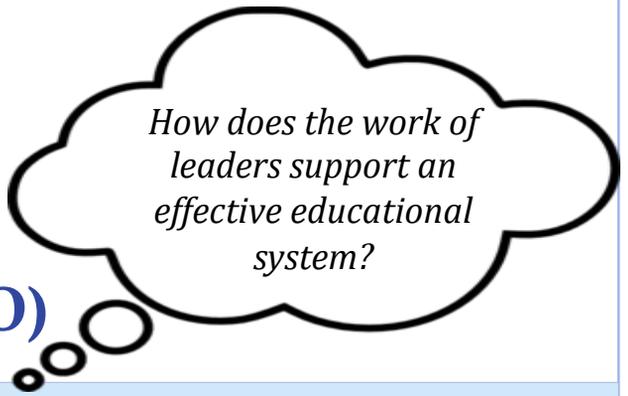


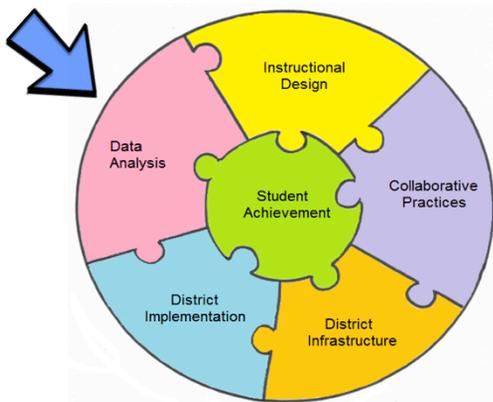
# Critical Question #2

## How do we teach effectively to ensure students are learning? (DO)



**Fundamental Practice 1.** *Instruction is continually informed by assessment of student learning through intentional and ongoing formative assessment practices (assessments for learning), interim assessments to determine progress toward mastery, and summative assessments to measure mastery (assessments of learning).*

Teaching to standards means that learning is continually monitored and instruction adjusted through a range of measurements and assessments. Instructional strategies should be designed or modified according to the information (data) provided by a variety of assessments, particularly forms of checks for understanding and formative assessment. And, performance expectations on assessments should be understood by both teachers and students as part of instruction. By continually evaluating information about what or how students are learning, the focus, intensity, efficiency, and effectiveness of instruction is enhanced. Additionally, objective evidence from interim and summative assessments regarding student progress and learning helps teachers and students know instruction is effective, i.e., yielding the intended learning results.

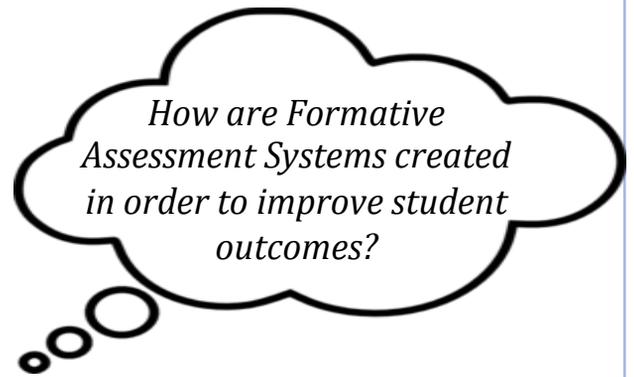
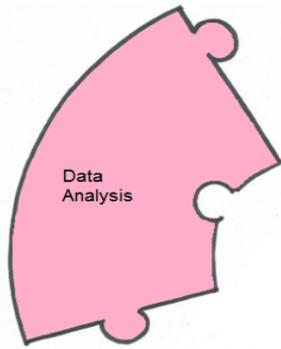


### Guiding Questions:

- How are teachers using formative assessments to inform their planning, teaching, or re-teaching?
- How can the analysis of student work inform instruction?
- How are teachers supported in effectively assessing learning and using that data to guide their teaching?
- How do teachers know when and how to re-teach a lesson for students to reach mastery?
- How are formative assessments helping students regularly understand their learning?

### Reflections:

1. As a leader, what is my role in ensuring this fundamental practice is taking place in my district and schools?
2. What are current barriers that are getting in the way of successfully implementing this fundamental practice systemically in my district and schools?
3. When I return to my district/school, I will complete the following three action steps to begin enhancing our (my and my staff's) application of this fundamental practice:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

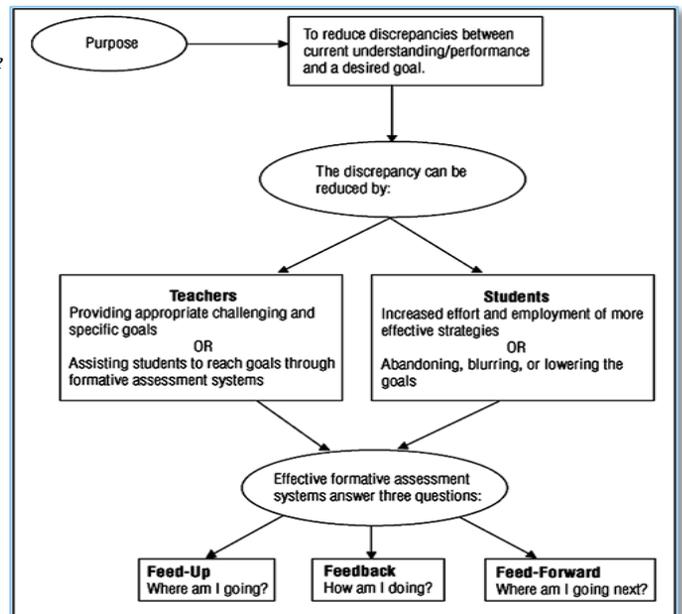


In Chapter 1 of their book, *The Formative Assessment Action Plan* (2011), Fisher and Frey suggest that, “Feedback, when used as part of a formative assessment system, is a powerful way to improve student achievement. Feedback by itself, though, is less useful. Further, they suggest a system of formative assessment which was developed by Hattie and Timperley (2007). It has three components: feed-up, feedback, and feed-forward (see Figure 1.1). Feed-up ensures that students understand the purpose of the assignment, task, or lesson, including how they will be assessed. Feedback provides students with information about their successes and needs. Feed-forward guides student learning based on performance data. They maintain that all three are required if students are to learn at high levels. The guiding question for Feed- up is: Where am I going? For feedback it is: How am I doing? And, for feed-forward it is: Where am I going? To view this entire article please visit:

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/111013/chapters/Creating-a-Formative-Assessment-System.aspx/>

In his article, *How School District Leaders Can Support the Use of Data to Improve Teaching and Learning*, Chrys Dougherty (2015) suggests that, “District Leaders establish a system of frequent assessments of recently taught curriculum.” In two case study districts Dougherty found that there was a system in place for timely information about how and if students are learning the district’s curriculum. Districts addressed this by developing interim or benchmark assessments to identify what students have learned cumulatively over a six- or nine-week grading period. Educators in two case study districts that Dougherty studied did what was necessary to ensure the assessments matched what had been taught during the given grading period. Common assessments were also given at these school sites every two to three weeks in order to provide more up-to- date information about students. These assessments gave the teachers information they needed in order to modify instruction, place students in short-term interventions, and set and monitor goals for students and teachers. To view this article in it’s entirety please visit:

<http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Use-of-Data.pdf>



**Connect to Resources**  
For additional resources on this topic, visit the critical question 2, fundamental practice #1 section of the toolkit.