

Reflection Paper – Key Differences Between Summative and Formative Assessment

I have always been a little disturbed by the separation of assessments as I believe they intertwine. So, when I am an admin, I plan to be fully flexible with this topic and focus more on if the teacher is simply, “Assessing with a purpose.” The site I used for describing what each assessment is comes from <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2012/formative-assessment-vs-summative-assessment-results-timing-matters/> (Goodrich, 2012) and it describes the differences pretty plainly. “In short, formative assessment are ongoing frequent measurements of a students’ understanding; a way for teachers and parents to gauge how students are doing as they’re learning what’s being taught. Summative assessments on the other hand are usually end of year exams that are taken to measure where a child is at the end of the learning period.” - See more at: <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2012/formative-assessment-vs-summative-assessment-results-timing-matters/#sthash.y3C3l37h.dpuf> according to the site.

My choice of reference was through the NWEA because it is a data-rich organization that I have used for the last 10 years as an educator. I’ve always understood that formative assessment was about progress and that summative was about tests. As a math teacher, that is the cold, hard truth about how we see the word, “assessment.” It comes down to if you know it or not.

With all of that said, I continuously discuss with students about how tests are simply a way for me to communicate with them. I allow and encourage test redos with students so they can describe to me their thinking and it also earns them their points back. I feel like I do this incredibly well as 95% of my students have shown medium to high growth on both the MCA and the NWEA consistently over the last 3 years. So, as I ponder the differences between the types of assessments, I begin to stop separating them and focusing on the point of them. I know that as an admin I will need to use the proper language with teachers, but I hope to convey it is more a blend than a difference.

Goodrich, Kelly, (2012). Formative Assessment vs. Summative Assessment Results: Timing Matters. Retrieved from <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2012/formative-assessment-vs-summative-assessment-results-timing-matters/#sthash.y3C3l37h.dpuf>