**Formative Assessments:**

**How Do We Know If Our Students Are Getting It?**

Without time to reflect and to think about what they have just been taught or just read or just seen, students are very unlikely to retain or understand content that has been “covered.”

*The purpose of formative assessment* is to use a variety of strategies and activities to *find out what students know and don’t know* so that appropriate *adjustments* can be made. It is critical that we intentionally plan for and consistently use these strategies.

**Formative Assessment Strategies**

* Present several possible answers to a question, then ask students to vote on best choice.
* Have students write their understanding of vocabulary or concepts before and after instruction.
* Ask students to periodically summarize the main ideas they've taken away from a lecture, discussion, or assigned reading; could be a one-sentence summary.
* Have students complete a few problems or questions at the end of instruction and check answers.
* Interview students individually or in groups about their thinking as they solve problems.
* Assign brief, in-class writing assignments (e.g., "Why is this person or event representative of this time period in history?)
* Use index cards for quick responses at beginning, during, and end of class.
* Use post-it notes to identify questions/vocabulary/etc.
* Ask students to identify from a list of topics which ones are “sticky points.” (Where do they get “stuck?”
* Present students with an analogy prompt: (A designated concept, principle, or process) is like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because
* Ask students to respond verbally at same time to cue given by teacher.
* Observe students as they work independently or in groups.
* Show students web diagram, chart, or other graphic organizer; have them either add to it or write 1-2 sentences to explain its main point; students could also create their own visual that shows relationship among a set of terms/etc.
* Use journal entries.
* Use “A-B-C” summaries; teacher provides letters; students must identify term that begins with given letters.
* Ask all students to write down an answer; then read a selected few out loud.
* Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and explain why.
* Ask students to rephrase key point after it is introduced.
* Employ different visual forms: timeline, flowchart, etc. to aide students in ordering things.
* Compare and contrast two objects or events.
* Make a “top ten” list about character, person, event, concept, etc.
* List/Group/Label; after list of items is generated either by teacher or by students, have students group then into categories. Categories may need to be provided.