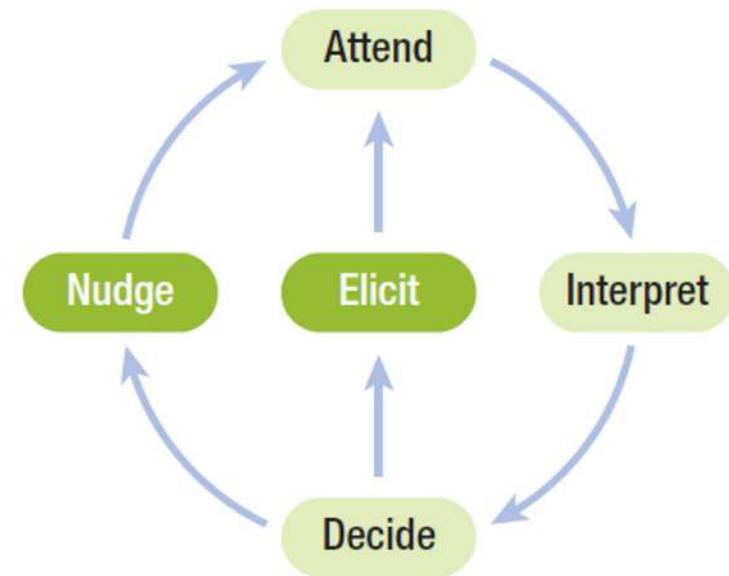
Interpret:

- *Where are students in a continuum of understanding?*
- *What strategies are students trying?*
- *What are they struggling with and why?*
- *Where are they in their process?*

Elicit student thinking to make it visible and probe reasoning:

- Beyond *what* students did to *why* they did it and *why* it makes sense.

Nudge student thinking or work forward



The conferring process, beginning with attending. The lighter cells are ways teachers think while conferring, and the darker green cells are actions teachers take.

Figure taken from Munson, 2018, p. 7

Eliciting & Probing Starter Questions

Eliciting & Probing Moves: Getting Started, Following Up, Targeting

Taken from Munson, J. (2018). In the Moment. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Eliciting: Getting Started

- What are you working on?
- Tell me about your thinking.
- What are you all thinking?
- How did you get started?
- What are you trying?
- What have you done so far?

Eliciting: Following Up

- Say more about that.
- What did you do first?
- What did you do next? And then what did you do?
- Can you show me what you did?
- How did you get that?
- What is happening in this task (or story)?
- What do you understand (about this task)?

[Download the starter questions](#)
taken from Jen Munson's book, *In the Moment*.

Active Listening

With all this talk about the conferring process—teachers may ask: *Am I eliciting, probing, or nudging?* Who cares! Remember to help teachers keep the main thing the main thing. And **active listening** is one of the keys to help a teacher stay focused on what is truly important in terms of moving student thinking forward.

Wait time after asking a question so that students have the time and space to come up with a response.

Ask students to “say more” about what they tell you. And repeat what they say to check that you’re hearing them correctly.

Ask questions to elicit student thinking: what students understand, do not yet understand, misunderstand, what they are trying to figure out, etc.

Productive Stances & Roles

Unproductive Stances

- Focus on something other than student thinking
- Center on students' behavior, the assignment, or the answer.
 - ✓ Catching kids being off task
 - ✓ Focusing on completing the task the *right way*
 - ✓ Looking for errors, not understanding
- Teacher control

Productive Stances

- Get curious about what your students are thinking
- Genuine curiosity leads to open, authentic questions
 - ✓ Ask questions you don't know the answer to
 - ✓ Make few assumptions about what students are thinking
- Teachers aren't trying to control student thinking, just understand it

A stance is *“the attitude and beliefs that affect how we approach our teaching, but it quietly and consistently changes the course of every interaction we have with students...Sometimes the words sound like the teacher is trying to support student thinking, but the tone, body language, and pace of the interaction say something very different. Students read and respond to these cues.” (Munson, 2018, p. 32)*

Setting the Conditions

Not all tasks are the same for eliciting student thinking or making student thinking visible:

- Rich instructional performance tasks
- Open-ended problems with multiple solutions
- Tasks that elicit application of disciplinary practices

Micro-Course 3 Outline

Module 1

- **Accelerating Learning:** Supporting high-quality formative assessments in the classroom

Module 2

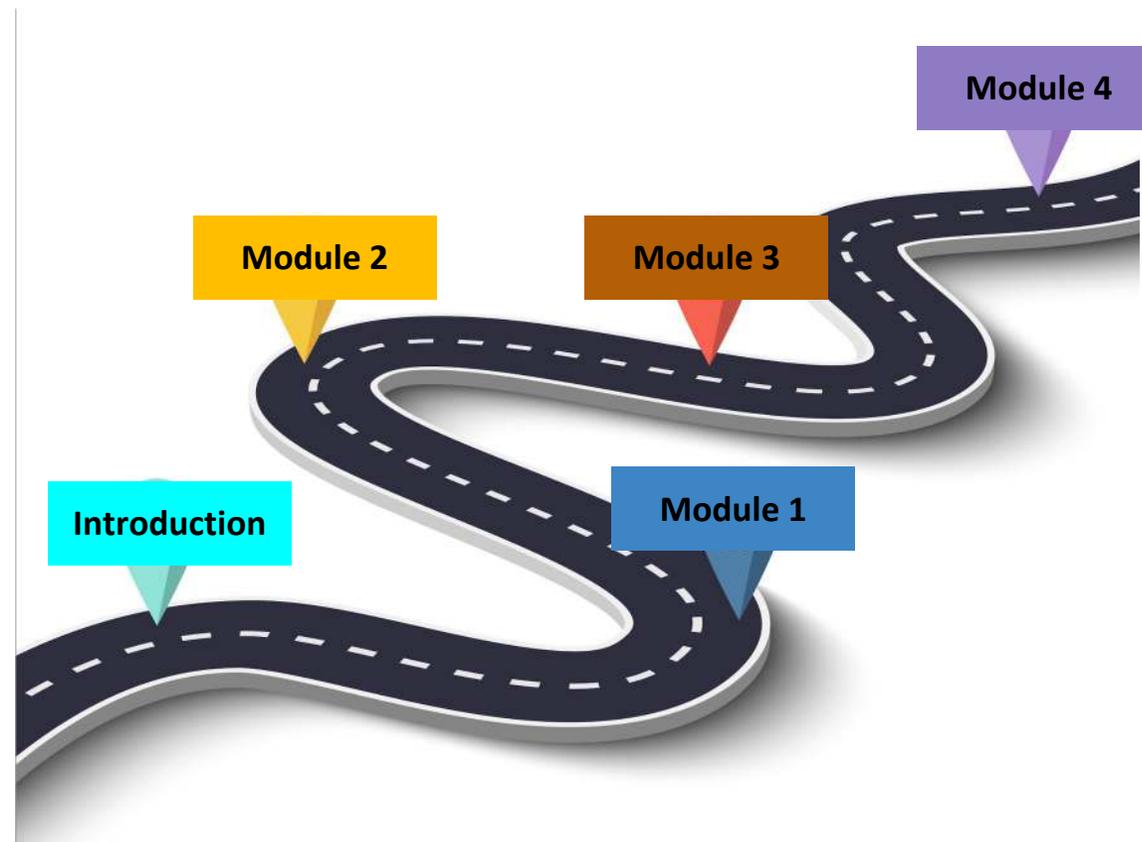
- **Accelerating Learning:** High-quality discussions between school leaders and teachers about formative assessment processes

Module 3

- **Accelerating Learning:** Supporting teachers as they create or select formative assessments during or after instruction

Module 4

- **Accelerating Learning:** Supporting teachers as they involve students and their peers in the formative assessment process



Reflection Questions

1. Explain a couple ways that you can support teachers to make appropriate decisions that improve instruction and student learning?
2. To what extent does your school have structures in place to promote teacher collaboration? What changes, if any, would you like to work towards in this respect?
3. How could you help teachers use student work analysis to monitor/adjust their future instruction?
4. How could you use teacher observations/evaluations and professional development to promote teacher use of formative assessment information?
5. What is one key takeaway and one lingering question you have after listening to this module?