

## Students receive early and frequent evaluation of their work

Ambrose, et al. (2010) describe feedback as “information given to students about their performance that guides future behavior.” In order for feedback and assessment to contribute to student learning, they must occur early in the semester. This allows students to apply feedback to guide future behavior. While later, summative assessments might make up a good portion of students’ grades, without early, formative feedback, we are not able to assess growth.

**Formative Feedback** focuses on moving students forward. They can use this information in future work. Formative feedback is developmental and part of a process.

**Summative Feedback** is generally used to justify a grade. Summative feedback tends to focus on a final product.

Prior to high-stakes midterm or final exams, offering low-stakes assignments and practice (*perhaps ungraded -- credit for completion rather than correctness*) is an opportunity for students to assess their progress and focus their energies when preparing for larger assignments and assessments.

Examples:

- Give students a short quiz with question types similar to those on larger exams. For incorrect answers, provide feedback on where their reasoning may have broken down and/or ask questions that guide students to the correct answer.
- Provide opportunities for shorter writing assignments prior to longer papers. Give students feedback on how to improve their writing by identifying areas where they might expand or clarify.

**Feedback is most effective if students have the chance to act on it to improve their future work and learning.**

Gibbs and Simpson (2004) suggest that feedback that is most effective:

- is frequent, timely, and detailed.
- can be linked to the assessment task and criteria.
- is understandable given the students’ level of experience with the subject.
- focuses on learning rather than scores by relating to future work and tasks.

(*adapted from* Glover & Brown, 2006)

**Early feedback on low stakes assignments offers students opportunities to improve.**

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Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.

Gibbs, G., & Simpson, C. (2004). Does your assessment support your students’ learning. *Journal of Teaching and learning in Higher Education*, 1(1), 1-30.

Glover, C., & Brown, E. (2006). Written feedback for students: too much, too detailed or too incomprehensible to be effective? *Bioscience education*, 7(1), 1-16.