THE ONLINE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

acara AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AUTHORITY

Education Services Australia

aitsl Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited

THE ONLINE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

is a project that has been funded by federal, state and territory education ministers to improve student learning by assisting teachers to:

- Efficiently and effectively identify where students are in their learning
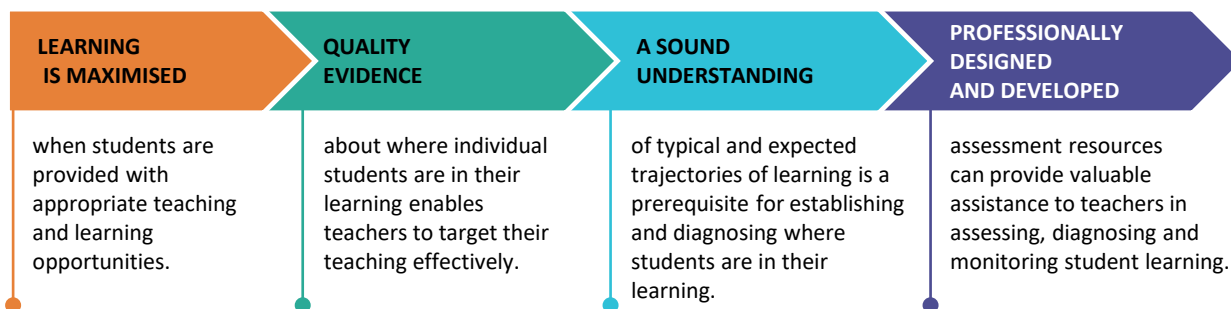
- Make informed decisions about what to do next

- Monitor learning to continually drive progress over time.

A concept paper prepared in 2018 by Chris Cawsey AO, Professor Geoff Masters and Laureate Professor John Hattie identified four principles of practice underpinning the vision for the initiative:

| LEARNING IS MAXIMISED	QUALITY EVIDENCE	A SOUND UNDERSTANDING	PROFESSIONALLY DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED
when students are provided with appropriate teaching and learning opportunities.	about where individual students are in their learning enables teachers to target their teaching effectively.	of typical and expected trajectories of learning is a prerequisite for establishing and diagnosing where students are in their learning.	assessment resources can provide valuable assistance to teachers in assessing, diagnosing and monitoring student learning.

THE INITIATIVE AIMS

to develop a technical 'ecosystem' that brings together the functions that teachers need, through a single, personalised portal.

In this ecosystem, the content that students are learning is **described in the Australian Curriculum** and **detailed in the National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions (NLNLPs),** which are supplements to the Australian Curriculum.
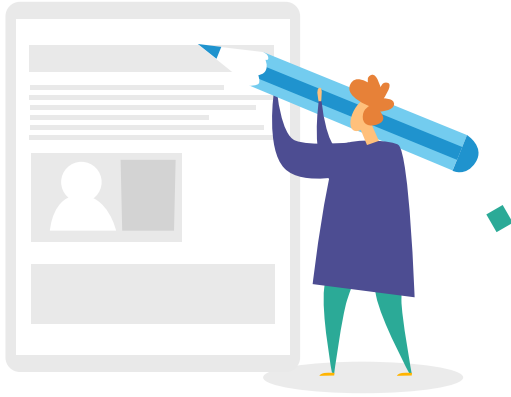
NATIONAL LEARNING PROGRESSIONS

National learning progressions describe the skills, understandings and capabilities that students typically acquire as their proficiency increases in a particular aspect of the curriculum over time.

The progressions describe the learning pathway(s) along which students typically progress in particular aspects of the curriculum, regardless of age or year level, and are designed to help teachers:

Ascertain the stage
of learning reached

Identify any gaps
in skills and knowledge

Plan for the next step
to progress learning.

The NLNLPs were examined in the discovery phase of the project. The NLNLPs are robust and evidence-based and have been validated using empirical data where available.

As literacy and numeracy are understood to be fundamental to student learning in all areas of the curriculum, **the NLNLPs were acknowledged to be a useful foundation for the design and development of the ecosystem**. It is possible that in the future other learning progressions will be identified and incorporated into the ecosystem.

In the ecosystem, assessments that are aligned to the NLNLPs will be available to assist teachers to identify where students are in their learning and provide insight to help plan for next steps.

For teachers, formative assessment describes a process, not a tool. Formative assessment in the classroom is frequently informal and opportunistic, with insights about student learning often generated by routine strategies such as observation and questioning.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is an adaptive process where assessment evidence of student learning is used by teachers to modify their instructional practices or by students to adjust their learning strategies.

In formative assessment, evidence elicited during learning is gathered, interpreted and used by teachers and students to make better teaching and learning decisions.
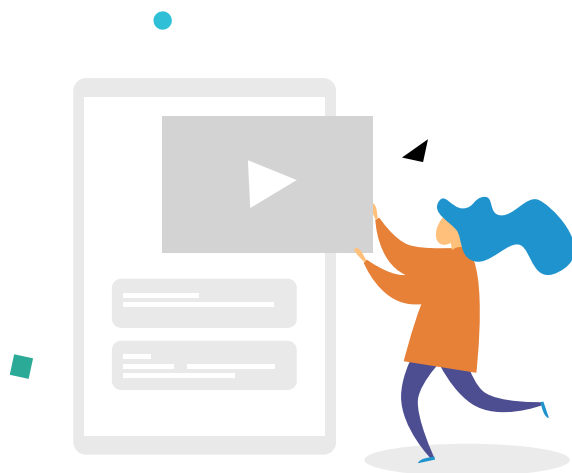
ONLINE TOOLS

The formative assessment delivered in the ecosystem will include online tools, such as tests, quizzes and other digital content. The NLNLPs will provide the common content base for the initiative and the system will include assessments that are aligned to the NLNLPs.

INTEGRATED SYSTEM

A common measurement scale is being developed so that the information about student learning from any assessment that is aligned to the NLNLPs, can be compared and connected with the insights derived from other assessments that are integrated with the system.

EASY TO MONITOR FOR ACTION

This means that teachers will be more easily able to monitor student learning progress because results of different assessments can be collated in one place and organised against the learning content of the NLNLPs.

The ecosystem will also **provide access to other digital resources** that teachers may choose to use to support student learning. Digital resources in the ecosystem will be quality assured, ensuring that they are **aligned to the NLNLPs** and **consistent with effective teaching practices.**

Over time, the digital resources will be promoted to teachers through a **suggestion engine** that will offer resources that match **most closely the perceived needs of students** and are **most strongly associated** with successful learning outcomes.

The project is currently in an 'alpha' phase, which **involves prototyping and testing potential technical solutions with teachers, school leaders, students and parents.** The alpha phase work is being informed by learnings from the discovery phase in 2019, which undertook user research to determine what teachers want, that would assist them in the task of improving student learning.

Paralleling this effort around the technical solution is **work to identify, develop and test professional learning** that builds the capacity of teachers and school leaders to adopt high-impact teaching practices and to use the new ecosystem to aid them to embed these practices consistently in their classrooms and across their schools.

BY THE END OF THE ALPHA PHASE,

the project aims to have detailed plans for construction of a solution, which will be based on the needs of teachers and other users and which will have been extensively tested with them.