

Title:	A teacher learning progression for formative assessment
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Audience: **Teachers, instructional coaches, principals,** district leaders, state education employees, **professional development providers,** local/state board members, higher education faculty, comprehensive centers and education agencies

Description: *A teacher learning progression for formative assessment* was created in order to highlight what the project partners observed during two years of onsite training with teachers, math coaches, and building leaders. This document outlines expectations for teacher learning in three domains: Knowledge and use of educational data, knowledge of classroom formative assessment practices, and leadership support to implement school and district changes in formative assessment. For each of these categories, descriptors indicate the types of teacher learning goals and leadership supports that are necessary to move teachers toward use of classroom formative assessment practices through a multi-year implementation.

How it was used: This document was shared with the New York State Education Department to inform their understanding of the types of in-service and pre-service training necessary to help teachers effectively use data to inform daily instructional practices, and to implement classroom formative assessment practices. This document outlines the role that principals and teacher leaders/coaches can play in creating the school-level conditions necessary for ongoing, site-based teacher learning.

Key lessons: Classroom formative assessment involves changing teacher knowledge and practice in a wide range of areas. This includes changes in the way that data is collected and applied to inform lesson planning, changes in how and why students are grouped, changes in understanding of content and how content-knowledge progresses for students, and changes in classroom routines. In addition, teachers benefit from coaching and opportunities for professional dialogue with peers throughout the implementation process. This document can be used to facilitate discussions about these issues from start-up through a multi-year project implementation.

Lessons from the New York Formative Assessment Project – A teacher learning progression in formative assessment

Creating a learning approach for teachers to develop and use classroom data:

A building and district- based timeline of formative assessment implementation

Key topics for training in formative assessment	Year 1 Implementation Outcomes	Year 2-3 Implementation Outcomes	Year 4-5 Implementation Outcomes
<p>Knowledge and use of educational data</p> <p>Knowledge of formative assessment as instructional data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vision of how formative assessment fits in with larger continuum of district and building assessment practices is established. • Leaders understand how different data informs different types of educational decision-making. • Leaders complete an analysis of current and past data use initiatives, such as Reading First or adoption of benchmarks, to make comparisons and note differences to the formative assessment implementation. • A plan is established to implement and monitor effectiveness of building and grade-level data teams to ensure use of appropriate tools and analysis protocols. • School schedules are developed that include structured time for teacher grade-level (or content-focused) collaborative team meetings focused on analysis of student data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers share a common definition of formative assessment as a process of using evidence about student learning in relation to short-term learning goals in order to adjust instruction to meet individual learning needs. • Teachers and leaders use common protocols and consistent data analysis practices during collaborative team meetings. • Teachers and leaders develop skills and capacity to analyze short, mid and long-cycle data. • Teachers understand the role of formative assessment and how it aligns with the range of student data they are asked to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher leaders take ownership of the leadership, facilitation, and data analysis of regularly scheduled collaborative meetings. • Teacher teams monitor assessment practices and engage in focused revision to improve grade-level or content-focused assessment practices. • Teachers show evidence of understanding how a range of data sources can be applied to understand different “grain sizes” of data as students progress towards mastery.
<p>Knowledge of classroom formative assessment practices</p> <p>Implementation of formative assessment components</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers show evidence of understanding research and theory about how students learn, specifically in their subject area. • Teachers use a range of tools and strategies to elicit evidence of learning within each lesson. • Teachers use strategies that elicit students’ prior knowledge before beginning a new unit or lesson. • Teachers show emergent knowledge of key elements of formative assessment implementation such as appropriate use of learning goals, success criteria, eliciting evidence of student understanding and providing effective feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers develop and use learning goals to define student learning expectations in each lesson. • Teachers develop success criteria that indicate the observable traits showing what success will “look like” when students reach the intended learning goal. • Teachers understand the nature and purpose of learning goals and success criteria, and how they are related to each other in formative assessment practice. • Teachers can align their learning goals with appropriate assessment tools and strategies. • Teachers interpret evidence from formative assessment data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers show secure knowledge of key elements of formative assessment implementation such as appropriate use of learning goals, success criteria, eliciting evidence of student understanding and providing effective feedback. • Teachers provide opportunities for student self-assessment in their lessons. • Teachers provide opportunities for peer-assessment in their lessons. • Teachers understand the ways in which student learning progresses in a particular domain. • Teachers are able to base instructional decisions about setting appropriate

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers provide descriptive feedback to students that helps students understand and internalize what they (the students) need to do to move their learning forward. • Students are able to describe their learning goals, success criteria, and the strategies they use to monitor their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning goals on a learning progression • Teachers are able to apply principles of “learning progression” to development of lessons and units. • Teachers show evidence of increased content knowledge in their domain. • Students show evidence of being able to self-monitor their learning and select appropriate learning tasks.
<p>Leadership support to implement school and district based change in support of formative assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis is completed to clarify implementation support strategies that will be used through the formative assessment implementation (coaches, external professional development providers, etc.). • Leaders develop and share a clear vision of how formative assessment is aligned to district vision and supports student learning. • Internal leadership roles are defined at all levels, and clarify the role of district, building, and classroom teacher leaders. • Internal leaders are able to describe new teacher knowledge required for formative assessment (Heritage, 2010) – content knowledge, formative assessment knowledge, knowledge of how students learn, student prior knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. • Internal leaders are able to describe the changes in teacher skill required for successful implementation of formative assessment (Heritage, 2010) – formative assessment strategies, interpretation of evidence, identifying the gap in learning, providing student feedback, and adapting to learning needs. • Structures are established that provide ongoing leadership support and guidance to teacher grade-level and content-focused teams developing formative assessment practices. • A professional learning plan is established that defines internal and external resources and other formative assessment supports over 3-5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals provide a clear vision of what teachers have to learn to be assessment literate, and to use formative assessment data. • Principals are able to guide collaborative teams focused on data, inquiry and improving instructional practice using data • Teacher leaders/content coaches show evidence of secure knowledge of key elements of formative assessment skill and content such as learning goals, success criteria, identifying the gap and adapting to student learning needs. • Teacher leaders/content coaches are able to model all classroom formative assessment components • Teacher leaders/content coaches have a range of skills and tools to work with individual teachers to support adoption of key formative assessment practices • Teacher leaders/content coaches have a range of skills and tools to work with teacher teams to support adoption of key formative assessment practices • District and school leaders ensure time for ongoing teacher learning and reflection of formative assessment practices for grade-level, building-level and district-level teams • Principals monitor improvement efforts in a variety of ways, including monitoring of student progress, reflective dialogue, and formative assessment work products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and school leaders show evidence that faculties show collective growth in developing formative assessment practices, and ensure that those teachers who are new to the system or those teachers who have not shown growth are provided with resources to succeed. • Principals and teacher leaders/coaches meet regularly to clarify ongoing learning needs across faculty and teams. • Teachers are able to lead collaborative teams to support ongoing learning about formative assessment practices • Principals continue to monitor improvement efforts in a variety of ways, including monitoring of student progress, reflective dialogue, and formative assessment work products

Formative Assessment Implementation – Internal and External support

External support:

Formative assessment requires significant changes in practice, and an expert voice is necessary to help facilitate the learning required, particularly in the first 2-3 years of implementation. Expertise is required to support intended change processes related to assessment literacy, formative assessment classroom practice, and leadership development. Experts provide access to formative assessment research, examples and pictures of best practice, and guidance about how other schools or districts have managed specific aspects of the change process. An ideal expert team includes individuals with strong content knowledge in the identified subject area, expertise about formative assessment research and practice, knowledge of assessment literacy, and experience related to navigating district and school change. An expert ensures that administrators, teachers and coaches have opportunities to reflect on emerging internal practice in ways that move them forward. Outside experts can provide professional development on formative assessment content, facilitate planning and implementation meetings, offer structured opportunities for reflection of teachers, leaders, and coaches, and support increased assessment literacy.

Internal support:

District and building leaders must provide significant structured time for teachers to meet, learn, and reflect on emerging formative assessment practices. This time must be protected and devoted to aspects of work related to formative assessment adoption. In the first two years, in particular, these meetings should be attended by a trained teacher leader, coach, or administrator who can help support new knowledge of formative assessment, guide the development of emerging data use and instructional practices, and provide structured and safe opportunities for teacher reflection.

Ideally, teachers should have regular access to content-area coaches or teacher leaders trained in classroom formative assessment. In addition to sharing content knowledge and knowledge of formative assessment, coaches have a variety of roles, and need to develop skill sets that support “embedded” learning. Coaches support teachers and teacher teams through modeling lessons on key aspects of formative assessment practice, facilitating team meetings, observing classroom lessons and providing descriptive feedback to teachers, and leading structured reflection. Coaches work with teachers to create a culture of learning in the classroom where students feel safe to learn, to express ideas, and to take risks. In the early stages of implementation coaches hold a vision and communicate with teachers about key changes necessary in the role of teachers and students. Coaches provide tools, resources, strategies and knowledge for teachers to model assessment strategies and provide descriptive feedback so that students learn to monitor and assess their own learning. Coaches must learn to differentiate support for teachers and teacher teams to ensure readiness and capacity for teachers to take their next steps in learning new elements of formative assessment over time.

Coaches and principals must work closely together to establish a learning plan for the building and for each teacher team. Coaches and principals guide this work through establishing clear expectations for changes in practice, ongoing communication and monitoring. Coaches and principals benefit from release time to meet with experts, learn foundational knowledge, establish new agreements about their roles, and explore best practices for teacher support and building-wide implementation. Principals benefit from role-alike training and reflection of formative assessment implementation, building and team level data use practices, structures and models for supporting effective use of teacher team time, and planning for effective monitoring of teacher, team, and building implementation.