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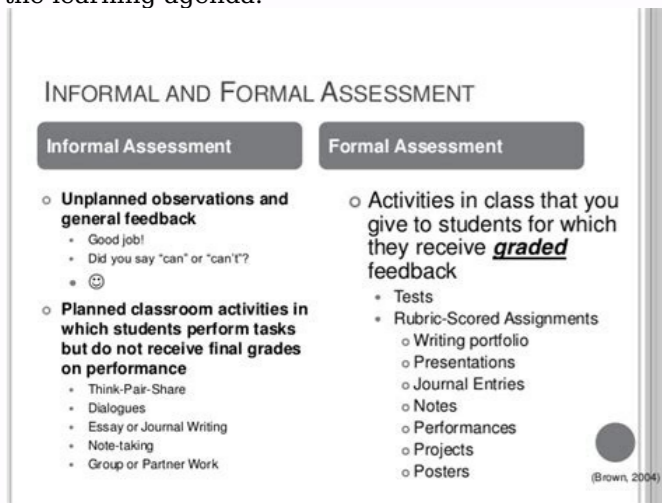

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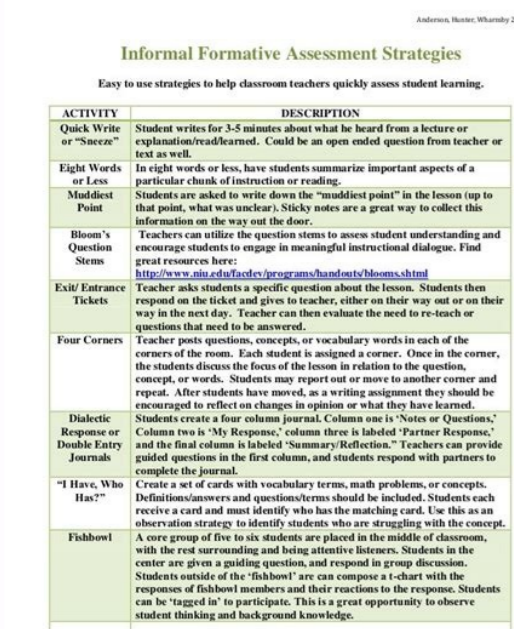
Examples of formal and informal assessment in education

What is an informal assessment in education. What are informal and formal assessments. What are some examples of formal and informal assessments.

How we assess what students have learned is one of the most hotly debated topics in education today. High-stakes testing determines whether students get into the college of their choice and helps school districts judge the effectiveness of their teaching staff. But all this focus on testing raises concerns that the urge to test is overwhelming what really matters: whether children are actually getting the education they need to thrive in an increasingly sophisticated, knowledge-driven economy. We asked Joseph McDonald, professor of teaching and learning at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, about the best ways to assess the success of teaching. McDonald notes that the best teachers are always assessing – that is, doing things deliberately to figure out whether they are getting through to their students – even when they are not handing out weekly quizzes and final exams. In this Q&A, McDonald talks about: The most effective assessment methods The advantages of doing summative and formative assessments Scheduling tests to avoid over- or under-testing Analyzing the data teachers gather from assessments Adapting teaching to diverse classrooms Let's go to Professor McDonald's answers: What are the most effective ways to assess a child's learning? When people think of assessment today, they often think first of standardized tests, the ones developed by testing companies and used by states, schools, and districts in standardized ways to measure what students have learned with respect to some criteria. These tests are an important part of U.S. education, and are likely to remain important for the foreseeable future. But these tests are also likely to change in format and prevalence. For example, they are likely to be increasingly administered online, and to be adaptive – that is, adapt the level of prompts to an estimated level of a particular test taker's understanding or skill level. This change will save time in both testing itself and in test prep. But the time saved won't be enough by itself to deal with widespread concerns today about overtesting. As the standardized testing opt-out movement has proved powerful in states such as New York and Illinois, some policymakers are ready to cut back on testing demands. Meanwhile, there are signs too that a new kind of standardized testing system may emerge – at least for teenagers and young adults. This system would be one to support – and provide legitimacy and validity for – a growing interest in digital badging, which use digital credentials to convey core academic knowledge and other competencies that can't be measured by traditional assessments. The individualized pursuit of badging is likely to emerge as an important design element in initiatives to reimagine 21st-century high schooling – so long as it can be undergirded with an authentic and valid system of assessment. For now, however, the most adventurous area of assessment is assessment in teaching. This interest in assessing teaching is encouraged by research on learning that reveals that learning is never simply additive. Learning nearly always involves unlearning too – or subtracting some previous understanding. So even as they teach toward the goal of new understanding, good teachers probe continuously for current understanding and emerging understanding. Many do so by probing through questioning, but this use of questioning is still rarer than it should be. As we've seen in the past, it's not enough to have good questions. As good as they are, teachers' own experiences as students, content expertise by itself is not enough to make a good teacher. But there are other ways besides questioning to assess knowledge while teaching. A simple technique is to pause in the middle of a lesson, and to ask everyone to write down or tweet or otherwise share briefly their understanding of [such and such] at this instant. A similar and favorite device of new teachers, because it's relatively easy to use, is called entry and exit tickets. Students have to "pay" their way into class by quickly writing down – or otherwise sharing – accounts of their current understanding of something on the day's learning agenda. This is the entry ticket, which has the advantage of previewing the learning agenda.



At the end of the class, the students pay their way out by accounting for changes in their understanding: "Take no more than one minute to write down your current understanding of [such and such], and don't sign your name." This is the exit ticket, which has the advantage of introducing metacognition into the learning process – something that research on learning suggests plays a big role in learning. After class, the teacher can quickly read and compare entry and exit tickets to estimate the range of cognitive change, and the relative need to reteach, review, or move on in the curriculum.



How do you define, interpret, and strike the right balance between formal and informal means of assessment? Instead of formal and informal, I prefer summative assessment – at the end of some unit of instruction, or some “gate” like the end of fourth grade, or the completion of the unit on gasses in the chemistry course – and formative assessment. The summative ones should be much less frequent in a student’s education than the formative ones. Students should always feel that a summative assessment is an appropriate capstone of some kind, and have time to prepare for it – and summon up metacognition for the purpose. The best summative assessments ask students to construct a response or a set of responses – rather than select right answers from a list as in multiple-choice exams. The best summative assessments are also ones that seem authentic – that is, true in some fashion to how the assessed knowledge is actually used in the world. It’s much better, for example, to ask students to write a movie review than to ask them to list the major requirements of a movie review. Formative assessments are really a kind of teaching. What students understand is not, after all, confined to how they cognitively enter and exit a particular instructional period. It evolves during the period, too, and nearly every one of a teacher’s moves can help it evolve in the right direction. This learning progression only happens, however, if the teacher teaches in ways that continually inquire about the evolution – not just en masse as in exit tickets (What do my students understand now?) but also in individualized ways (What does Jose understand at this moment? How about Mirabelle?). Good teachers are alert to signs of learning – Mirabelle’s look, Jose’s posture – and, of course, they literally ask individual students to explain their understanding. These are the kind of teachers, however, who do not ask questions to fish for right answers, and who do not discount wrong answers. They explore whatever answers they get in order to unearth misunderstandings – so that these can be cleared away, and so that scaffolds can be communally erected to reach higher levels of understanding across the class. And they teach students to ask questions, too, as a good way to put them in touch with each other’s emerging understandings. Sadly, however, too few teachers know how to do all of these methods well. The gap may be in part an ironic artifact of the fixation of much assessment on right answers. How often should assessments occur? Can you easily over- or undertest and/or assess, whether it’s formal or informal?

Informal vs. formal assessments

- | Informal | Formal |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preassessment Checking for understanding Questioning strategies Observation checklists Exit cards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3 question quiz at the end of the class OR write down what you learned today) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests/quizzes Authentic assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance assessments Portfolios Projects Lab report Word problem Essay |
- Assess students INDIVIDUALLY (no KWL charts)

How often?

Summative assessments should be infrequent, while formative ones should be highly frequent. Undertest? Yes. A college professor who lectures incessantly and assigns only one long paper is guilty of this. Overtesting is much more prevalent, however – at least P-12. Overtesting with standardized tests, including test prep, is particularly dangerous. Standardized tests use a relatively small sample of items drawn from a large domain. Overtesting can invalidate the sample by displacing attention to the larger domain. Educators may think, “This test doesn’t ask questions about Asian history so we’re not going to cover it.” Overtesting can also displace its practice in it, by encouraging fourth-graders to spend so much time reading short passages and answering multiple-choice questions about them – in preparation for a reading test – that they don’t read any actual books. What should teachers do with the data they get back from these assessments to modify their teaching approach to enhance student performance? I’m studying data use in schools right now, and one of the things my team and I are learning is the phrasing of your question is misguided when it comes to the heart of the process of using data in teaching. What I mean is that only a small proportion of the data that’s useful in teaching is data that teachers “get back.” This is standardized test data – whether from annual testing, or so-called benchmark testing (periodic tests that claim to predict outcomes on annual tests). But good teachers understand that the data they derive from teaching itself – from pressing for understanding, unearthing misunderstanding, and so on – is much richer. And so is data that they gather themselves in formative assessments of various kinds, and in collecting other purposeful samples of student work. And in the best schools, they examine together with their teaching colleagues. Indeed, what we’re learning from our study is that opportunities for look together at student work with colleagues, and regularly talk together about teaching and learning – is one of four key things that can make schools and data benefit their students’ learning. The other three things are: A good data management system, including tech-savvy colleagues, at the school level. A smart policy environment that doesn’t oversell the measurement error inherent in standardized tests. And, finally, a classroom culture that makes it possible to use data in this way. If you have it in a diverse, inclusive classroom, how do you adapt and/or tailor assessment methods to address differing needs and ways of learning? Lots of formative assessment helps, because it makes diverse levels of understanding and skill development discernible and thus more addressable. It helps a lot, too, to build a classroom culture that acknowledges diversity as a learning asset for the whole group, and that encourages and creates opportunities for all students to work on “hard stuff” with the understanding that one person’s hard is nearly always another person’s easy – but any group of humans is always “smarter” as a whole than any of its parts. And it helps to create summative assessments that to the furthest extent possible permit a range of ways to express one’s understanding of what they cover. Finally, it helps to incorporate a range of technology supports into teaching, and formative and summative assessment, too – for example, smartphones and apps that can turn text into sound and vice versa, post questions that others can read and respond to, and respond in an instant to teacher inquiries about what students know – even graph the results. And all students should have access to such tools – not just students whose Individualized Education Plans say they should. Most classrooms are far more diverse and inclusive than most people imagine. As learning progresses, teachers use subtle methods to track how much students know and to discover any challenges learners have with the subject. These subtle methods are best described as informal assessments and make up an essential part of course evaluation. Unlike formal evaluation, informal assessment methods do not use standard grading criteria, hence, they are described as low-stake. Here, the teacher uses straw polls, exit surveys, and flashcards to determine how much students know. Use this guide to learn about different informal assessment methods and how to create online educational assessments with Formplus What is an Informal Assessment? An informal assessment is spontaneous. It is a method of evaluation where the instructor tests participants’ knowledge using no standard criteria or rubric. This means that there is no spelled-out evaluation guide. Rather, the instructor simply asks open-ended questions and observes students’ performances to determine how much they know. If informal assessments are not concerned with grading students, then what are they about? It’s simple—feedback. From these evaluations help the instructor make ongoing adjustments to create better learning experiences for participants. Simultaneously, teachers depend on these pieces of information to plan out standardized testing, aka formal assessments. For example, during an English class, the teacher notices that students are struggling with understanding the author’s intent during the reading assignment. The teacher can use this information to create a quiz to check students’ understanding of the author’s intent. Once the teacher knows that the students are struggling with understanding the author’s intent, they can know about a subject. Quizzes or tests can happen at any point in the lesson, including before kick-off and after the instructor covers substantial knowledge grounds. Often, teachers use quizzes to improve class participation. A standard method is to split students into groups and ask them questions in turns. The group with the highest score at the end wins the quiz and earns bragging rights plus some other reward. So how do you design classroom quizzes? Most times, it’s best to ask close-ended questions that students can respond to fast. There are several ways to do this—you can ask multiple-choice questions with radio options or checkboxes or choose dichotomous questions. It’s not uncommon for people to use quizzes and tests interchangeably, although they are pretty different. Unlike a quiz, tests are a more standardized assessment method—you can think of them as mini exams. The instructor evaluates test papers using a rubric, and these scores are part of the final grading. Examples of Quiz Questions 1. How many continents are in the world?

Formal	Informal
Full sentences ✓	Short sentences ✓
Correct grammar and vocabulary ✓	Lack formal grammar and vocabulary ✓
No contractions e.g. I would... ✓	Contractions e.g. I'd... ✓
No idioms ✓	Idioms e.g. On point (good) ✓
Passive voice ✓	Active voice ✓
e.g. The application form is complete. ✓	e.g. I completed the application form. ✓
No phrasal verbs e.g. To investigate ✓	Phrasal verbs e.g. Look into ✓
No abbreviations e.g. As soon as possible ✓	Abbreviations e.g. ASAP ✓
No exclamation marks ✓	Exclamation marks ✓
No Imperatives ✓	Imperatives (start with a verb) ✓
e.g. You may complete the form. ✓	e.g. Complete the form. ✓

2. Australia and Africa are examples of planets. Advantages of Using Quizzes in Classroom Assessment. Because quizzes are fun and fast, students are more excited to take part in this process. It exposes students to new subject areas. Disadvantages of Using Quizzes in Classroom Assessment Quizzes are fast-paced and do not give room for detailed feedback. It can demotivate students easily. Projects A school project is a creative task that requires students to use their knowledge from the classroom and engagement with the real world in answering complex questions. For example, students can be asked to conduct a mini-survey at home and present their findings to others. Depending on the project's structure, the teacher can assign group tasks or ask each individual to engage with the project independently. For example, in a drama class, students may have to work with others to produce a mini-play. School projects allow students to develop deep knowledge on the subject and relevant skills like critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. Examples of School Projects Ask students to write a sample letter to the President, inviting him for their presentation. Ask students to grow a plant at home and bring it to school. As part of civic education, you can ask students to do some charity work for the elderly in their community and share their experiences in writing. Group Projects Group projects encourage students to collaborate on the completion of a task. Each student contributes his or her own ideas and efforts towards achieving the common goal. School projects may require students to have access to the resources needed for the project. Portfolio As learning progresses, the instructor may require students to build up a portfolio. This is essentially a "snapshot" of each student's knowledge and provides evidence of their experiences, strengths, and weaknesses. The instructor asks students to present their portfolios at different points until the learning period for informal assessments. This way, the instructor can give real-time feedback to help individuals improve their knowledge before a formal evaluation. As learners create their portfolios and improve them over time, they develop self-awareness, goal-setting, and decision-making skills to help them make the right decisions. Examples of Student Portfolios for Informal Assessments A student can build a portfolio to show the process of a creative project like a novel. Students can create a swipe file of their best artworks and pieces. Pros of Using Portfolios for Informal Assessment It helps the instructor to identify any gaps in the student's knowledge and address them on time. It promotes positive feedback and encourages teacher-student communication. Disadvantages of Using Portfolios for Informal Assessment It is time-consuming, especially when you're dealing with a large class. It is subject to bias. Observation Observation is one of the most common methods of informal assessment. As the name suggests, observation involves watching a person typically interact with a particular method. Here, the instructor subtly observes student interactions with the learning material to gain insight into how well they understand any challenges they face. Simultaneously, the instructor also looks out for character traits like timidity, charisma, and friendliness. The most important aspect of observation is keeping records of changes over a period. This allows the instructor to compare a student's performance over the learning period and determine how much progress they have made. Advantages of Observation Observation is one of the simplest methods of assessing students. It doesn't require too many resources from the instructors or students.

Definition of Informal Assessment

Remember, for the 14-15 School Year, we will all be grading utilizing the 90% Formal Assessment /10% Informal Assessment Split

Provides useful information that can help teachers to identify the individual strengths and weakness of each student – and most importantly, guide the next steps in instruction.

How to plan future instruction so that student needs are met

How students should be grouped for instruction so that each

If instruction is being delivered at the right pace

Which students need individual support



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It provides reliable data for assessment. Disadvantages of Observation Students can adjust their behaviors when they know the instructor is watching. This alters the quality of data from observation.

Observation is subjective and easily affected by the personal bias of the instructor.

Oral Presentation Oral presentations take different forms. For example, the teacher can organize an impromptu presentation on a specific subject or tell the students to prepare ahead of time. Sometimes, the instructor merges oral presentations with written assignments. It's not uncommon for instructors to request extemporaneous speeches from students. In these situations, the instructor might include prompts like: "the most important thing I learned is . . . What I did not like about the class was . . ." In these situations, the student only needs to complete the sentences with their ideas. Oral presentations can also happen within groups like debates. Advantages of Oral Presentations During oral presentations, teachers can provide immediate feedback to every student. The rest of the class also benefit from these feedback sessions. It is one of the most effective methods of assessing students. Oral presentations are flexible. You can easily adjust them to suit different contexts.

Disadvantages of Oral Presentations If you are dealing with a large class, oral presentations time-consuming. Students and teachers need to invest lots of resources to organize oral presentations successfully. How to Use Formplus for Online Assessments Formplus allows you to create quizzes, polls, and questionnaires for informal assessments. With the different field options, you can collect data in multiple formats from your students. Here's a simple way to create an informal assessment questionnaire: 1. Sign up for a free Formplus account here if you don't have one. Step 2: Click on the "create new form" button on the dashboard to access the form builder. Step 3: On the left side of the builder, you'd find a section with multiple field options, including rating scales, long question fields, and advanced fields. To add any of these fields to your form, simply click or drag and drop them into the work area. Step 4: Each field has a pencil icon for editing. When you click on this icon, you can add questions or carry out other functions like making the field read-only or compulsory. Step 5: Save all changes to access the form customization section. Here, you have access to different functions to help you change the look and feel of your form. You can choose new themes or create custom themes from scratch. Step 6: Copy the form link and share it with respondents. If you want more sharing options, go to the form share section and try your hands on a few of them. For example, you can embed the form link on your website or share it as a post on social media with beautiful images. Benefits/When to Use Informal Assessment Informal assessment methods help the instructor monitor the learner's progress throughout the learning period—these different methods build up to the final formal assessment at the end of the class or session. Let's look at some other benefits of informal assessments. 1.

It presents a more accurate picture of a learner's abilities: You've probably heard that examination isn't the actual test of knowledge. Different occurrences can throw a student off balance and ruin their performance during a final evaluation. There are many situations where A-list individuals end up with subpar performances and results. With informal assessments, instructors can observe students' progress as they go from one stage to the next. This provides a holistic background for grading knowledge instead of one-off tests. 2. It takes place in the student's natural learning environment: Since informal assessments happen in the students' natural learning environment, they can engage with different tasks freely. This provides a realistic presentation of their abilities. A standardized test or a traditional evaluation tool may not accurately picture the child's knowledge on the flip side. Exams come with a lot of anxiety, and the student might feel scared, anxious, or uncomfortable during a formal assessment, thus skewing the results. 3.

Unlike formal assessment, informal assessments require less planning and resources to pull off. The instructor can simply call students up for an impromptu presentation without investing any monetary resources.

4. It sets the stage for immediate and consistent feedback. Since there's no grading involved, students can improve and apply their knowledge multiple times. 5. For the instructor, informal assessments like formative evaluation provide meaningful data that informs specific adjustments to their teaching methods.

Instead of guesswork, teachers identify the particular challenges students face and adjust their teaching methods to address them.

Disadvantages of Informal Assessment Since there are no formal criteria for evaluation, it can be challenging to measure how much progress a student has made over time. Informal assessments are spontaneous, which puts a lot of pressure on both students and teachers. For example, a student who has stage fright might suffer a panic attack when asked to make an impromptu presentation. Informal assessments are unpredictable, so these results cannot be used as a standard grading system. Read More: Formal vs Informal Assessment: 15 Key Differences & Similarities Conclusion The goal of informal assessment is to discover the peculiar learning needs of individual students, and then, create strategies to plug these gaps. Informal assessment methods thrive on two-way feedback—the students get feedback on their performance while teachers get feedback on their instructional methods and the learning curriculum. Trying out different informal evaluation methods is the best way to discover what works for your class. You could start with exit surveys and move on to flashcards or polls. Using multiple assessment methods would help you gather data in different formats to improve the learning process.