

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT TEACHERS USING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN AUSTRALIAN CLASSROOMS

Australian teachers can now access a new range of free, evidence-informed resources to strengthen formative assessment practice in their classrooms and improve outcomes for young Australians.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and developed and published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the new resources provide teachers with high-quality formative assessment advice and examples to aid classroom teaching and learning programs.

These resources are designed to reduce workload by giving teachers practical, time-saving tools that guide planning, strengthen teacher capability and support high-quality teaching in all Australian classrooms.

Formative assessments are used to gather evidence of student learning. The short assessments can include quizzes, classroom discussions, comprehension questions and other ways to provide information on how students are progressing with their learning. Teachers then use this evidence to guide learning by adapting their teaching in response to student needs.

ACARA CEO Stephen Gniel said that the resources provide practical examples, tools and guidance that can be used in any classroom setting.

“ACARA’s new formative assessment resources place curriculum at the centre of formative assessment design, helping teachers make clearer links between teaching and assessment.

“These tools support teachers to design and use formative assessment against the Australian Curriculum, helping them understand how students are progressing in their learning and what their next steps should be.

“Our new resources are also adaptable, supporting jurisdictions, systems and schools to use them seamlessly alongside their existing resources.

“We know that teachers face considerable workload challenges. That’s why these resources are designed to reduce workload by giving teachers practical, ready-to-use tools that will save them time in planning and design and support consistent practice across Australian classrooms.”

The resources were developed through extensive research and consultation over an 18-month period with teachers, assessment experts, jurisdictions and education stakeholders from across Australia.

Dr Tom Porta, Lecturer in Education, School of Education, College of Education, Behavioural and Social Sciences at Adelaide University was one of the key academic experts involved in the development of the project.

“There has never been a more important time in education to prioritise formative assessment,” said Dr Porta.

“These new national formative assessment resources from ACARA provide teachers with a clear structure for designing and implementing effective practices and the flexibility to adapt these approaches with professional autonomy. They enable teachers to make responsive, evidence-informed decisions that meet the diverse learning needs of all students, while aligning closely with the curriculum. These are outstanding resources and every teacher should be engaging with them.”

David Austin, Principal at Sacred Heart Primary School in Pearce, ACT, where the teachers have been using the resources since the beginning of the school year, explained the impact they have already made in the classrooms.

“ACARA’s formative assessment resources have been an outstanding support for our school,” said Mr Austin.

“The materials available on the Australian Curriculum website have significantly strengthened our teachers’ shared understanding of formative assessment. Our teachers are using the selector tool and assessment design guides to create high-quality, curriculum-aligned, formative assessments.

“This has increased their confidence in the validity of the evidence they collect and enhanced their ability to use this evidence to inform their next teaching steps, which maximises the impact on student progress.

“Most importantly, these resources have helped our staff strengthen the connection between curriculum, assessment design and responsive teaching. As a result, assessment is increasingly being used to improve learning, rather than simply measure it.”

You can find the National Formative Assessment Resources on the Australian Curriculum website at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/formative-assessment.

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Background: About formative assessment

Formative assessment is a key part of a comprehensive assessment system. Within this system, its distinct role is to provide real-time, ongoing insights into how students are progressing and what they need to do next to reach achievement standards.

Formative assessment brings together assessment design and classroom practice to support teaching and improve student learning. It is most powerful when intentionally designed and seamlessly embedded into everyday teaching. Formative assessment involves implementing assessments that align with the curriculum and using them during teaching to gather purposeful and manageable evidence of students’ learning. Teachers use this evidence to adapt their teaching, respond to student needs, and guide learning towards curriculum expectations and progress over time.

Formative assessment is not like summative assessment (such as the Year 12 final exams in each state and territory), which measures learning at specific points in time to determine final learning outcomes. It is not like diagnostic tools, which offer a snapshot of student strengths and gaps before teaching begins. Formative assessment actively informs classroom teaching as learning happens and should be used regularly and purposefully alongside summative and diagnostic assessment.