# 6.2 Developing Effective Formative Assessment Strategies



## Introduction

In the previous unit we reviewed the general setting that Flipped Classroom creates for the **adaptation of assessments**. Now, it is the time to delve deeper in the most compatible types of assessments for Flipped Classroom, the Formative Assessments and particularly the strategies that can be followed for the achievements. After all, it is **purpose that differentiates** Formative Assessments, making it synonymous with **strategic thought**. That being said, let us begin to explore the multitude of possibilities with Formative Assessments.

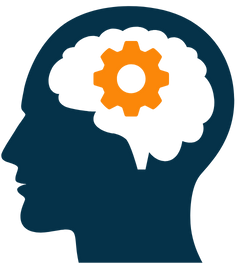
### What are Formative Assessments?

Let’s review what Formative Assessments are exactly to match up its characteristics with the capabilities offered by the Flipped Classroom.

Formative Assessments are Assessments **for Learning**. They are used as a **method of teaching** as well as a **method of providing feedback** and **making interventions**. Rather than simply being tests, it is a continuous formative process, which follows the student along the curve of their learning journey.

The continuous evolution of the process is powered by a **continuous loop of active feedback**, meaning that the feedback process must **guide students to act**, rather than passively sit. Afterwards, **this action** of the student **is also assessed**, to ensure that indeed **progress** is being made based on the instruction provided. This is one of the bridges between the levels of **remembering & understanding** and the level of **applying** as per **Bloom’s** Taxonomy (Bloom’s Taxonomy, n.d.).

While the benefits of the formative assessment is usually viewed on the level of the **behavior**, **cognitive development,** literature supports the positive outcome of deep learning when implementing formative assessments (Higgins, Hartley, Skelton, 2002).



### How are Formative Assessments Relevant to the Flipped Classroom?

The Flipped Classroom consists of an **online component** and a **face-to-face component**. Therefore, the assessment strategies that can be implemented in this context can be either **synchronous**, during face-to-face lessons, or **asynchronous** with the use of digital tools.

### Where Vocational Education and Training Comes.

Vocational Education and Training is intensively **connected to the labor market** and the relevant skills required for it. Therefore, the practical aspects of it can create even more differentiated formats for assessment. In fact, **more stakeholders** can be part of a **common system of formative assessments** when a student is undergoing **Work-Based Learning and internships**.

Though this sounds like an activity that requires specialized software, **common communication and file sharing systems can be used smartly** to accommodate any of those needs. Even a project management tool such as [**Asana**](https://asana.com/) or [**Jira**](https://www.atlassian.com/software/jira?&aceid=&adposition=&adgroup=140479881486&campaign=18442480203&creative=663390759269&device=c&keyword=jira&matchtype=e&network=g&placement=&ds_kids=p73335832032&ds_e=GOOGLE&ds_eid=700000001558501&ds_e1=GOOGLE&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA_tuuBhAUEiwAvxkgTgZnC6_JqakMwBgb0g_GRMOYerTH9WwwphKWI2hyBwGengfNjgfolBoCpDIQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds) can be an efficient way to keep track, provided that all the relevant privacy protocols are respected. If anything, this is a great example of how the formative process itself offers opportunities to teach daily skills including **project management** and **digital communication skills**, including netiquette.



### Understanding Strategy

As formative assessments are **highly flexible**, they can also become quite **vague** without a concrete direction from the instructor. Hence, you should be able to shape this approach based on the available resources and the outcomes you want to achieve. To make this tangible, **let us view the following case!**



Assume that you are planning to use a **3D design tool for fashion**, which requires some operation of it **after class**. While **most of your students** have sufficiently strong devices at home, a **very small percentage** of the class **does not**. Should you dismiss your strategy?

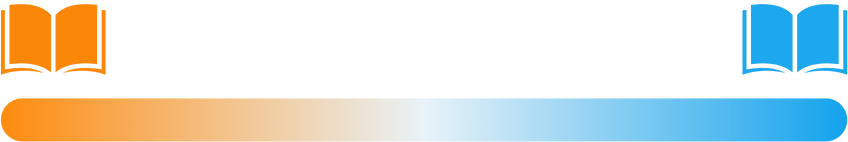
The correct way to face this situation is to **adapt to it**. With the **digital divide** in mind (American University, 2020), the best solution would be to **provide the relevant hardware** for the student to use. If it is not portable, in our case, perhaps there is a library where the student can use it after class.

### Beginning Early

Timing directly affects the efficiency and feasibility of a strategy. While choosing the timing to implement the Flipped Classroom is another variable, **using formative assessments** **individually**, early on, starting during the first weeks has a potential to benefit students (McCallum & Milner, 2020).

When the formative assessments kick in since the starting phase, they enhance **students’ self –monitoring skills**, improving the quality of their overall guidance. This logic also holds water due to the fact that the earlier the teacher or trainer can detect a weakness, the earlier they can intervene and help the student solve the issue, either directly or indirectly.

## Active Learning Continuum



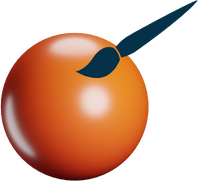
Formative assessments can create an **active learning continuum**, allowing the transition from **low level simple tasks** to **high level ones**, the prerequisite of which is **tackling individual needs** and **special demands** (Khalil, Fahim, 2016).

This is combined with the fact that **assessments take place at different times of a process**. **Depending on the timing, the format of the content or input assessed is different** (Khalil, Fahim, 2016).

To take it a step further, depending on the **format the assessment**, the assessment can also be automated. This further enhances the logic of **keeping track of one’s resources** since automation can help with their **economy of time and energy**, allowing the VET teacher to concentrate on more intensive and crucial areas.

For example, at the beginning, when the idea is **being formed**, the assessment can be in the form of an **oral presentation**, having mostly **informal characteristics** and being blended into a dialogue with the instructor.

### Subject-specific formats



Moving forward, depending on the **subject** the **format can drastically change**. For example, a **graphic designer will have access 3D Modelling tools, sharing similarities with the fashion design class but having vast differences with others**. From that moment, the assessment can be applied to any aspect of the relevant software use or output.

The same can be said and applied in the aforementioned context of **Work-Based Learning and Internships**. Each **sector** or **occupation** has their own **competences**, the **skills** and **knowledge** of which are better expressed in some formats than others.

## Providing Feedback

Another category of means used in formative assessments is of course the type o feedback. Providing feedback in general is an **integral part of formative assessments** as we have analyzed before. However, feedback itself can **differ in type** and can be used under a variety of circumstances for different **objectives**.

Feedback can be focus on the following distinct characteristics (Hattie, Timperley 2007).



Adapted from Hattie and Timperley (2007)

**Which level do you believe is the most crucial in your case and why? Can you combine two different levels to create a feedback strategy?**

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## Self-Regulation is the key to success

**Outside the classroom formative assessments help with self-regulation.**Focusing specifically on the **outside-the-classroom** part of the flipped classroom, formative assessments play a particularly pivotal role in fostering self-regulation among students. This segment of learning is crucial because it's where students **first encounter new material**, and **effective self-regulation** during this phase is essential for the **success of the entire flipped classroom model**.

**Guided Learning Pathways** through assigned readings, video lectures, or interactive modules are essential. **Formative assessments integrated** into these materials can guide students through the learning process, **providing checkpoints** that help them gauge their understanding as they go. This structure supports self-regulated learning by offering students **clear markers of progress** and areas that need more attention, **without overwhelming** them with information. Even if it is something simple of an approach, a student may face the **obstacle of analysis paralysis** (The Decision Lab, n.d.).

### Self Reflection

**Draft a plan for self-assessment. What kind of questions would you choose to guide your students? How would you gauge whether you have provided enough or too many questions?**

### Receiving Qualitative Input

Most of the time the data received by students is of **quantitative nature**. However, there is much value contained in **qualitative data** as well. In particular, the qualitative data can reveal aspects of skills gaps in Vocational Education and Training that **cannot be described by numbers**. Many actually rely on **psychomotor learning** and the key may be in accurate descriptions.

Moreover, qualitative descriptions can offer **insights of emotional states**. For example, you may be facing a straight-A student whose state, **performance-wise**, seems perfect. However, they may be facing emotional difficulties, which could potentially affect their future performance in the long run. By **assessing their emotional worries**, you may decide what is the best way to assist the student, if of course, possible and appropriate.

Some digital tools do an amazing job **gathering opinions and expressions** and one of them is Miro. Miro is a whiteboard app, where users can log in and share their thoughts, while collaborating. It allows you **interact with elements** on screen and **create a visual map** of a small, ad hoc team. For example, you can upload photos, files, stickers and widgets and move them in the space, rearranging objects in meaningful ways and essentially creating flowcharts.

Check the Following Video to become more inspired in the many ways you may use whiteboards!

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6AacVZO37k)

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/supported_browsers?next_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D-6AacVZO37k>

**Lowering the Affective Filter**

One important step to take when implementing formative assessments is to make sure that the **guarding mechanisms** of students are **lowered** (Vasquez, n.d.). This is achieved by creating a **safe space** for the learner, fostering openness. Through this method, communication with the learner is improved, while feedback is received as a **constructive element**, rather than a threat against their personality.



**Time Management**

Formative Assessments can be a lot of work, because the **density of possible interactions** with students and the **respective** **data** are only increasing. This is why proper time management is required, especially if the classroom is flipped.



**What is your most time efficient strategy? Did you read about it first or was it something that you came up with experience?**

Moreover, time management is also required for **rapid corrective interventions**. Some methods (particularly with the use of tools) of formative assessments even **encourage interventions** during tests. This requires a clear mind and clear plan through a **range of responses**, along with **thinking on the go**, as you would be tracking a whole classroom for the duration of the assessment.

## Useful Resources

Asana Project Management Tool: <https://asana.com/>

Jira Project Management Tool: <https://www.atlassian.com/software/jira?&aceid=&adposition=&adgroup=140479881486&campaign=18442480203&creative=663390759269&device=c&keyword=jira&matchtype=e&network=g&placement=&ds_kids=p73335832032&ds_e=GOOGLE&ds_eid=700000001558501&ds_e1=GOOGLE&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA_tuuBhAUEiwAvxkgTgZnC6_JqakMwBgb0g_GRMOYerTH9WwwphKWI2hyBwGengfNjgfolBoCpDIQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds>

Miro Tutorial: 6 Essential Feature For Remote Workshops: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6AacVZO37k>

**WATA (Web-based Assessment and Test Analysis)** - is a system developed for an engine for teachers to administer and manage testing, an engine for students to apply tests, and an engine for generating test results and analyses for teachers. If you are interested in learning more, check the resource in this link: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227605342_Web-based_Assessment_and_Test_Analyses_WATA_system>

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