


**Formative Assessment:
Observing teachers and English
Language Learners to support
them contingently**

Aída Walqui
Director, Teacher Professional
Development Program
awalqui@wested.org



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*Confederation of Oregon School
Administrators Conference*

Eugene, August 8, 2014

*Aída Walqui
Director, Teacher Professional
Development Program
awalqui@wested.org*

WestEd
WestEd.org

**The New Standards provide educators with
an opportunity to rethink the way in which
the education of ELLs has been framed**

FROM:

Language as form
Learning as individual
Teachers as imparters of
knowledge
Development as linear
Learners as passive
vessels
Language, literacies, and
disciplinary knowledge as
separate

TO:

Language as action
Learning as social
Teachers as creators of
the conditions for learning
Development spiraling
Learners in control of their
learning: agency
Weaving of disciplinary
concepts, academic skills,
and language in learning

Assessment is usually viewed as:

- Something apart from regular teaching, a tool
- Serving primarily the purpose of providing grades or informing parents
- Traditional summative testing, a notion born in teacher education and propagated through professional development



"Tests are not helpful because it doesn't tell you what you missed and why. It's more beneficial if you know what you did wrong."

"I'm not able to tell you what we are learning."

"If you don't pass it, you don't know what you are supposed to."

"Can't be truthful with your teachers that their teaching is boring because you want to be nice."

What Do Students Say?

"There is a huge difference between knowing you made a mistake and why you made a mistake and knowing how to fix it that's the thing with final tests. You take a final and you're done."

"Lots of times I'm confused."

"All comes down to one day and it determines if you pass or fail."

"Tests are not even related to what was taught."

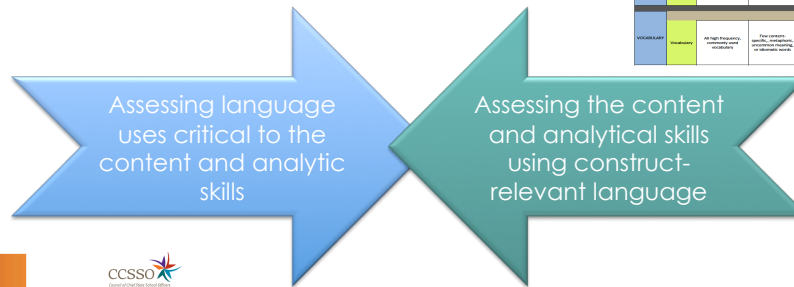
"A test is not a great way to be judged."

Anderson, 2014



The critical nexus for assessment

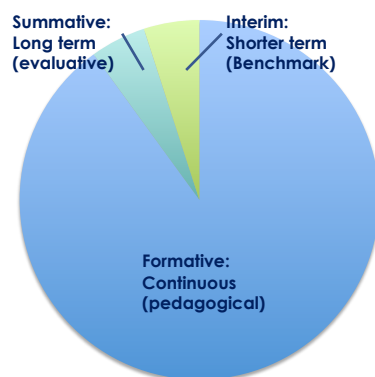
Language Complexity Barometer		Progress			
TEXT COMPLEXITY	Language Complexity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Language Complexity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
LANGUAGE COMPLEXITY	Language Complexity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Language Complexity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
VOCABULARY	Language Complexity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Language Complexity	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4



Framework for English Language Proficiency Development Standards corresponding to the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards



Comprehensive assessment systems clearly define purposes of each component



- **Formative:** Directly informs, supports, enhances teacher pedagogy, student learning
- **Interim/benchmark:** Predicts outcomes, “dipsticks” units of study
- **Summative:** Drives program review, external accountability

Abedi & Linquanti (2012)



Formative Assessment

- Primary objective: to maximize teacher's information uptake to foster translation of that information into short term pedagogical practice.
- The goal: to bring about student understanding and conceptual change by providing immediate feedback to students and teachers focused on reducing the gap between the student's current level of understanding and the place where it ultimately should be.
- Also: to enhance students' awareness of their ongoing learning, of their learning goals, and to "hand over" to them control of their own learning.



Formative Assessment is not a new concept

"Assessment is not an add-on to teaching and learning; it is integral to learning. Black and Wiliam (1998a) presented rather convincing evidence that formative assessment causes improvement in student learning. Yet they (1998b) also noted that such practice is rarely found in teaching."

Shavelson,(2006). *On The Integration Of Formative Assessment In Teaching And Learning with Implications for Teacher Education*. In F. Oser, F. Achtenhagen, & U. Renold (Eds.), *Competence-oriented teacher training: Old research demands and new pathways* (pp. 63–78). Utrecht, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.



EXCERPT FROM
THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN*

notes

May (wrote) in an autobiography she was assigned in her eighth-grade Language Arts class at Merced's Hoover Junior High School:

On our way to Thailand was something my parent will never forget. It was one of the scariest time of my life, and maybe my parents. We had to walked by feet. Some of family, however, leave their kids behind, kill, or beat them. For example, one of the relative has tried to kill one of his kid, but luckily he didn't died. And manage to come along with the group. Today, he's in America carrying a scar on his forehead.

My parents had to carried me and two of my younger sisters, True and Yer. My mom could only carried me, and my dad could only my sister. True with many other things which they have to carry such as, rices (food), clothing, and blankets for overnight. My parents pay one of the relative to carry Yer. One of my sister who died in Thailand was so tire of walking saying that she can't go on any longer. But she dragged along and made it to Thailand.

There was gun shot going on and soldier were close to every where. If there was a gun shot, we were to look for a place to hide. On our trip to Thailand, there were many gun shots and instead of looking for a place to hide, my parents would dragged our hands or put us on their back and run for their lifes. When it gets too heavy, my parents would tossed some of their stuff away. Some of the things they had throw away are valuable to them, but our lives were more important to them than the stuffs.

"You have had an exciting life!" wrote her teacher at the end of the essay. "Please watch verbs in the past tense."

*Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You And You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1997. Pages 154-155.



Formative Assessment supports

- 1) Teacher agency
- 2) Evidence –based, highly responsive pedagogy to students' immediate needs
- 3) Student metacognitive strategies
- 4) Student ownership of learning



We will briefly focus on the immense expertise educators need to engage in formative assessment with ELLs

- We will see how formative assessment is (or is not) an integral part of teaching, guiding it, creating teacher responsiveness, and fostering student growth and ownership of the learning process.
- We will discuss and reflect on one problematic and a second example of what a teacher does to make formative assessment feed into her next teaching moves.



Features of formative assessment

- Promotes student learning
- Changes the roles of teachers and students by placing students at the center of teaching and learning
- Uses learning progressions (individual, not universal) to anchor learning goals and monitor learning
- Results in meaningful feedback and adjustments to improve learning instruction for students
- Enables students to become self-regulated and autonomous learners



A good example of formative assessment as part of pedagogy

Teacher: Tanya Warren
School: International Newcomer Academy,
Fort Worth, TX
Students: In the US and in English for six weeks
Discipline: Science

NOTE: *In Spanish 'why' and 'because' are expressed by the same word: Por qué*



Meaningful assessment for ELs under new standards....

- Recognizes role of language in assessing academic performance using English
- Leverages appropriately all components of a comprehensive assessment system
- Identifies & minimizes *construct-irrelevant* language in large-scale assessment
- Utilizes effective & valid accommodations to strengthen signal to educators



Formative assessment is *not* a tool or event



- A *process* teachers *and* students engage in to move learning forward
- Grounded in learning goals, structured tasks, questioning, instructional conversation, contingency

(Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2013; Heritage, 2013)



SIX STARS IN THE WORLD CUP, BRAZIL, 2014

	Definition and Purpose	Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Definition and Purpose	Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Definition and Purpose
Formative Assessments	Formative assessment is assessment for learning: an ongoing process of observing and evaluating student learning that takes place <i>during teaching</i> . These processes include 1) gauging students' emerging understanding, skills, and language; 2) noticing what is in the cusp of being understood or developed; 3) noticing what may have been misconstrued, 4) making decisions as to where the richest and most promising developmental moment will be to provide appropriate scaffolding that will drive this development forward; 5) providing actionable feedback for the student; 6) engaging the student in becoming increasingly aware of their own development and how to support it, and 7) using the information to inform current and future instruction.	<p>The SBAC is still developing formal materials that state their definition of formative assessment, but their master work plan refers to the process as "a full cycle of formative assessment practices—identifying learning targets, using tools/strategies to gather evidence of student understanding, analyzing evidence, providing feedback, making adjustments, and helping students reassess, in a recursive process."</p> <p>The SBAC is also in the process of developing a digital library with professional development materials regarding "formative assessment practices and strategies." These will include: "scoring rubrics for performance tasks" and "evidence-gathering tools and techniques."</p>	<p>PARCC is also in the process of developing formative assessment "tools," the purpose of which "is to provide educators with instructionally useful information related to how students demonstrate CCSS proficiencies...at an appropriate level of detail and specificity to supplement a teacher's current understanding of student proficiency."</p> <p>They describe the tools as "curriculum-embedded" to "gather information about student learning in a manner that seeks to be 'invisible' to the student."</p> <p>These tools will "provide teachers with information they can use to adjust instruction as appropriate."</p>



	Definition and Purpose	Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Definition and Purpose	Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Definition and Purpose
Interim Assessments	Interim Assessments (also known as <i>benchmark assessments</i>) are normally given periodically at set intervals to determine how students perform after a unit of instruction to 1) inform next unit of instruction	SBAC defines interim assessments as those that “provide educators with actionable information about student progress throughout the year.” SBAC has created their own optional interim assessments to “help teachers, students, and parents understand whether students are on track, and identify strengths and limitations in relation to the Common Core State Standards” and “support the development of state end-of-course tests.”	PARCC labels its optional interim assessments “Mid-Year Assessments.” These contain both constructed response and multiple choice items “designed to inform curriculum, instruction and professional development.” The assessments “focus on difficult-to-assess standards, including writing effectively when analyzing texts in ELA/Literacy and applications/modeling and reasoning in mathematics.”
Summative Assessments	Summative assessments are assessments <i>of</i> learning. They are used to evaluate learning at the end of a specified period of instruction (a unit, a semester, a year). They do not provide information for informing current teaching practices, because the knowledge gained about student progress is retrospective.	SBAC’s summative assessment, which is administered during the last 12 weeks of the school year, is used to “1) Accurately describe both student achievement and growth of student learning as part of program evaluation and school, district, and state accountability systems; and 2) Provide valid, reliable, and fair measures of students’ progress toward, and attainment of the knowledge and skills required to be college- and career-ready.”	PARCC summative assessments are designed “to provide educators with timely feedback to inform instruction and provide multiple measures of student achievement across the school year.” PARCC states have endorsed a grade-based design in English language arts/literacy (ELA/literacy) and both a course-based and integrated design in mathematics. A performance based assessment is administered after 75% of the school year has passed, while the End-of-Year Assessment (EOY) is administered after approximately 90% of the school year.



What does Formative assessment look like?



Teachers...

- ✓gather and respond to specific evidence that is proximal to learning occurring in the “construction zone”
- ✓probe thinking, uncover misconceptions and insights, observe developing language use

Students...

- ✓*receive & use feedback* that guides or draws them forward in learning, extends thinking using language
- ✓engage in *self/peer-assessment* and *reflection* in ways that build metacognitive & metalinguistic awareness, confidence and autonomy

(Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2013; Heritage, 2013)



Thank you

