Formative Assessment – Refine task

[Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The logo for the Victoria State Government. Formative Assessment – Refine task.]

NARRATOR: Hi, I'm Narelle. I will be presenting this video about refining your task.

[A flow chart with three stages: Plan, Assess, Review. The Plan stage lists "describe a learning continuum," "develop a formative assessment rubric," and "design a task," unpacking parts 1 and 2 of the Guide to Formative Assessment Rubrics of the Victorian Curriculum, F to 10. The Assess stage lists "collect evidence," "moderate," and "interpret and uses evidence," unpacking part 3 of the guide. The Review stage lists "improve rubrics," "refine learning continuum," and "refine task," which is part of review and refine for best practice.]

NARRATOR: This is the final video within the Review section of the formative assessment videos. This video relates to refining the task originally developed to use with the learning continuum and rubric described in parts 1 and 2 of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Guide to Formative Assessment Rubrics. When it is time to refine your task, you should already have administered the task to your students.

By the end of this video, you will know how to review the formative assessment task, including the administration guidelines. To do this, you will draw on the experiences of using the task with your students in the classroom. If other teachers have also used the task, it would be helpful to get their input too. It is a good idea to refine a task as soon after you use it as you can. This is because the experiences will be fresh in your mind. The sooner you refine the task, the quicker the process will be and the better the outcome.

The main way to judge how well a task worked is to consider how well it elicited the evidence you required to assess the students against the rubric. Most refinements you will want to make will be based on your answer to this question. If it didn't elicit all the evidence you needed, what changes could you make to improve it? Remember, if you have made revisions to the rubric since the task was administered, you will need to check that the task will still work with these revisions.

The next most important thing to think about is whether the evidence generated by the task was accurate. Did anything make it difficult for your students to show what they know and can do? Consider any parts of the task that tripped them up. Could they be changed to make it work better? Did any students find it difficult to show their understanding in the way required by the task? Is there another way they could complete the task that would work better? Did the students find the task engaging? Is there any way you could tweak the task to engage them more?

Another important thing to think about was the administration of the task in the classroom. You want the administration of a task to be as stress free as possible, for both you and your students. For students, often stress is caused by parts of the task or the instructions being unclear. Is there anything you needed to explain better? Were there common queries from students? How could you change things in the future to eliminate these difficulties?

For teachers, a cause of stress can be when you have to make a difficult decision about the assessment on the spot. Particularly this can happen when you planned modifications to the task for students with a disability, an injury, or an unexpected situation did not go as well as planned. Did this happen when using the task? If so, could you add something to the administration guidelines that would help avoid stress caused by this in the future?

The last common cause of stress can be after the task when you realise that another teacher used the same task in a very different way than you did, but the results from your students are going to be compared. If this happened, then you can think about how you can modify the administration guidelines to help all teachers use the same task in the same way. If assessing your task is difficult, it wastes time that teachers simply don't have.

One reason tasks can be difficult to assess is that the rubric didn't work well. If that is the case, please see the improve rubrics video for help. Another reason can be that it is hard to follow what students have done and it takes too long to find where the information is for each action you have to assess. If this is the case, some redesign of the task or refinement of the instructions can go a long way to solving the problem.

Finally, tasks that have to be assessed in the moment can be difficult because of timing difficulties or distractions. If this is the case, think about how you can design a flexible task where the administration of the task can be undertaken in a range of situations, and be explicit about this in the administration guidelines. Alternatively, consider if you can leverage technology to shift assessment from in the moment to outside class time.

Now you are ready to review your task and its administration guidelines so the task will be refined and ready to go when you next want to use it. It is worth taking the time to review your task and administration guidelines as soon as you have used it in the classroom, so it is fresh in your mind.

[More information available at vcaa.vic.gov.au. Authorised and published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.]