Formative / Summative

Formative vs Summative Assessment

**Formative Assessment**  
Formative assessment is given throughout the learning process. The main objectives are to understand how students are progressing through a specific learning objective or course topic and provide a structured way to give feedback to students. Formative assessment can be used to inform, adjust and focus teaching in the classroom, serve as rationale for interventions and pedagogical adjustments.

**Summative Assessment**  
Summative assessment is given at the end of the semester or the end of a specific topic. The main objective is to record the level of mastery that a student has about the given topic or course after they have received adequate instruction. Summative assessment can be used to inform student promotion or readiness for topic advancement.

**Formative** is used to check the students' understanding and to plan subsequent instruction. The information gained from formative assessments guides the next steps in instruction and helps teachers and students consider the additional learning opportunities needed to ensure success. Formative assessment information must be fed forward into an instructional model that allows for responsiveness to student need.

Formative assessments include:
- Assigning projects and performances
- Giving writing assignments
- Giving tests
- Asking questions

**Summative** assessment of learning provides teachers and students with information about the attainment of content knowledge. Summative assessments often result in grades that have a high point value. The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.

Summative assessments include:
- A senior recital
- A final project
- A midterm exam
- A paper

Some content modified from Med Kharbach, "A Visual Chart on Summative vs Formative Assessment."