

ENHANCING OUR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

If we want to know not just what our students know, but how they know it, then we must make their thinking visible. Thus, making students' thinking visible is a formative assessment practice. As Stevens Cooperative School principal Shehla Ghouse explains, "Insights into student thinking provide teachers with invaluable information that can be used to plan next steps for individual students. It also helps us better understand the individual learner and ways in which to reach them more effectively to further their learning."

Speaking about the specific benefits of thinking routines as formative assessment tools, Katrin Robertson identifies their open-ended nature as being particularly useful with her university students. "By asking students to make their thinking visible through a thinking routine, I not only can collect data about specific areas of their learning that I want to understand, but also am able to reveal students' learning in ways that I had not considered or anticipated." She adds that by providing both sought after and unanticipated information, thinking routines "help me design better learning opportunities that support and extend students' learning in rich and nuanced ways as we move forward in our learning."