

Notes from Workshop Session 2
Promoting Authentic Learning:
Setting out broad principles for provision
and supporting them in practice
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The discussion concentrated on the following question: *How can formative assessment be implemented throughout systems?* Several possible approaches were discussed:

Providing videos about Formative Assessment

- It was agreed that providing videos showing formative assessment methods is a good way to promote it.
- Many instructors want to know what other instructors are doing. Videos are one way of providing this information
- People are interested in getting “inside the black box” (that is, inside classrooms)
- In Norway, videos are often shared and discussed at schools

Cooperation between Research and Practice

- Researchers can help to codify/legitimize the knowledge of practioners, and can help to promote this knowledge
- Sometimes, instructors are scared to be assessed or observed, but may be persuaded to take part in a study, such as a video study of teching methods.

Instructor Development

- In the UK, university instructors must in other instructors in classrooms in order to get ideas for their own teaching. This is a very easy and inexpensive approach for developing capacity with formative assessment methods.
- Instructors should be seen as learners themselves, who need to learn using formative assessment in their own learning, before applying it in their classrooms
- Ongoing professional development for instructors is necessary, because formative assessment requires high level skills of instructors
- Many instructors are afraid of having to change all their methods at once. But formative assessment can be implemented in small steps.
- Formative assessment does not mean that instructors have to do more than before. It means, that the way they teach will change over time. So there is no ‘adding of new methods’ and rather a ‘replacement with new methods’.
- Problem: instructors in adult education do not have the same opportunities for professional development as do teachers working in compulsory levels
- School leaders have to lead and scaffold changes for their instructors. Often, every school leader has his or her own new programme and instructors, who are experiencing more than one school leader tend to get less and less open-minded about making changes
- There is similar effect in regard to the influence of education ministries: each new government create new and different programnes and oftentimes, instructors are fed up with changing their practices all

the time. Possible Solution: Instructors should not get receive too many guidelines; they should be trusted in what they are doing.

Difference between primary/secondary and adult education

- In primary/secondary education, there is a curriculum and instructors have to teach for specific learning goals. In adult there is not one goal for all adults. Each adult learner has a lot of experiences and have more interest and ability to shape learning goals. So individual learning goals have to be established!
- However, adult learners are very heterogenous: some of them are at the age of 16-18, others are a lot older and have already worked.
- In Spain, primary school instructors are observed during the first three months. This can not be done for adult education, as it is a lot more unstructured and unsystematic

Good Policy Example in Norway

- Norway has a project on formative assessment which uses a bottom-up approach to implementing formative assessment, and engages instructors in primary, secondary and adult education in reflection on their practices. Researchers evaluate schools and report to the schools. Programme and school leaders are also involved in the project as well. A problem is, that instructor training institutions do not have competencies to train instructors in formative assessment methods. The goal of the project is to create a 'formative attitude' in the country.

Workshops found areas of consensus:

- Instructors need to be involved in making changes . Change needs to be primarily "bottom-up".
- If instructors are to make changes, they need to feel that they are trusted, and to have opportunities fo a lot exchange with other practitioners (videos may be helpful with this). Cooperation with researchers can be fruitful. Programmes leaders can help to "scaffold" the change process – providing the right level of challenge and support
- A 'formative attitude' needs to be developed!

At one point in the discussion, it was asked: *What exactly do the different countries mean by formative assessment?*

- Formative assessment is not only about assessing or diagnosing learner needs, it is about enabling people to learn.
- Formative assessment is for learning, where as summative assessment is for qualification! It is important that learners know and understand this difference
- "It's all in the feedback": you can use summative methods, it is the attitude that makes the difference