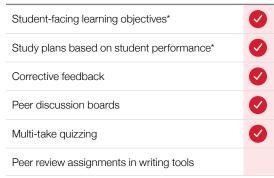FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative Feedback

Description

Formative feedback is information given to a learner during the learning activity to help them improve by modifying their thinking or behavior. Feedback is best delivered using a variety of channels: learner-instructor, learner-peer, and learner-self. Effective formative feedback:

· Clarifies good performance and behaviors through goals and criteria
· Facilitates self-assessment and reflection
· Delivers high quality information about learning
· Encourages instructor-peer dialogue
· Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem
· Gives opportunities to close performance gap
· Provides information to instructors to shape their teaching

Why is this important?

Formative feedback, self-regulated learning, and student engagement are intertwined—they are opportunities for students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, revise their work and refine their understanding, and engage in critical learning processes through meaningful discourse. In an ideal learning environment, students should be able to transfer formative feedback into self-monitoring skills to improve their learning.

Implementation Examples

Student-facing learning objectives*	✓
Study plans based on student performance*	✓
Corrective feedback	✓
Peer discussion boards	✓
Multi-take quizzing	✓
Peer review assignments in writing tools	

available in

✓ Achieve

*in select courses

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Practical Applications

✓ Provide elaborated feedback that is specific and clear; deliver in manageable chunks

✓ Make students aware of learning goals, deliver feedback in relation to goals

✓ Use feedback to encourage dialogue

✓ Focus praise on student effort, not ability or intelligence

✓ Provide action points for students alongside feedback

✓ Focus on productive struggle by normalizing mistakes, allowing resubmission

✓ Improve student self-assessment skills by teaching how to give feedback to peers

✓ Avoid public feedback; normative comparisons with peers; negative feedback

✓ Do not interrupt active learning with frequent pauses for feedback; deliver at natural pauses in learning

Sources: Black & Wiliam (1998), Gikandi et al. (2011), Kluger & DeNisi (1996), Nicol and Macfarlane (2006), Sadler (1989), Shute (2008)

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