

## Classroom-Based Assessment

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### Some Common Ways to Look at Assessment Results

- Formative assessment: How are they doing?
- Summative assessment: How did they do?
- Norm-referenced assessment: How did they do compared to the average?
- Criterion-referenced assessment: How did they do compared to some criterion or standard?
- These are sometimes called *interpretive frameworks*

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### What is classroom-based assessment (CBA)?

- Purpose: to provide teachers and students with information to improve teaching and learning
- Typically used for formative assessment (compare *summative*)
- Often referred to as "assessment for learning" (vs. assessment of learning)
- Feeds back into the teaching and learning process.
- Should occur frequently, and be performed at the same time as teaching
- Low-stakes, often ungraded
- Often is the same as the teacher paying attention systematically to the students and their progress
- Activities/tasks often look a lot like learning activities

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**Four Stages of Formative Assessment  
(MacDonald et al., 2015)**

1. Design and teach lessons.
  - o Build opportunities into lessons to gather samples of the target language
2. Sample students' language.
  - o Collect the samples
3. Analyze
  - o Identify where they are in terms of language learning—*was the student successful at this task?*
  - o Consider how to adjust instruction as necessary
4. Provide formative feedback
  - o Tell students what they are doing well at and what they can do to improve
  - o Adjust your instruction to meet the students' needs

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**What does CBA involve?**

- Continual, explicit feedback to students to assist them in answering these questions:
  - o Where am I going?
  - o Where am I now?
  - o How can I close the gap between the two?
- Black & William (1998): Seven findings about effective CBA...

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**Black & William (1998):  
Research Findings about CBA (1/2)**

1. Feedback to students should:
  - o be about the quality of their work,
  - o advise what they can do to improve, and
  - o avoid comparisons with other students.
2. Students should be trained in self-assessment, so they can:
  - o understand the main purposes of their learning,
  - o and thus grasp what they need to do to meet course goals.
3. Each piece of teaching should include opportunities for students to express their understanding.
4. CBA dialogue between teachers and students should be:
  - o thoughtful, reflective, and focused, and
  - o conducted so that students have an opportunity to think and express their ideas.

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**Black & Wiliam (1998):  
Research Findings about CBA (2/2)**

- 5. Any feedback (on tests, seatwork, homework, etc.) should give each student guidance on how to improve.
- 6. Each student should be given help and an opportunity to work on the improvement.
- 7. Teachers should assume that students have untapped potential; this can particularly help students who have struggled in the past.

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**Orienting Ourselves to Do CBA: 6 Rules  
(Abeywickrama, 2010; MacDonald et al., 2015)**

- 1. Do not view assessment as a discrete activity separate from teaching and learning



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**Orienting Ourselves to Do CBA: 6 Rules**

- 2. Share learning goals with students
  - o Frame feedback using clear criteria for what a good performance or outcome would look like on the task.
  - o The feedback must make clear how *current* performance relates to *good* performance.



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### Orienting Ourselves to Do CBA: 6 Rules

- 3. Involve students in self assessment
  - o Help them see how their progress does or does not yet meet the success criteria.
  - o Use feedback to open a dialogue, not just as a way to transmit information.
  - o Present the feedback in an *encouraging* way.




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### Orienting Ourselves to Do CBA: 6 Rules

- 4. Provide timely focused feedback that helps students recognize their next steps and how to take them.
  - o Timely: Delivered while the student is still learning, not at the end of the lesson, unit, or course
  - o Focused: Simple, specific, and brief, focusing clearly on just a few important elements
  - o Corrective advice in the feedback helps students know what to do to close the gap




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### Orienting Ourselves to Do CBA: 6 Rules

- 5. Recognize that assessments are only used formatively if they affect how teachers teach, or how students learn.
  - o The feedback cannot focus on grades.
  - o The interpretation and feedback must be criterion-referenced.
  - o The results must influence teaching as necessary.




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### Orienting Ourselves to Do CBA: 6 Rules

- 6. Keep in mind that the purpose of CBA is not to provide a grade, but to help students learn more effectively
  - o Teachers need to know how the learning process is going
  - o Students need feedback on how they are doing
  - o Students need to learn to self-assess, and recognize how they are doing



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### Five Questions to Ask Ourselves (Adapted from MacDonald et al., 2015)

1. What is the specific language feature we are going to focus on?
2. Why is this feature important?
3. How can I describe achievable success criteria for my students?
4. What scaffolding or help will students need to move toward this target?
5. What method(s) or tool(s) can my students and I use to monitor their progress with this language feature?

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### Discussion #1: Answering the Five Questions

Think of a specific English class that you teach, or you have taught:

1. What is one specific language feature that is important in that class?
2. Why is this feature important?
3. How can you describe achievable success criteria for your students? (*How good is "good enough?"*)
4. What scaffolding or help will students need to move toward this target?
5. What method(s) or tool(s) can your students and you use to monitor their progress with this language feature?

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Examples of NON-Formative Assessment

- Asking one student a question
  - The teacher only has information on one person.
  - Not effective for the whole class, unless every student answers the question and gets feedback (see below)
- Quizzes and tests
  - Grades only: Not formative
  - Grades plus feedback: Formative
  - Review the quiz or test in class, explaining the answers
  - Pick individual students for each question to explain their answers to the rest of the class (teacher must make notes while grading!)

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CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (1/10)

- Traditional teaching/learning activities:
  - Homework, classwork, quizzes, etc.
  - For CBA, focus is not on grades, but on providing feedback
  - Feedback to teacher: What is working, what is not; are students learning, and how well?
  - Feedback to student: How am I doing?
  - One thing may be used for both summative and formative assessment
- Card sorting:
  - Pairs of Ss get several cards or pieces of paper, and put them in order
  - Emphasize discussion of reasons for how the cards are sorted

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CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (2/10)

- “Commit and explain”:
  - Students choose a multiple-choice option and explain/justify their choice to a partner
  - Students anonymously choose an option and explain their reasoning on paper (“commit and pass”)
- Pair/share, turn and talk
- Informal in-class oral assessment
- In-class polling:
  - Clickers
  - Individual slates (white board, chalk)
  - Colored cards/pieces of paper

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**CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (3/10)**

- Exit slips/tickets:
  - Students must fill out before they can leave the room
  - Usually anonymous
  - Students answer one, or a few, questions about the day's material:
    - "What do you still want to learn about this?"
    - "What is one thing that confused you in today's lesson?"
    - "What was the most important thing you learned?"
    - "What was the most interesting thing you learned?"
  - Review the slips before the next class, and adjust teaching as needed
- Entrance slips/tickets

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**CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (4/10)**

- Chain notes:
  - During a presentation, pass a note or envelope around the class asking a question or making a statement about the topic
  - Each student writes a short, anonymous response, and passes the note along
  - Students should still pay attention to the lesson!
  - Teacher reviews responses and uses them:
    - To see what students understand and what they don't
    - As the basis for a class discussion
- Monitoring student participation:
  - Keep a record of who speaks how often (tally marks)
  - Quieter students may need more help, and/or more monitoring

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**CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (5/10)**

- Student-generated test questions:
  - Maybe use on an actual quiz or test... or maybe not!
  - Pairs, groups, or the whole class can answer them, too
  - Teacher reviews questions, and reviews students' progress in answering
  - Students self-assess as they try to answer the questions
- Journals
- Suggestion box/envelope
- Peer review/advising/editing
- Top ten lists

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### CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (6/10)

- Quick write:
  - Do this midway through a lesson or at the end.
  - Students have 2-3 minutes to write on a Post-It note, index card, or half sheet of paper.
  - Write what they have learned, apply what they have learned, etc.
  - Share some with the class, or collect as exit slips.
- 3-2-1 summarizer:
  - Good for closure at the end of a lesson
  - Students list:
    - 3 things they have learned,
    - 2 questions they still have or wonder about, and
    - 1 personal connection they can make to the topic.

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### CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (7/10)

- My textbook page:
- Over the course of a year, each student makes their own “textbook” for your course
  - Write one page at a time; one page per lesson, per unit, etc.
  - Summarize important concepts
  - Note important vocabulary
  - Explain things in their own words
  - Suggest tips or hints for understanding or remembering the learning point
  - Helps them “make it their own,” but helps you track their comprehension
  - Students keep them in a notebook

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### CBA Techniques: An Incomplete List (8/10)

- Visual representation tasks:
- Especially useful for describing or comparing things from reading/listening passages
  - Matrix/table to help with descriptions and comparisons among items
  - Venn diagrams
  - Web wind-ups (idea webs)
  - Picture note making
    - Draw a picture
    - Write three things about it (list important ideas, important events, etc.)
  - Unit collage
  - Photo finish: Draw a series of pictures to summarize a story

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**Some Suggestions on Teacher Feedback  
(MacDonald et al., 2015)**

- Provide feedback on work in progress and increase opportunities for resubmission (???) (!!!) (???)
- Introduce two-stage assignments where feedback on the first stage helps improve the second stage (e.g., on projects)
- Model strategies in class to close a performance gap.
- Provide action points along with the feedback comments.
- Involve students (in groups, especially) in identifying their own action points in class, after they read the feedback on their assessment.

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**Some Suggestions on Peer Feedback  
(MacDonald et al., 2015)**

- Have students read the feedback comments they have been given (by the teacher or by a peer) and discuss them with peers. The group suggests strategies to improve.
- Have students find one or two examples of feedback comments they found useful, and explain to peers how the comments helped them better understand something.
- Have students give each other descriptive feedback on their work before turning it in, *using specific, focused criteria*.
- Ask students to discuss criteria and standards before beginning work on a group project.

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**Some Suggestions on Self Feedback  
(MacDonald et al., 2015)**

- Allow students to request a particular focus to the feedback that they will get back.
- Have students use a scoring rubric to identify strengths and weaknesses in their language production or work.
- Have students assemble a portfolio and critically reflect on their achievements.
- Ask students to reflect on milestones in their language learning and/or projects, especially before and after a unit of instruction.

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**Summing it up...**

- Often, CBA may just mean doing many of the same things you probably already do, but... keeping more systematic records
- Make sure that the whole class has chances to show that they have (or have not!) learned something
- Adjust what and how you teach based on how well the students are learning!

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**Discussion #2: Your Own Experiences and Ideas**

1. Have you ever tried any of the CBA techniques discussed here? If so, how well did they work?
2. Which CBA technique do you think would be the most useful in your classes?
3. Can you think of any additions or modifications to the list of techniques?

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**CBA Application Activity #1**

Consider the following traditional teaching/learning activities:

- Homework, classwork, quizzes, etc.
  - For CBA, focus is not on grades, but on providing feedback
  - Feedback to teacher: What is working, what is not; are students learning, and how well?
  - Feedback to student: How am I doing?
  - One thing may be used for both summative and formative assessment
1. Pick a specific English class you or a partner teach.
  2. Pick a specific class session, learning point, etc. that you want formative information about.
  3. Choose one of the activities above and plan for how you could use it for *formative* assessment of this learning point.

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### CBA Application Activity #2

Consider the following types of CBA activities:

- In-class polling
  - Exit slips
  - Entrance slips
1. Pick a specific English class you or a partner teach.
  2. Pick a specific class session, learning point, etc. that you want formative information about.
  3. Choose one of the activities above and plan for how you could use it for *formative* assessment of this learning point.

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### CBA Application Activity #3

- Think of a class you teach or have taught. How well do you think the following CBA activities would work in that setting?
  1. Quick write
  2. 3-2-1 summarizer
  3. My textbook page
  4. Smart cards
- With your partner, choose one activity type and plan how you would use it.

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### CBA Application Activity #4

- Think of a class you teach or have taught. How well do you think the following CBA activities would work with reading or listening passages in that setting?
  1. Matrix/table
  2. Venn diagrams
  3. Web wind-ups (idea webs)
  4. Picture note making
  5. Unit collage
  6. Photo finish: Draw a series of pictures to summarize a story
- With your partner, choose one activity type and plan how you would use it.

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**CBA Application Activity #5**

1. Pick a specific English class you or a partner teach.
2. Pick a specific class session, learning point, etc. that you want formative information about.
3. Choose a specific CBA technique that you could use to collect formative assessment data in that class.
4. When do you want to administer it?
5. Create an example of this technique that you could give to students.

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