

Frequently Asked Questions

Formative Assessment and North Carolina's Formative Assessment Learning Community's Online Network (NC FALCON)

1. *What is formative assessment?*

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve intended instructional outcomes (CCSSO FAST SCASS, 2006).

2. *What is the primary purpose of the formative assessment process?*

The primary purpose of the formative assessment process is to provide evidence that is used by teachers and students to inform instruction and learning during the teaching/learning process.

3. *How does formative assessment fit into North Carolina's next generation assessment system?*

North Carolina's next generation, comprehensive, balanced assessment system includes formative assessment, interim/benchmark assessments, and summative assessments that are aligned to state standards. Formative assessment is an essential component of this system because it forms the foundation of teaching and learning. In contrast to summative assessment, formative assessment is more focused on collaboration in the classroom and identifying learning gaps that can be addressed before end-of-year assessments. Formative assessment should occur in the classroom more often than any other assessment.

4. *Are there "formative tests"?*

The definition that North Carolina has adopted defines formative assessment as a process. With this in mind, there is no such thing as a "formative test." Formative assessment is regarded as an ongoing process rather than a particular kind of test.

5. *What formative assessment strategies can be implemented during classroom instruction?*

There are a number of formative assessment strategies that can be implemented during classroom instruction. These range from informal observations and conversations to purposefully planned instructionally embedded techniques designed to elicit evidence of student learning to inform and adjust instruction. See the *Collecting and Documenting Evidence* professional development module on [North Carolina's Formative Assessment Learning Community's Online Network](#) (NC FALCON) for additional information on formative assessment strategies.

6. *What resources are available to educators that will provide them with a basic understanding of formative assessment and illustrate the role it may play in a comprehensive, balanced assessment system?*

The online professional development series modules located on [NC FALCON](#) are intended to serve as a primer for teachers wishing to learn more about how formative assessment can impact their instruction and help their students achieve targeted learning goals.

7. *What professional development modules are available to educators on NC FALCON?*

There are currently five different formative assessment modules in the online professional development series located on NC FALCON. The following is a list and description of the modules:

- **Importance of Formative Assessment**—An introduction to formative assessment and its role in North Carolina’s 21st century balanced assessment system.
- **Learning Targets and Criteria for Success**—An exercise in writing clear learning targets and defining criteria for success to help students answer the question, *Where am I going?*
- **Collecting and Documenting Evidence**—An exercise in collecting and documenting evidence of learning to help students answer the question, *Where am I now?*
- **Analyzing Evidence and Descriptive Feedback**—An exercise in analyzing evidence and providing descriptive feedback to help students answer the question, *How do I close the gap?*
- **Administrator’s Role in Formative Assessment**—An exploration of the administrator’s role in formative assessment, as outlined by the North Carolina *Standards for School Executives*, and its implementation in the school or district.

8. *How much time does it take to complete the modules?*

The modules and the activities contained within each module have been created so that the series can be completed in approximately seven hours. Approximately forty-five minutes to one hour of computer time is needed for each module. The modules are self-paced; therefore, individual participants control the pace and location of their learning.

9. *Is it better to complete the modules individually or with a school or district learning team?*

The modules have been designed so that they can be used by individual educators working independently or with a school or district learning team. The NCDPI recommends participants work collaboratively in learning teams. Working together, teachers may assist one another as they complete the modules and practice their formative assessment skills.

10. *Is CEU credit available for participants who complete any or all of the NC FALCON modules?*

At the completion of each module, participants will be able to print a certificate of completion which includes a recommendation for renewal credit or continuing education units (CEUs). Final awarding of CEUs must be approved by the local education agency (LEA). The LEA determines the content area and the number of CEUs granted.

11. *How do educators access the modules on NC FALCON?*

Locate NC FALCON at <https://center.ncsu.edu/nc/course/category.php?id=10>

1. Use an existing username and password to login
 - § Check to see if you linked to your primary district or school by clicking on “Request to Link to School/District”
 - § Review your current role(s) and school/district
 - § Edit or add the information if necessary

2. Find an existing account or recover login information
 - § Choose “Account Finder” to find an account if you believe you already have a user account
 - § Choose “Password Recovery” if you know you already have an account but have trouble with your login

3. Create a new account
 - § Choose “create new account” on the right side of the page
 - § Create login information as requested
 - § Enter a valid email address when creating a new account
 - § Validate your account when you receive the email (check spam or junk email if the confirmation email message is not received in your inbox)
 - § Login and follow the Link Request process – click on “Request to Link to School/District”
 - § Enter the required information/select the school or district you are requesting to link to by following the steps on the page
 - § Enroll in NC FALCON