Droichead – Overview of Assessment Types – Post-primary

Formative Assessment: Supporting Continuous Progression

1. Purpose

Formative assessments are an integral part of the learning process for both teachers and students. Their primary purpose is to **inform planning**, monitor learning, and promote progression. Here is how you can integrate formative assessments effectively:

2. Some Examples of Formative Assessments

1. **Diagnostic Questions**:
   - **Purpose**: Identify students' prior knowledge and misconceptions.
   - **Implementation**: Begin lessons with thought-provoking questions.
   - **Benefits**: Tailor your teaching approach based on their responses.

2. **Exit Tickets**:
   - **Purpose**: Gather feedback at the end of a class.
   - **Implementation**: Ask students to summarize key concepts or reflect on their learning.
   - **Benefits**: Insights for adjusting future lessons.

3. **Quizzes and Quick Checks**:
   - **Purpose**: Regularly gauge understanding.
   - **Implementation**: Use digital tools for instant feedback.
   - **Benefits**: Real-time insights into student comprehension.

4. **Observations and Discussions**:
   - **Purpose**: Evaluate student application of concepts.
   - **Implementation**: Engage in classroom discussions, group work, and peer interactions.
   - **Benefits**: Adjust teaching methods based on observations.

5. **Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment**:
   - **Purpose**: Encourage student reflection and peer feedback.
   - **Implementation**: Students evaluate their own progress and provide constructive input to peers.
   - **Benefits**: Fosters metacognition and ownership of learning.

6. **Graphic Organisers or Concept Maps**:
   - **Purpose**: Visual representation of knowledge.
   - **Implementation**: Students summarise information using the graphic organiser.
   - **Benefits**: Provides a structure to disjointed information.

3. Some Strategies for Effective Formative Assessment

- **Timelines**: Conduct formative assessments **frequently** during regular classes. Immediate feedback enhances learning.
- **Feedback**: Provide specific, actionable feedback. Focus on strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Adjust Instruction**: Use formative insights to adapt teaching methods. If students struggle with a concept, revisit it, or try a different approach.
- **Student-Centred Approach**: Tailor assessments to individual needs. Recognise that each student's learning journey is unique.
- **Success Criteria**: Suggest ways to attain learning outcomes. Examples include a sequence of instructions, a list of prompts or a checklist.

Summative Assessment: Evaluating Students' Learning

1. Purpose

- **Comprehensive Evaluation**: Summative assessments provide a review of students' learning at the end of an instructional unit. They allow teachers to gauge how well students have understood the material and achieved learning objectives.
- **Informing Instructional Decisions**: By analysing results, teachers can make informed decisions about effectiveness of their teaching methods, and individualised support for students.
- **Quality Improvement**: Summative assessments illustrate areas where students excel and areas that need improvement.

2. Some Examples of Summative Assessments

- **State Certificate Examinations**:
  - **Junior Certificate (JC)**
  - **Leaving Certificate (LC)**
  - **Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)**
  - **Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)**

3. Balancing Formative and Summative

- **Importance**: Both types of assessment contribute to student motivation and learning.
- **Feedback**: Regularly provide constructive feedback to students.
- **Adjust Instruction**: Use formative insights to adapt teaching methods.
- **Holistic View**: Consider the whole student experience, not just exam results.