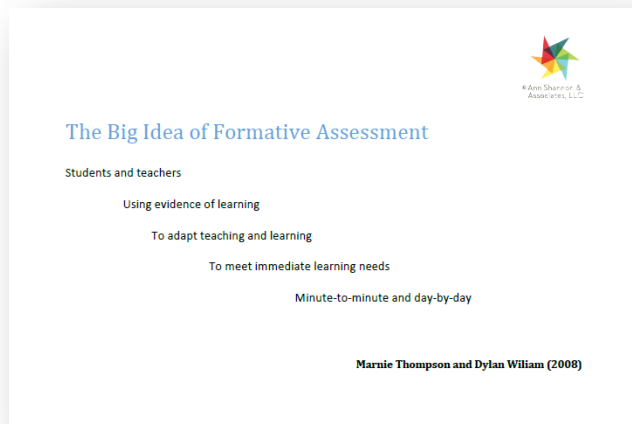


The Big Idea of Formative Assessment

This part of the Professional Learning (PL) provides participants the opportunity to gain a shared understanding of the interpretation of *Formative Assessment* that underpins the Shell Center's Formative Assessment Lessons. Because participants bring many interpretations of Formative Assessment to the PL, it is important to provide them with a shared understanding that will form the basis of their work with the Formative Assessment Lessons.

Achieving this goal:

This component will give participants the opportunity to study the Handout called the *Big Idea of Formative Assessment*. This Handout communicates that the interpretation of Formative Assessment underpinning this PL is just another name for effective teaching.



Summarizing the main ideas:

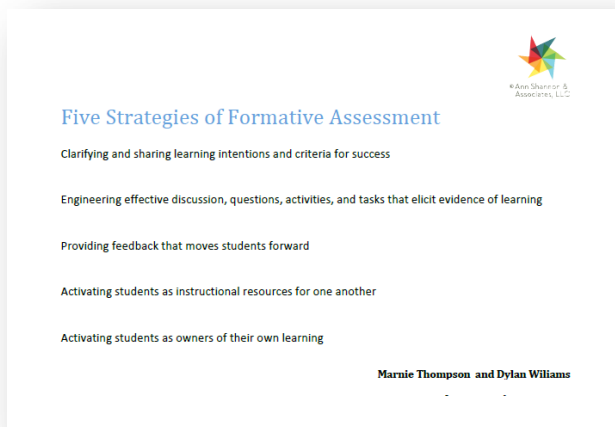
Formative Assessment is not used to rank or label students. It is used to guide teachers as they reflect on what is and is not working so that they can modify their teaching to better serve their students. The interpretation of Formative Assessment that is relevant here has much to do with effective teaching and little to do with testing.

Five Strategies of Formative Assessment

This part of the PL introduces the five strategies of Formative Assessment and provides participants with an opportunity to learn how these might be used to bring the Big Idea to life in classrooms.

Achieving this goal:

Again, this component will give participants the opportunity to study the Handout called the *Five Strategies of Formative Assessment*. This Handout outlines the strategies that participants will use minute-to-minute and day-by-day to foster formative assessment in their classrooms and meet the immediate learning needs of students.



Suggest unconventional ways of “Activating students as instructional resources for one another”

Conventional wisdom around collaborative learning usually leads teachers to create heterogeneous pairs or groups of students to activate students as instructional resources for each other. During this part of the PL, participants usually cite students working in heterogeneous groups as an effective means of *activating students as instructional resources for each other*. In their words, this allows students *strong* in math to *help* those considered to be *weak* in math. Heterogeneous grouping is thought to be essential for equitable teaching and effective classroom management, and therefore something that US teachers feel compelled to do.

Our explorations enacting the Shell Center’s Formative Assessment Lessons in various classrooms revealed that homogenous pairings can have enormous positive consequences for learning.

Video: [The Importance of Homogeneous Grouping](#)