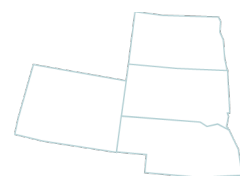# Module 1
Overview of Formative Assessment

A Formative Assessment Program Created by
The Assessment & Accountability Comprehensive Center
and The North Central Comprehensive Center at McREL

Facilitator's Guide

Assessment and Accountability
Comprehensive Center
AACC ● A WestEd and CRESST partnership

North Central
Comprehensive Center
at
McREL

Module 1
Overview of Formative Assessment

Facilitator's Guide

Table of Contents

Overview of Module 1

This module is the first in a series of seven modules in the Formative Assessment Program. Participants will be introduced to formative assessment as a process and explore key components/attributes of formative assessment. Participants will have the opportunity to read relevant articles, engage in processing activities to deepen their understandings, and consolidate their learning by applying new ideas and understandings about formative assessment to their own contexts.

Module 1 Learning Goals

1. Understand the purpose and function of Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs).
2. Understand that formative assessment is effective in moving students' learning forward.
3. Understand the purpose of formative assessment in an assessment system.
4. Understand that formative assessment is a process.
5. Understand that a collaborative classroom culture is necessary for formative assessment.

Module 1 Success Criteria

Participants can:

1. Describe the purpose of TLCs and how they function
2. Explain how formative assessment moves students' learning forward
3. Explain how formative assessment fits in an assessment system
4. Describe the process of formative assessment
5. Describe the characteristics of a collaborative classroom culture

Main Message for Module 1

Module 1 is intended to provide participants with an introduction to the important aspects of formative assessment, and set the groundwork for ongoing work in formative assessment. Formative assessment is a powerful process that can lead to increases in student learning. During effective formative assessment, teachers make adjustments to teaching and learning in response to assessment evidence. Students receive targeted and specific feedback about their learning and what they can do to improve. For formative assessment to be effective, active student participation in the learning and assessment process, through self- and peer-assessment, is essential. Module 1 includes information on Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) as support for formative assessment implementation.

At a Glance

Presenting the Workshop

Check When Complete	Lessons	Materials and Handouts
	Introduction to Module 1	PPT Introduction 1
	Lesson 1 **Teacher Learning Communities** **60 – 75 minutes**	
	Lesson 1.1	PPT 1.1
	Your Turn: *Benefits of TLCs* (Dylan Wiliam Video)	Discussion questions
	Your Turn: Teacher Learning Communities, Myths and Misconceptions	Handout 1.1.1
	Your Turn: Teacher Learning Communities, Getting Started	Handout 1.1.2
	Try It Out: Setting up a TLC Meeting	PPT slide directions
	Lesson 2 **Formative Assessment in an Assessment System** **60 – 95 minutes**	
	Lesson 1.2	PPT 1.2
	Your Turn: Assessment Systems	Handout 1.2.1
	Try It Out: Triad Structure Protocol: Short-Cycle Assessment Discussion	Handout 1.2.2
	Lesson 3 **Introduction to the Process of Formative Assessment** **60 – 75 minutes**	
	Lesson 1.3	PPT 1.3
	Turn & Talk: What is Formative Assessment?	Discussion
	Turn & Talk: Formative Assessment Definitions	Handout 1.3.1
	The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	Handout 1.3.2
	Consolidate Your Learning: ZPD and the "Gap"	Discussion
	Try It Out: ZPD and the "Gap"	TLC Discussion
	Lesson 4	

	Formative Assessment in Action 75 – 90 minutes	
	Lesson 1.4	PPT 1.4
	The Process of Formative Assessment	Handout 1.4.1
	Turn & Talk: Formative Assessment Process: Definition of Terms	Handout 1.4.2
	Consolidate Your Learning: Discussion Web for Attributes of Formative Assessment, *Attributes of Formative Assessment* (Article)	Handout 1.4.3 Link to article on PPT
	Try It Out: Formative Assessment in Your Classroom	Handout 1.4.4
	Lesson 5 **Classroom Culture** **60 – 75 minutes**	
	Lesson 1.5	PPT 1.5
	The Need for Collaborative Classrooms (*Journey to Excellence* Video)	Handout 1.5.1 Link to video on PPT
	Your Turn: Mind-Sets Graphic Organizer, *Mindsets and Equitable Education* (Article)	Handout 1.5.2 Link to article on PPT
	Your Turn: Partner Discussion	Discussion questions on PPT
	Try It Out: Formative Assessment Climate Characteristics	Handout 1.5.3
	Approximate Total Time: 6 hours	

Background Information

In their landmark synthesis of research findings in 1998, Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam proposed that effective formative assessment requires that teachers make adjustments to teaching and learning in response to assessment evidence;[1] students receive feedback about their learning with advice on what they can do to improve; and students participate in the process through self-assessment. They concluded that the student learning gains triggered by formative assessment were among the largest ever reported for educational interventions, with the largest gains being realized by low achievers (1998b).

The purpose of formative assessment is to *enable* learning, not simply to measure what has been learned at the end of a period of instruction or which standards have been met at the end of the school year. That is the role of summative assessment, which is used to "determine whether a student has attained a certain level of competency after completing a particular phase of education, whether it be a classroom unit or 12 years of schooling" (NRC, 2001, p. 38).

Formative assessment is internal to the classroom and is solely within the locus of control of teachers. They make the decisions about how and when they will collect and use evidence of learning. Formative assessment should not be confused with interim or benchmark assessments. These are typically external to the classroom and are standardized in terms of content and timing of administration. They serve a different purpose than the formative assessment process that is integrated into everyday instruction and learning.

The enabling role of formative assessment is well summarized by Richard Durán, who cautions that formative assessment should be reserved "to enable learning and its ongoing social support as classroom cultural practice and not just to provide close-in snapshots of whether students have learned what was targeted for learning" (Durán, 2010, p. 3).

The quality of the classroom climate plays an essential role in enabling learning. Students need to feel that the classroom is a place where they belong and that their teacher and their peers are there to help them learn. The teacher must set, explicitly teach, and model classroom expectations that reflect positive social behavior, non-threatening interactions, and collaborative routines.

Participants also need to understand that formative assessment is a continuous process that happens while instruction and learning is underway. It is not a single event, but rather an ongoing cycle of evidence collection and feedback to keep learning moving forward. *It is essential for participants to understand that formative assessment is not a single test. Rather, it is a process that involves teachers <u>and</u> their students using feedback to further learning <u>while</u> the learning is developing.*

From a learning theory perspective, formative assessment helps teachers to work in and through the student's zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the area in which Vygotsky hypothesized

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[1]Black & Wiliam (1998a, 1998b) refer to assessment in the context of formative assessment as all the activities undertaken by teachers and by the students through self-assessment that provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.

learning takes place (1978). Through formative assessment, teachers keep a close eye on how learning is developing, minute by minute, day- by day, so they can set goals and make learning adjustments to keep learning aims consistently within a student's reach and can support the student in meeting expected goals. During the process of formative assessment, students also keep an eye on their learning by receiving feedback and through self-assessment. Teachers use formative assessment evidence to provide students feedback that helps them move forward, and peers are involved in providing constructive feedback to their classmates. Students learn how to check on their own learning so that they are aware of when they are not meeting learning goals and need assistance to make progress.

It is essential for participants to understand the need for continuous evidence gathering and interpretation so that teachers and students are constantly working in the ZPD. If evidence is not continuously gathered during the course of instruction, teachers risk working outside the student's ZPD. This can result in learning being too easy or too hard. If the time between when learning is occurring and assessment takes place is too long, then teachers also risk learning becoming focused on remediation—fixing the problems too late in the day.

Teacher Learning Communities

Implementing formative assessment often means "changing the way a teacher thinks about their teaching and their view of their role as a teacher" (Black et al., 2003, p. 80). In many instances, formative assessment practice requires teachers to think differently about the relationship between instruction and assessment, to regard feedback as key to promoting learning, and to view students as partners in the learning process. Such shifts in practice take time, commitment, and patience on the part of both teachers and administrators (Wylie & Heritage, 2010).

One effective way to support teachers in their implementation of formative assessment is through school-based teacher learning communities (TLCs), especially if they are structured to enable teachers to engage in ongoing cycles of learn-practice-reflect-revise (Wiliam & Thompson, 2006). TLCs provide teachers with opportunities to come together to deepen their understanding about formative assessment, to share and reflect on what they have been trying out in their classrooms, get feedback from their peers, and make plans for what they will do next. When teachers make their individual plans in a TLC, they are accountable to their peers for ensuring that those plans are implemented (Wylie, Lyon & Mavronikolas, 2008).

It is essential that the members of the TLC meet on a regular basis. When meetings are intermittent and infrequent, it is difficult to sustain momentum and commitment (Lyon, Cleland, & Gannon, 2008).

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Getting Ready to Be a Facilitator

Overview

In the *Facilitator's Guide* for each module, you will find advice and recommendations for preparing and facilitating the module lessons in two sections: "Essential Planning and Set Up," and "Implementation, Intersession and Feedback Advice." The "Essential Planning and Set Up" section provides an overview of your responsibilities before, during, and after a meeting. This section also includes formative assessment strategies that you should model and use with participants during the meetings. The next section, "Implementation, Intersession and Feedback Advice," presents considerations for grouping participants, lesson-specific advice for highlighting main ideas and anticipating potential confusions, and suggestions for intersession activities. The current section, "Getting Ready to Be a Facilitator," only appears in Module 1. This section outlines key decisions that you will need to make concerning your role as a facilitator, which will be foundational to how you facilitate all of the modules.

What Does a Facilitator Do?

As a facilitator of the formative assessment modules, your main role is to structure an environment in which all participants can engage with the lesson content within a teacher learning community (TLC). You will need to carefully review the module content, activities, and materials in order to plan for the meeting. However, you are not expected to be the content expert or coach with regard to the information presented in each module during a meeting. Each participant will bring different levels of background knowledge and experience related to formative assessment. The TLC provides a structure for participants to leverage the group's collective knowledge as they encounter new information about formative assessment, make plans for classroom implementation, and share and reflect on progress with colleagues. As the following two sections ("Essential Planning and Set Up" and "Implementation, Intersession and Feedback Advice") describe, the facilitator role is critical in supporting this process. We have included the table below to further define the role of the facilitator.

	Facilitator	Presenter/Coach
Knowledge/ Experience	Is familiar with the content and has some relevant experience	Is a content expert
Main Role	Engages participants in lessons and keeps group on schedule	Teaches participants about module content
Main Responsibilities	Structures environment for participants to engage with content (e.g., schedules meeting and organizes logistics, encourages all participants to take part in activities and discussion, monitors if any participants are not engaged, keeps discussion focused on the agenda and meeting purpose)	Presents content

Setting (and Maintaining) Working Norms

As you prepare for the first meeting, you need to consider who will be attending, and the degree to which they may have collaborated in the past. For example, will there be a large number of new teachers? Or, will the majority of the participants be veteran educators who have worked together for many years? In the former situation, you will need to think of how you will welcome the new colleagues into the group. How will you make them feel comfortable participating? In the latter situation, the group may be used to working together to plan field trips or share materials, but they may not be used to sharing their own practice – and offering feedback on another colleague's classroom practice. In both situations, it will be essential that you help the participants establish strong working norms or ground rules, and that you remind participants of, and revisit, these norms.

During the first meeting, you will want to set ground rules or working norms with participants. You might want to share a couple of common working norms as examples (e.g., "respect perspectives of others," "allow all voices to be heard"). However, we suggest that you also ask participants to offer suggestions. You will want to write the list of working norms on chart paper and post it in the room so that everyone can see the list. If you notice that participants are not following the working norms, then it is important to remind participants of the agreed upon norms. You may decide to renegotiate and add to the norms as a group over time. There are some sample working norms in the "Essential Planning and Set Up" section. In addition to these sample norms on page 13, you may want to consider asking participants to suggest norms related to confidentiality, and use of technology (e.g., texting and reading email) during meetings.

Finally, be sure to ask participants for feedback on the meeting structure and process at the conclusion of the meeting. What did participants like about how you structured this meeting? What did they not like about the meeting structure? Do they have comments or suggestions regarding the participation norms? If participants offer critiques, be sure to ask whether they have a suggestion for the next meeting. Some participants may be hesitant to offer this feedback, so you might consider asking them to write the comments and suggestions on paper that you collect.

Keeping a Time Schedule

The "Essential Planning and Set Up" section identifies that one of your responsibilities during a meeting is to keep to a time schedule. It is important that you allow sufficient time for each lesson and the accompanying activities. At times, keeping to the time schedule might mean that you will have to interrupt a productive discussion. This task is difficult, especially when participants are engaged and eager to continue talking about a certain topic. We suggest that you give participants a 5-10 minute warning before you are going to transition the group to another task. For topics that generate a great deal of conversation, you might consider asking participants to make a plan to continue the conversation during their next TLC meeting.

If you find that a participant's conversation and comments are distracting from the main meeting agenda, then you will need some strategies for re-focusing the group's attention on the module lessons and activities. For example, you may have a piece of chart paper on which you can document questions and/or concerns that cannot be addressed in the moment. Also, you may have post-it notes on each table so that participants can write questions and/or concerns as they arise during the module. With both approaches, you will need to decide how you will follow-up on these items to get more information and address the participants' questions/concerns. As the facilitator, remember that your role is not to be the expert on the module content, so there will be questions that you are not able to answer. Your responsibility is to document participants' questions as they arise, and to have a strategy for following-up on these questions.

A Final Note About Facilitating and TLCs

As noted above, your role as facilitator is essential for involving all participants in the lessons and process, as well as for encouraging participant learning and application in between meetings. You will want to make a couple of key decisions related to your role in relation to the TLC(s) before the first meeting. Depending on your role within the school or district, you may be also a full participating member of the TLC. You will need to decide how you will navigate these dual roles of facilitator and fellow learner. How will you monitor colleagues' participation and involvement in a lesson while still authentically participating yourself? For example, you may consider sharing some of your facilitation responsibilities (e.g., timekeeping, monitoring participation norms) with other participants.[2]

We realize that other facilitators may work with multiple TLCs, and we suggest that you consider how you will move among the participant groups. For example, you might decide to make an effort to sit with a different team during each of the discussion and small group activities. Or, you may strategically decide to sit with groups who have questions, or who seem to be very unfamiliar with the module content. While sitting with a small group, your role would be to listen, and to offer any clarification related to the activity and lesson goals. Regardless of your strategy, you would want to try to sit with different groups throughout a meeting in order to gauge how participants interpret the information presented in a module and engage with lesson activities. Throughout the modules, you will need to attend to how individuals are participating in the group, and how you might be able to encourage more participation from individuals.

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[2] For more information about sharing facilitation roles and responsibilities, you might consult a facilitation guide, such as Ingrid Bens, *Facilitating with Ease! Core Skills for Facilitators, Team Leaders and Members, Managers, Consultants, and Trainers (3rd Edition)* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

Essential Planning and Set Up

This section of the guide is provided to assist you in preparing to facilitate the learning sessions with your group. We know that the person selected to facilitate each team varies in background, skill, and understanding of formative assessment, and have designed the information with the following assumptions. We assume that the facilitator:

- Will communicate the expectations to the participants
- Has content knowledge
- Understands adult learning practices
- Includes all participants in the module and lesson process
- Clearly communicate expectations
- Clearly communicates the schedule, logistics, what to bring to the meeting, time commitment, etc. to participants

Essential Planning

Before the meeting:

- Read this Module 1: Overview of Formative Assessment Facilitator's Guide in its entirety and become familiar with the content and activities.
- Read the Module 1 articles ahead of time:
    o For Lesson 4, Consolidate Your Learning: *Attributes of Effective Formative Assessment (FAST-SCASS)*
    o For Lesson 5, Your Turn: *Mind-Sets and Equitable Education (Carol Dweck)*
- Complete the background reading suggested in the prior section.
- Run through each lesson and activity yourself before presenting it to others.
- Determine how you would like the group to use the online handouts and readings—digitally with laptops, with printed copies of the PowerPoint and handouts that you provide, or the expectation that participants print the PowerPoint and handouts themselves.
    o Establish and communicate the meeting times and place with participants.
    o As much as possible, visit with each participant prior to the first meeting to informally assess where they are in their journey with formative assessment and what skills, knowledge and understanding they already bring to the group.

On the day of the meeting:

- Prepare the room. Ensure that the room is comfortable and that computer speakers and a working Internet connection are available to present the online module content.
- Provide refreshments or ask participants to bring their own drinks and/or snacks so they can concentrate, especially if the meetings are held after a school day.
- Keep to the time schedule.

> Preparation is worth it!
> "For every minute spent in organizing, an hour is earned."
>
> -Anonymous quote, adapted from http://thinkexist.com/quotations/preparation/

- Be certain to include every participant in the group discussions.
- Establish ground rules or working norms for meetings and discuss them with participants. Sample norms might include:
  - Listen for understanding
  - Engage in the work
  - Allow all voices to be heard
  - Focus on solutions
  - Assume positive intent
  - Challenge ideas, not people
  - Respect perspectives of others

After the meeting:

- As much as possible, follow up with each individual between lessons to see how their Consolidate Your Learning work is going. Offer individual tips, feedback, and assistance as needed by each person.
- Engage in some reflective dialogue exercises with participants to get their feedback for you as a facilitator. Ask them how you can continuously improve the workshop and your facilitation skills.
- Review the entire module before moving to Module 2: Learning Progressions.
- Note places where you might add or change the module facilitation the next time you present the content.

Advice for Facilitators

- Be certain to send the agenda to all team members prior to the meeting date.
- Establish and review the learning team's ground rules, the participant expectations for each session, and how you plan to close each session.
- If participants are bringing laptops, be certain to have tables, chairs, and power strips to plug in cords.
- Establish partners for lesson pairing, sharing, and collaborating in discussions. These partners may remain the same or participants may switch partners as you complete each module.
- Use formative assessment strategies with your participants whenever appropriate. Appropriate uses include using strategies to clarify content, and making sure learning goals and success criteria are clearly understood and that participants can receive, provide, and effectively use feedback. Use of these strategies contributes to a collaborative climate where all participants are learning together.

Ten Formative Assessment Strategies to Try

1. Clarify the learning goals and success criteria at the beginning of each Teacher Learning Community (TLC) meeting. Post them on the wall. At the end of the meeting, go back to the success criteria and check off the learning goals and success criteria reached.

2. End lessons with a 5-minute "Turn to Your Neighbor" time to recap and discuss key points from the lesson.

3. Give everyone on the learning team an index card with a different question relating to the meeting's topic. Ask participants to respond to the question throughout the meeting and share out at the end.

4. Provide participants with statements related to the module content and ask them if they agree or disagree with them prior to beginning the lesson or before moving on to a new lesson. Allow discussion of these ideas. This will help you identify misconceptions to address as facilitator.

5. Let participants develop some activities and guiding questions to ask each other during and after the meetings related to the learning goals and success criteria identified for the module.

6. Use a feedback protocol such as "2 Stars and a Wish" that allows partners or teams to provide feedback to each other. Stars are strengths and wishes are areas where improvement is suggested. Ask participants to be specific about both the stars and wishes and connect them to the learning goals and success criteria for the lesson.

7. Ask participants to write "Minute Papers" to end a lesson. Minute Papers are generally written on half sheets of paper or index cards. Allow participants to write one or two important concepts from the day's lesson. The purpose is merely to provide a chance for self-reflection on one or more important understandings gained from a lesson or a module.

8. Use the following questions to guide participants in a self-reflection, or use your own questions:
   o What do I currently know or think I know about this topic?
   o Why would this topic be valuable for me to know about?
   o What questions do I have about this topic?
   o What do I expect to learn studying this topic?
   o How can I find out more information about this topic?
   o What do the experts say?
   o Has this made a difference in my learning?
   o Has this made a difference in my students' learning?

9. Ask participants to write in a learning log or journal on a regular basis about their learning experience. Participants can indicate what they tried each day, what frustrations or barriers they are experiencing, what they plan to do next, and what questions they have about formative assessment. Have participants bring their logs to meetings and share entries with the team or a partner.

10. Ask participants to engage in an observation and reflective dialogue with another team member. Ask them to invite another team member into their classroom for a peer observation of one learning goal from the module. Set up a time for the observer to provide descriptive feedback. Use the success criteria for the module to provide descriptive feedback to each other. If face-to face peer observations aren't possible, video a lesson where you are using formative assessment practices. Bring the video to a team meeting and ask for descriptive feedback on the practice.

Implementation, Intersession and Feedback Advice

Implementation Advice

Plan to modify lesson-by-lesson to meet the needs of the various levels of learners. Begin by determining the roles of your participants and then provide options in some cases for various audiences. You may be working with district teams, or your participants may primarily be intermediate service agency staff who are piloting the professional development and who plan to train others. There may be many other configurations. This section includes tips for you, the facilitator—suggestions for what to emphasize, ideas for grouping teams, examples of opportunities to deepen participant understanding, and tips on how to handle situations in which issues arise. The advice below is based on work with diverse audiences, including state departments of education, regional education associations, school and district leadership, and K-12 teachers. Plan each lesson with your particular set of participants in mind. The questions you ask and the time you provide for reflection and discussion are all important components of effective implementation.

Don't rush the learning and plan with your participants' needs in mind.

For example, what will you do with building administrators or others not currently in the classroom, if these people are part of the group? In some instances, providing non-classroom teachers with sample content materials, particularly from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), would be useful. In other lessons, teaming them with classroom practitioners is a strategy that works. In some instances it may be important to keep role-alike groups together particularly when discussing implementation issues.

The lessons can be facilitated separately or taught sequentially during a one-day professional development experience. Because the materials are available online, the lessons themselves can be taught either face-to-face or using a phone conferencing system such as Polycom© or GoToMeeting©. If you plan to include all the lessons in a one-day experience, think about how to incorporate the activities that will consolidate the participants' learning. Having them read and discuss two articles back-to-back may not engage the learner as well as inserting a different type of learning experience after a reading activity. The sessions themselves should model the formative assessment process. Include a focus on feedback from you to the participants and the participants back to you as part of a continuous improvement process.

Clearly, preparing participants for implementation takes time. First, participants need to explore the ideas and strategies and relate them to their own ideas. Then they need to prepare for change before engaging in initial implementation. Schools and districts that have successfully implemented formative assessment processes have developed their practices around common language, common expectations and common methods. They also have an implementation team that evaluates the process and encourages practitioners to "finish what they start."

Read the advice provided below as you plan for each lesson in Module 1. The text will: emphasize some main ideas from the lesson; highlight places where participants may struggle and get confused, and provide suggestions or probing questions to help you both model the formative assessment process and facilitate the learning experiences.

Lesson 1	**Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs)** **Main Message:** • *Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) provide opportunities for collaboration and supportive structures for formative assessment implementation.*

- To reveal the prior knowledge of the participants, ask them to discuss their previous experiences with Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs). Gather ideas from each table group. Summarize for the group the essential components of a TLC. Since there is not a group leader, have the teams discuss how they will make sure that their time together is productive and that the tasks get accomplished. The responsibility for preparing for the next TLC session belongs to the group so this may be a discussion you will want to have with participants.

- Regardless of good intent, every team member will not be able to attend every meeting of the TLC. Help the groups to think through how they will store and archive important documents (agendas, tools and sample lessons) and examples. Some schools and districts store everything electronically using programs like OneNote™ so that participants can both use the stored resources and keep track of conversations and progress.

Lesson 2	**Formative Assessment in an Assessment System** **Main Message:** • *Formative assessment is one component of a comprehensive assessment system, focused on short-cycle assessments that provide immediate information to help learning moving forward.*

- Even though we focus on formative assessment in these modules, formative assessment is only part of a comprehensive assessment system. Assessment systems must be not only comprehensive but coherent, continuous, and include technical adequacy (i.e., fairness, reliability and validity). You will want to spend some time helping participants to deepen their understanding of formative assessment as part of a comprehensive system.

- Because of your participants' various roles, they have had different experiences with components of an assessment system. What is key here is to emphasize the importance of the different assessment cycles in a comprehensive assessment system that includes formative assessment, which is clearly in the domain of the classroom teacher. Be sure that everyone has the same understanding of interim assessment, benchmark assessments, and common assessments, which are *not* synonymous with formative assessment. The data from these assessments can be used to formatively assess programs or groups of students but are not the same as classroom formative assessment tasks.

Lesson 3	**Introduction to the Process of Formative Assessment** **Main Message:** • *Formative assessment is a continuous process through which teachers and students close the gap between the students' current learning status*

	and desired goals.
	• Remind participants that this is their first introduction to the formative assessment process, and as they progress through the modules they will have additional opportunities to expand their understanding of elements in the feedback loop. You will want to emphasize that formative assessment is a continuous process that informs instruction that supports student learning.
	• Be sure to spend enough time having groups discuss what teachers need to know and do to implement formative assessment. They need to be able to make sense of the diagram.
	• Using the overview of this module, remind the group of one of the main ideas: *It is essential for participants to understand the need for continuous evidence gathering and interpretation so that teachers and students are constantly working in the ZPD.*
	• The zone of proximal development is introduced early in the modules because of its importance to the formative assessment process. ZPD and scaffolding are ideas that some of your participants will have familiarity with while others will find this to be new learning. The key here is to develop a basic understanding of both ideas and how they fit with the formative assessment process. Don't let the participants get too focused yet on how to implement this part of the process with students.
Lesson 4	**Formative Assessment in Action** **Main Message:** • *Formative assessment is a continuous process through which teachers and students close the gap between the students' current learning status and desired goals.*
	• This lesson provides an opportunity for diverse groups of participants to come to a shared understanding of the assessment-related terminology. It is important to build this understanding early in the professional development experiences. Encourage participants to use the appropriate language of assessment and refer to the glossary list that is available in the resources section.
	• You will want to find out which terms are most confusing to the participants and consider some direct instruction strategies, such as a Frayer Model, if needed. For example, you can help them understand what a learning goal is by giving their own definition, giving examples or learning goals and non-examples, and even draw a picture that represents the vocabulary term.
	• Don't be too quick to assume that everyone has a clear understanding of the characteristics of the formative assessment process. Spend time reviewing the videos. You may want participants to create one of their own that they can then share with their TLC to consolidate this piece of the learning.
Lesson 5	**Classroom Culture** **Main Message:** • *A positive classroom culture provides a foundation upon which formative assessment can be successfully implemented.*
	• Clearly, developing a positive classroom climate is essential to effective implementation of the formative assessment process. This may include teaching students some

processes and procedures that are needed to support an ongoing feedback system in the classroom. Get the participants to think about each aspect of the FA process and what students would need to have the teacher do to support a positive climate that helps all students move forward in their learning.

- Elementary teachers have significant expertise in building classroom climate, while secondary teachers often focus more on the content and spend less time planning for positive climate. You may want to mix the groups of participants to include elementary and secondary teachers and administrators in each group to enrich the conversations.

- The reading on mindsets is one that can be referred to often throughout the modules. Participants will be asked to have a growth mindset when it comes to their ability to implement formative assessment processes with students. Remember that another way to say it is, "I haven't learned it yet!"

Intersession Advice

If you are teaching each lesson separately, you need to be sure the activities that you conduct in this module build from lesson to lesson and that they prepare participants for the next module. People need something specific to do and multiple opportunities to engage meaningfully with the content. The "Try It Out" activities at the end of each lesson are designed to continue the learning and reinforce the ideas by linking them to participants' prior knowledge; in essence, to consolidate their learning. These activities also help participants analyze or apply learning to classroom practice as they build a mental model of the formative assessment process.

In addition to the "Try It Out" activities, we pose three options to use during intersession work before moving to the next module:

Option 1

Additional Input (individual or group) – Watch a YouTube video, read an article, etc.   Go back to the Additional Readings section of this guide. This will reinforce the learning from lessons 1-3. Ask participants to identify what is most confusing to them about the ideas from Module 1 and ask a question that they will gather input to answer. Have them share their findings with others or group participants that investigated the same question in small discussion teams.

Option 2

Collaboration with others –Within a TLC group meeting, face-to-face or virtually on a wiki or other Web 2.0 platform, discuss questions generated by the group to extend their learning (or provide them with 3 questions based on lesson/module learning goals and success criteria). For Lesson 4, you can ask them to create their own videos (similar to the examples), then share with others and discuss them as a group. For Lesson 2, the group can evaluate their district assessment system and create a draft comprehensive assessment system document to continue the conversation.

Option 3

Action Research–This occurs when you ask participants to try something and reflect on how it goes (self reflection or peer feedback). This works particularly well for Lesson 5. A teacher or administrator can teach a process or procedure that helps to build a positive classroom climate or positive school environment. Self-reflection or peer feedback should follow the implementation after the procedure is taught, modeled, reinforced, and practiced.

After providing these options to your group, be certain to gather information regarding what options they select, what materials and other resources they use, and what impact these options have on their learning and implementation.

Feedback Tool

As you progress through each module, we suggest that you keep track of how the learning is progressing using the following feedback template. Create your own template if you wish to gather different information. This is important since the formative assessment process needs to be modeled by you as you work with others, and the feedback you gather will inform your role as a facilitator.

Feedback Template

Lesson	What worked well?	What didn't work?	Checks of Learning	Next Steps
Lesson 1: Teacher Learning Communities				
Lesson 2: Formative Assessment in an Assessment System				
Lesson 3: Introduction to the Process of Formative Assessment				
Lesson 4: Formative Assessment in Action				
Lesson 5: Classroom Culture				