

Formative Assessment + Other RI Initiatives

Transition to the Common Core

Over the next few years, LEAs will be working to develop a deep understanding of the Common Core State Standards. In addition, they may be developing new curriculum to align with the CCSS. As part of this work, teams of teachers will be engaged in the process of looking carefully at the CCSS and their units of study. This presents an ideal opportunity to plan for and integrate formative assessment, either at the same time or as a next step.

Educator Evaluation

The new educator evaluation system documents the work that educators do to improve their practice. If your school is launching the Formative Assessment PD this year, you might encourage teachers to set their Professional Growth Goal around formative assessment and use the online modules and Community of Practice meetings as their action steps. In addition, as teachers become more comfortable with the formative assessment process and begin to implement it in their classrooms, they can draw upon this formative data to monitor students' progress toward Student Learning Objectives.

Data Use Professional Development

The Data Use Professional Development involves learning a protocol for reviewing all types of student data—from state and district assessments to attendance and survey data. When teachers learn the formative assessment process, they learn to think about the activities that they do in their classrooms as potential sources of formative data and to plan for how to use that data to make decisions about instruction, grouping, remediation, etc. Therefore, though you might initially have different groups of educators launching these initiatives, the approach to using data and habits of mind they develop will be aligned and supportive of each other.

Interim Assessment System

The Interim Assessment System, which will also be accessed through the IMS, includes an item bank with ELA and mathematics items for grades 3-11, aligned to the Common Core State Standards. In addition to creating interim assessments, teachers can use these items for quick formative assessments to determine students' understanding of particular standards. It could also be useful for creating differentiated assignments for groups of students with similar needs. The test construction tool will be available by early 2013.

Response to Intervention

Formative assessment facilitates data-based decision making, which is at the heart of Response to Intervention. It is about strengthening the Tier 1/Core Instruction that schools provide to *all* students, prior to considering what supplemental supports should be available at a Tier 1/Targeted or Tier 3/Intensive level. Teachers who use the formative assessment process identify what they want all students to learn, define what it looks like when they have learned, and determine how they are going to measure their learning. Using formative assessment data, teachers can decide if and how they need to re-teach material (which may include a different manner of instruction) to the whole group (if less than 80% of students have demonstrated understanding, for example) or flexibly group students to provide additional support to small groups of students (typically those with similar needs). This may include interventions for students at-risk of failure and/or enrichment for students who demonstrate high levels of proficiency. Grade-level or department meetings may provide an opportunity to review formative assessment data, particularly between screening periods. Given the shorter cycle of administration, formative assessment puts relevant and timely data into the hands of teachers, who can use that data to make informed decisions about interventions and provide descriptive feedback to students and families.

Instructional Management System

Not only will teachers use the Instructional Management System to access the Formative Assessment PD, they can also use it to share unit and lesson plans that incorporate the formative assessment process.