

Figure 4.5: Formative Assessment Strategies for Student Engagement and Action

Strategy One: Provide a Clear and Understandable Vision of the Learning Target

Teachers share with students the CCSS cluster, learning targets, and prior-knowledge understanding expectations in advance of teaching the lesson or unit, giving the assignment, or doing the activity. They provide students with scoring guides written in plain language so they can understand them. More importantly, the teachers develop and design scoring criteria and rubrics with students.

Strategy Two: Use Examples and Models of Strong and Weak Work

Teachers use models of strong and weak work, such as anonymous student work, work from life beyond school, and their own work. They begin with work that demonstrates strengths and weaknesses related to problems students will commonly experience, especially the problems or tasks that require student demonstrations of understanding. They ask students to discuss with peers strengths and weaknesses of given solutions or strategies used to obtain a solution to problems posed in class or on a common assessment instrument. They also ask students to select examples of their strong and weak work and explain the reason for the selection.

Strategy Three: Offer Regular Descriptive Feedback

During and after the unit, teachers offer descriptive feedback instead of grades on practice work. Descriptive feedback should reflect students' strengths and weaknesses with respect to the specific learning targets they are trying to achieve in a given assignment. Feedback is most effective when it is timely and identifies what students are doing right as well as what they need to work on next and then requires students to act on that feedback.

Strategy Four: Teach Students to Self-Assess and Set Goals

Self-assessment is a necessary part of learning, not an add-on that teachers do if they have the time or the "right" type of students. Self-assessment includes asking students do the following:

- Identify their strengths and areas for improvement for specific learning targets throughout the unit
- Offer descriptive feedback to classmates
- Use teacher feedback, feedback from other students, or their own self-assessment to identify what they need to work on and set goals for future learning and then take action on those goals

Source: Adapted from Stiggins et al., 2007, 42–46.