

**Differentiation with Embedded
Formative Assessment:
Assessment that Shapes Instruction and
Learning**

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Differentiation in the Classroom

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Formative Assessment: ABCD Cards

Purpose: Provides evidence of student learning through questions that cause deeper thinking.

Materials Needed:

*index cards(any size you prefer), 4 per student

*rings if you want to hook the cards together

Explanations:

Letter Corners

Use multiple choice questions with 4 options A, B, C, & D and pose the question to students. Students choose their answer card and if each option has at least 3 students supporting it, the teacher sends them to the four corners of the room which should already be labeled A, B, C, or D. Once there the group of students must work together to defend their answer and be able to explain why theirs is the correct one. After students start discussing some may move or sneak to a new corner because they change their mind, this is ok because we want to honor their change in thinking.

Question with More than One Answer

Pose a question with more than one correct answer. Doing this allows students to see the answer in different ways. For example the teacher can include answers at different levels to allow for differentiation among her students. Answers should challenge the high achievers and should allow all others to be successful, therefore increasing engagement of all students.

Questions with No Right or Wrong Answers, but Different Views

Use the ABCD cards here when discussing an issue with different views. Each letter is assigned an opinion, suspect, or group, then students are encouraged to show which letter they agree with and show that card so the teacher can pull them into the discussion when needed. During the discussion if the student changes their mind they simply switch their card. At the end of the discussion the teachers asks the students to reevaluate their answers and then can see how the student's thinking changed and most likely only 1 or 2 answers are now showing.

Bridge Two Lessons

At the end of a lesson the teacher can pose 6 questions to students. Four of the questions should relate to the lesson and two should relate to the lesson for the next day. As students hold up cards to answer each of the first four questions the teacher is looking for understanding of the current lesson, when answering the last two the teacher is seeing if the students are in fact ready for the next lesson. For example if all of the students answered the first 4 question with a good degree of understanding, but could not answer the last two, the teacher then knows the students are in fact ready to move on to the next day's lesson.

Formative Assessment: Exit Passes

Purpose: Provides evidence of where students are at in their learning.

Materials:

*Post-it notes

*index cards(any size)

Explanation:

Exit Passes

Exit Passes are used when there is a natural break in discussion. Teachers create a question to collect evidence of student learning. For example if you are learning long division in math and you are working on a particular strategy and you want to know if the students get it, write a question on the board for students to solve on a post-it note or index card. Students then hand it in or stick it in a designated spot for the teacher to review later. The teacher can then quickly see if the students understood a specific concept or strategy and whether the students are ready to move on or if another lesson is needed.

Place Settings

Place Settings is similar to Exit Passes, however have the students put their name on the post-it or card when they hand it in. Having names attached to student work allows the teacher to **place** students in flexible groups. The groups can be made up of students all at the same level or include one student at a slightly higher level to assist other students. The advantage to creating groups this way is that students don't know the outcome of their question, so they don't know why they are placed in a particular group, which creates more open discussion within the group.

Formative Assessments: Colored Cups, Red/Green Disks, and Traffic Lights

Purpose: Helps students self-assess their learning and helps the teacher pace the lesson according to students needs.

Materials:

- *Red, Yellow, & Green Cups
- *Red & Green Disks
- *Red, Yellow, & Green Colored Pencils

Explanations:

Colored Cups

In the classroom each student is given a red, yellow, & green cup and at the start of each lesson all students start with the green cup on their desk. Once the lesson starts if a student feels the teacher is going too fast they put out the yellow cup, if they want to ask a question they put out the red cup. Students are honest in their color because there is a rule that if someone puts out a red cup then the teacher uses popsicle sticks to call on another student at random to come up or explain the answer to that student. Having this rule requires students to be more aware of their own learning and to be honest about what they understand or don't understand. The teacher and students must have a good discussion about this rule in order for students to feel completely comfortable! A benefit of using the cups is that the teacher can easily see what color each student is displaying. This assessment can also be used while students are working individually on class work. Green would signal to the teacher the student is ok, yellow means I have a question, but I can wait, and red means I really need help.

Red/Green Disks

Red/Green Disks is similar to Colored Cups except that students only use a red and green disk red on one side and green on the other and the disks lay flat on student desks. Some teachers prefer this variation because it is easier to have one disk out rather than having cups all over. All students start the lesson with green displayed, but then switch to red signaling the teacher to slow down. Having red signal slow down allows students the confidence to signal they are confused without having to raise their hand and ask a question. This technique can also be used during independent student work time.

Traffic Lights

Ownership in Learning

Traffic Lights is when a teacher writes the learning targets or objectives of the lesson on the board for students to copy into a learning notebook. Once a lesson is complete the students place a green, yellow, or red circle by each target or objective in their learning notebook. A green circle means I feel confident that I understand the intended the learning. A yellow circle means either the student isn't quite sure if they understand or that they only partially understand. A red circle means the student has not learned what was intended. To steer students away from just putting green in their notebooks for fear of not looking good, the teacher explains that if you are a green you are able to confidently help another student, possibly a yellow, learn the material while the teacher is helping students who put a red circle in their notebooks.

Test Preparation

Test preparation is when the teacher helps his/her students prioritize what they need to study for a test. The teacher helps the students by having them go through their notes from a particular unit or lesson and place a green, yellow, or red circle in the corner of each page or by a certain set of notes. A green circle means that the student already feels confident that they know the material and no more review is necessary. A yellow circle means some review needed. Finally a red circle means information that needs major review. To decrease the occurrence of only putting green circles, tell them no one else will look in their notebook, not even the teacher.

Other Quick Formative Assessment Techniques: “No Hands Up”, “Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce”, “Popsicle Sticks”, “Thinking Thumbs”, “Fist of Five”

Purpose: Helps students self-assess their learning and helps the teacher pace the lesson according to students needs.

Materials:

Popsicle Sticks

Jar/Can or container to hold Popsicle Sticks

“No Hands Up”

In a “No Hands Up” classroom the rule is that hands are only raised to ask a question. The teacher poses the questions in discussions and picks on a student at random. In a “No Hands Up” classroom, participation/engagement is not optional.

“Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce”

A variation of “No Hands Up”: The classroom teacher poses the question, pauses at least five seconds, pounces on one student at random for the answer, and then bounces that student’s answer to another student, again at random, saying, “What do you think of that answer?”.

“Popsicle Sticks”

Popsicle sticks are used to assist the teacher as a randomization device. Making sure the teacher is truly calling on students at random. The students’ names are written on popsicle sticks and placed in a jar or can. The teacher then pulls a stick with a student’s name on it to answer the question, and so on.

*leave the selected sticks out of the can/jar, but then replace them when students who have already answered a question seem off task

*student “selector” of the day – this resolves the concern of the teacher rigging the selection of the sticks

“Thinking Thumbs” and “Fist of Five”

Collecting information from the whole class simultaneously can be helpful to check your students' confidence level in their understanding.

Thumbs up: Confident

Thumbs Horizontal: Not Sure

Thumbs Down: Still Confused

Or

With a number 0 to 5

Fist =0

Appropriate Number of Fingers 1-5

Resources:

William, Dylan. Embedded Formative Assessment. Solution Tree 2011