

DEVELOPING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: ACTION PLANNING GUIDE

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Overview

This *Developing formative assessment: Action planning guide* (guide) complements three case studies that describe Australian schools at different stages of developing their formative assessment practice.

The aim of this guide and the accompanying case studies is to assist teachers and school leaders to identify, undertake, reflect, apply and evaluate professional learning to improve formative assessment practices and processes in line with school improvement goals. Teachers and school leaders may choose to undertake this professional learning individually, with a mentor, collaboratively with colleagues during in-school professional learning sessions or as a leadership team.

How to use this guide

Full of practical, real-life examples from schools across Australia, this guide and the accompanying case studies have been designed to strengthen your formative assessment practice and knowledge.

This guide is underpinned by the [High Quality Professional Learning \(HQPL\) Cycle¹](#), which supports a whole-school approach to professional learning that aligns with the following steps:

Step 1: Prepare for and identify professional learning

Step 2: Select, undertake and reflect on professional learning

Step 3: Apply professional learning

Step 4: Evaluate overall impact and determine next steps.

Key: There are many ways to engage with and apply the information presented within this guide. The key below depicts the symbols and headings that you can expect to see throughout this guide.



Reflect



Apply



Resources



Professional conversation

Intended learning outcomes

To be able to:

- identify formative assessment professional learning needs
- select, undertake and reflect on formative assessment professional learning
- apply formative assessment professional learning to school context
- evaluate formative assessment professional learning.

Step 1: Prepare for and identify professional learning

Whether you are a teacher or a school leader, effective professional learning follows a continuous learning cycle, as represented by the [High Quality Professional Learning \(HQPL\) Cycle](#) (see Figure 1 below).

The first step in this cycle helps you identify what your professional learning needs are. To help you determine what your formative assessment professional learning needs are, ensure you are familiar with **Stage 1** of the [HQPL Cycle](#).



Figure 1: High Quality Professional Learning (HQPL) Cycle



Resources for teachers

For more information on how to prepare for and identify your or your school's formative assessment starting point, look at the links below. You may wish to explore these before moving on to Step 2.

- AITSL's [Improving Teacher Professional Learning²](#).
- The *Formative assessment rubric for teachers* aims to help teachers identify their individual starting points and set targeted goals to strengthen their formative assessment practice.



Resources for school leaders

These resources can help you to understand your school's starting point for formative assessment. They can then guide you to create the necessary conditions for implementing and embedding high quality professional learning and effective formative assessment practice.

- The *Formative assessment rubric for schools* is designed to help school leaders reflect on the consistency and quality of formative assessment practice throughout a school.

- *Evidence for Learning's Putting evidence to work: A school's guide to implementation*³ aims to help school leaders understand how they can create the right conditions for implementation, as well as a structured process for planning, delivering, and sustaining change.
- *AITSL's Enabling High Quality Professional Learning: A practical guide for leaders*⁴ supports leaders to gain a better understanding of the HQPL cycle and encourages high quality professional learning.
- The *Formative assessment implementation guides for school leaders* provide more information on how to create the conditions for adopting and embedding effective formative assessment practices at your school.
- The *Teacher collaboration guides for formative assessment* help teachers create an environment of continuous improvement and sharing of practice and evidence-based strategies.



Reflect

To help identify professional learning for formative assessment relevant to your, or your school's needs, consider the following:

- What is your development goal for formative assessment? What are your intended learning outcomes?
- What is your school's development goal in relation to formative assessment? What is the intended learning outcome for your school?

Step 2: Select, undertake and reflect on professional learning

The case studies highlight examples of high-impact formative assessment practice in real school settings. Teachers and school leaders share how they identify, implement and develop formative assessment practices. They share the challenges and the impact formative assessment has had on teaching and learning.

Before you explore the case studies, revisit **Stage 2** of the [HQPL Cycle](#) to help select professional learning.

Then, explore the three case studies to help you identify a topic that relates to your professional learning need. Each case study has a different focus, outlined below:

Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
<p><i>Formative assessment in practice</i></p> <p>Shares effective formative assessment techniques that teachers and school leaders use to assess student learning in schools.</p>	<p><i>Implementing formative assessment in schools</i></p> <p>Depicts a wide range of approaches to school-wide formative assessment implementation and their challenges.</p>	<p><i>Developing formative assessment practice</i></p> <p>Describes a range of approaches to building teacher capacity and consistency in formative assessment practice across schools.</p>



When you have selected the case study that is most aligned to your professional learning need, it's time to view the case studies and undertake learning. Use the table below to help capture your notes while viewing the case studies.

Table 1: Template for case study note-taking

What formative assessment techniques are described in the case study?	School techniques:	Teaching techniques:	
How were the formative assessment techniques implemented?			
What were the challenges of implementing these formative assessment techniques?			
What were the benefits of these formative assessment techniques?	School:	Teachers:	Students:
What is the underpinning pedagogical approach in this case study?			
Other observation notes			



Reflect

Once you have viewed your chosen case study/studies, take some time to reflect. Consider the particular formative assessment techniques or approaches you saw that could be relevant for your context. Use the questions below to guide your thinking:

- What have you learnt from viewing the case study/studies? How could this learning enhance your practice?
- How does this case study relate to your intended learning outcome, development goal, and/or school improvement goal?
- What formative assessment techniques did you identify and how would you apply them to your own practice?
- How do these formative assessment techniques align with your school's pedagogical approach?
- What barriers can you identify to applying these techniques to your own or your school's practice?
- What support would you and/or your school need to implement this technique?
- How do you think students and/or teachers would respond to these techniques?



Professional conversation

Seek out a colleague or a mentor to discuss your reflections on the questions above. Then, work together to determine two formative assessment techniques that you could try in your classroom or school.

Discuss the potential benefits of the techniques, and the challenges and key implementation considerations that you can think of. Consider how you might overcome these.

Step 3: Apply professional learning

Now that you have considered how formative techniques or approaches from the case study/studies could be applied to your school context, it's time to create an action plan. Before looking at the questions below, revisit **Stage 3** of the [HQPL Cycle](#) to help with applying and refining learning.



Apply

Consider the following questions to help clarify what you will need to include to plan for implementation:

- What technique will you apply to your class/school? Why?
- When will you begin to apply this technique?
- To which cohort or group will you implement the technique? For example, a class, or a group of teachers?
- How long do you plan to implement this technique? How long will you need to implement the technique to see an impact?
- How will you measure the impact? (for example, learner data and feedback, peer assessment and reflection, moderation of learner assessment tasks using work samples etc).
- What support is required? From whom/what (resources/tools etc)?



Reflect

After you have implemented your chosen formative assessment technique, reflect on how it went:

- What did you observe?
- How did the students/teachers respond?
- What was the impact?

Step 4: Evaluate overall impact and determine next steps

Reflect on any changes to your formative assessment practice to help you evaluate the overall impact of your professional learning.

To help you evaluate the overall impact, revisit **Stage 4** of the [HQPL Cycle](#). Then, refer to the evaluation flowchart below to help you identify next steps (see Figure 2 on the next page).

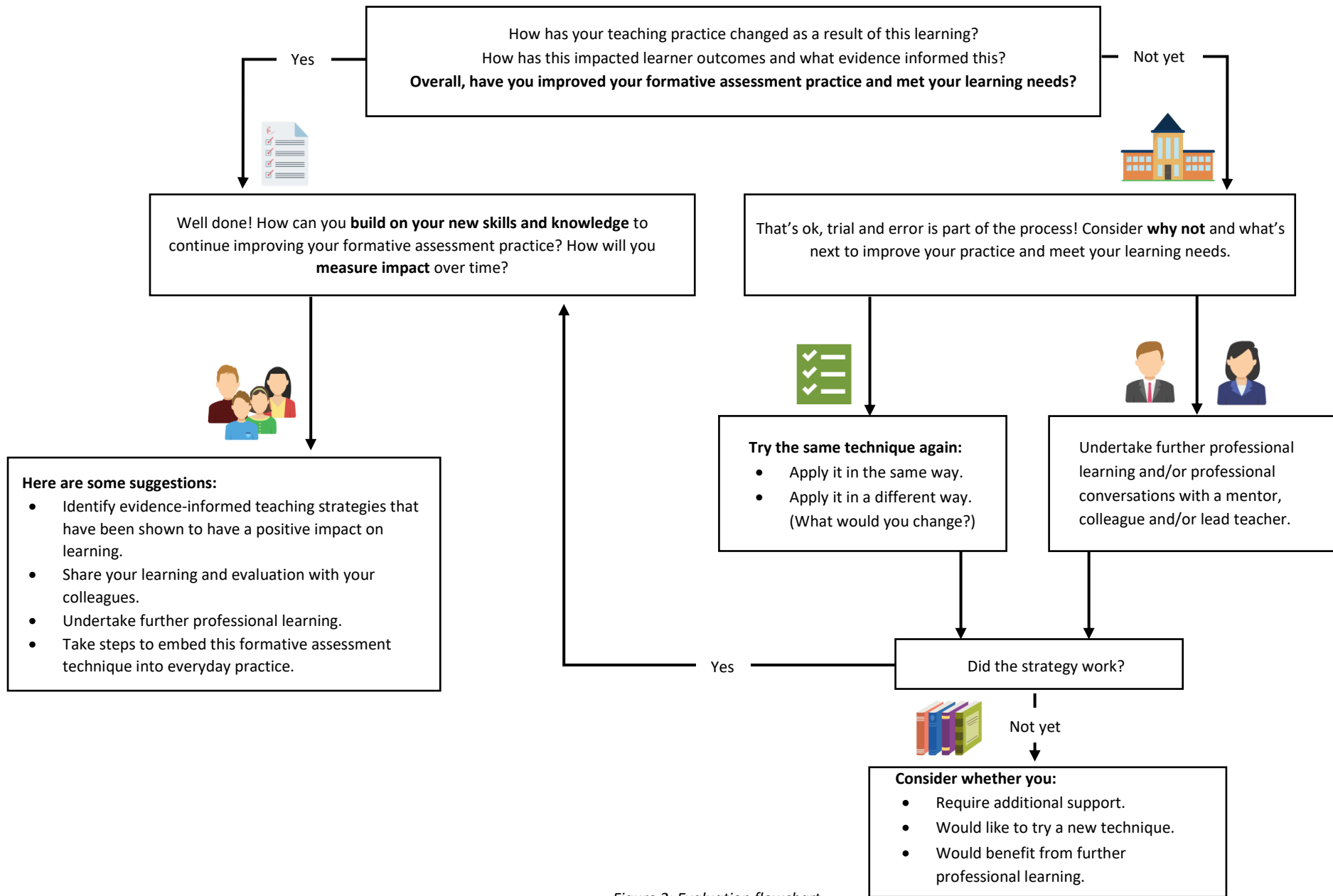


Figure 2: Evaluation flowchart

Professional learning prototype developed for the Online Formative Assessment Initiative.



Resources

If you would like to evaluate the impact of formative assessment in a group, look at the *Teacher collaboration guides for formative assessment: Evaluating the impact of formative assessment practice* (guide 6).

What's next?

Congratulations! You have successfully identified, selected, applied and evaluated your formative assessment professional learning.

Here are some suggestions for further developing your formative assessment practice to support a culture of continuous improvement:

- Share your learning and new formative assessment techniques with your colleagues.
To help you do this, view:
 - AITSL's [classroom observations strategies](#)⁵, which share evidence-based strategies to develop practice.
- View the other case studies to help you identify another professional learning need and continue working through the [HQPL Cycle](#).
- View the Online Formative Assessment Initiative's suite of formative assessment professional learning prototypes:
 - *Formative assessment modules* to learn about evidence-based formative assessment practices and implementation approaches
 - *Formative assessment implementation guides for school leaders* to create conditions for adopting or embedding focused and sustained formative assessment practice
 - *Formative assessment rubric for teachers or schools* to compare your results before and after undertaking professional learning
 - *Teacher collaboration guides for formative assessment*, which help leading teachers create an environment of continuous improvement and sharing of practice and evidence-based strategies.

References

- ¹ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2012, [High Quality Professional Learning \(HQPL\) Cycle](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/hqpl/enabling-the-high-quality-professional-learning-cycle---for-leaders.pdf), AITSL, Melbourne
- ² Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2012, [Improving Teacher Professional Learning](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach/improve-practice/improving-teacher-professional-learning), AITSL, Melbourne
- ³ Evidence for Learning, Guidance Reports: [Evidence for Learning's Putting evidence to work: A school's guide to implementation](https://evidenceforlearning.org.au/guidance-reports/putting-evidence-to-work-a-schools-guide-to-implementation/), Australia
- ⁴ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2017, [Enabling High Quality Professional Learning: A practical guide for leaders](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/lead-develop/develop-others/classroom-observation), AITSL, Melbourne
- ⁵ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, [Discover trusted strategies to improve classroom practice](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/lead-develop/develop-others/classroom-observation), AITSL, Melbourne