



A Teacher's Resource For A Comprehensive Assessment System

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INTRODUCTION

As articulated in the MMSD strategic framework (July 2013), MMSD has a clear focus for thriving schools. This focus rests on high standards for all students, intentional and great teaching, and the regular use of data to drive instruction and make decisions. Priority area number one targets the goal of coherent instruction for all of our learners, from our struggling to our advanced learners. In order to achieve a system of coherence, we must align curriculum, instruction, and assessment around the standards associated with college, career, and community readiness. A comprehensive assessment system is paramount to achieving such coherence.

A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

An assessment system consists of multiple assessments, which produce comprehensive, credible, and dependable information upon which important decisions can be made about students, schools, and districts within a school year and over multiple years. It is important for teachers to have a *system* of assessments because no single assessment can tell us what we need to know about a student's progress.

A local assessment system should perform the following critical functions (Kellough, et al., 1999; McRel, 2002):

- Monitor students' progress toward mastering grade-level standards
- Identify students' strengths and weaknesses in order to determine appropriate intervention/support/additional challenge
- Guide placement, promotion/retention decisions
- Assess the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies and programs
- Provide data to assist in decision making at the school and district level
- Provide data that can be communicated to a variety of stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, school administrators, politicians, and taxpayers)

Therefore, a comprehensive assessment system incorporates formative assessment, interim assessments, and summative assessments, each of which is administered for a different purpose, level of interpretation (e.g., classroom, grade, school, or district), and audience (CCSSO, 2008). Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between summative, interim, and formative assessments and Table 1 outlines audience and purpose for each assessment type.

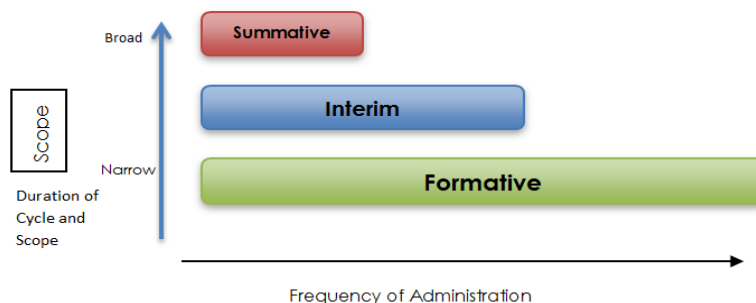


Figure 1. Inter-relationship between Formative, Interim, and Summative Assessments.



Table 1. Audience and Purposes for Assessment

Who is it for?	What does it communicate?
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To report on learning and communicate progress ● To motivate and encourage ● To know how students are doing and set goals for continuous improvement ● To build independence in learning
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To check for understanding ● To inform instruction ● To evaluate students, provide feedback, and assign grades ● To diagnose students' strengths and areas of need in learning
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be informed about students' progress ● To connect home and school efforts to support student learning
School administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To ensure programming is supporting student learning ● To allocate resources ● To ensure accountability
Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To establish accountability of schools ● To inform the public of school progress
Taxpayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To demonstrate that tax dollars are well spent
<p>Afflerbach, P. (2012). <i>Understanding and using reading assessment K-12</i>. (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.</p>	



TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below we describe each type of assessment beginning with formative assessment as this is most often used by teachers to plan and adjust instruction. At the end of this section, Figure 2 illustrates how these assessment types work together over the learning cycle.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is an intentional and systematic process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides immediate feedback to adjust on-going teaching and learning in order to improve students' achievement of the intended instructional outcomes. (CCSSO, 2007).

What are the purposes of formative assessment?

- To inform instruction within and between lessons, for both student and teacher
- To check for understanding
- To involve students in evaluating their own learning
- To promote metacognition and reflection

What are some unique characteristics of formative assessment?

- Can be done at any time during instruction to give immediate feedback to student and/or teacher in relation to daily learning targets
- Can be spontaneous or planned
- Students are at the center of teaching and learning
- More likely to be informal process rather than formal product or standardized process

How do I use the data from formative assessment?

- Use as immediate feedback to student and/or teacher to guide next instructional steps in any content area
- Collect qualitative, descriptive, and/or observational data to look for patterns and trends in my student's learning
- Combine my formative assessment data with interim and summative data as a way to collect comprehensive evidence of growth and progress towards grade-level standards.
- Use my formative assessment as reflection:
 - Student: What do I need to learn before I understand this completely?
 - Teacher: Did the student learn what I taught? If not, how will I re-teach the lesson? What learning comes next for this student? Is this student challenged enough? Is this student falling behind?



How do I incorporate formative assessment practices?

- Use multiple modes of formative assessment (in any content area) across different learning domains: oral language, writing, performance, and non-verbal
- Determine which mode will be optimal based on your content and learning outcomes.

Examples of Formative Assessment*

- Oral Language (e.g., Language Frames, Whip Around, Accountable Talk, etc.)
- Writing (e.g., Writing to Learn, Read-Write-Pair-Share, Quick Writes, etc.)
- Projects & Performance (e.g., Portfolios, Public performance, etc.)
- Non-Verbal (e.g., Fist to Five, Response Cards, Thumbs-Up, etc.)

*For technology tools that can be used across these formative assessment domains, click [here](#).

For additional professional team learning, a video and discussion guide is available [here](#). For a self-paced video module with embedded reflective questions, click [here](#).

See Appendix A for an expanded list of formative assessment practices by learning domain.

INTERIM ASSESSMENT

Interim assessment evaluates students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic goals, typically within a limited time frame and are designed to inform decisions at both the classroom level and beyond, such as the school or district level. [Adapted from Perie, Marion, Gong & Wurtzel, 2007]. There are three different types of assessments that fall into this category of interim assessment, which include screening, diagnostic, and benchmark.

What are the purposes of interim assessment?

- To screen all students in a class, grade, or school to determine if students are at-risk for poor outcomes or have already mastered some or all of the standards.
- To benchmark students at critical junctures to assess student progress at meeting grade-level standards.
- To use as a diagnostic tool to identify particular strengths and needs of students who are not performing at grade level or those students that need challenge beyond their grade level.

What are some unique characteristics of interim assessment?

- Planned to be given at regular intervals throughout the year
- May be developed by a teacher, school, collaborative team, district, state, or purchased from a vendor
- Can be used for formative or summative purposes
- Standardized process with psychometric properties (e.g., reliability, validity, sensitivity to change)
- Quick and easy to administer and give a snapshot of a student's skill levels.
- Can be aggregated and disaggregated on multiple variables



- Use to pinpoint skills gaps in order to plan for targeted instruction
- More likely to be administered in a one-on-one setting
- Monitor progress over time using a common metric
- Evaluates the effectiveness of instruction and interventions
- Guides programming decisions

How do I use the data from interim assessment?

- Combine my interim assessment data with formative and summative data as a way to collect comprehensive evidence of growth and progress towards grade-level standards.
- Use the results to guide my flexible student groups
- Use my interim assessment data to reflect at regular intervals (e.g., quarterly):
 - Are my students on track for meeting grade-level standards? How well are they progressing?
 - How well is this program/unit working?
 - "Is the student at-risk of NOT meeting benchmarks?"
 - Has this student responded to the intervention? Has achievement improved?
 - Has this intervention been effective?

How do I incorporate interim assessment practices?

At the beginning of the year, find out the calendar for your school's Comprehensive Assessment System, and follow the assessment windows as outlined.

Examples of Interim Assessment

- Beginning-of-year, Mid-term, End-of-year, End-of-unit (e.g., Beginning-of-Year [BOY] Assessment, End-of-Year [EOY] Assessment, Quarter Assessments, Mondo Benchmarking Assessments, fluency rubrics), F&P Sistema, Flynt-Cooter
- PALS, MAP, AIMSweb –Literacy & Math, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools Screening Instrument, Columbia Depression Screener
- Concepts about Print, Text-Reading Level(TRL), dictated sentences, Math Diagnostic Assessments (MDA, fact interviews, problem solving assessment)

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students at a given point in time, e.g., end-of-unit, end-of-year. A summative assessment is designed to evaluate cumulative learning. Summative assessment occurs after instruction to help evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and levels of student learning.

What are the purposes of summative assessment?

- To measure mastery of grade-level standards
- To inform long-term instructional planning
- To evaluate cumulative learning of the standards



What are some unique characteristics of summative assessment?

- Typically standardized
- Large-scale (can be given simultaneously to a large group)
- Longer to administer and grade
- Snapshot data (represents one point in time)
- Can be used to track long-term trends

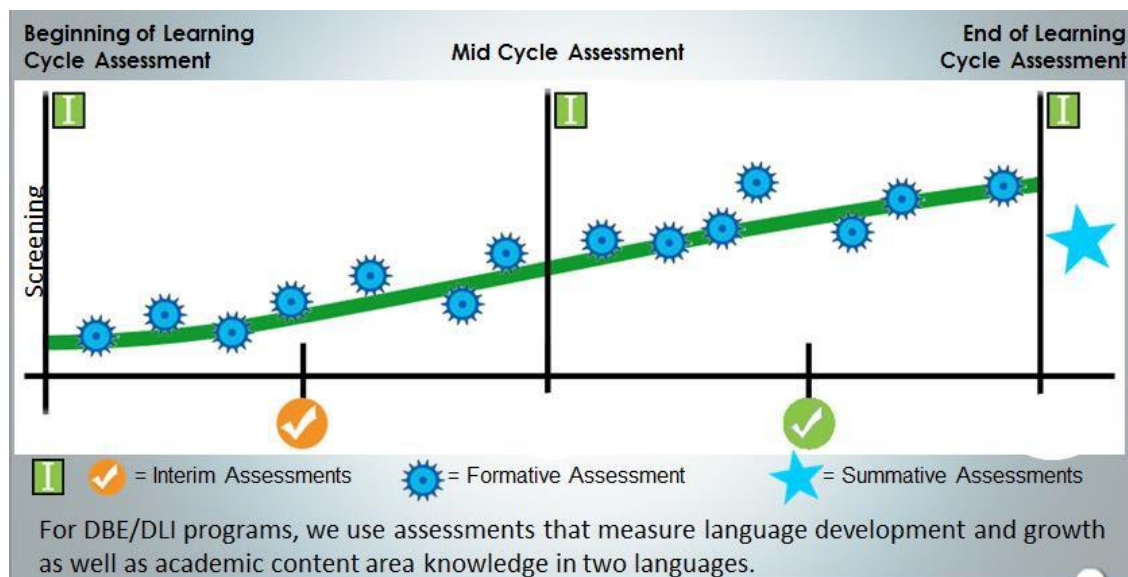
How do I use the data from summative assessment?

- Combine my summative assessment data with my formative and interim data as a way to collect comprehensive evidence of growth, progress towards grade-level standards, and mastery.
- Track trends over time for the class, grade, school, district
- Compare subgroups
- Use my summative data to reflect
 - Are there gaps in my curriculum and instruction?
 - Are there differences in performance by different groups of students?
 - How do achievement levels compare over time?

Examples of Summative Assessment

- End of unit/quarter assessments, including [performance assessments](#) (e.g., on-demand performance assessments, instructional performance assessments)
- End of course exams
- State assessments

Figure 2. Assessment Cycle





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APPENDIX A

Formative Assessment Practices by Learning Domain*

	Oral Language	Writing	Non-Verbal Communication	Projects & Performance
Audience Response Systems			•	
Blooms Taxonomy Questions	•	•		
Depth of Knowledge Questions	•	•		
Electronic and Paper Portfolios				•
Four Corners			•	
Hand Signals			•	
Language Frames	•			
Multi-media Presentations				•
Public Performances				•
RAFT		•		•
Retellings	•	•		
Read-Write-Pair-Share		•		
Response Cards			•	
Triangle-Square-Circle		•		
Think-Pair-Share	•			
Whip-Around Pass	•			
Writing to Learn		•		

*This table is not meant to be an exhaustive list of formative assessment practices, merely an illustration of some practices by domain. Please note, these formative assessment practices can be used in any content area.

For technology tools that can be used across these formative assessment domains, click [here](#).