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FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT – CONTRADICTORIES OR JOINT OPPORTUNITIES?

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ABSTRACT
Formative assessment is used for monitoring student learning in order to provide the student with relevant feedback, while summative assessment is used to evaluate student learning outcomes. Traditionally, these two concepts are seen as counterparts or contradictories, and this might result in a belief that one is to be preferred in favour for the other. In fact, they both are important measures in creating an efficient learning environment, and in reality they are often combined. This contribution discusses the benefits of both concepts and in particular how one and same assignment could be utilised both for summative and formative purposes. The discussion is exemplified using experience from a first year course in project management and academic writing entitled “Technical projects and report writing”. In the course, summative as well as formative assessment methods are utilised. The interconnection between assessment methods and the integration of both summative and formative aspects in some of the assignments is highlighted. We will also address how the setup is communicated to the students and their feedback and reflections on the course and their learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS
Formative assessment, Summative assessment, Project management, Course activities’ design, Standards: 3, 8, 11

OBJECTIVES
To efficiently combine formative and summative assessment methods so they support each other and the total learning situation without adding too much work load for the teachers as well as for the students.

CURRENT STATUS
We have successfully combined formative and summative methods in one and the same course, and some of the assignments are currently used both for summative and formative purposes.
FUTURE WORK

How can we use the findings from Technical Projects and Report Writing in other courses? How can we become more efficient in communicating the course setup to the students and create the most efficient course setup without increasing the workload? Can we combine formative and summative assessment in more activities, or develop the current activities?

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Mirka Kans, Ph. D. holds a position as associate Professor in Terotechnology and has been program director for several educational programs since 2004 and forward. She is active in developing the education practices and curriculum according to student centered and active learning concepts (e.g. in form of CDIO), and in close collaboration with industry. The research is focused on data and IT requirements for maintenance management and how to support maintenance by means of IT.

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