



STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE: Formative Assessment Process in the Classroom

This document identifies the “gold standard” for the critical components of a systematic implementation and use of the formative assessment process developed by the Formative Assessment for Michigan Educators (FAME) project, an ongoing collaboration between the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC). The formative assessment process components and elements delineated within this strategy guide are most effectively practiced in an environment which promotes locally based teams collaborating around the use of student evidence of learning within the formative assessment process.

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Learning Point: What do we mean by Formative Assessment? [Formative Assessment](#)

<p>Critical Component</p> <p>How does this component contribute to the overall outcome of this practice?</p>	<p>“Gold Standard” for Implementing a Critical Component</p> <p>What would you see when this component is implemented well?</p>	<p>Progression of Stages to Achieve the Gold Standard of the Critical Component/Elements</p> <p>What stages might you see as you progress toward full implementation and use?</p>
<p>GUIDING QUESTION: Where are we (teacher and students) going?</p>		
<p>COMPONENT 1: PLANNING</p> <p>Indicators of Successful Practice for Component 1</p> <p><i>The teacher intentionally plans in advance.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher’s planning reflects formative assessment process knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of students.</i></p>	<p>ELEMENT 1.1: INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING</p> <p>Planning is based on knowledge of the content, standards, pedagogy, formative assessment process, and students.</p> <p>Learning Point: Planning: What role does it play in the formative assessment process? Instructional Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers systematically prepare for teaching and learning, including the identification of instructional targets, instructional methods, and the systematic and ongoing evaluation and management of the instructional and assessment processes. 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING IN THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At a beginning stage, the teacher plans the lesson in advance, but the planning does not include when or how evidence of student learning will be obtained, nor how the lesson might change as a result. In addition, the lesson is an isolated event and not connected to previous or future learning and assessment.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the second stage, the teacher plans the lesson in advance, and include when and how evidence of student learning will be</p>



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<p><i>Planning includes when and how evidence of student learning will be obtained and used.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher plans for when student learning does not progress as planned.</i></p> <p><i>Students are able to build knowledge over time.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional planning is informed by the teacher’s knowledge about what students already know and can do. • Teachers intentionally plan the steps in the lesson based on: target for learning, instruction to be provided, when and how evidence of student learning will be gathered, how this evidence will be analyzed and what types of change in instruction and student learning might be necessary, depending on student evidence. • Intentional planning is undertaken to ensure that the students understand: the target for their learning, the criteria for meeting that target, and ways to receive support when needed. • Instructional planning focuses on several key aspects of planning: when or how evidence of student learning will be obtained, different levels of student understanding that might be shown, and how the lesson might change as a result of evidence of student understanding. 	<p>obtained. If changes to instruction are made during the lesson, they are made extemporaneously. The lesson appears to have some connection to past and future instruction, but changes to instruction are not articulated or intentional.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, the teacher plans the lesson in advance, and includes when and how evidence of student learning will be obtained. However, the teacher does not plan what to do if student learning is not proceeding as planned. Connections are made to past and/or future learning goals and assessment.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, the teacher plans the lesson in advance and includes when and how evidence of student learning will be obtained. The teacher also plans what to do if student learning does not proceed as planned. Connections are made to past and/or future learning and assessment to situate students’ understanding within the broader learning goals.</p>



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<p><i>Component 2: Learning Target Use</i></p> <p>Indicators of Successful Practice for Component 2</p> <p><i>The teacher prepares content for the learning target in advance of the lesson.</i></p> <p><i>The learning target for the lesson focuses on concepts/skills from content/grade level standards.</i></p> <p><i>The learning target uses student-friendly language.</i></p> <p><i>The learning target is connected to the instructional activities/ performance of understanding.</i></p> <p><i>Use of learning targets reflects formative assessment process knowledge, content knowledge,</i></p>	<p>ELEMENT 2.1: DESIGNING LEARNING TARGETS</p> <p>The use and communication of daily instructional aims with the students.</p> <p>Learning Point: What Are Learning Targets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning targets guide a teacher’s instructional decisions and formative assessment practices. • Designing learning targets includes the following elements: • Description of what students will learn (also known as a learning target or learning target statement) • Learning experiences students will engage in to demonstrate their attainment of the new knowledge and skills (this is often referred to as performance task or performance of understanding) • Criteria so that students know they have reached the learning target (also referred to as success criteria) • Connection of the lesson to previous and future learning experiences and targets (see ALN Learning Point on Learning Progressions) so students understand 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF DESIGNING LEARNING TARGETS RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, effective learning targets (that focus on concepts/skills from content/grade level standards, use student-friendly language, and are connected to the instructional activities and performance of understanding) are posted but not mentioned.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, effective learning targets are stated by the teacher but not connected to instruction.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, effective learning targets are stated and connected to the day’s activities.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, learning targets are stated and connected to the day’s instructional activities. The knowledge and skills needed to accomplish the learning targets are described. The teacher refers back to the learning target throughout the lesson to re-orient students.</p>



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<p><i>pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of students.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher clearly communicates the learning target to the students at the beginning of the lesson and makes connections to past and future learning.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher explains the knowledge and skills needed to accomplish the learning target.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher references the learning target throughout the lesson and gathers evidence of student understanding of the target.</i></p>	<p>why they are learning what they are learning and what learning will follow the current lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction of the lesson-sized chunk of knowledge and skills to students <p>ELEMENT 2.2: LEARNING PROGRESSIONS</p> <p>Connection of the learning target to past and future learning</p> <p>Learning Point: What are learning progressions?</p> <p>The teacher utilizes an awareness of different learning paths to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand how to connect the learning target for a given lesson to previous and future learning; • identify specific concepts and skills for student learning; • determine learning targets and success criteria; • connect instruction to learning goals; • collect relevant evidence of student understanding; 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF INSTRUCTION INVOLVING LEARNING PROGRESSIONS RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, the teacher does not connect learning targets to past or future learning. The learning path may not be known or acknowledged with students.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, the teacher mentions past or future learning targets, but they are not clearly connected to the current learning targets. The learning path may be unclear to students.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, the teacher makes some effort to explain to students how current learning targets follow past learning targets to build toward achievement of a content</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide feedback to students about the next step in their learning; and • identify and address individual student learning needs 	<p>standard. A general description of the learning path is presented to students.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage the teacher explicitly connects learning targets to past and future learning, reflecting the path of learning toward achievement of a content standard. The students understand how the current lessons fits within a sequence of learning and contributes to a broader purpose for learning.</p>
	<p>ELEMENT 2.3: MODELS OF PROFICIENT ACHIEVEMENT</p> <p>Examples of successful work for students to use as a guide.</p> <p>Learning Point: Models of proficient achievement: Why are they important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher explicitly teaches students how to use the model, and students consistently use the model to guide their independent work. • The teacher and students engage in discourse about the model to improve their understanding of the learning target and success criteria. 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF USE OF MODELS OF PROFICIENT ACHIEVEMENT RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, no models of “good work” (when appropriate) on the learning target is provided to students.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, a model of “good work” on the learning target is shown to students, but is not used by students to guide their work.</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have opportunities to reflect on the model of proficient achievement and to articulate what they notice about the model as well as their own work. 	<p>Stage 3: At the third stage, a model of “good work” on the learning target is provided. Some students use this to guide their work on the learning target.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, a model of “good work” on the learning target is provided or jointly constructed. Students are taught how to use the model. Students use the model to guide their independent work.</p>



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<p>GUIDING QUESTION: What does the student understand now?</p>		
<p>COMPONENT 3: ELICITING EVIDENCE OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING</p> <p>Indicators of Successful Practice for Component 3</p> <p><i>The teacher uses various strategies to activate students’ prior knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher gathers evidence of understanding of the learning targets from all students.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher intentionally uses a range of questioning strategies.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher intentionally uses questions to deliver content and monitor the</i></p>	<p>ELEMENT 3.1: ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>The opportunity for students to self-assess or connect new ideas to their prior knowledge</p> <p>Learning Point: Prior knowledge: Why is activating it important in the formative assessment process?</p> <p>Teacher utilizes a variety of strategies to activate prior knowledge including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept maps • Charts that capture what students Know, what they Want to know more about, and what they Learned (KWL) • Anticipation guides, or reflection journals 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, no effort is made by the teacher to activate prior knowledge on a new topic.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, the teacher mentions prerequisite concepts but does not engage students with them.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, the teacher asks students to think about past learning experiences in preparation for upcoming learning.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, the teacher helps the students to self-assess or to connect new ideas to their prior knowledge. Students use concept maps or other tools to connect the current learning targets to past knowledge.</p>



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<p><i>understanding of the class as well as individual students.</i></p> <p><i>Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>Students have varied means to demonstrate their knowledge.</i></p>	<p>ELEMENT 3.2: GATHERING EVIDENCE OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of a variety of tools and strategies to gather information about student thinking and understanding regarding the learning targets from all students. • Learning Point: What is gathering evidence of student understanding? • Various ways are used by a teacher to gather evidence of student understanding during a lesson, and several different ways are used (to most accurately assess students). • The teacher elicits evidence during instruction by using what they already do, rather than trying to add several new evidence collection strategies to current practice • Three instructional routines support teachers in gathering evidence of student understanding during instruction. Gathering evidence through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ academic dialogue ○ observation and examination of student work ○ conferences and one-on-one conversation 	<p>THE FOUR STAGES OF GATHERING EVIDENCE OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: The teacher does not gather information about student thinking and understanding during the lesson.</p> <p>Stage 2: The teacher asks questions of a few students to sample student understanding of the learning targets. The teacher does not appear to use the evidence to determine what comes next and students appear to be unsure about what is expected.</p> <p>Stage 3: The teacher uses strategies and tools such as observations, verbal questioning, non-verbal self-assessments (e.g. thumbs up/down/sideways), or written work to gather information about student thinking and understanding of the learning targets from some students. The teacher appears to use the evidence to determine what comes next, but</p>



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		<p>students appear to be unsure about what will be done.</p> <p>Stage 4: The teacher uses a variety of integrated strategies and tools (observations, student conferences, questioning strategies, or written work) tightly aligned to the learning targets to elicit evidence of thinking or understanding from all students. The teacher appears to analyze students’ thinking and other evidence and clearly indicates how the information will be used to inform feedback and instructional next steps.</p>
	<p>ELEMENT 3.3: TEACHER QUESTIONING STRATEGIES</p> <p>The intentional use of questions for students to explain their thinking or to connect their idea to another student’s response.</p> <p>Learning Point: What are teacher questioning strategies?</p> <p>Effective questioning strategies facilitate connections to prior knowledge, support a classroom culture that values learning and risk-taking, and promote cognitive</p>	<p>FOUR STAGES OF TEACHER QUESTIONING STRATEGIES RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, the teacher is generally looking for the correct answer and often produces it if students fail to respond.</p>



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	<p>development. The next section describes elements of effective questioning strategies that educators can use to elicit evidence of student understanding</p>	<p>Stage 2: At the next stage, the teacher often scaffolds students’ thinking to help them produce the correct answer.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, the teacher often asks for elaboration or clarification of a student’s answer.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, the teacher often asks students to explain how they arrived at an answer or how their answer connects to another student’s response.</p>
	<p>ELEMENT 3.4: SKILLFUL USE OF QUESTIONS</p> <p>A focus on the purpose, timing, and audience for questions to deliver content and to check students’ understanding.</p> <p>Learning Point: What is skillful use of questions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skillful use of questions is the intentional use of different questioning strategies to deliver content and gather information about student thinking and understanding with a specific focus on who is being asked the questions, when questions are being asked, 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF SKILLFUL USE OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, questions are asked to review past class work or as an engaging way to deliver new content.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, questions are mostly for delivering content, but a few are used to</p>



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	<p>and the purpose they will serve to gather evidence of student understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A key aspect of skillful use of different types of questions is the planned use of questions to check for student understanding from the entire class as well as from individual students. • Students understand that questioning is about the opportunity to share current understanding and explore thinking to move learning forward rather than trying to “get it right.” 	<p>gather information about student thinking and understanding.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, questions that are used for delivering content are also used to check students’ understanding. The teacher primarily monitors the overall understanding of the class.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, questions that are used for delivering content are also used to check students’ understanding. The teacher monitors the understanding of the class, but also formally keeps track of individuals’ understanding during the class period.</p>

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<p>GUIDING QUESTION: How do we know (teacher and students) get to the learning target?</p>		
<p>COMPONENT 4: FORMATIVE FEEDBACK</p> <p>Indicators of Successful Practice for Component 4</p> <p><i>A teacher creates a classroom culture where feedback about learning is valued.</i></p> <p><i>Feedback is both descriptive and actionable.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher monitors students’ understanding of the feedback and scaffolds their revisions.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher models the peer assessment process.</i></p>	<p>ELEMENT 4.1: FEEDBACK FROM THE TEACHER</p> <p>Verbal or written feedback is given to a student to improve his or her achievement of the learning target.</p> <p>Learning Point: What is formative feedback? Why is feedback from the teacher important?</p> <p>The following points highlight the salient features of effective feedback (Susan Brookhart, 2017).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References success criteria • Describes how to improve the work, rather than judge • Is positive, clear, and specific • Is ongoing and consistent • Makes actionable and manageable suggestions for improvement • Helps students become reflective learners 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF FEEDBACK FROM THE TEACHER RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, students receive no feedback or the feedback is mainly evaluative (e.g., correct/incorrect or “good job”).</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, some feedback is descriptive, but it is too directive (essentially gives the answer) or too vague (not “actionable” – student doesn’t understand what to do next).</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, feedback is descriptive and actionable, focusing on both the outcome of the task (the answer) and how the student arrived at the answer (the process).</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, feedback is descriptive and actionable, focusing on both the outcome and the process. The teacher monitors</p>

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<p><i>Students are provided with supports such as rubrics or other criteria to peer assess.</i></p> <p><i>Students are engaged in the peer assessment process and accept and use feedback from each other.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher models the self-assessment process.</i></p> <p><i>The students use a rubric, model, or other criteria to assess their own work.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is followed by opportunities for students to use the feedback to enhance their work • Occurs in an environment where feedback is valued <p>ELEMENT 4.2: FEEDBACK FROM PEERS</p> <p>Feedback from one student to another student about his or her learning in relation to a learning target occurs.</p> <p>Learning Point: <u>What is feedback from peers?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from peers can be defined as the process through which a student gathers information and feedback from another student’s learning in relation to a learning target. • This process involves three steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognize the desired learning goal ○ Provide feedback on the quality of another student’s thinking and performance relative to the success criteria so that the other student is able to gather evidence about his or her current position in relation to the learning goal 	<p>students’ understanding of the feedback and scaffolds their revisions.</p> <p>FOUR STAGES OF FEEDBACK FROM PEERS RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, students grade each other’s work and only provide a score or the correct answer.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, students do peer assessment, but are not provided with supports, such as rubrics or other criteria. Students provide a mix of evaluative and descriptive feedback on each other’s work.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, students do peer assessment and are provided with supports such as rubrics or other criteria. Feedback is both descriptive and actionable.</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information including understanding, strategies, and skills to close the gap between the student’s current position and the desired performance 	<p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, students do peer assessment and are provided with supports such as rubrics or other criteria. Feedback is both descriptive and actionable. Students are engaged in this process and accept and use feedback from each other.</p>
	<p>ELEMENT 4.3: STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT</p> <p>The process in which students gather information and reflect on their own learning in relation to the learning goal.</p> <p>Learning Point: What is self-assessment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student self-assessment can be defined as the process in which students gather information about and reflect on their own learning in relation to a learning goal. • This process involves three parts in which students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ recognize and understand the desired learning goal, ○ monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and performance to gather evidence about their 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, while students don’t evaluate their own work, they may keep track of their overall performance. They don’t reflect on what they did to earn their grades or make plans to improve their learning.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, students rate their understanding of a learning target (e.g., by using a scale of 1-4).</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, students use a rubric, model or other criteria to assess their own work. It is unclear whether they plan</p>



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	<p>current position in relation to the learning goal, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ acquire the understanding, strategies, and skills to close the gap between their current position and the desired performance. 	<p>revision in their work based on their self-assessments.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, students use a rubric, model or other criteria to assess their own work. They plan revisions in their work and set goals for their learning based on their self-assessment.</p>
<p>COMPONENT 5: INSTRUCTIONAL AND LEARNING DECISIONS</p> <p>Indicators of Success Practice for Component 5</p> <p><i>The teacher intentionally analyzes student evidence with next steps in mind.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher makes instructional decisions, citing specific evidence of student learning.</i></p>	<p>ELEMENT 5.1: ADJUSTMENTS TO TEACHING</p> <p>Adjustments to teaching can be defined as the ongoing changes that teachers make to adjust teaching and learning based on evidence in order to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional aims.</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustment to teaching?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher uses evidence of student understanding in relation to learning targets to verify or modify teaching and learning activities. After teachers interpret the evidence and identify the current status of student learning, they need to make decisions and take action to respond to students’ learning needs. 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF ADJUSTMENTS TO TEACHING RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, the teacher does not make instructional decision based on evidence of student learning.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the second stage, the teacher makes instructional decisions, but is not clear about the reasons for making the decisions.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, the teacher makes instructional decisions, and provides a rational that uses vague evidence from students (e.g., “I don’t think you got this, so I am going to review</p>



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<p><i>Additional instruction is provided to all students if needed or only the subset of students who need it.</i></p> <p><i>Students receive feedback and use it to improve their current and future work.</i></p> <p><i>Students set goals and make adjustments in learning tactics based on feedback.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher may make adjustments in: (1) lesson plans, (2) instructional approaches, (3) types of assessment to gather further information on what students know or do not understand. These adjustments occur both during planned, reflective work time and moment to moment in the classroom when the teacher continually considers evidence to guide instructional decisions <p>Adjustments to teaching are based on the ongoing analysis of teaching and learning throughout the formative assessment process.</p>	<p>it again”). Additional instruction is provided to all students.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, the teacher makes instructional decision, citing specific evidence of student understanding. Additional instruction is provided to all students, if needed, or only the subset of students who need it.</p>
	<p>ELEMENT 5.2: ADJUSTMENTS TO LEARNING</p> <p>Students make use of feedback for improvement.</p> <p>Learning Point: What are adjustments to learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher can support students in their use of feedback to make adjustments in their learning by: ensuring students receive feedback—from self, from peers, or from the teacher; 	<p>FOUR STAGES OF ADJUSTMENTS TO LEARNING RELATED TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</p> <p>Stage 1: At the beginning stage, there is no opportunity or encouragement for students to use feedback.</p> <p>Stage 2: At the next stage, students receive feedback and are encouraged to use it, without</p>



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<p>Critical Component</p> <p>How does this component contribute to the overall outcome of this practice?</p>	<p>“Gold Standard” for Implementing a Critical Component</p> <p>What would you see when this component is implemented well?</p>	<p>Progression of Stages to Achieve the Gold Standard of the Critical Component/Elements</p> <p>What stages might you see as you progress toward full implementation and use?</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modeling how to use feedback to adjust learning tactics; • providing opportunities for students to use the feedback; and • supporting students to set goals and make adjustments in learning tactics based on the feedback. 	<p>the opportunity to use the feedback to improve their work.</p> <p>Stage 3: At the third stage, students receive feedback and use it to make changes in their current work, but do not necessarily adjust their future learning strategies.</p> <p>Stage 4: At the fourth stage, students receive feedback and use it to improve their current and future work, often setting goals and making adjustment in learning tactics based on the feedback.</p>