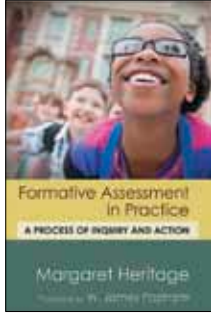


Formative Assessment in Practice: A Process of Inquiry and Action.

Margaret Heritage. Harvard Education Press, 2013, 164 pages.

Many students at one time or another have asked themselves, "Why must I take this test?" or "OK, I took the test, now what?" In other words, they want to know the purpose of their assessment. Some educators may also ask similar questions. Is the purpose of assessing to ascertain information about students' current achievement levels or to find out what needs to be taught to achieve success? Is the test fair to all the students in the class?



Margaret Heritage, author of *Formative Assessment in Practice*, provides

an interesting perspective on why educators test students and how results should be used. She also challenges educators to consider adopting a "children's rights" assessment approach. This method suggests that educators approach assessment from the position that students should be involved and have input into their own assessment. Heritage provides innovative examples of students reflecting on their own learning.

Heritage also speaks to the idea that learning is a collaborative activity that requires learning and participation by both students and teachers. To accomplish this, teachers should practice routine assessments, provide a positive environment, and set up situations and assignments where they can actually witness whether a student is progressing toward a desired goal.

This book also outlines steps for developing learning progression. These steps explain how learning expertise develops over a period of

time. Heritage breaks down how students begin with a limited amount of knowledge and how their thinking and understanding progresses. She also expands on gathering and interpreting evidence as well as how to use it effectively once it has been gathered.

The author also elicits the support of policymakers. She proposes that they make sure their assessment policies ensure that all students are learning, regardless of their status.

This book is written in a straightforward manner and can influence teachers to change some traditional methods in favor of adapting some of these innovative ideas and procedures into their assessing practices. The book is a must read handbook for educating students and preparing them for the 21st century classroom.

Reviewed by Hester Chandley Alfred, Assistant Principal, Caroline Sibley Elementary School, Calumet City, Illinois.

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