

## Ideas and Strategies for Incorporating Formative Assessment in Language and Literacy

**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:

- a. 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*;
- b. Providing opportunity for communication and collaboration with families, teachers, and service providers regarding children’s interests, development, and learning; and
- c. 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.”<sup>1</sup>

### IDEAS FOR INCORPORATING COMPONENTS OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THIS COURSE

**OBSERVATION ON INFANT, TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.** After the observation, ask students to conduct a forum on how the educator interacted with children in the classroom and provide insights about how to make the activity more meaningful for each child.

**INTERVIEW FAMILIES ABOUT HOME LITERACY PRACTICES.** Conduct a home literacy assessment with a family. Share the results, along with evidence-based practices for increasing the emphasis on literacy. Or ask students to make a kit to give to a family to scaffold the literacy learning, and to follow up with an interview to assess progress.

**VOCABULARY UNIT OF STUDY USING A BOOK WHICH EMPHASIZES RICH VOCABULARY.** Ask students to choose ten or more vocabulary items from the books that are “rich”. Then ask students to write a child friendly definition, develop an activity that emphasizes the vocabulary word, and create a conversation starter that uses the word. If these are implemented in the class, the teacher can evaluate the use of the vocabulary, but the children can also use a tally mark graph to assess their own usage of the rich vocabulary.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT ACTIVITY:** After doing a language and literacy environmental inventory (e.g., what are the home languages? What are the challenges being addressed by each learner?), identify opportunities to increase the ways in which environmental print support the young learners in the setting. Translate those opportunities to changes in the classroom, and implement them. Then track responses of children to the changes to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

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<sup>1</sup> 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)