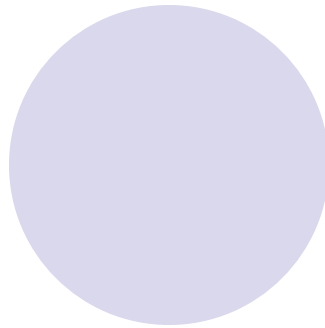
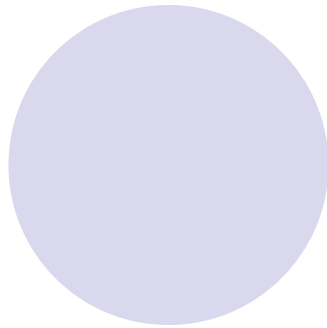
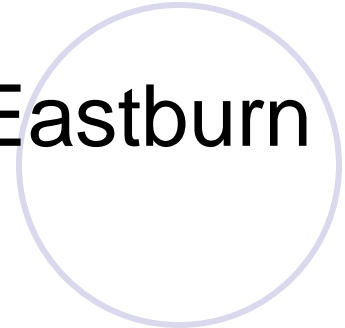


Do students really learn from
formative assessment and
formative feedback?
Evidence from the literature.



Sara Eastburn



A decorative graphic at the top of the slide consists of six circles. The first circle on the left is solid light purple and contains the word 'Context'. To its right is an empty circle with a light purple outline. Further right is another solid light purple circle, followed by another empty circle with a light purple outline, and finally a solid light purple circle on the far right.

Context

- EdD student
- Pilot phase of research
- Slow process!
 - Not as far forward as had predicted and hoped
 - Limited breadth of literature
 - Generate some [interesting] thoughts



Aim

- Present findings from [the very early stages of my review of] the literature in relation to the value and impact of formative assessment and formative feedback to student learning
 - Think [more] critically about practice
 - Generate discussion and questions [to help me develop my research project further]

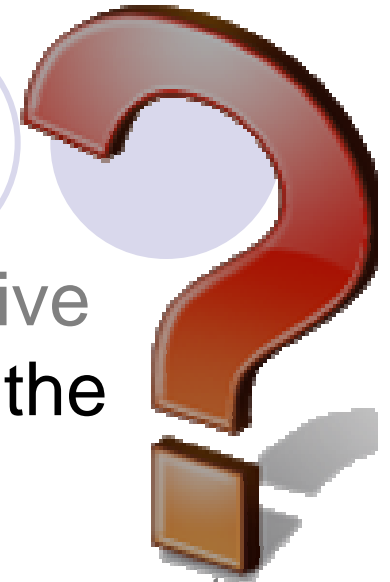
Aim of Research



- **To investigate the worth attributed to formative assessment and formative feedback by learners**
 - Discover the impact of formative assessment and formative feedback on the trajectory of learning
 - Correlation between the learner and educator's view of its role?

Central Research Question

What is the value and impact of formative assessment and formative feedback to the learning experience of students?



- What worth do learners and educators place on formative assessment and formative feedback within and across the learning spectrum?
- What role does formative assessment and formative feedback play in the “teaching” experience of the educator?
- Is there difference or similarity between the worth placed on formative assessment and formative feedback by learners and educators?
- Is there difference or similarity between practice-based educators and university-based educators as to the role and merit of formative assessment and formative feedback?
- How is formative assessment and formative feedback used to support the summative assessment process across the spectrum of education?
- What are the key features of formative assessment and formative feedback across education and how can these be implemented more widely?



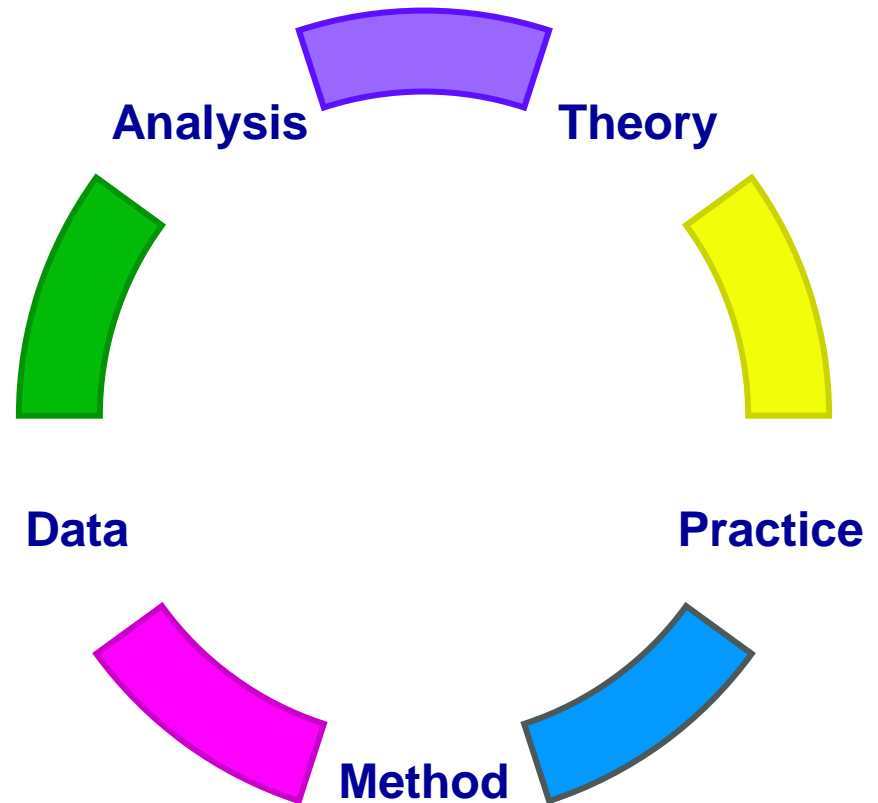
What do I hope to achieve?

- Uncover the extent to which learners and educators **truly** understand their responsibilities, and those of other stakeholders, with respect to formative assessment and formative feedback within higher education
 - Students are supported along their individual learning continuum
 - Staff are educated, supported and guided

Theoretical Position and Research Paradigm

- Inductive position
- Interpretive paradigm
- Flexible

“...capture, interpret and explain how a group [of students] ... experience and make sense [of formative assessment and formative feedback] ...” (Robson, 2002: 89)





Background and Rationale

- Ability to make **decisions**, **problem-solve** and [clinically] **reason** is paramount to graduate practice and professional integrity
- **How are these skills learned?**
- **What specific learning opportunities have influenced this learning?**
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2006: 20) “...appropriate and timely feedback to students on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement...”

Best Learning Strategies?

- “Trial and error” learning is essential to the learning process
Race (1994)
- “Trial and error” learning is ineffective, unnecessary and unhelpful
Sadler (1989)
- Formative assessment and formative feedback have the ability to encourage an individual to change and modify their activities to promote ongoing learning
Black and William (1998)
- Formative assessment and formative feedback directly influence learner motivation
Brown (1999); MacMillan and McLean (2005); Race (2005); Irons (2008)
- Learners do not always use feedback
Irons (2008)
- Formative assessment and formative feedback is reliant upon, in part, the learner’s motivation to reduce this mismatch between actual and expected performance
Biggs (1998)
- Assessment strategies can precipitate a strategic and tactical learning approach such that learners aim to understand the “rules of the game”
Norton (2007)
- Formative assessment and formative feedback nurture the summative assessment process, especially when the theory/skill being learned is new
McAlpine (2004)
- Feedback can have the most powerful single effect on achievement
Rushton (2005)

Definitions



- Formative assessment is “any task or activity which creates feedback (or feedforward) for students about their learning”
- Formative feedback is “... any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates student learning based on comments ...”

Irons (2008: 7)

Literature Search Strategy



- Search Terms:

- Formative assessment (FA)
- Formative feedback (FFB)
- Learning (L)
- Formative evaluation (FE)

Koh (2008)

- Search Dates:

- January 1998 – March 2009

Black and Wiliam (1998)

Search Results

	Database	Dates	Terms	In	What	Result	First Screen	Comments
#1	EBSCO	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Phrase	228	50	
#2	EBSCO	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Phrase	27	8	
#3	EBSCO	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Phrase	89	2	
#4	Emerald	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Words	8	3	
#5	Emerald	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Words	5	2	as #4
#6	Emerald	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Words	8	0	
#7	ERIC	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Phrase	98	32	Peer reviewed
#8	ERIC	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Phrase	15	3	Peer reviewed
#9	ERIC	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Phrase	40	1	Peer reviewed
#10	CINAHL	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Abstract	Phrase	22	3	
#11	CINAHL	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Abstract	Phrase	7	2	
#12	CINAHL	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Abstract	Phrase	27	1	
#13	Wiley InterScience	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Keywords	Phrase	5	3	
#14	Wiley InterScience	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Keywords	Phrase	0	0	
#15	Wiley InterScience	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Keywords	Phrase	0	0	
#16	Web of Science	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FA + L	Topic	Phrase	215	20	
#17	Web of Science	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FFB + L	Topic	Phrase	113	12	
#18	Web of Science	Jan 98 - Mar 09	FE + L	Topic	Phrase	139	2	
#19	British Education Index	?	?	?	?	?	?	12



The Literature: the favourable

- Reactivate/consolidate prerequisite skills/knowledge
- Focus attention on important aspects
- Encourage active learning strategies
- Give opportunity to practice skills and consolidate learning
- Provide knowledge of outcomes
- Provide corrective feedback
- Help students monitor their own progress
- Develop self-evaluation skills
- Encourage self-regulated learning
- Guide the choice of ongoing learning activities
- Help students feel a sense of accomplishment
- Develop deep thinking and deep learning
- Maintain motivation and self-esteem
- Encourage employability skills

The Literature: the less favourable

- Encourage a surface learning approach
Gijbels and Dochy (2006)
- Promote “assessment careers”
Ecclestone and Pryor (2003)
- Encourage rote learning
Irons (2008)
- Promote overconfidence
Yorke (2003)
- Be unnecessary once the summative marks are known
- Poor achievers are less likely to seek formative feedback
Sinclair and Cleland (2007)
- Be inhibitory to student progress
Smith and Gorard (2005)
- Be underutilised by the learner
Higgins, Hartley and Skelton (2002)
Covic and Jones (2008)
- Be useless without summative assessment
Taras (2009)
- Conflict with learning cultures
Davies and Ecclestone (2008)
- Under-resourced area of higher education
Perera et al (2008)



Key Issues

- Need to look across the spectrum of education
- Look beyond and at the familiar – context and content
- Considering the same



Next Steps

- Review first literature search in light of altered research question
 - Summative
 - +/- formative
 - Learning cultures literature
- Reflect on conference learning and contributions from colleagues
- Paper based on tensions within literature?

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