

Formative Assessment Techniques

To Provide Feedback that Moves Learning Forward

Plus - Minus - Equals Grading

Materials

- Current student work
- Student scores of previous work on the same topic

This scoring technique provides students with information about their work that is within their control. Rather than enabling students to evaluate themselves either favorably or unfavorably as compared to others, 'Plus-Minus-Equals Grading' confines students to reflecting on their own efforts.

Procedure

The teacher compares the quality of the student's present work to



Photo provided by Microsoft

the quality of his last assignment in the same subject matter. Work that is not as good receives a minus; similar work receives an equals; and better work receives a plus. This type of scoring, along with descriptive comments on how to improve his future work, focuses the student on his own achievement.

Adapted
from:

Embedded Assessment

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Solution Tree
Press

Some Principles of Feedback:

- ◆ Feedback should not do the thinking for the student. Wiliam states, "The first fundamental principle of effective classroom feedback is that feedback should be more work for the recipient than the donor." p. 129.
- ◆ Allow time in class for students to use feedback to improve their work.
- ◆ The purpose of feedback is to direct the student to his or her next steps. No matter how bad or good their work is, all students should receive comments on next steps to take.
- ◆ Limit comments by focusing on one aspect of the student's work at a time. Specifically relate feedback to learning targets that have been presented to the class.
- ◆ Constructive feedback includes specific comments on errors, suggestions about how to improve, and at least one positive remark. It is worded to cause thinking, not an emotional reaction, e.g.:

"Your description of the city is clear and creates a picture in my mind. Add more details to make the reader feel as if they are in the city too. You mention traffic and noise. Include describing words that tell how the traffic is moving and what the noise sounds like."