Formative vs. Summative Assessment

“When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative assessment; when the customer tastes the soup, that summative assessment.”

Paul Black

Formative assessments include evaluation of students during the work process. i.e. the making of the soup! (and how well they followed the recipe)

Summative assessments involve students being evaluated upon completion of work and the focus is on the final product. i.e. the soup!

Examples of Formative assessments
- A brief written summary of a lecture
- Student-teacher conferences
- A completed graphic organizer,
- A assignment which can be scored using a rubric

Examples of Summative assessments
- End of term or semester final exams or grades
- End of unit or chapter tests
- Benchmark assessments which measure mastery of a standard
- State exams
- Can also use a rubric to evaluate a final project

“So YES, you can use course grades for assessment of how your students performed, but only as the final end-product. Final grades usually contain more than just exam scores. They may also include attendance, participation, homework, etc. Additionally, students do not have the opportunity to respond to final grades, as they would to a draft of a term paper, so it would be difficult to say that final grades are formative. For a graphic representation of formative and summative assessment go to: http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/02/a-visual-chart-on-summative-vs.html

“If you say you don’t have time for assessment, you assume that the teaching is more important than the learning.”

Grant Wiggins

For more information on student learning outcomes assessment, contact:

Ingrid Novodvorsky  novod@email.arizona.edu  626-4187
Elaine Marchello  evm@email.arizona.edu  621-1328