

Formative assessment in action

Setting up for success

10 September 2024

Bec Kendall and Erin McShane



Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the Ongoing Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past and present as ongoing teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learner in NSW achieves their potential through education.

'Kariong - Our meeting place' created by Stella Haynes from Cammeray Public School on Eora Country as part of the 2022 Calendar for cultural diversity.

Effective assessment team



Rebecca Kendall
Curriculum Reform Advisor



Kat Hand
Curriculum Secondary Advisor



Vanessa Hewitt
R/ Curriculum Reform Advisor



Erin McShane
R/ Curriculum Reform Advisor



Heather Laverick
Curriculum Reform Coordinator

Agenda



Item	Presenter
Exploring assessment	Erin
High impact formative assessment strategies	Bec
Where to next?	Bec

Graduate teaching standards

- **5.1.1** Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches, to assess student learning.
 - **5.2.1** Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.
 - **5.3.1** Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.
 - **5.4.1** Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.
 - **5.5.1** Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers, and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.
-

1

Exploring assessment



Nothing else matters in teaching and learning as much as quality assessment, that is, data that inform and differentiate instruction for each learner in a never ending cycle of inquiry to discover what works best.

(Sharratt, L. 2019:120)

Clarity: What matters most in learning, teaching and leading

Setting the scene

Curriculum reform presents an opportunity to strengthen understanding of effective assessment across NSW to ensure the intentions of the curriculum are met.

Findings from learning research underscore the importance of teachers establishing where students are in their learning to guide next steps in teaching and learning.

Masters (2020:77)



Our Plan for NSW Public Education

NSW Department of Education



Our Plan for NSW Public Education

Transforming lives through learning

Our plan is built on the power of public education to provide opportunities for all and transform lives through learning. Our plan sets our direction and priorities for the coming years and harnesses the commitment of our teachers and schools to provide an outstanding education for every learner. Our approach has been informed by evidence and insights from engagement with our education community.

Our commitment

Every student learns, grows and belongs in an equitable and outstanding education system.

Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we learn, work and live, paying respect to Elders past and present as teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories. We strive to ensure every NSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander learner achieves their potential through education.



Deliver outstanding leadership, teaching and learning


Deliver effective teaching practices including explicit teaching and effective feedback underpinned by high expectations

Provide high-quality, evidence-based curriculum resources

Strengthen high-quality assessment

Together we will	Advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences	Strengthen trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff	Give children the best start in learning	Deliver outstanding leadership, teaching and learning	Strengthen student wellbeing and development	Provide meaningful post-school pathways
With actions that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a culture that values diversity by advancing reconciliation and eliminating barriers Ensure schools have access to the staff and specialists they need Prioritise resources where they are needed most Develop targeted, differentiated, evidence-informed initiatives and supports Embed diverse learner, family and staff voices in decision-making Provide broad, inclusive and rich curriculum with strong co-curricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address staffing shortages Attract and retain more high-quality teachers, especially in high-need locations and specialist subject areas Ensure initial teacher education is fit-for-purpose by partnering with the university sector Improve staff wellbeing Address workload pressures to ensure a manageable workload for all staff Support staff development through high-quality and accessible professional learning Make public education a more attractive career with more quality career pathways Strengthen development for leaders at all stages of their careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase enrolment and participation in preschool for all children Build new public preschools co-located with public primary schools Create better transitions between early education and primary school Deliver the NSW Aboriginal Children's Early Childhood Education Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support schools to deliver school excellence through continuous improvement Deliver effective teaching practices including explicit teaching and effective feedback underpinned by high expectations Strengthen educational and instructional leadership Provide high-quality, evidence-based curriculum resources Increase student literacy and numeracy Strengthen high-quality assessment Improve how data is used to inform teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement evidence-informed, whole-school wellbeing approaches Create positive school cultures that value student voice Build partnerships with students and families to connect them with the support they need Provide equitable access to services by building partnerships across agencies Expand counselling services in schools Improve support for students at all transitions through school Ensure schools are inclusive and safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance access to high-quality vocational education and training (VET) in schools, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and HSC pathways Support, inform and inspire all students to choose post-school pathway options aligned to their goals Improve access, opportunities and choice across post-school pathways including university, training and work for all students
So	Every learner receives a high-quality education that enables them to excel	Our teachers and staff feel valued, included and supported to perform at their best	All children have the best start in life	Every student achieves ambitious learning goals every year	Every student is known, valued and cared for	Every student finishes school ready to succeed in their chosen pathway as an informed, responsible citizen
And we'll measure success by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing gaps in student outcomes, due to structural inequities Increasing community confidence in public education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the number of school staff so supply meets demand Increasing the proportion of teachers and school staff who feel valued, trusted and respected in their profession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the proportion of children enrolled in preschool Increasing the proportion of children who are developmentally on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students Increasing the proportion of students completing Year 12 in public schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the proportion of students reporting a sense of belonging Increasing attendance rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the proportion of students who take up university, training or work in the year after school

Enabled by  Support services that are efficient, effective and easy to access  School infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing population and supports improved student outcomes

Our values  Excellence  Integrity  Equity  Accountability  Trust  Service

Assessment and explicit teaching



In [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](#) we are deepening the focus strengthening high-quality assessment as well as explicit teaching practices.

Formative assessment strategies are key in supporting explicit teaching.

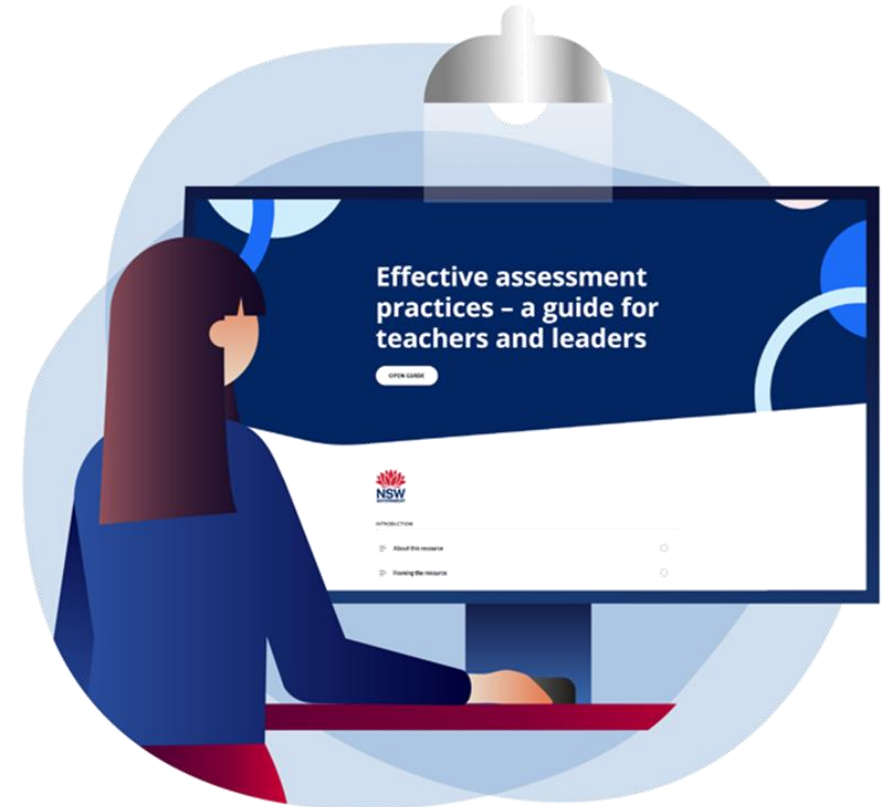
Effective assessment practices guide

Available now

[Effective assessment practices guide](#) offers practical assessment advice for teachers and school leaders K–10. It includes:

- what, why and how of assessment
- best practice in assessment, including assessment design
- guiding policies, procedures and documents
- consistent teacher judgement
- high impact formative assessment practices
- use of assessment data.

The guide is intended to serve as a reference tool, to be used at point of need. **It is not designed to be read from start to finish.**

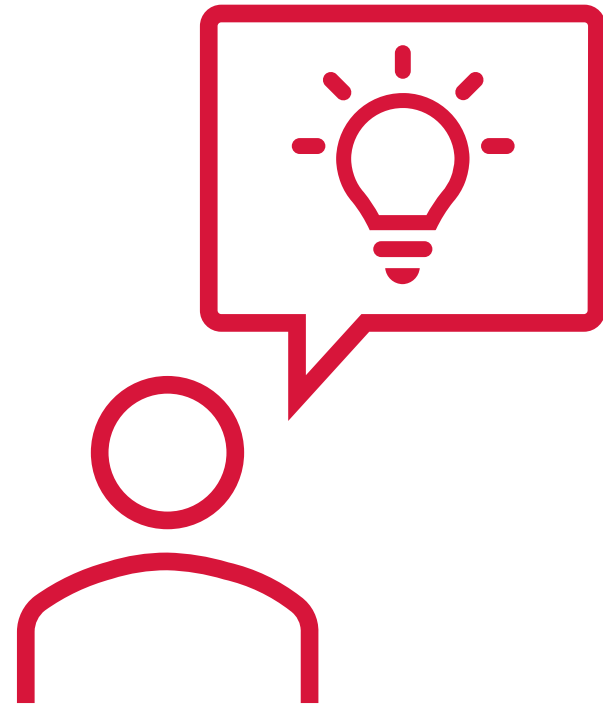


Establishing a shared understanding

Consider

- What is assessment?
- Why do we assess?

‘The primary role of assessment is to establish where individuals are in their learning so that teaching can be differentiated and further learning progress can be monitored over time.’ CESE (2020a:24)





Assessment occupies such a central position in good teaching because we cannot predict what students will learn, no matter how we design our teaching. Students do not learn what we teach.... what students learn as a result of our instruction is unpredictable. Everything a teacher does is teaching – learning is the mysterious process that occurs in students’ heads, when they can do things they we not able to do before. Formative assessments involves getting the best possible evidence about what students have learnt and then using this information to decide what to do next.

Wiliam, D. (2018:54)

Embedded formative assessment. 2nd ed. Solution Tree Press.

Formative assessment

In formative assessment, you gather and interpret information about student learning as it is happening in your classroom. It helps you to adapt your teaching to meet student needs (AERO 2022).

Formative assessment involves:

- checking knowledge and understanding throughout the learning process, to determine what has been learned and what areas needs more work
- confirming student understanding before moving on to the next concept
- correcting misconceptions
- providing in the moment, informal feedback to students to guide learning.



Summative assessment

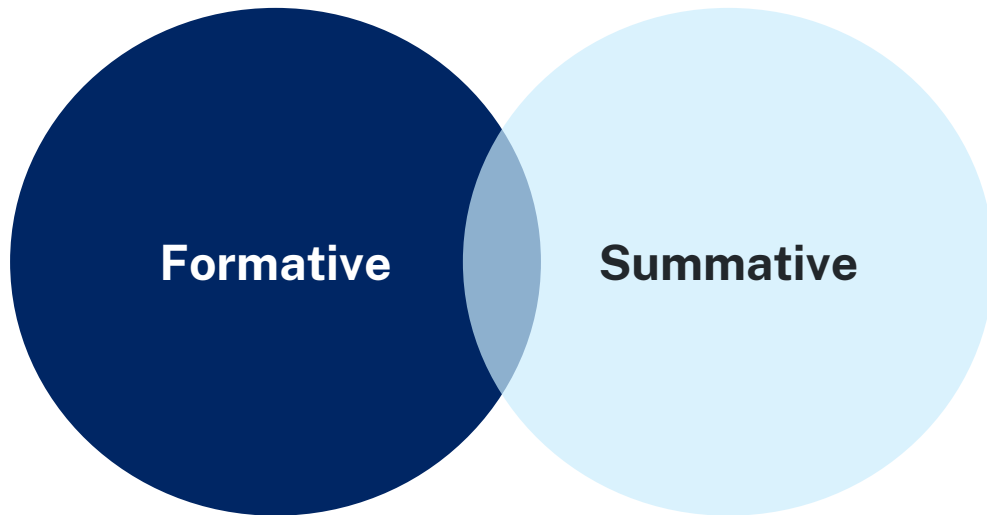
Summative assessment:

- generally occurs at the end of a period of learning and represents an end-point of instruction
- is used to evaluate student achievement of content knowledge and skills against expected curriculum standards or learning objectives
- occurs at a specific point in time, and treats assessment as an event rather than a process
- can, and should also, be used formatively. For example, to provide actionable feedback and identify further learning opportunities to consolidate student understanding.

Summative assessments provide opportunities for teachers to confirm the view of the student they have developed as a student has progressed in their learning (through formative assessment practices).

Formative and summative assessment

What is the difference?



When the cook tastes the soup, the assessment is formative. When the customer tastes the soup, the assessment is summative.

Robert Stake in Cizek et al., 2019, p.5

The distinction between formative and summative assessment is somewhat artificial. It relates to how the information drawn from an assessment is used. Data from the same assessment may be used both formatively and summatively.

Modes of assessment

Tend to be more formative in nature

Less formal

- Assessed frequently
- Fewer outcomes assessed (targeted)

More formal

- Assessed infrequently
- More outcomes assessed (broad)

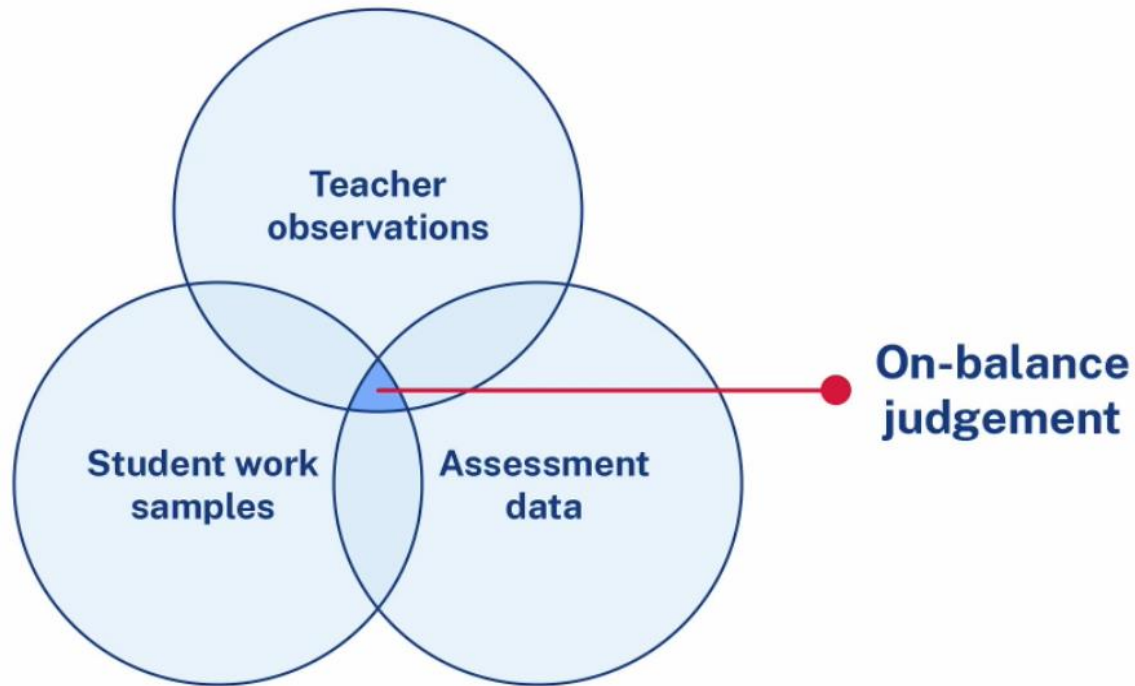
Tend to be more summative in nature



Modes of Assessment				
	Unstructured	Slightly structured	More structured	Most structured
Models	General classroom observation	Pre-planned observation opportunities	Pre-programmed class assessment	Large-scale standardized assessment
Examples	<p>For example:</p> <p>Unplanned observations and questioning of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Dispositions • Content understanding 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes • Hinge questions • Planned observations • Reviewing student work • Peer and self-assessment 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled in-school assessments • On-demand assessments • Practical assessments • Reviewing work samples against criteria 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAPLAN • Check-in assessments • VALID Science • HSC examination
Embedded timely, effective feedback				

The different modes of assessment each provide valuable information to assist teachers in making on-balance judgements of student learning.

Assessment to inform on-balance judgements



When developing or implementing teaching and learning programs, plan:

- opportunities for intentional teacher observations, guided by high impact formative assessment practices
- specific work samples that allow students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in relation to syllabus outcomes and content.

2

High impact formative assessment strategies

A model of formative assessment

Developing assessment capable learners



Learning intentions

Learning intentions are statements that clearly describe what students should know, understand or be able to do following an activity, lesson or series of lessons.

Effective learning intentions are:

- aligned to syllabus outcomes
- planned for and embedded in units/teaching and learning programs
- written in student-friendly language
- intended to support students to understand what they are learning and why
- visible and referenced to throughout a lesson or period of learning
- used in conjunction with success criteria.



Success criteria

Success criteria unpack how students achieve the learning intention. They summarise the key steps or ingredients the students need to fulfil the learning intention – the main things to do, include or focus on

(Clarke & Love and Crowell (2018) note that having clear and explicit success criteria is ... important for equity reasons, as they ‘level the playing field by making explicit what success looks like ... so students don’t have to guess what’s on the teacher’s mind – a phenomenon that tends to privilege students whose backgrounds are similar to teachers’.

CESE, 2020a:26

- support the provision of effective feedback and enable impactful peer and self-assessment
- should be used by students to evaluate their learning and progress towards the learning intention.



Writing effective learning intentions

Learning intentions and success criteria are most effective when they focus on the learning, rather than a specific activity or task.

Consider the following two learning intentions:

- We are learning to use research skills to gather information.
- We are learning to research information about pandas.



Writing effective learning intentions and success criteria

Learning intentions and success criteria are most effective when they focus on the learning, rather than a specific activity or task.

Contextualised skill (only relevant for a lesson)	Decontextualised skill (transferable)
<p>Learning intention: We are learning to write an argument about wearing school uniforms.</p> <p>Success criteria</p> <p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• explain why uniforms might be popular• identify the role that wealth or privilege plays in this issue• explore the importance of personal choice• discuss how uniforms affect students' opinions of each other.	<p>Learning intention: We are learning to write a balanced argument.</p> <p>Success criteria</p> <p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and include arguments for and against a topic• provide evidence that supports my arguments• include quotes to support my argument• state my opinion and draw conclusions in the conclusion.

Activity

Writing an effective learning intention

Activity focused learning intention

We are learning to create posters about the health risks of smoking or vaping.

We are learning to draw a bar chart to show how students in our school travel to school.

We are learning to write letters to the Prime Minister about coal mining.

Decontextualised learning intention

We are learning to create informative, multimodal texts.

We are learning to represent information in a graph.

We are learning to write persuasive texts.

The power of co-construction

Co-constructing success criteria with students:

- encourages students become more independent in self regulation
- provides a checklist for students to follow or choose from
- allows students have more ownership over their learning
- permits student to decide which criteria they need more input for or practice of

Strategies for co-construction

1. Analyse excellent products
2. Compare a good and bad example with the whole class
3. Demonstrate steps at the front of the room
4. Demonstrate how not to do something (play the fool)

Effective questioning



Teachers use questions to:

- cause students to think
- gather information about what students know and can do to determine next steps before and during instruction. (Wiliam, 2011).

It is important that questions are carefully and intentionally planned.

Effective questioning strategies

Using statements	Multiple questions	Challenging questions	No spectators
<p>Using statements instead of questions can allow students to react and debate (Wiliam 2014).</p> <p>E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Carbon dioxide emissions cause climate change." • "Everyone is an artist." 	<p>Presenting students with multiple questions can encourage students to engage with the content on different levels (Wiliam 2014).</p> <p>E.g., write 2 mathematics questions of varying difficulty on the board and ask, "Which question is harder? Why?"</p>	<p>Make questions more challenging by using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open-ended questions • De Bono's thinking hats • visible thinking routines (for example, 'think, puzzle, explore'). <p>Use planned hinge questions to determine whether to move on or review a concept/idea.</p>	<p>Use a range of strategies to promote engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • think, pair, share • pose, pause, pounce, bounce • 'no hand up' (genuine random selection of students) • whole class checks (e.g., whiteboards, ABCD cards, visual responses)

How to make questions **more challenging**

How to engage **all** learners

Feedback

Feedback is recognised as one of the most powerful influences on student learning (Hattie and Clarke, 2019).

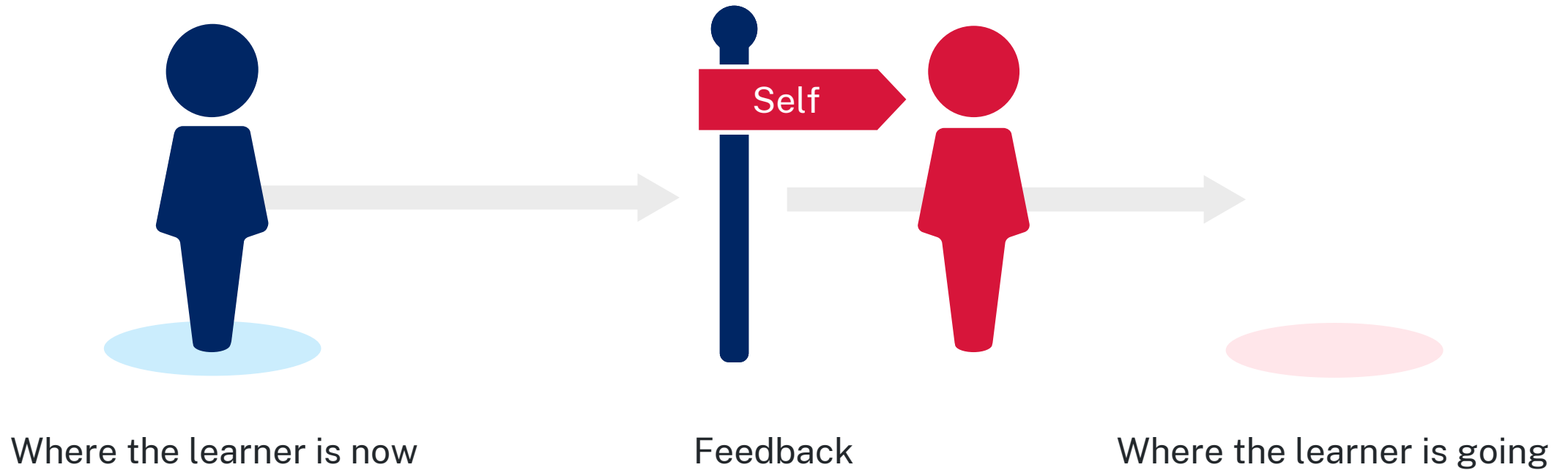
Feedback:

- is most useful when aligned with learning intentions and success criteria (Clarke et al. 2003)
- should be timely, specific and provided throughout a lesson or period of learning
- should provide detailed and explicit direction about what students need to do to move their learning forward (CESE 2020a).



Guiding the way for next steps

Effective feedback



Feedback tips

Informal opportunities	Formal opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• on-the-spot correction during class instruction• correcting thinking processes and encouraging students to reflect on or explain their answers• interacting with students during guided and/or independent activities to redirect and clarify understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify common areas for improvement and give whole class feedback• regularly check-in with individual or groups of students to discuss next steps• provision of time for students to reflect on what they have learnt, and to self-assess where they still have difficulties.• written feedback for specific activities or tasks (against LISC)

Peer and self-assessment

Self-assessment and peer assessment require students to make judgments about their own and others' work, identify the gap between their current performance and the desired standard and take actions to close the gap.

Yan et al. (2022:2)

Peer and self-assessment:

- are most effective when aligned to explicit quality criteria, such as success criteria
- must be modelled and scaffolded by the teacher – students must be explicitly taught how to peer and self-assess
- empower students to plan next steps and identify future learning goals
- should not be considered as grading or marking.



Peer and self-assessment strategies

Peer assessment	Self-assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and use peer assessment tools, for example templates, checklists and rubrics.• Provide sentence starters to help students to give appropriate feedback.• Peer to peer conferencing enables students to engage in peer feedback discussions.• Complete SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students identify where they have met each of the success criteria.• Pause during a lesson and ask students to discuss how their learning is going. Experiment with using Thumbs up or Traffic lights.• Use 3,2,1 at the end of a lesson<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 3 things I've learnt– 2 questions I've got– 1 insight I've had.

Remember: peer and self-assessment must be explicitly taught and modelled by the teacher

Peer assessment scaffolds

Guided feedback chat

Task:

Name:

Feedback given by:

1

Student 1

I would like feedback that I receive to be focused on...

2

Student 2

My feedback to Student 1 is...

3

Student 1

After receiving this feedback, my next steps are...

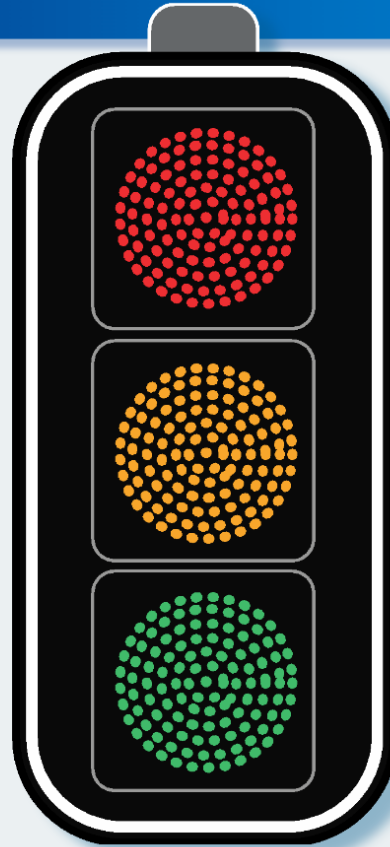
Self assessment scaffolds

Traffic light reflection

I need some help!

I'm getting there!

I get it!



I need to improve on...

I am still working on...

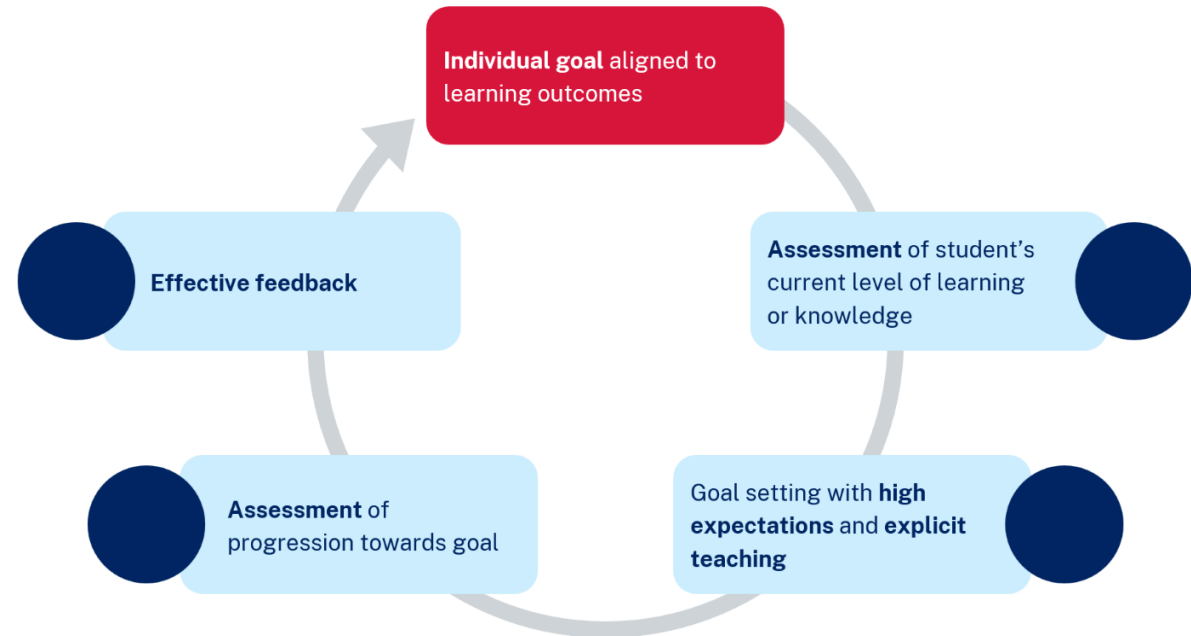
I am most proud of...

Goal setting

Individual goal setting involves students identifying areas for improvement, then setting and working towards challenging, but realistic, learning goals.

Goal setting:

- promotes a growth mindset
- must be explicitly taught and modelled by teachers
- is most effective when informed and supported by feedback aligned to explicitly quality criteria, such as success criteria
- empowers students to be autonomous, self-reflective and analytical learners (Clarke et al. 2003:90).



Supporting goal setting through formative assessment

Goal setting can be supported by effective use of learning intentions and success criteria.

For example, teachers may support students to set learning goals by:

- guiding co-construction of differentiated success criteria so students know 'where they are going' and 'what a good one looks like'
- providing effective feedback about specific tasks or activities, based on the learning intention and success criteria
- modelling how to identify an area of growth for the next lesson or series of lessons, based on success criteria
- allowing time for students to reflect on and review their learning to identify a focus for the next lesson or series of lessons.

3

Where to next?

Embedding formative assessment

Where to start

Don't try to implement everything at once – start small!

1. Choose one high impact formative assessment strategy.
2. Read and learn as much as you can about the strategy.
3. Collaborate with a colleague to plan for and embed the strategy into a lesson or series of lessons.
4. Trial using the strategy. Remember to plan reflection time after each lesson where you trial the strategy.
5. Reflect on your implementation of the strategy and its effectiveness. Refine your practice as you go.

Build up your repertoire of formative assessment strategies over time!

Further reading and resources

NSW Department of Education

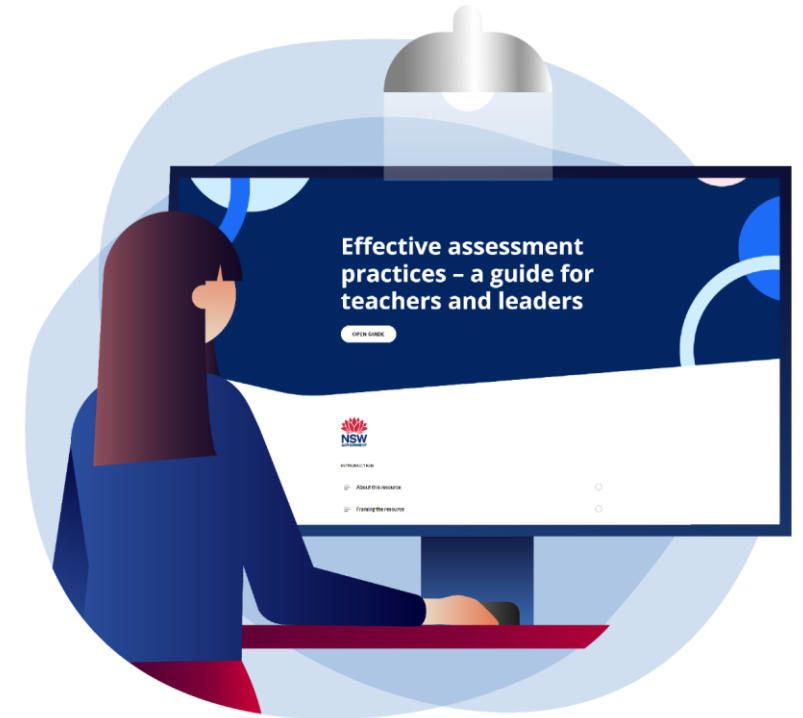
- [Effective assessment practices guide](#)
- [Digital learning selector](#)
- [Assessment modes](#)
- [What works best: 2020 update](#) (CESE 2020)
- [What works best in practice](#) (CESE 2020)

Australian Education Research Organisation

- [Formative assessment](#) (2022)
- [Formative assessment practice guide](#) (2021)
- [Exit tickets](#) (2021)

Tools to support high impact strategies

- [Reflection tool – unpacking formative and summative assessment](#)
- [Elements of effective assessment template](#)
- [Implementation tool – using learning intentions and success criteria](#)
- [Implementation tool – planning for effective in-class questioning](#)
- [Implementation tool – effective feedback](#)
- [Implementation tool – supporting goal setting](#)



Contact



For further information or any questions please contact us at

contactcurriculumreform@det.nsw.edu.au

Copyright

© State of New South Wales (Department of Education), 2024

The copyright material published in this resource is subject to the *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)* and is owned by the NSW Department of Education or, where indicated, by a party other than the NSW Department of Education (third-party material).

Copyright material available in this resource and owned by the NSW Department of Education is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\) license](#).

This license allows you to share and adapt the material for any purpose, even commercially.

Attribution should be given to © State of New South Wales (Department of Education), 2024.

Material in this resource not available under a Creative Commons license:

- the NSW Department of Education logo, other logos and trademark-protected material
- Material owned by a third party that has been reproduced with permission. You will need to obtain permission from the third party to reuse its material.



Links to third-party material and websites

- Please note that the provided (reading/viewing material/list/links/texts) are a suggestion only and implies no endorsement, by the New South Wales Department of Education, of any author, publisher, or book title. School principals and teachers are best placed to assess the suitability of resources that would complement the curriculum and reflect the needs and interests of their students.
- If you use the links provided in this document to access a third-party's website, you acknowledge that the terms of use, including licence terms set out on the third-party's website apply to the use which may be made of the materials on that third-party website or where permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*. The department accepts no responsibility for content on third-party websites.