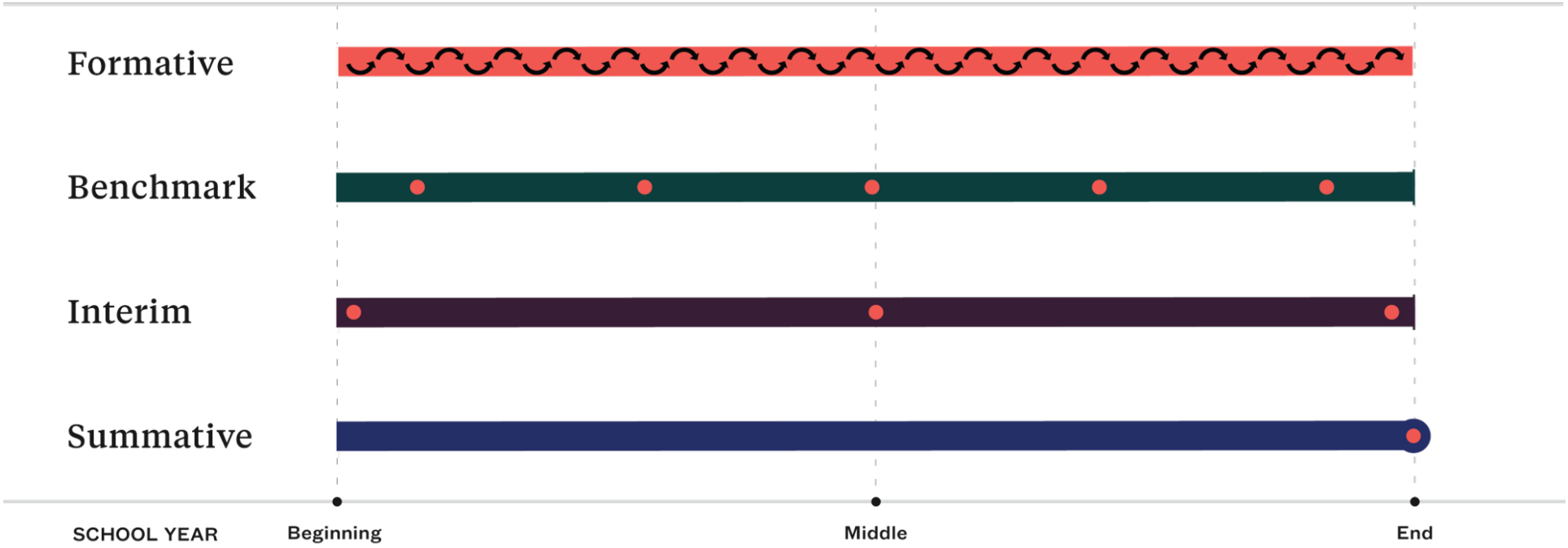
Balanced Assessment System

Multiple components serve different needs and give different information.

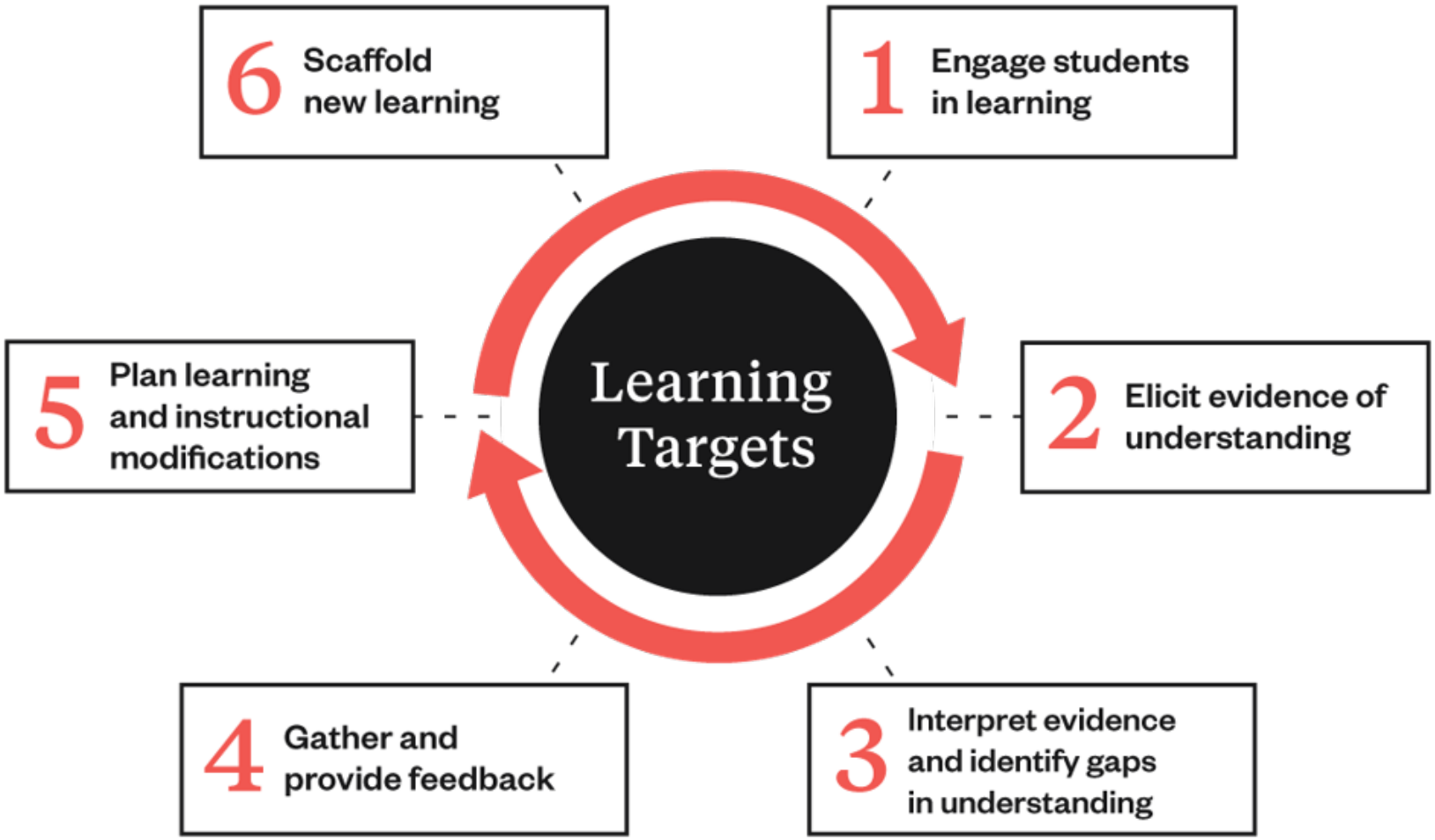
Formative	Benchmark	Interim	Summative
Instruct and Adjust	**Confirm and Review**	**Monitor and Predict**	**Evaluate and Report**
An ongoing, interactive process used throughout the year by students and teachers to gather evidence of understanding while instruction occurs	Assessment of recently taught material for grades and/or to monitor progress towards learning goals; test content follows curriculum pacing.	Assessments that track student performance and growth toward end-of-year goals, used to identify students or curricular areas that need attention	General achievement measures used at the conclusion of a unit of instruction or the school year to certify learning and to fulfill accountability requirements
Informing educational decisions and actions			
• Clarify learning goals and success criteria • Identify misconceptions • Provide actionable feedback • Adjust instructional next steps	• Assess understanding of new content • Determine readiness to move to new concepts • Identify needs for review or adjustment of instruction	• Monitor student progress • Examine group performance and needs for intervention • Analyze curriculum and instruction	• Verify and document student achievement • Determine effectiveness of programs, practices, and policies • Demonstrate equity and school quality
Level of impact on instruction and learning			

Evidence and data contribute to your continuous improvement planning.

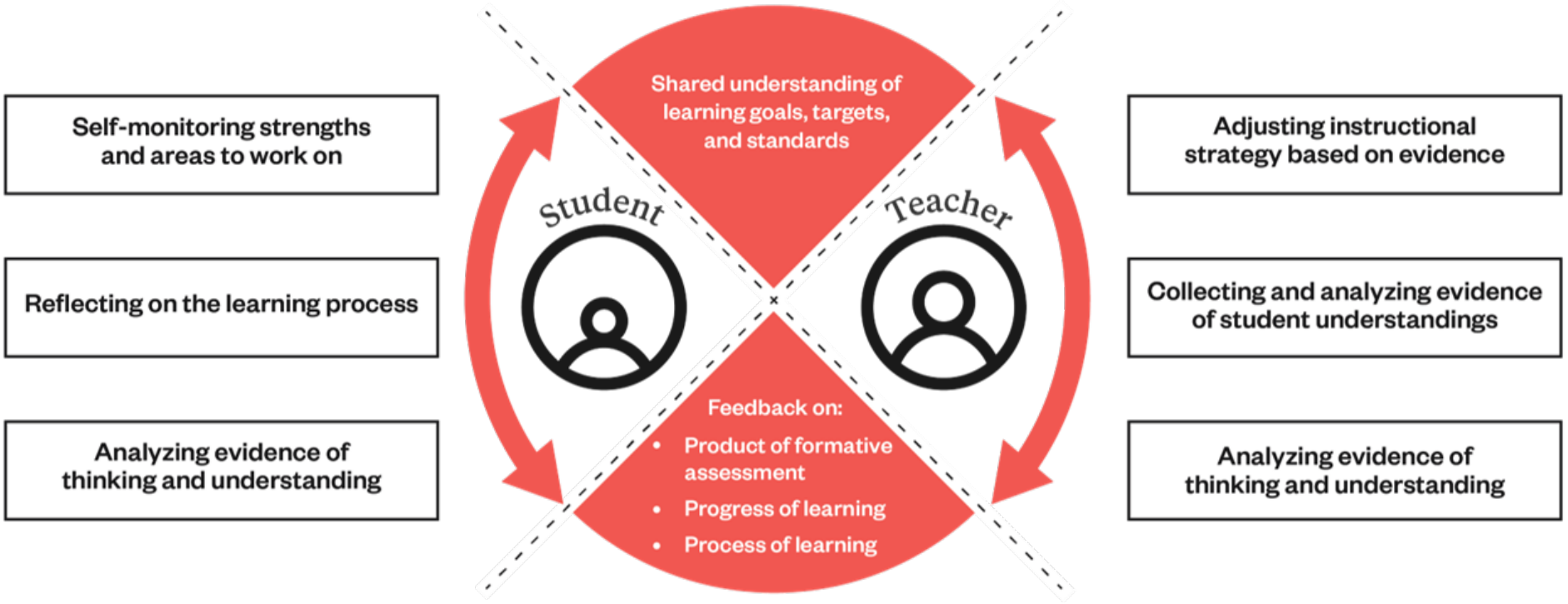
Balanced Assessment System



The Formative Assessment Process



Formative Feedback Process



Provide multiple means of Engagement

Affective Networks
The "WHY" of Learning

Provide multiple means of Representation

Recognition Networks
The "WHAT" of Learning

Provide multiple means of Action & Expression

Strategic Networks
The "HOW" of Learning

Access

Provide options for Recruiting Interest (7)

- Optimize individual choice and autonomy (7.1)
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (7.2)
- Minimize threats and distractions (7.3)

Provide options for Perception (1)

- Offer ways of customizing the display of information (1.1)
- Offer alternatives for auditory information (1.2)
- Offer alternatives for visual information (1.3)

Provide options for Physical Action (4)

- Vary the methods for response and navigation (4.1)
- Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies (4.2)

Build

Provide options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence (8)

- Heighten salience of goals and objectives (8.1)
- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge (8.2)
- Foster collaboration and community (8.3)
- Increase mastery-oriented feedback (8.4)

Provide options for Language & Symbols (2)

- Clarify vocabulary and symbols (2.1)
- Clarify syntax and structure (2.2)
- Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols (2.3)
- Promote understanding across languages (2.4)
- Illustrate through multiple media (2.5)

Provide options for Expression & Communication (5)

- Use multiple media for communication (5.1)
- Use multiple tools for construction and composition (5.2)
- Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance (5.3)

Internalize

Provide options for Self Regulation (9)

- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation (9.1)
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (9.2)
- Develop self-assessment and reflection (9.3)

Provide options for Comprehension (3)

- Activate or supply background knowledge (3.1)
- Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships (3.2)
- Guide information processing and visualization (3.3)
- Maximize transfer and generalization (3.4)

Provide options for Executive Functions (6)

- Guide appropriate goal-setting (6.1)
- Support planning and strategy development (6.2)
- Facilitate managing information and resources (6.3)
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (6.4)

Goal

Expert learners who are...

Purposeful & Motivated

Resourceful & Knowledgeable

Strategic & Goal-Directed

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What makes a strong assessment item?

Scoring Information

An answer key, scoring guide, or rubric should be provided with each item. An answer key for a selected-response item indicates the correct answer, which is assigned a specific number of points.

Scoring guides for a variety of constructed-response item types may include rubrics and sample student responses. A rubric assigns point values to specific components and expectations for the responses to an item. Using rubrics helps ensure that scoring is consistent from scorer to scorer, so that resulting student scores are fair. Rubrics save time in scoring and help educators identify areas where students show understanding of a standard or topic and where they may be struggling. Sharing rubrics with students also helps clarify expectations and promote positive teacher–student interaction to support learning.

Item Type

All item types—multiple-choice, constructed-response, extended-response, technology-enhanced, performance tasks—elicit different levels of responses from students.

Item rigor is an important element in assuring that assessments deliver what they promise. Item types provide varying levels of cognitive complexity. When determining which item type to use, you should factor in the method of scoring and amount of time allotted for test taking. No matter the item type, items based on evidence-centered design principles define the outcomes and evidence that lead to the most valid measurement. These items elicit meaningful demonstrations of your students' knowledge and abilities.

Authenticity

"Authenticity" refers both to the source of a reading passage or other stimulus and to the context of an item. Many assessment programs require that reading passages and other stimuli be authentic—that is, drawn from actual published work—and of a nature and time, current or historic, that would be familiar to the student.

Authentic items are those based on real-world situations and contexts that students recognize and relate to—minimizing opportunities for misunderstanding because they allow the student to connect to an item through personal experience.

Bias and Sensitivity

"Bias" refers to an unintended advantage or disadvantage to some group or groups of students based on construct-irrelevant features that can affect students' responses to an item. An item may be biased if its content matter caters to or assumes familiarity with a particular experience or environment not equally familiar to all groups. A good item is free of bias.

"Sensitivity" refers to the awareness that certain topics or objects have different perceptions and value in particular cultures. Sensitivity in item content means that items are free of references that might be offensive to a particular culture or group, and the content is acceptable to a diverse audience.

High-quality items include multiple reviews for bias and sensitivity during the development process—leading to more valid and reliable results.

Distractors and Distractor Rationales

"Distractors" are the incorrect response choices for a multiple-choice or selected-response item. Good distractors are plausible and based on common misinterpretations or errors. Poor distractors might offer a clue to the correct answer or easily identify that option as an incorrect answer.

"Distractor rationales" indicate which option is the correct answer (the "key") and identify misconceptions or clarify why the distractors are incorrect. Effective assessments include items with distractors and distractor rationales. They provide insight into student understanding and help you focus on areas of weakness in student learning.

Alignment to Standards

Well-written items measure what is intended by a particular standard. Student responses to well-aligned items provide a valid basis for inferences about attainment of the standard. In addition to review by experts, one way to determine the accuracy of an item's alignment (and the item's validity) is to try it out in a field test to see if the student responses show the expected evidence.

Alignment is twofold: First, items must align to your standards and measure what is intended—and second, items addressing a range of standards should be included in a general assessment.

Validity and Reliability

"Validity" of an item means the extent to which an item demonstrably measures what it intends to measure; it aligns with the standard and elicits meaningful evidence.

"Reliability" means the extent to which an item or assessment would produce similar results if re-administered.

Valid items and reliable assessments yield data that support your decision making, to inform instruction and measure student growth.

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