Using formative assessment in Science – Secondary

Transcript

(GENTLE MUSIC PLAYS)

In 2019 the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority partnered with the Assessment Research Centre at the University of Melbourne to provide professional learning for teachers to strengthen their understanding and use formative assessment rubrics.

Why use formative assessment rubrics?

Interesting to see how many different rubrics different schools are currently using and then linking that back to the work we were doing today with the formative assessment rubric.

And it's like everyone's got little bits and pieces that seem to be working and then bringing that all in to kind of this one idea that this is the kind of rubric that we can use to really get a good idea of where the students are at and where they're going next.

So kind of, yeah, picking and choosing the best bits from everybody and everybody's school environments and kind of putting them all together, I found really, really exciting.

And it shifts the focus from it being a teacher rubric to a student rubric.

Yeah, absolutely. Yep.

Something that they can look at and go, "Alright, this is what I kind of do now. This is what I can achieve. This is my next step."

What were some considerations when writing or using the rubrics?

Some of the things that people think you can do with rubrics in terms of, like, a global mark, and they're mixing general capabilities with particular disciplines just doesn't work.

And what does that mark actually mean? It might mean something if it was just around inquiry skills, for example, and you were doing it on a progression. But when it's mixed with other elements, it just becomes a jumble and it just becomes, like, a percentage for our parents to have a look at.

One of the really big gaps was they were making a prediction but not explaining their prediction. And that's a really quick and easy one to go, "OK, so that's what I have to work on with a large amount of kids in the class."

With my Year 10 class, it was more of a diagnostic tool. So I hadn't taught them anything about a hypothesis. So unless they'd been told before that a hypothesis needs to contain an explanation, they wouldn't have included that, so most of my class didn't.

So we had gap in the chart for those students and that stood out as, "OK, what's going on there?" But we could easily identify why that gap was there. And then we've adjusted our task to account for that.

How does formative assessment impact student learning?

I had eight teachers do the task and all the feedback was how straightforward it was and how quick and easy, but also valuable in terms of knowing where the students are at and also the feedback was direct in terms of their next steps of learning.

So it was pretty positive, from that group of teachers I worked with, anyway.

I think these formative assessment rubrics will be a terrific thing to make our teaching program a lot stronger and, you know, hopefully it'll lead to, you know, much better learning outcomes with the students.