

MMP Template

Brian Shevory

MMP Project

1) **Purpose/Goals:**

The purpose of this project is to share best practices in teaching and instruction with teachers. In particular, it is hoped that the teachers will learn some best practices of using formative assessment and feedback in their classes. They will identify methods that fit with their educational philosophies, course profiles, and their students' needs. I use screen casting methods to share with teachers some methods for assessing students' knowledge and skills. I will create several screencasts that highlight some methods and approaches to using formative assessment in classes.

2) **Rationale & Summary of Project:**

The topic of this project is formative assessment. I will attempt to teach in-service/pre-service teachers about brief/quick methods they can use in their classes to determine their students' current understanding and knowledge about topics/course content. The goal is to have teachers identify and choose specific methods of assessment that they can use in their courses that will fit with the content of their classes as well as their educational philosophies. This is an important topic because formative assessment is part of the learning process. As Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) have identified in *How Learning Works*, learning requires assessment for recalibration of instruction. Teachers will not be completely sure if their instruction is on target and reaching students unless they give frequent, formative assessment accompanied with feedback. The teachers cannot determine feedback without the assessment. Furthermore, formative feedback is also helpful for students in that it allows them to recognize where they are and the kinds of adjustments they need to make in their learning and efforts. I have heard the analogy between formative assessments and feedback and a GPS—with formative assessments and feedback, teachers and students get a better sense of where they are and where they need to go. Thus, I believe that enabling teachers with quick and engaging methods for assessing students' understanding is key.

For now, I would like to use a screencast to set this up as a means of broadcasting some of these methods of assessment. Teachers can access these different methods to review how to use them, and what the benefits and drawbacks are for certain methods. In addition, I would also like to use some web 2.0 tools that enable teachers to quickly assess their students and gather data based on their needs.

3) **Audience:**

This project is designed for both in service and pre-service teachers. The goal would be to provide some new strategies in assessment for teachers who want to improve instructional outcomes for their students. I would want the teachers to have some

background and familiarity with using technology, since there will be some different programs and applications mentioned in this professional development. In working with a broad swath of educators like this, there are definitely some things to take into account. One would be that there is a wide variety in experience and knowledge. Some teachers might come in with certain ideas about assessment and knowing students' ability levels. Thus, I would need to be ready to address preconceptions and possible misunderstandings about the nature of assessment. Sometimes, teachers might only think that assessment happens at the end of a unit, or at the end of the week. They may only think of assessment in the summative sense, rather than in a formative sense. In addition, I would need to plan for the fact that if I am working with in-service teachers, there may be a great deal of experience and ideas that some of these teachers already have. I would like to make some part of this interactive and provide some space for teachers to share their own ideas and resources for assessment.

For prior knowledge and experience, I suppose that teachers will come with some degree of experience and prior knowledge about assessment. This might be accurate in that they can share their expertise; however, it could also be problematic or contain misconceptions, in which case, I would need to address this in some of the initial information presented. Thus, providing some basic background ideas or information would be helpful. It might be useful to give some kind of pre-assessment to help teachers understand what the content is about, as well as present some information in an interactive manner.

For data collection, assessing teachers' prior knowledge and asking some general demographic information would be useful. I would probably offer some kind of post-training assessment/evaluation in which I asked for feedback about the delivery of the information and the interactivity of the design. I would do this possibly through google forms or other survey software.

4) **Overview of Your Instructional Plan and Your Learning Objective/s:**

Teachers will review and identify different aspects of formative assessment
Teachers will identify a method (or methods) of formative assessment that aligns with their educational philosophy, course outcomes, and students' needs.
Instruction will happen via pre-recorded screencasts
Teachers will share their experiences with using these methods on a wikipage (or some other interactive webpage in which they can post)
I will evaluate the objectives by using a survey evaluating the effectiveness of the module and the efficacy of teachers' experiences implementing and evaluating the methods (this will be self-report)

5) **Technological Tool/s & Rationale:**

I will use Jing (or another screen casting tool).
I will use wikispaces to provide a space for teachers to share resources and comment on their experiences of using the formative assessment methods
I will use google forms (or survey monkey/zoomerang) to create a survey to assess the module's effectiveness and any possible changes that may need to take place. I may also use google forms as a means to assess prior knowledge about assessment

6) **Learning Theories/Principles:**

Guiding much of the design and activities for this module will be Malcolm Knowles' theory of Andragogy which posits the important ideas that adults need to know the reason for learning (improve instruction and feedback), adults bring in their own experiences to their learning, and that adults often want to apply what they are learning in a practical setting in order to solve problems (Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, 2006). Those teachers using these instructional modules will most likely seek to integrate this information into their previous experiences and concepts of assessment. Furthermore, as Knowles explains, it is integral that those working with adults seek to bring in their own previous experiences.

Another theory that deals with experience is Schon's reflective practitioner Merriam et al., (2006). In Schon's theory, practitioners need to actively reflect on their learning prior to or after implementing a new skill or tool. This process of reflection should be guided, preferably by another more experienced individual. In this practice, the period of reflection for a practitioner serves as a means to, in Paigetian terms, accommodate and assimilate new information and ideas into existing structures. Thus, it provides the learner with a new or adjustment to an existing framework of knowledge and skills. This learning module hopefully enables teachers to practice some critical thinking and problem solving. All teachers, no matter what, are critical thinkers in that they must examine instructional practices and constantly make adjustments to differentiate and meet the needs of their students. Thus, this process involves some degree of being able to identify instructional problems, make appropriate adjustments, and determine whether the adjustments were effective or not. Similarly, enabling teachers to determine which assessment methods are most effective for their own classes will require them to be creative thinkers as well. They may need to make adjustments and adapt rather than adopt any methods or approaches to formative assessment. While there may not be any synchronous communication, enabling teachers to post reflections and experiences with implementing their assessment methods will create a level of communication that may move beyond the typical PD session. Providing the capacity for asynchronous communication creates a virtual resource for teachers to reference back to examine experiences, potential problems and benefits of using specific methods of formative assessment.

Furthermore, providing teachers with a variety of methods of assessment and possibly expanding their concepts of assessment may create more flexible teachers with a greater array of resources from which they can draw upon during their teaching. When teachers have a greater array of resources and feel more efficacious in their ability to instruct and assess their students, other teachers and administrators may view them as a resource within their school. This can help to create a cadre of teacher leaders, or at least promote leadership skills within the teacher as a resource for instructional methods.

7) **Timeline:**

I'm not really sure about a timeline for this project. I have used some of these screen casts before, and I have plenty of instructional materials about formative assessment already gathered. This would require synthesizing the material and writing out some scripts for the different methods of assessment. In addition, I would need to develop a pre-assessment using google forms (or other survey software), and create a wikispace for teachers to post their resources. I might also need to develop some kind of guided reflection for teachers. This can all be done over the course of the next month to month and a half.

References:

Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L.M. (2006). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.