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## Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning: A Review

Ms. V S S Durga ([satya14sri@gmail.com](mailto:satya14sri@gmail.com)) and Mr. Ch. Balaji Kumar

Faculty Members of Sri Chaitanya Schools, Palakollu, A. P., India

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### Abstract

*This paper predominantly focuses on Formative and Summative Assessment for Learning (AFL) that is an approach and a continuing process to teaching and learning. Formative assessment encapsulates the process of learning in view of identifying gaps, misunderstanding, and developing understanding before summative assessments; whereas summative is undertaken to test the validity of a theory or determine the impact of an educational practice.*

### Introduction

In the field of education Assessment plays a key role in teaching-learning process and learning outcomes. Assessment is an integral part of instruction assisting student learning and improving educational standards. Assessment for learning (AFL) is an approach and an ongoing process to teaching and learning, providing feedback for the improvement of students' performance. Harris and Hodges (1995) defined assessment as: "process of gathering data to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning".

Assessment for Learning and quality feedback can and do promote increased learner progress (Jones, C. A. 2005). Assessment for learning supports practitioners and helps them focus on the learner and learning in individual classroom sessions. So, they often use appropriate approaches for assessment and evaluation of student learning and teaching practice. Assessment is used for different reasons.

Assessment as a tool for learning has a great impact on the students' learning and development into reflective practitioners (Sluijsmans, Dochy and Moerkerke, 1998). Most of the teachers prefer traditional assessment tools, including essays, exams, and oral presentations. In addition, they also try to incorporate self-assessment and peer-assessment activities for giving feedback, a socially constructed process, affected by the conditions in which it was produced, distributed, and received (Fairclough, 1995; Lea & Street, 1998).

Assessment Reform Group defines AFL as:

Assessment for learning (AFL) is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence.

An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs (ARG).

### Types of Assessments: Formative and Summative

There are generally two types of classroom assessments: formative assessment (assessment for learning and summative assessment (assessment of learning). Formative assessment encapsulates the process of learning in view of identifying gaps, misunderstanding, and developing understanding before summative assessments. Formative assessment may be conducted using a number of forms- asking informal questions, providing puzzles, quizzes, classroom exercises, etc. In Formative assessment students are permitted to practice and improve their skills, abilities and knowledge in an environment of tension-free and irrespective of grades or ranks.

Assessment for Learning and quality feedback as formative is used to refine goals and evolve strategies for achieving goals, while summative is undertaken to test the validity of a theory or determine the impact of an educational practice so that future efforts may be improved or modified (*Saettler*, 1990).

Many educators would like traditional way of assessment, such as essays, mid-term and final exams by using short, long and multiple-choice questions as well as oral presentations. There is a drawback in this approach which does not give the learner or the teacher any opportunity to get any feedback on the learning process, but it provides only a summative result. This lack of opportunity to apply new learning and receive formative feedback obstructs student's learning ability.

### Assessment for Learning (Formative)

The philosophy behind assessment for learning is that assessment and teaching should be integrated into a whole. The power of such an assessment doesn't come from intricate technology or from using a specific assessment instrument. It comes from recognizing how much learning is taking place in the common

tasks of the school day – and how much insight into student learning teachers can mine from this material (McNamee and Chen 2005, p. 76).

Assessment for learning is progressing evaluation that permits educators to observe students on an everyday basis and change their classroom instruction depending on the needs of the students to be successful. This type of assessment furnishes students timely with exact feedback so that they are able to modifications to their learning.

### **Assessment of Learning (Summative)**

Summative assessment refers when teachers summarize students' learning near the end of a teaching cycle, then, they may use, not have to, giving that information for feedback (formative assessment) to improve teaching and learning (Lam, 2013, as cited by Ridhwan,2017).

According to Brown (2004), summative assessment is used to measure and summarize what students have learned, and how well that students accomplished the learning objectives in a course. Summative assessment takes place after completion of learning giving information and feedback that sums up the teaching and learning process.

Assessment of learning is the preview in time that lets the educator, students and their parents realize how well the students have finished the learning targets and activities. It gives data about student accomplishment. While it gives helpful revealing data, it regularly has little impact on learning. The below Table-1 (cited by Ridhwan) shows the differences between formative and summative assessment in practice:

	<b>Formative (Assessment for Learning)</b>	<b>Summative (Assessment of Learning)</b>
Nature	Classroom observation	Student course experience survey
Assessor	Students, teachers	Committees, examiners, government
Stakes	Relatively low	High stakes
Purpose	Identify problems and weaknesses, provide feedback	Evaluate students' performance with numerical data
Frequency	During teaching	Once in a semester, or semester year

Participant	Students, especially who have lower performance in the class	All students
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**Table-1**

Formative assessment is used during the learning process, providing feedback on learning-in-process which is dialogue-based and ungraded; whereas Summative assessment reveals the final results at the end of the learning process, evaluating student learning against some standard or benchmark and awarding grades to the students.

Paul Black (1998) distinguished the two concepts of assessment terms taking cooking process for example. While a cook is making her soup, she occasionally tastes it to decide if it needs a bit more spices or ingredients. With each taste she is assessing her soup, and using that feedback to change or improve it - in other words, the cook is engaging in formative assessment. Once the soup is served to the customer, the customer tastes it and makes a final judgment about the quality of the soup – otherwise known as summative assessment. So, in this way, teachers commonly employ both types of formative - Assessment for Learning and summative -Assessment of Learning.

### **Self-assessment, Peer assessment and Student-Feedback**

In the classroom various activities are conducted for student learning like, Self-assessment in which students become realistic judges of their own performance and to improve their work; Peer assessment that provides a structured learning process for students to critique and provide feedback to each other on their work, in which students are empowered to take responsibility for and manage their own learning and they are also motivated to engage with course material more deeply. Assessing Prior Knowledge should be considered to allow an instructor to focus and adapt their teaching plan and helps a teacher create a bridge between students' previous knowledge and new material.

Self-assessment activities certainly enhance student-feedback. Peer assessment helps students develop lifelong skills in assessing and providing feedback to others, and also equips them with skills to self-assess and improve their own work.

Feedback offers students an experiential base for reflection. If learning from feedback is to be effective, programmes should be designed to include dedicated classroom time allocated for reflection on written feedback, thus providing an opportunity for feeding forward and for self-development for university

students, and placing reflection on feedback at the heart (Mutch, 2003). Teachers have to add reflections on the internal and external assessment moderation in their teaching practice and for a better understanding of delivering effective feedback to students.

## Conclusion

Assessment for learning (AFL) plays an important role in improving student learning as well as providing good educational standards. AFL is an integral part of instruction assisting student learning and improving educational standards. Assessment for learning (AFL) is an approach and an ongoing process to teaching and learning. AFL supports practitioners and helps them focus on the learner and learning. Assessment is used for different reasons.

AFL and quality feedback as formative is used to refine goals and evolve strategies for achieving goals, while summative is undertaken to test the validity of a theory or determine the impact of an educational practice. Self-assessment and Peer assessment activities certainly enhance student-feedback and help students develop lifelong skills. Thus, Formative assessment is used during the learning process, providing feedback on learning-in-process; whereas Summative assessment reveals the final results at the end of the learning process, evaluating student learning.

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