



## WHAT WORKS IN INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### “IMPROVING LEARNING THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT”

2 - 4 FEBRUARY 2005

OECD HEADQUARTERS, LA MUETTE, PARIS

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

This international conference on “Improving Learning through Formative Assessment” is the culmination of a major OECD/CERI study on formative assessment and teaching. It has been carried out as the latest contribution to the series “What Works in Innovation in Education”, begun in 2002. The study has focused on innovations at the lower secondary level of schooling, where the widespread implementation of formative approaches to teaching and learning are more challenging than either at the primary or the upper secondary levels.

The results of this study are now available in the final report, which serves as the main conference document - *Formative Assessment - Improving Learning in Secondary Classrooms*. This examines exemplary practices in eight OECD systems, brings together literature reviews from different linguistic traditions, all set in the broader policy environment on contemporary education reform.

The conference aims to:

- *Examine and share the main findings* of the study on formative assessment and related teaching strategies, and *extend the focus* to practices and experiences in OECD countries as a whole.
- Bring together *policymakers and officials, researchers, and school leaders and practitioners* in order to consider the potential for *implementing formative assessment on a wider basis* and how this might be achieved.



## WHAT WORKS IN INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

**DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2005**

**14:00 - 18:00**

**Room 2, Main OECD Building  
All Afternoon in Plenary Session**

**14:00 - 14:30 Welcome and Introductions to the Conference**

- *The priorities for education in the OECD and in CERI*
- *The “What Works” study on formative assessment and teaching*
- *Conference aims and arrangements*

**14:30 - 16:00 Setting the Context: Relevant Challenges and Opportunities on the Education Reform Agenda**

Findings from two major parallel OECD programmes set the stage for the conference debates – PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and the recently-completed study on teachers and teacher policies.

- *What light does the PISA programme shed on student learning, the challenges for testing and assessment policies, and nature of school and learning environments?*
- *How well-equipped are teachers across OECD countries to implement the challenging agenda of formative assessment and a broader range of teaching strategies?*
- *Open discussion*

**16:00 - 16:30** Tea/coffee break

**16:30 - 18:00 Why Formative Assessment?**

This session provides for a general discussion of how formative assessment fits into the reform agendas of different OECD education systems.

- *How widely held is the view of formative assessment as an important avenue of secondary school reform for raising student achievement, equity of outcomes, and “learning to learn”?*
- *How real is the tension of formative approaches with accountability pressures and summative assessments in the form of standardised tests and end-of-cycle examinations?*

**18:00 -** Cocktail Reception at OECD

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**DAY 2: THURSDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2005**

**09:00 - 18:00**

**09:00 - 10:00    The Components of Formative Assessment**

*Plenary - Room 2*            The OECD synthesis of the concepts, approaches and elements of formative assessment

- *Secretariat presentation*
- *Questions and discussion.*

**10:00 - 12:30    Formative Assessment in Practice**

*Workshop Sessions 1: Four meeting rooms*            Participants from the initiatives featured in the OECD study will present their experiences in implementing formative assessment strategies. On the basis of these lead presentations from 2-3 of the featured systems, each workshop will allow all participants to share their experiences of formative assessment in practice.

Questions include:

- *Motivations for introducing the initiatives?*
- *Strategies for addressing educational challenges?*
- *Strategies for addressing organisational challenges?*
- *How to engage all teachers, not only the advocates?*
- *Successes and failures in the implementation process?*

**12:30 - 14:15    Lunch Break**

*(13:45 - 14:15 OECD Cinema)*            (To be confirmed) **film presentations, formative assessment in action**

**14:15 - 14:45    Formative Assessment in Practice (cont.)**

*Plenary - Room 2*            Feedback from workshop chairs on key issues and challenges

## WHAT WORKS IN INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

### 14:45 - 16:00 **Formative Assessment: Evidence and Impact**

**Workshop  
Sessions 2:  
Four meeting  
rooms**

Organised around the lead of 2-3 systems featured in the international study, each workshop will discuss the role of evidence in the successful implementation of formative assessment strategies:

- *Gathering evidence on student understanding - which evidence?*
- *Using evidence to monitor individual student progress and to tailor teaching*
- *Evidence for school improvement?*

### 16:00 - 16:30 Tea/coffee break

### 16:30 - 18:00 **Research on Formative Assessment - Building the Evidence Base for Policy and Practice**

**Plenary -  
Room 2**

A panel of workshop chairs and experts will focus on the evidence base, as it is now and how it should be further developed. It will address both findings and the adequacy of the research base, followed by general conference discussion.

- *Insights from the workshops*
- *Key findings from the literature reviews*
- *Building the evidence base for use in policy and practice*
- *Plenary discussion*

## DAY 3: FRIDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2005

09:00 - 13:00

### 09:00 - 10:00 **The Policy Agenda for Formative Assessment**

**Plenary -  
Room 2**

A key issue now concerns how to support and promote formative assessment practices so that they become more systematically practised, within and across schools. The CERI study concludes with a model linking evaluation in classrooms, schools and system, used formatively to shape improvements at each level.

- *Conclusions of the OECD study*
- *Insights for policy from Days 1 and 2*
- *General plenary discussion*

## WHAT WORKS IN INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

### **10:00 - 11:15 Meeting the Policy Challenge – Making Connections**

#### ***Workshop***

#### ***Sessions 3:***

#### ***Four meeting rooms***

Thematic workshops will address how to make formative assessment more systematic and coherent drawing on the OECD model. Each will focus on a different set of the relationships connecting learners in classrooms to schools, schools to the broader system, and (possibly the most challenging) learners in classrooms to systems.

- *Specific elements and connections of the OECD model*
- *The implications - substantive, organisational, financial - of strengthening the connections*
- *Barriers and bottlenecks*

**11:15 - 11:45** Tea/coffee break

### **11:45 - 13:00 Implementing the Policy Agenda, Conclusions, and Conference Close**

#### ***Plenary - Room 2***

Participants will come together for a structured discussion on embedding formative principles and improving coherence across the different levels of policy and practice.