

Creating a culture of learning online

Assessment & feedback to promote
community and student success



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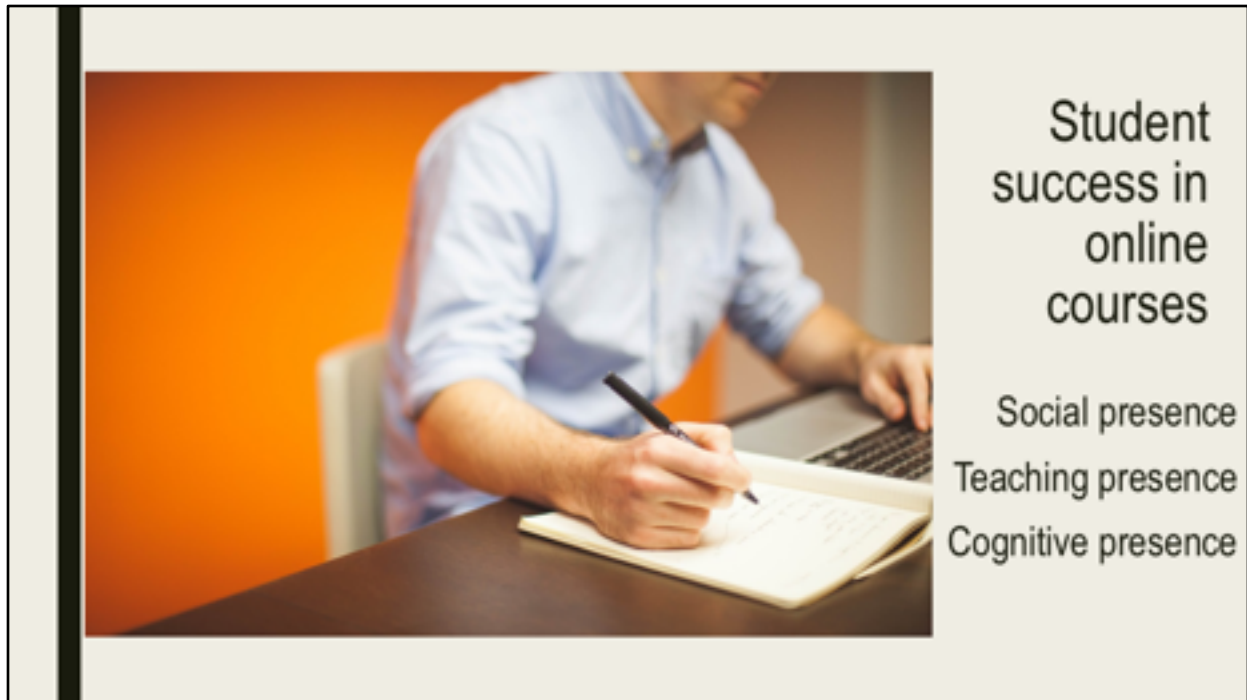
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What is formative assessment and how does it lead to greater student success in online courses?

What are some examples of formative assessments?

What are tools you can use to implement formative assessments in your online courses?

Questions to be answered in presentation



Why are people skeptical of teaching online? Without having ever taught online, it may seem like online courses don't offer the experience of true interaction that face to face courses offer. One theory, known as the Community of Inquiry framework, outlines 3 different types of interaction in online courses that determine student success:

- Social presence – do students feel connected with their classmates?
- Teaching presence – designing, facilitating and direction through course materials
- Cognitive presence - opportunity to interact with course materials to construct meaning

Perception of social and teaching presence leads to greater student success.

Formative assessment can contribute to building each of these presences in an online course.

So, how can we use formative assessment to create the type of environment pictured in an online course?

Summative vs. formative assessment



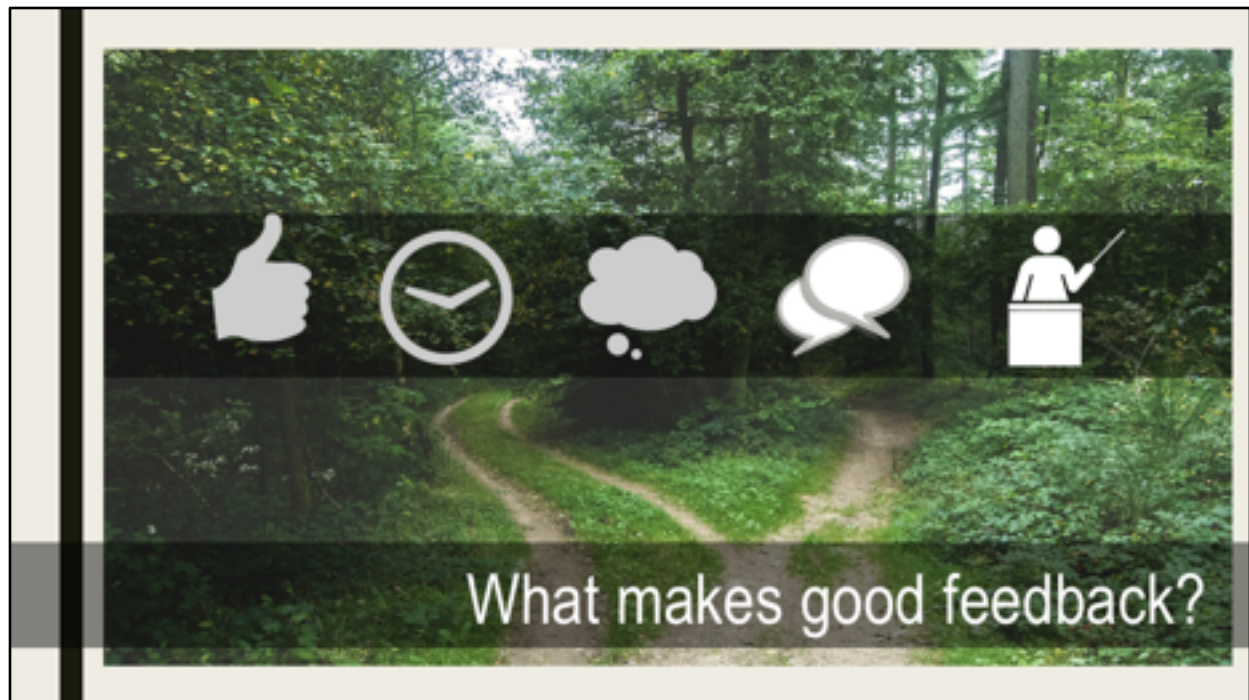
Summative assessment is something we are all familiar with: large assignments that we give in the middle or at the end of the semester. A midterm or final, or a term paper. But, relying on these assessments doesn't allow time to catch student misunderstandings and correct them as they are learning.

Formative assessment involves using usually smaller assessments as sources of feedback to improve teaching and learning. It provides the student with an opportunity to not only relearn a concept, but apply the relearned concept to enhance its retention. It also gives the teacher an opportunity to adjust instruction based on student understanding as revealed in formative assessments.



In an online course, formative assessments can offer the opportunity to enhance the three types of presences or the three types of interaction in the course. According to research, formative assessment can "foster a sense of interactive and collaborative online learning communities" by increasing student interaction with not only the content, but the teacher and classmates. We'll discuss examples of how formative assessments can do each of these shortly.

This increased interaction with the content, instructor and peers allow students to continuously check their understanding by reviewing the different types of feedback from the course. This can not only assist them in becoming more self-regulated in their learning, but also provide motivation to keep going since they know where their strengths and weaknesses may be. Formative assessment pinpoints where they need to improve. Without it, a student may feel they are mysteriously working toward the midterm or final guessing whether or not they truly understand the material.



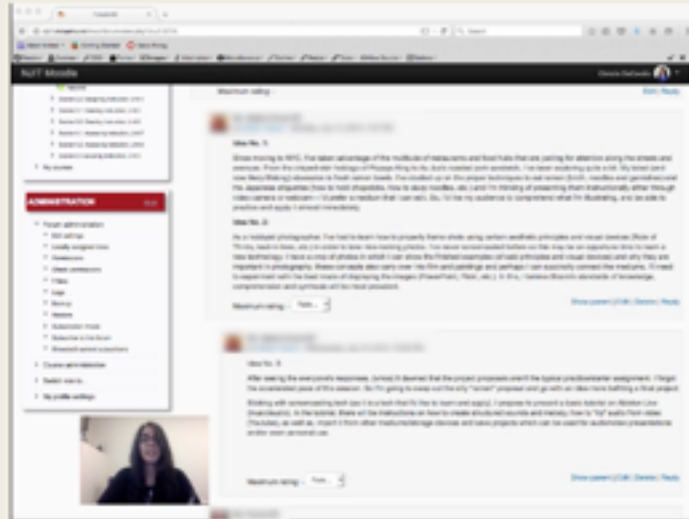
- Clarifies expectations & what good performance is
- Is timely
- Provides an opportunity for student reflection & to self-assess learning
- Encourages discussion about learning
- Gives students info about their learning
- Provides opportunities to close gap between current and desired performance
- Helps teachers make decisions about how to shape future teaching

Specific feedback from teachers enhances teaching presence in an online course as the teacher guides the student through their learning, correcting the students where needed. This also provides an opportunity for true learning: for a student to correct their misunderstanding and apply the new information. Is getting a question wrong on a test and then forgetting about it learning? The opportunity to correct and apply is learning.



These types of assessments offer students immediate feedback of their learning. They can make conceptual adjustments and corrections as necessary before approaching a higher stakes assessment or project. Typically, most learning management systems allow you to input standardized feedback for correct/incorrect responses to objective questions (such as multiple choice or true/false). This feedback is not personalized for each student, but can help them self-correct misunderstandings as they learn material. eduCanon and EdPuzzle also offer opportunities to input standard feedback for correct/incorrect answers.

Formative
assessments
that offer
personalized
feedback

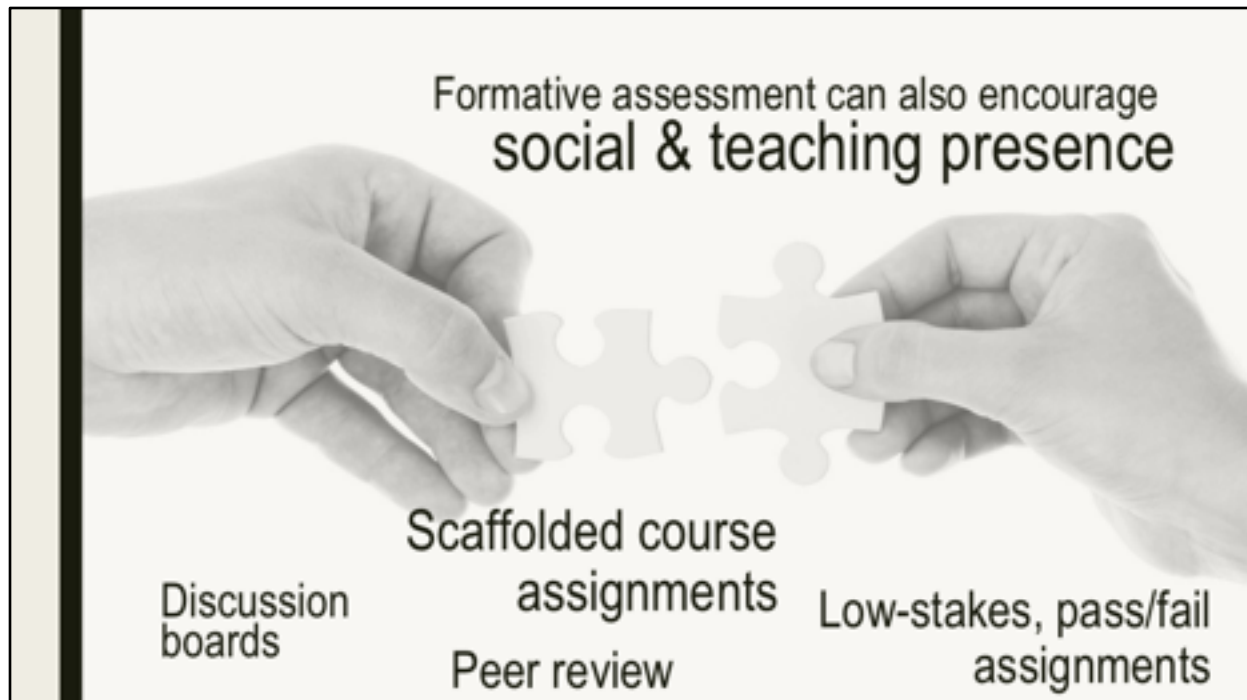


Example of video feedback that can be used to enhance instructor presence in a course. This was feedback given during a course called “Digital Instruction Essentials.” One of their larger summative assessments was to create an instructional video. The first step was a formative assessment in which students had to turn in learning objectives for their instructional video. In this video, I give the student feedback on his learning objectives. He had the opportunity to revise these before completing the next stage of the project.

Written feedback example:

“Your learning objectives are well written. Part of your evaluation strategy is for the participant to complete their own scholarship & financial aid listing for the college selection process; **you might want to develop a learning goal for this specific evaluation piece. Each learning goal should be evaluated, and each piece of the evaluation should correspond with a learning goal.**”

This written feedback was given for another summative assessment in my course where students had to develop a learning module. Before creating the actual learning module, students developed a design plan in which they wrote learning objectives and outlined the basic content of the module and outlined what their assessments might look like. This student needed to revise his assessments to align with his learning goals, which he had the opportunity to do before completing the final project.



- Discussion boards and peer review enhance a sense of community and interaction in an online course, increasing social presence. It also provides students with opportunities to hear varied feedback and perspectives on their work.
- Scaffolded course assignments offer the opportunity for students to hear feedback from the instructor (or peers) regarding their learning with an opportunity to revise.
 - For example, in my Digital Instruction Essentials course, students had a large project that required them to create an instructional video. Prior to creating the video, they first had to choose a topic and design learning goals. I gave them feedback on their topic and learning goals from both myself and their classmates in a discussion board. Next, they created an instructional video design plan which detailed the format, structure and content of their video. They received feedback on the design plan prior to creating their instructional videos, giving them an opportunity to revise and apply the corrections to their learning.
- Low stakes, pass/fail assignments give the opportunity for students to receive feedback regarding their learning (a check-in of sorts) without having the threat of a large assignment grade looming.

Peer review example:

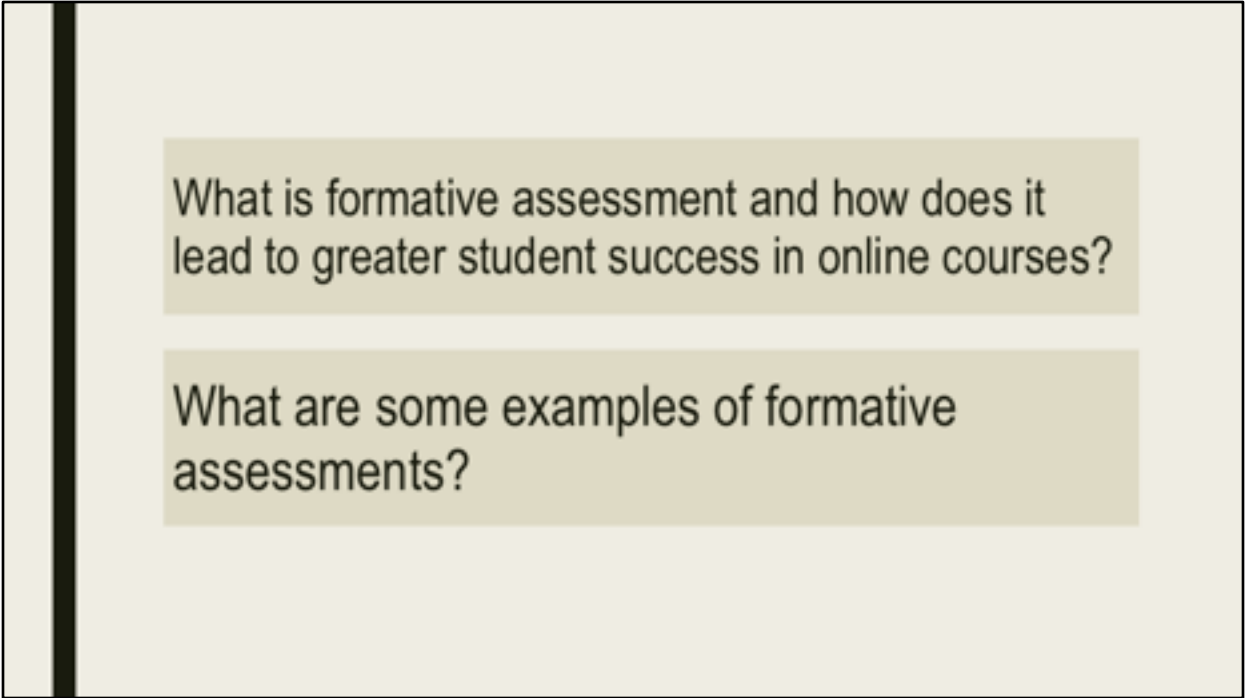
“The module assessment does not address the ‘Recognize how changing methodologies and occupational philosophies can be used to address cross-generational workplace rifts.’ ... I recommend considering an objective test or a written exam for assessing these 2 learning outcomes.”

Peer review assessments can offer an opportunity to enhance social presence in an online course. In this example, given during my Digital Instruction Essentials course, a student gives feedback to a classmate. I offered opportunities for anonymous peer review in my course as well as more open opportunities.

Discussion board question example:

“Reflect on content and readings. Based on the readings and videos about remix culture, **do you think copyright laws limit free speech? Why or why not?** What are some everyday examples of remix culture that you’ve encountered?”

Discussion board questions offer the opportunity to enhance social presence in a course, especially if students are asked about their perspective, opinion, or to connect course content to their own lives. This will encourage students to have points to discuss with one another. If discussion boards are based on concepts or facts that they can repeat from their readings, an engaging discussion will be difficult to lead. In addition, students will have to provide evidence for their responses, giving an opportunity for you as an instructor to see if they’re on the right track in understanding material and provide guidance if needed.



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Review main points

What are tools you can use to implement formative assessments in your online courses?

- ✓ eduCanon (<http://educanon.com>) for interactive lecture videos
- ✓ EdPuzzle (<http://edpuzzle.com>) for interactive lecture videos
- ✓ VoiceThread (<http://voicethread.com>) for multimedia discussions
- ✓ Publisher-provided interactive tools/quizzes
- ✓ Within learning management systems:
 - Discussion boards
 - Auto-graded quizzes



Questions?

References

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