**What is Formative Assessment**? Introduce and discuss the concept of formative assessment, underscoring how it relates to the development of young children. Then ask students to find their state’s definition of formative assessment online. For example, the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education defines formative assessment as “systematic ongoing procedure to document, monitor and evaluate children’s progress, and plan appropriate learning experiences by:

1. Observing, documenting and evaluating all children’s development, knowledge, skills, behaviors, strengths, needs and interests in all areas defined in *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*;
2. Providing opportunity for communication and collaboration with families, teachers, and service providers regarding children’s interests, development, and learning; and
3. Providing data that teachers can use to systematically plan and evaluate learning experiences and teaching practices based on documentation of the learning and development of a diverse group of children.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Observing and Documenting the Impact of Using Creative Approaches to Supporting Language and Literacy.** Several recent studies have underscored the connections between the use of creative approaches, such as movement, and improved language and literacy development for young children (see for example, [**http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2015/03/26/why-kids-need-to-move-touch-and-experience-to-learn/**](http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2015/03/26/why-kids-need-to-move-touch-and-experience-to-learn/)).

To discover the impact creative approaches can have, complete the follow sequence of activities.

1. Select two unfamiliar new picture books for a group of children you work with (toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarten). The books should have similar levels of complexity and should both be on topics of interest to the children. Ideally, each book should also involve actions that children could act out.
2. Read one of the books in a traditional manner with a small group of children, sharing words and the pictures, and using thoughtful questions to prompt expansion of the key ideas. The next day, bring the book out. Before reading it, ask children to share what they remember about the story. Record the vocabulary and concepts the children retained from the previous day’s reading.
3. The following week, read the second book in the same manner as the first. When the story is over, help the children to act out the scenes from the book. The next day, bring the second book out again. Before reading it, ask the children to share what they remember about the story. Record the vocabulary and concepts the children retained from the previous day’s reading.
4. Compare the results for the two book reading approaches. What differences did you notice? Were the differences more profound for some learners than for others? What can you take away from this sequence that you will use on an ongoing basis?

1. NC Curriculum and Assessment Review Committee Working Title, Definition and Criteria for Assessments

   [**http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf\_forms/definition\_and\_criteria\_for\_formative\_assessments.pdf**](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf_forms/definition_and_criteria_for_formative_assessments.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)