

Common Formative Assessments (CFAs)

In an effective intervention program, teacher teams use assessment information to identify students who need additional time and support to master content, as well as to confirm which core instructional strategies most effectively meet their students' needs. In this exercise, which draws on the work of Larry Ainsworth and Donald Viegut (2006), a team can examine existing student assessment tools and review important considerations for creating measurements for learning.

It is first important to appreciate just what a common formative assessment is, and what it isn't. First, determine whether the assessment tools you employ or are planning to use meet the following criteria.

CFAs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assess higher order thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Are frequent, short assessments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Require application rather than recall of knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Are assessments for learning rather than assessments of learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assess learning in a new context | <input type="checkbox"/> Are teacher-created, not standardized tests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide immediate feedback to the teacher and learner | <input type="checkbox"/> Contain multiple types of problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give results in time to make meaningful instructional adjustments | <input type="checkbox"/> Are collaboratively scored and analyzed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Actively motivate and involve students in the process | <input type="checkbox"/> Are based on power standards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diagnose needs of individuals and classes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescribe follow-up actions | |

Next, list all existing assessments currently in use and ask: Are they necessary? To what extent do they help diagnose student needs and inform future teaching and learning? These steps will almost certainly take more time than preparing student tests.

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Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) (Cont'd)

Using this table, list all important assessments given during a year (on a scale of 1 to 5).

Assessments	Rank Based on Impact on Instruction and Student Learning (1 = greatest impact)	Rank Based on Alignment to Power Standards (1 = most aligned)

Next, fill out the following table.

Topic:			
List power standards (ideally, 2-3)	List essential learnings—the big ideas you want students to know	Write test questions (ideally, 3-4 per standard)	Create rubrics and answer keys for power standards

Adapted from Ainsworth, L, & Viegut, D. (2006). *Common formative assessments: How to connect standards-based instruction and assessment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

