



# Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

Assessing, providing feedback, and reporting on student learning are critical components of the role of teachers in Australia. Research confirms that effective assessment, feedback and reporting practices enhance student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement by creating a supportive and responsive learning environment.

## Assessing student learning

Assessment is a critical component of the teaching and learning process in Australian schools. By assessing student learning, teachers can identify current levels of achievement and tailor their teaching programs to meet the specific needs of each student, ensuring that no child is left behind. This process helps in building a more inclusive and equitable education system where every student can succeed.

Schools in Australia use a variety of assessment methods to monitor and evaluate student learning which can be broadly categorised into three main types: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Diagnostic assessments are used at the beginning of a learning period to identify students' existing knowledge, skills, and understanding. They help teachers plan their lessons by highlighting areas where students may need additional support or enrichment. Formative assessments, which are ongoing and provide feedback to both teachers and students to inform teaching and learning practices. Summative assessments, on the other hand, are used to evaluate student learning at the end of a teaching period and are often used for reporting purposes.

In addition, standardised tests such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) are conducted annually for students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 to assess their proficiency in literacy and numeracy. By using diverse assessment tools, teachers gain a comprehensive understanding of their students' strengths and areas for improvement.

*"I use a range of assessment tools to meet the varied needs of my students. They can express their understanding orally, through written work, or multimedia. I allow them to use voice-to-text if that works best for them. I always have marking rubrics, so students know how to be successful. The rubrics are structured to the achievement standards of the Australian curriculum, but I transfer them to student-friendly language so that students can access it themselves. This has really opened up the curriculum and their understanding of what's required from me as a teacher, and what I am requiring from them as students."*

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**Highly Accomplished Teacher - Secondary**

## Providing feedback to students

Contemporary Australian pedagogy involves providing timely and specific feedback that helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for their academic growth. By providing clear, specific, and actionable feedback, teachers can guide students towards better performance and deeper understanding of the subject matter.

In Australia, teachers employ various strategies to provide constructive feedback. One method is combining feedback with instruction, ensuring that students understand the learning objectives and success criteria.

Teachers also focus on providing timely and specific feedback, which helps students make immediate improvements. Additionally, peer and self-assessment are encouraged, allowing students to reflect on their own work and learn from their peers. These practices not only enhance student learning but also foster a collaborative and supportive classroom environment.

*“Students expect feedback through formative assessments, which may be peer-reviewed, quizzes, self-assessment, or my anecdotal evidence from observations. Formative and summative assessment tasks must align with learning objectives and outcomes, using a feedback loop. Formative assessment data informs my next steps and where I need to adjust. Communication with all stakeholders and clear assessment expectations, criteria, rubrics, and data-driven analysis help identify areas of strength and growth, informing future direction.”*

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#### Lead Teacher - Secondary

### Making consistent judgments and interpreting student data

Teachers in Australia engage in collaborative assessment practices, where they work together to analyse student data and make consistent and comparable judgments about student achievement. Assessment moderation plays a key role and involves collaboration between colleagues to align standards for judgement. This collaborative approach ensures that assessments are fair and reliable, and it helps in building a professional learning community among teachers.

In Australian schools, assessment data is analysed to identify trends and patterns in student performance to assist teachers make informed decisions about their teaching strategies. Using this information allows teachers to adjust their instructional approaches and provide targeted support to students. By understanding and utilising student data, they enhance their teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes.

*“In tracking student progress, a lot of it comes down to formative assessment tasks where they’re able to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge without too much pressure. I find entry and exit tickets are a really good way of understanding how they’re going. We also use standardised testing and school-based tests to track progress. With those, I like to have a bit of a traffic light system that I won’t show the students, but I know where they’re going, how they’re going, and if they need extra support, which informs my planning.”*

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#### Highly Accomplished Teacher - Secondary

### Reporting on student achievement

Teachers in Australia report on student progress through a combination of formal and informal methods to ensure comprehensive communication with students, parents, and carers.

Schools provide formal written reports for parents and carers. Employers specify when and how many formal written reports should be provided for parents and carers. These reports typically include grades or achievement levels based on the Australian Curriculum standards, along with comments on the student’s performance in various subjects. The reports aim to provide a clear picture of the student’s academic achievements and areas that may need further attention.

Another common method of reporting is parent-teacher interviews, where teachers discuss a student’s progress, strengths, and areas for improvement directly with parents. These interviews provide an opportunity for personalised feedback and collaborative goal setting.

Teachers maintain regular communication updating parents and carers on student progress in between formal reporting periods through informal channels such as the collaborative curriculum planning process, emails or phone calls. In the early years or primary phases of schooling it is not uncommon for parents to take their children to school or pick them up at the end of the school day providing further opportunity for teachers to share updates on student progress and achievements.

*"I regularly use platforms such as Seesaw to share student learning with the parent community. This helps with fostering transparency and strengthening home school connections to track data and monitor student progress in the classroom. Engaging with parents is [a] crucial aspect as families play an important role in their children's education - regular communication, whether through emails, reports or parent teacher conferences, helps establish trust and ensures parents feel involved in their child's learning journey."*

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**Lead Teacher - Primary**

### **Take action: Feedback**

Watch AITSL's *In the Classroom* video to see how Ayse structures her learning environment by creating learning intentions and success criteria. Her learning maps provide opportunities for explicit feedback about how students are progressing in their learning.

