



Course Overview

Formative assessment is an instructional practice to gauge where your students are in their learning by gathering evidence of their learning, assessing the evidence, and planning the next steps in instruction. The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards, and new English Language Proficiency Standards all include a focus on argumentation, requiring that students construct claims supported by evidence and/or reasoning. In this course, we will explore how formative assessment practices can be targeted to improve student argumentation skills, an essential, cross-disciplinary practice.

Participants in this course will use a range of practical tools for gathering and analyzing language samples that show how students currently construct claims supported by evidence and/or reasoning, as well as identifying next steps in students' development. These tools support formative assessment and instructional planning. Focal topics include: articulating claims; linking evidence and/or reasoning to claims; and evaluating evidence and/or reasoning. We will also explore similarities and differences in argumentation across content areas and grade levels. This course will enable teachers to collaborate with other educators and build professional relationships that result in an online community focused on improving students' abilities to engage in argumentation across content areas.

Course Goals

- Recognize and be able to engage in the essential components of formative assessment.
- Develop a practical understanding of argumentation, with emphasis on what this looks like in linguistically diverse classrooms that are focused on teaching to the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards;
- Use the formative assessment process to focus on language in order to help students develop argumentation skills.
- Listen more carefully to student argumentation and use a tool to analyze student argumentation, focusing on how students build disciplinary knowledge and language.
- Learn and practice practical teaching strategies for building students' abilities to engage in argumentation;
- Collaborate with other educators and build professional relationships that result in an online community focused on improving students' abilities to engage in argumentation across content areas.

Topics by Session

Session 1 –Introduction to Argumentation and the Formative Assessment Process

- Examine how argumentation can be a powerful way to develop language, thinking skills, and content understandings
- Recognize the features of argumentation (e.g., claims, evidence/explanations, reasoning/justification)
- Recognize the four essential components of the formative assessment process and what those components entail
- Conceptualize how formative assessment can be a powerful tool for improving students' argumentation.
- Elicit and interpret an example of oral argumentation in your classroom
- Form teams in order to collaborate and reflect on student argumentation with other educators

Session 2 – Setting the Stage for Argumentation and Formative Assessment in our Classrooms

- Identify insights about student argumentation (from assignment 1 and content knowledge) that can inform and improve teaching and learning in your setting
- Design classroom activities that are authentic and purposeful, prompting the use of argumentation in order to reach complex content understandings
- Generate effective argumentation prompts
- Consider several core argumentation skills and how these may be taught in your setting
- Discuss and reflect on the process of designing and teaching argumentation with teammates

Session 3- Supporting Students to Provide Strong Support for Claims

- Explore ways to help students provide strong support for claims
- Observe and analyze an example of oral or written argumentation from one student
- Design and implement a lesson or activity that involves modeling and scaffolding of argumentation skills appropriate to your setting

Session 4- Supporting Students in Learning the Language of Argumentation

- Examine ways to support students' use of language to convey key relationships among ideas when constructing arguments
- Explore ways ELL and content area teachers can collaborate to support ELL students in learning the language of argumentation
- Identify key takeaways from the course and create a lesson plan or presentation incorporating these key takeaways that can be shared with real-life colleagues

Throughout the course, opportunities are provided for teachers to connect their learning across sessions and to explicitly consider the implications of that learning for classroom practice. Teachers will also be able to revisit their work and reflections by viewing their individual Course Portfolios.