

# Effective assessment for learning:

## Classroom assessment in Estonian schools

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# Assessment and learning

- assessment **of** learning = summative
- assessment **for** learning = formative
- assessment **as** learning = formative?



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# Relations between assessment purpose and assessment type

	Assessment of Learning	Assessment for Learning
Summative	<b>X</b>	x
Formative	x	<b>X</b>

# Study on formative assessment in Estonia

- Time: 2011
- Sample: Teachers, parents and pupils from 8 basic schools: 4 FA (formative assessment) schools, 4 „ordinary“ schools.
- Method: Focus group interviews (teachers, parents) and essays (pupils).



# Formative assessment schools and classrooms in Estonia

- Some private schools with child-centred teaching and learning approach (incl. Waldorf schools)





- Classrooms of teachers who have had training in active teaching and learning methods, for example:
  - ISSA (International Step by Step) classrooms
  - Directed Inquiry Learning classrooms
  - RWCT (Reading and Writing for Critical thinking) classrooms
  - Language Immersion classrooms
  - . . .









- Teachers participating in PLC-s of formative assessment (based on Brookhart's approach)





# The focus group interviews with teachers and with parents

1. General discussion about assessment, its meaning and roles in school.
2. Every participant evaluated 16 statements on 5 point Likert-type scale.
3. Three statements were chosen (s)he at most agreed with, and three that (s)he at most disagreed with.
4. The discussion followed.



# Statements about assessment

1. Assessment has to motivate student to learn.
2. Assessment enables to control the achievement on learning outcomes.
3. Assessing student his/her previous achievement level has to be taken into account.
4. Assessment has to be based on the average (results) of the class.
5. Assessment has to be national (minimum) standard based.
6. Assessment helps to identify talented students and those who need help.
7. Assessment has to support student's adequate self-concept/awareness.
8. Assessment has to support student's self-esteem/positive self-concept.
9. Grades/marks motivate student to make efforts.
10. Grades/marks are the "salary" for pupils.
11. Grades help to (achieve the) discipline and control in classroom.
12. Assessment teaches to cheat .
13. Competition between students motivates them to learn better.
14. Most parents require grades/marks.
15. Grades depend mostly on learners abilities.
16. Students are motivated by achievement, better results, development.

# The main results of the study

- The **concept of assessment** is organically connected with the **concept of teaching and learning**
- In FA schools teachers see themselves more as the **partners and motivators** of students.  
They express the idea that **all students are able to learn** and achieve the intended outcomes of national curricula.  
They also express the idea that **all students deserve positive feedback.**





# The main results of the study

- The parents in FA schools share the school's values, but in ordinary schools there are also parents who share the ideas of FA.
- Part of teachers and parents in ordinary schools believe **teacher's at most active role in teaching-learning process**. They use arguments that support the traditional knowledge transmission model of education.



# Estonian teachers' ideas that do not support the implementation of formative assessment

1. Classroom assessment = „giving grades to the students“.
2. (Most of ) students learn because they want to get (better) grades. If students won't get the grades they won't learn.
3. Parents demand grades.
4. The teacher is the assessor in school. Pupils' self- and peer assessment could not be fair.
5. Formative assessment and student involvement take a lot of time. The subject programme and preparing to exams are so tight that there is no „time to waste“ for FA.


# Assessment terms in Estonian

**hindamine** = assessment/ evaluation

**hinded** = grades, marks

**hind** = price ; ))





*„Misconceptions are the inevitable result of misunderstanding and often cause teachers to question the formative assessment process.*

*Clearly these misconceptions can dilute the effectiveness of formative assessment and block its consistent use in the classroom.“*

*S. M. Brookhart*

# Estonian teacher's misconceptions about formative assessment

**Formative assessment** is :

- 1.giving some „formative grades“;
- 2.giving „verbal grades“ („Very Good“ instead of „5“, etc.);
- 3.giving „graphical marks“ („the butterfly“ means „5“, „the bee“ is „4“ and „the frog“ is „3“);
- 4.**writing** long and descriptive summaries of students learning at the end of the term/ course;
- 5.only **praising** the students, no matter how good or bad their performance really is;
- 6.a **new trend** of education that will fade out soon naturally;
- 7.a trendy **new term** used to describe something teachers have always done.




# American teacher's misconceptions about formative assessment

**Formative assessment** is :

1. a special kind of **test or series of tests** that teachers use to find out what their students know;
2. a **program** that teachers have to add to the instructional activities they already do;
3. **any practice that gathers information** for the purpose of **improving programs** or **improving teaching** is a part of formative assessment.





**The terms are secondary**  
**The classroom processes**  
**are primary**



# The main questions of formative assessment:

- Where are you trying to go?
- Where are you now?
- How can you get there?




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	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is right now	How to get there
Teacher	Clarifying learning intentions and criteria for success	Engineering effective classroom discussions and other learning tasks that elicit evidence of student understanding	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	Activating students as instructional resources for one another	
Learner	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	Activating students as the owners of their own learning	





*„Formative assessment is not a pre-packaged program or set of techniques that teachers adopt and enact.*

*Formative assessment is a philosophy of teaching and learning in which the purpose of assessing is to inform learning, not merely to audit it.*

*The formative assessment process is a fundamental reframing of the work teachers and students do day to day and minute by minute in the classroom.“*

*S. M. Brookhart*

# Our next steps

- Action research with professional learning communities (4 – 6 teachers) from schools willing to change
- Video-recording lessons centred around a theme (3-4 lessons)
- Joined analyse based on the conceptions of FA, Personal development plans, resources and support
- New video-recordings and analyse of lessons after periods of time.



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# Thank you!

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