

What to Assess: Teachers cannot assess whatever they themselves like. In classroom assessment, teachers are supposed to assess students' current abilities in a given skill or task. The teacher can assess students' knowledge, skills or behaviour related to a particular field.

Who to Assess: It may seem strange to ask whom a teacher should assess in the classroom, but the issue is of great concern. Teachers should treat students as 'real learners', not as course or unit coverers. They should also predict that some students are more active and some are less active; some are quick at learning and some are slow at it. Therefore, classroom assessment calls for a prior realistic appraisal of the individuals teachers are going to assess.

How to Assess: Teachers employ different instruments, formal or informal, to assess their students. Brown and Hudson (1998) reported that teachers use three sorts of assessment methods – selected-response assessments, constructed-response assessments, and personal-response assessments. They can adjust the assessment types to what they are going to assess.

When to Assess: There is a strong agreement of educationists that assessment is interwoven into instruction. Teachers continue to assess the students learning throughout the process of teaching. They particularly do formal assessments when they are going to make instructional decisions at the formative and summative levels, even if those decisions are small. For example, they assess when there is a change in the content; when there is a shift in pedagogy, when the effect of the given materials or curriculum on learning process is examined.

How much to Assess: There is no touchstone to weigh the degree to which a teacher should assess students. But it doesn't mean that teachers can evaluate their students to the extent that they prefer. It is generally agreed that as students differ in ability, learning styles, interests and needs etc so assessment should be limited to every individual's needs, ability and knowledge. Teachers' careful and wise judgment in this regard can prevent teachers from over assessment or underassessment.

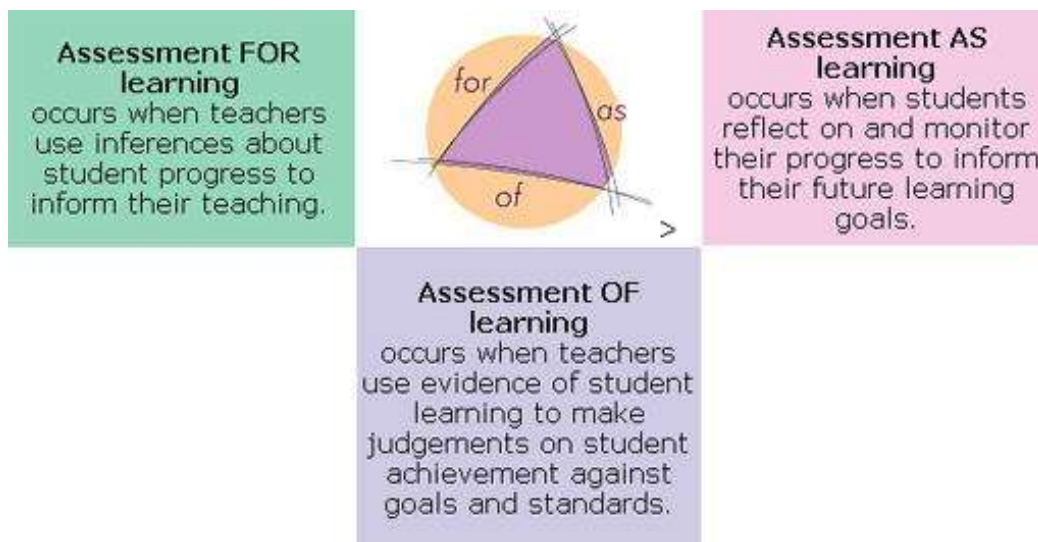
Activity: Critically discuss the significance of decisions that teachers take regarding classroom Assessment.

1.3 Types of Assessment

"As coach and facilitator, the teacher uses formative assessment to help support and enhance student learning, As judge and jury, the teacher makes summative judgments about a student's achievement..."

Atkin, Black & Coffey (2001)

Assessment is a purposeful activity aiming to facilitate students' learning and to improve the quality of instruction. Based upon the functions that it performs, assessment is generally divided into three types: assessment *for* learning, assessment *of* learning and assessment *as* learning.



a) Assessment *for* Learning (Formative Assessment)

Assessment *for* learning is a continuous and an ongoing assessment that allows teachers to monitor students on a day-to-day basis and modify their teaching based on what the students need to be successful. This assessment provides students with the timely, specific feedback that they need to enhance their learning. The essence of formative assessment is that the information yielded by this type of assessment is used on one hand to make immediate decisions and on the other hand based upon this information; timely feedback is provided to the students to enable them to learn better. If the primary purpose of assessment is to support high-quality learning then formative assessment ought to be understood as the most important assessment practice.

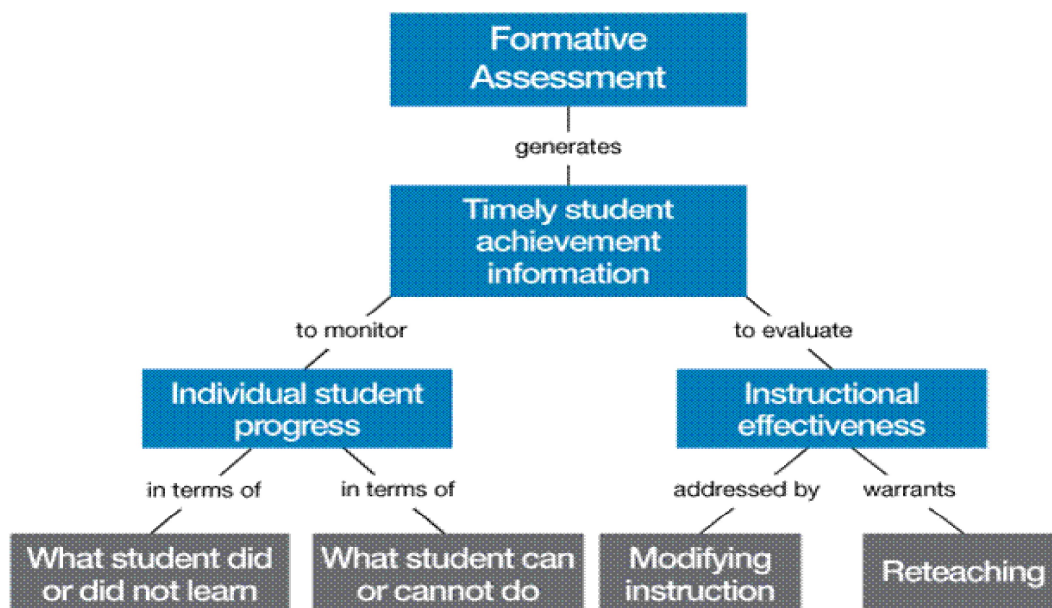
The National Center for Fair and Open Testing (1999).	The Value of Formative Assessment. http://www.fairtest.org/examarts/winter99/k-forma3.html
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Assessment for learning has many unique characteristics for example this type of assessment is taken as “practice.” Learners should not be graded for skills and concepts that have been just introduced. They should be given opportunities to practice. Formative assessment helps teachers to determine next steps during the learning process as the instruction approaches the summative assessment of student learning. A good analogy for this is the road test that is required to receive a driver's license. Before the final driving test, or summative assessment, a learner practice by being assessed again and again to point out the deficiencies in the skill

Another distinctive characteristic of formative assessment is student involvement. If students are not involved in the assessment process, formative assessment is not practiced or implemented to its full effectiveness. One of the key components of engaging students in the assessment of their own learning is providing them with descriptive feedback as

they learn. In fact, research shows descriptive feedback to be the most significant instructional strategy to move students forward in their learning. Descriptive feedback provides students with an understanding of what they are doing well. It also gives input on how to reach the next step in the learning process.

Role of assessment for learning in instructional process can be best understood with the help of following diagram.



Source:

http://www.stemresources.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=70

Garrison, & Ehringhaus, (2007) identified some of the instructional strategies that can be used for formative assessment:

- **Observations. Observing students' behaviour and tasks can help teacher to identify** if students are on task or need clarification. Observations assist teachers in gathering evidence of student learning to inform instructional planning.
- **Questioning strategies.** Asking better questions allows an opportunity for deeper thinking and provides teachers with significant insight into the degree and depth of understanding. Questions of this nature engage students in classroom dialogue that both uncovers and expands learning.
- **Self and peer assessment.** When students have been involved in criteria and goal setting, self-evaluation is a logical step in the learning process. With peer evaluation, students see each other as resources for understanding and checking for quality work against previously established criteria.

- **Student record keeping** It also helps the teachers to assess beyond a "grade," to see where the learner started and the progress they are making towards the learning goals.

b) Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)

Summative assessment or assessment of learning is used to evaluate students' achievement at some point in time, generally at the end of a course. The purpose of this assessment is to help the teacher, students and parents know how well student has completed the learning task. In other words summative evaluation is used to assign a grade to a student which indicates his/her level of achievement in the course or program.

Assessment of learning is basically designed to provide useful information about the performance of the learners rather than providing immediate and direct feedback to teachers and learners, therefore it usually has little effect on learning. Though high quality summative information can help and guide the teacher to organize their courses, decide their teaching strategies and on the basis of information generated by summative assessment educational programs can be modified.

Many experts believe that all forms of assessment have some formative element. The difference only lies in the nature and the purpose for which assessment is being conducted.

Comparing Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning

Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)	Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment)
Checks how students are learning and is there any problem in learning process. it determines what to do next.	Checks what has been learned to date.
Is designed to assist educators and students in improving learning?	Is designed to provide information to those not directly involved in classroom learning and teaching (school administration, parents, school board), in addition to educators and students?
Is used continually?	Is periodic?
Usually uses detailed, specific and descriptive feedback—in a formal or informal report.	Usually uses numbers, scores or marks as part of a formal report.
Usually focuses on improvement, compared with the student's own previous performance	Usually compares the student's learning either with other students' learning (norm-referenced) or the standard for a grade

	level (criterion-referenced)
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Source: adapted from Ruth Sutton, unpublished document, 2001, in Alberta Assessment Consortium

c) **Assessment *as* Learning**

Assessment *as* learning means to use assessment to develop and support students' metacognitive skills. This form of assessment is crucial in helping students become lifelong learners. As students engage in peer and self-assessment, they learn to make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge and use it for new learning. Students develop a sense of efficacy and critical thinking when they use teacher, peer and self-assessment feedback to make adjustments, improvements and changes to what they understand.

Garrison, C., & Ehrlinghaus, M. (2007)	Defining Formative and Summative Assessment http://www.education.vic.gov.au/images/content/studentlearning/forofas.jpg
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Self Assessment: 'Formative assessment results in improved teaching learning process.' Comment on the statement and give arguments to support your response.

1.4 **Characteristics of Classroom Assessment**

1. **Effective assessment of student learning begins with educational goals.**

Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values/ goals should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

2. **Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.**

Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time