

Cognia Formative Assessments

What is a formative assessment?

Formative assessments are planned, ongoing process used by students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit evidence of student learning. In a learning partnership, students and teachers use this evidence to improve students' understanding of intended curricular learning outcomes and support them to become self-directed learners. High quality formative practices are inseparable from instruction and are used to provide in the moment feedback to students and for teachers to gain insight into student thinking so they can adjust instruction to best meet students' learning needs.

Why are they important?

The primary purpose of formative assessments is to provide students feedback about their learning. These practices empower teachers with a deeper understanding of student learning and needs, informing appropriate instructional decision-making to meet the needs of students in relation to learning goals. Formative assessments can occur through informal checks during the teaching learning process, or integrated question sets in lesson plans, all with the aim of making student thinking visible.

How does this connect to classroom instruction?

As teachers evaluate student understanding they will find that students arrive with varying degrees of learning and instructional needs. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to identifying and addressing students' needs in the wake of disruptions, formative assessment practices, which are embedded in strong instructional practices, serve to provide evidence of what students know and can be used to adapt instruction accordingly. Further, by regularly gathering evidence of student understanding and misconceptions as part of instruction, teachers may use formative assessment practices to plan differentiated instruction, a necessary framework to support students upon reentry.

What is available to New Mexico schools?

NM PED recognizes that teachers are regularly engaged in formative assessment practices within their classroom. These formal or informal checks on understanding happen in the moment and inform instructional next steps. However, given the need for high-quality tools aligned to NM content standards in the wake of significant learning loss, NM PED is providing Cognia formative assessment resources to all NM schools.

The resources are designed to help teachers and learners identify misconceptions, define success, and adjust instruction. They include:

- Dozens of pre-assembled, high-quality questions ("item sets") that pinpoint learning targets.
 - Support materials that provide detailed information about targeted standards, item complexity, and specific skills addressed.
 - "Distractor rationales" for multiple-choice items that identify the misconceptions in each incorrect option.
 - Scoring guides to help probe students' understanding using items that require students to construct their responses.
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Additionally, Cognia formative assessments provide:

- Reading, mathematics, and STEM resources for grades 3–8
- Items grouped in sets that can be administered in 10–15 minutes
- Information for teachers, including item set blueprints and scoring information
- Ability for teachers to select individual items or create their own sets
- Instant scoring for multiple-choice items
- Same online delivery platform as iMSSA and summative NM-MSSA
- Searchable content library

How to access Cognia formative assessments

The formative item sets will be available at the beginning of the school year as downloadable PDFs and for online administration in the iTester platform. Please see the online administration section below for online access information.

PDF versions of the formative item sets are available through Cognia's myJourney portal at this link:

<https://assessments.cognia.org/login>

For account access, teachers should fill out the account request form on the New Mexico Help and Support site's formative resources page at this link: <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/formative-assessments/>

Online administration:

Administrative tasks will be performed in the iTester platform in the same manner they are for both interim and summative assessments. That platform is accessed using this link: <https://newmexico.cognia.org>

Students will be able to log in and access their assigned items using this link: <https://newmexico.cognia.org/student/>

For account access, teachers should fill out the account request form on the New Mexico Help and Support site's formative resources page at this link: <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/formative-assessments/>

For more information on the use of both access portals and other key informational documents, consult the New Mexico Help and Support site: <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/formative-assessments/>