



## Using Formative Assessments to Prepare Students for Master (Part 1)

**Naat Jairam; Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles** [00:00:15] Prior knowledge is critical to moving forward in a course, because sometimes students have some great knowledge you can use and build on to scaffold their learning, and sometimes they may have some misconceptions that don't square with the course itself. So it's good to discover that.

**Jeff Suarez-Grant; Senior; Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles** [00:00:31] If you don't, you risk not addressing misconceptions students have about the subject matter of the discipline. You also risk perhaps not finding out that oh, like students know a lot about this already. Like, oh my goodness, like, I don't have to start from square one. I can jump a little bit ahead and make time for something different or exciting. So how do you identify those misconceptions? Well, one common way is to do like a knowledge survey. The knowledge survey asks for their— reading their level of confidence in addressing some sort of problem or task.

**Naat Jairam** [00:01:05] You can state some objectives of previous courses in the curriculum and say, "How confident are you in doing this?" So do I know absolute value? Do I know how to use standard deviation? You can provide resources in a learning management system so they can do it on their own, so they're not— don't feel called out or anything like that. But also offer a space for them to discuss that with you.

**Melissa Ziegler, PhD; Assistant Teaching Professor; School of Health Professions; The University of Southern Mississippi** [00:01:28] If there's this knowledge that they were supposed to have before they came in to class, so regardless of whatever it was supposed to be, from whatever class they were supposed to get it from, we have kind of a little free quiz before the lecture itself. So I teach ECG. So when they have to come in to look in an electrocardiograph. And the only way to know that is to know how the heart functions. I try to assess what they don't know right before we start the lesson. So just in case they missed it in prior classes, we can cover it then. So I'll know that they learned it. That's the only way they can do the next part. It's the only way they can do the part in my classes if they have that previous knowledge.

**Desmond Stephens, PhD; Associate Professor; Director of Faculty Development; Department of Mathematics; Florida A&M University** [00:02:06] Today, I would like to start class by giving you a readiness assessment on trigonometry. And so in this assessment, I don't want you to be afraid. I know that there may be some parts of this assessment that you don't know. You may have forgotten them. This is really only for me to see how you are doing and where you're at, so I can make adjustments in the way that I present the material.

**Desmond Stephens, PhD** [00:02:27] I think that when you're giving a readiness test, it's really important that you let students know that it's ungraded so that they will do their best, but they won't have the anxiety that you're dropping something on them that they haven't had an opportunity to prepare for. I want them to know that this is just a way that I can get a benchmark as to where they're at.

**Desmond Stephens, PhD** [00:02:44] So we're gonna use the clickers today in order to take this assessment. And so it's on trigonometry. You'll see the left-hand column has some trigonometric functions and the right-hand side has the values of the trigonometric functions. So what I want you to do when I tell you that the poll is open is I want you to just click the numbers on the right-hand side in the order that match the left-hand side. And then we'll talk about the responses when you're finished.

**Desmond Stephens, PhD** [00:03:10] Ungraded readiness evaluations are very important so that the faculty member and the students don't have this content crossing ships in the night, and that you actually know where your students are, and that you can fill gaps if you need to, or you can move ahead if you need to. It may be the case that students are much further along than you actually think they are.



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**Melissa Ziegler, PhD** [00:03:30] If one doesn't get it or two don't get it, then maybe we just have like a one-on-one session. But usually it's not just one or two. Usually, if one or two don't get it, it's seven or eight of them. If you've got half or more of the classroom that don't understand the beginning part of the process, then you have to stop and you have to go back. It's not their fault they didn't learn it from somebody else. I mean, if it's a whole group of students didn't learn it, it's because it either wasn't covered well or maybe it was missed, or even though they were supposed to get it in a previous course, maybe that instructor didn't have time for it. And so you've got to go back and assess that information before you get started and you've got to make sure that they have it before you push through.

**Kelly Lester, MFA; Director; Center for Faculty Development; The University of Southern Mississippi** [00:04:17] It's important to me for students to demonstrate mastery early in the semester so that I make sure we're all on track. I don't want to leave someone behind and I don't want to leave a couple of people behind. I want to make sure we're moving forward together.

**Natasha Nurse-Clarke, RN, PhD; Assistant Professor; School of Nursing; Lehman College, CUNY** [00:04:30] Having a strong foundation is really important to any course and to any concept that we're teaching. So it's very important to strengthen students' foundation right at the beginning, because then it's easier to know if a student is struggling with a particular concept. Now I know I can spend a little bit more time in that area.

**Kelly Lester, MFA** [00:04:51] If they don't know the information and then I just keep moving forward, then they're not going to get the next thing, and the next thing, and the next thing. So for me to slow down a little bit and say, OK, I just left our class, I looked at this quiz and nobody seems to be on track with this. Let's try again. I'm gonna come in with a new plan, a new way for us to investigate this principle and then we'll go back. And so it's gonna change our calendar a little bit. But don't worry, it's my job to keep us on track and I'll make sure we get to the end. So I also try to build that trust with them that I'm watching, even though there's been this course outline that they've gotten and they've written down all of the dates, I'm not just gonna propel forward and leave them drowning behind me. I want to make sure that as a team, the boat keeps going.