

The best value in formative assessment essay sample



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The authors clarify that the difference between summative and formative assessment lies in how and when the assessment results are used, and who is going to use them. Summative assessment – assessment of learning – typically documents and measures the success of the instruction/learning process after it is finished. Common examples are state and district assessments, benchmark assessments, and teacher developed assessments (if they only count as a grade). As such, these summative assessments provide, at best, minimal information useful to teachers and students for improving instruction and learning. Formative assessment – assessment of learning – is ongoing and provides feedback during the instruction/learning process. As such, formative assessment has immediate value for teachers and students to improve real-time instruction and learning. The central feature of formative assessment is timely, understandable, descriptive feedback relative to learning goals. Teachers are able to adjust instruction quickly for the students' benefit, while the students are able to adjust and improve their own learning.

The authors provide a model of how to apply the formative assessment method – of particular interest to me as a returning classroom teacher. It is a common sense approach I can use to become an assessment-literate teacher who guides her students toward self-assessment, adjustment and improvement. The formative assessment method can help me become a more culturally sensitive teacher and help my students develop a growth mind-set.