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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Answers to Your Biggest Questions About Teaching Elementary Reading*.

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What Are Some Common Formative Assessment Methods?



Formative assessment is extremely versatile. There are many different methods that can be used concurrently in the classroom to inform your instructional decisions. The Common Formative Assessment Methods table offers seven common forms of formative assessment in the reading classroom.

Common Formative Assessment Methods		
Formative Assessment Method	When Is It Done?	Why Is It Powerful?
Observation from a distance	When students are independently reading or working in reading stations	Observation from a distance enables you to notice reading behaviors and quickly identify who may need immediate and quick support.
Discussion during lessons and read alouds	During whole-group and small-group instructional times, including read aloud	Discussion offers you the opportunity to clue into students' thinking and response to others' thinking around reading.
Observation up close and listening to reading	Anytime students are reading in any format: conferences during independent reading, small groups, in stations, in partnerships	Up-close observation and listening to reading allows you to home in on reading behaviors and skill and strategy use at close range. You'll be able to respond in the moment or jot notes to keep track of patterns over time.
Conferring	Every supported independent reading period	Talking with individual students about their reading offers insight into their thinking about reading. It also enables you to pinpoint their specific strengths and needs in the moment and talk about learning goals.
Running records* (Clay, 2017)	During conferences or small groups	Running records enable you to track and respond to students' reading accuracy, errors, and self-corrections in the moment and over time as you notice patterns.

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Reading student writing about reading	During or any time after students write, jot, or sketch about their reading	Student writing, jotting, and sketching about reading can offer an insight into their understanding and thinking. However, talking with students about their reading is often a more accurate assessment of comprehension.

*The running record is a powerful tool that enables teachers to see exactly what students are doing as readers while they are reading. Learning how to take and analyze running records goes well beyond the scope of this book. It is a powerful reading practice all elementary educators should adopt. To learn more about running records, I recommend Marie Clay's (*Running Records for Classroom Teachers*) (2017).

Notes
