

"The Formative Classroom" Video Transcript

>> I first learned about formative assessment in college, in my graduate classes. And there, we were just kind of taught the basic level of formative assessment which is, you know, use the [INDISTINCT] or use a ticket to leave. But they had never really told us what to do with the information to better instruct or to, you know, to make our teaching better, to instruct our students towards the targets they're trying to reach.

And so I remember feeling frustrated at first because I would gather all this data and have kids all over the place and then have no idea what to do with it after I'd gathered it.

But now I feel like I have a much better understanding of how to use the data, not just collect it.

I've learned a lot of different strategies to use with formative assessment especially hands-down strategies which seem to, you know, cause so much engagement in a classroom, which I love.

But I'm learning a lot more about now how to gather that data and make instructional decisions.

So it's definitely informed my teaching in that way where I'm thinking much more about flexible groupings and I'm thinking much more creatively about how I can meet the standards with when kids are at different places.

I'm much more conscientious about it.

I do it much more deliberately now.

I think before it was, you know, I was using the [INDISTINCT] as a management tool or something like that.

And, now, I'm planning it.

I'm planning, you know, every few minutes to do a check-in using formative assessment.

>> The formative assessment process has really helped me know what my students know by being able to have kind of a building block and scaffolding for the students.

I can start them at kind of a basic level and slowly progress them through to a more advanced level to hit that target.

Because I use all different forms of assessments like my observations; conferences with the students one-on-one; just small discussions with them; exit slips, thumbs up, all the different types of formative assessment that I do use on a regular basis in the classroom, my ability to give them feedback is so much more in-depth, so much more focused and really can directly relate to the target and I can kind of get them to grow quicker, it almost seems, because they're getting this descriptive feedback from me.

>> Observation is really the foundation of not only differentiated instruction but also formative assessment.

You have to be there with the students.

You have to see what they're doing.

You have to break down the wall that can exist between the teacher and between a student.

And the only way that you can do that is to get kids acclimated that "Here I am and I am with you and you are with me. And I am observing, and not only am I observing you, but the students are observing each other."

So it's a two-way street.

You know, as I'm observing them, I'm seeing what they're doing, I'm taking notes on them, but they're also observing one another.

They're checking, they're self-assessing through their observation of the progress of their work and it's a phenomenal, phenomenal technique.

>> The formative assessment process has really changed my classroom community.

The students are much more willing to speak up, to ask questions and not just yes-no questions or "What do we do next?" it's much deeper questions.

I think that I notice that they're definitely willing to orally pursue complicated issues, which I think is really impressive for eight and nine-year-olds to be willing to take that risk and to talk through some of their thinking.

Armenia and Edwin were having a good conversation and then I use the sticks.

>> Like if you have altogether and each, then you'll know it's going to be multiplication because there's two words that are times and only one word that's addition.

>> Interesting.

So you may have to look for a second keyword.

The kids are much more engaged with each other instead of just always asking me questions; they turn to each other and ask each other for questions, look for answers from each other, explain mistakes to each other.

They seem much less nervous to make a mistake or to ask for some help from one of their peers, so that's been a big change.