



Common Challenges & Misconceptions

Jeff Suarez-Grant; Senior; Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles [00:00:00] So the difference between summative and formative assessment, well they both evaluate students, but in kind of for different reasons or different purposes. We'll start with formative assessment. That really is typically a lower-stakes assignment or assessment that gives the student and you the instructor real-time data on learning in time to be able to make changes. You might have a test as opposed to having a midterm and a final. So instead of having two high-stakes opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, maybe you give them three or four tests throughout the entire semester. And what that can do is give them information on how they're doing a lot sooner. And they can see, like, oh, well, I'm not taking this course very seriously, and it shows. My, my score on this test number one was not great. I need to, I need to take this course more seriously. It can also tell you like, oh boy, like, they're really struggling with these concepts. I might need to address this. I might need to revisit some of this subject matter. I can't just continue on.

Jeff Suarez-Grant [00:01:07] Summative assessment is more about kind of proving, having students kind of prove their final attainment of those outcomes. It's usually done at the end of the term and in a way that it can't be undone, right? You can't take it back. And really typically determines whether or not students continue, right? They either need to repeat that course. Determines their GPA. So it's pretty high-stakes, that summative assessment. Formative assessment, though, right? Again, the idea is that you're getting information in time to make changes. To change the trajectory, whether that's the student changing their trajectory in the course or the faculty member discovering there's an issue and changing the course to better suit that, that group of students. Giving students multiple opportunities to practice, to show and demonstrate their learning, that's kind of the hallmark of formative assessment. Summative assessment, again, is kind of like it's one and done. It's, it's one opportunity, one attempt, and it typically determines whether they repeat the course or they get the grade that they get.