

# Using Formative Assessment to Ensure Success in the Learning Pathway

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Considering the difficulty in learning a second language we need to provide our students with all the aid possible to ensure their success. In order to have a chance at being successful in their university studies, the students must attain at least intermediate level English. According to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California and other language experts, it will take the normal Arabic speaking person 65 weeks to go from beginner to intermediate level English. However, our students have only 48 weeks to perform the same task. Therefore we must do everything possible to assist and expedite the learning process. One such way is the Learning Pathway coupled with Formative Assessment.

## **A statement about the Pathway and why the Pathway is important**

The Learning Pathway is both a teaching tool and a learning tool. It is designed for both the teacher and the student, though its greatest benefit is to the student. It brings the student into the learning process and makes the student responsible for their progress and overall learning.

In the Learning Pathway we provide clearly stated goals or objectives for the students. We take the normal process of stating only goals a little further by adding the condition under which the student will be evaluated and the degree to which the students must perform, along with the prior knowledge needed to reach the goal and then we share all of this with the students in a concrete form.

When we do not provide all of this information it produces a lack of understanding on the part of the student, a gap in their understanding. The lack of a full understanding of what is required of the student produces much anxiety and fear, not to mention that it decreases the engagement by the students (Al-Essa & Al-Malik 1999).

As instructors we often 'tell' the students at the beginning of the semester what they have to learn. Many of the books we use will have a page or pages which state what the student will be able to do after they complete the book. So the student knows where he/she will hopefully end up, but that is not enough to engage the student in the learning process.

Unfortunately, these goals are usually stated in general terms and when stated by the instructor usually verbally and once. The student does not know how to get to the objective, which forces the student to be dependent on the teacher instead of taking responsibility for their own learning. Instead, we need to really share all aspects of these goals and bring the student into the learning process. This is inline with what

Barr & Tagg, (1995) said in their article “*Changes*”, about bringing the students into the learning process instead of just teaching.

### How to use the information with students

One way I have found for sharing the goals, standards and prior knowledge needed is by posting them on the wall of my classroom, so that the students had the information in front of them constantly. We would refer to the poster almost daily and through reflection, the students would determine how well they were achieving the goals. If I did not have an assigned classroom, I would print these items and distribute them to the students as a handout at the beginning of the semester.

I would not assume that the students would guard this handout; instead I would refer back to it often, asking the students to take out the handout and ‘examine where we were at’ or ‘Tell me the next goal to be achieved’. I would ask them to do some self-evaluation, “Did you learn everything you were supposed to? Can you apply everything you learned?” This constant reinforcement will cause the students to develop the habit of guarding the handout and referring to it constantly.

It is important to note here that the ‘conditions / degree and prior knowledge’ should not to be an individual interpretation. This must be a collaborative effort by all instructors in a given course to ensure consistency of grades and accuracy of prior knowledge. The more explicit the Pathway, the better the students will succeed (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002; Davies et al., 2004; Hermann & Lewis, 2004). All instructors should bring their own version of conditions, degree and prior knowledge to a group meeting and come to an agreement as to the exact conditions and degree, along with the correct prior knowledge needed to achieve the goal.

At the end of the semester the teachers would again consider how well the Pathway functioned; were goals met, were the conditions actually used, were the degrees met, was stated prior knowledge actually necessary, etc. From this point, the teachers would make changes in the Pathway if needed.

The Pathway below is however an individual interpretation, since none of my colleagues have had experience in developing a Learning Pathway. It is for this reason that this paper has been written in the hopes that more will come to use this learning / teaching tool.

**TABLE 1 – The Pathway for Level C students at Sur College**

	READING GOAL	READING CONDITION & DEGREE	PRIOR KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO OBTAIN THE GOAL
1	THE STUDENT WILL RECOGNISE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PUNCTUATION MARKS IN TEXT	A = WHILE READING - ALOUD OR SILENTLY – THE STUDENT ALWAYS RECOGNISES AND USES PUNCTUATION CORRECTLY B = WHILE READING THE STUDENT RECOGNISES AND USES PUNCTUATION CORRECTLY 85% OF THE TIME C = THE STUDENT RECOGNISES AND USES PUNCTUATION CORRECTLY 75% OF THE TIME I = THE STUDENT RECOGNISES AND USES PUNCTUATION CORRECTLY LESS THAN 75% OF THE TIME	THE STUDENT NEEDS TO MEMORIZE THE DIFFERENT PUNCTUATION AND HOW THEY ARE USED

2	<p><b>THE STUDENT WILL IDENTIFY PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR FUNCTION IN A TEXT</b></p>	<p><b>A = WHILE READING - ALOUD OR SILENTLY - THE STUDENT CONSISTANTLY IDENTIFIES PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR FUNCTION IN A TEXT 95% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>B = THE STUDENT CONSISTANTLY IDENTIFIES PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR FUNCTION IN A TEXT 85% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>C = THE STUDENT CONSISTANTLY IDENTIFIES PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR FUNCTION IN A TEXT 75% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>I = THE STUDENT IDENTIFIES PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR FUNCTION IN A TEXT LESS THAN 75% OF THE TIME</b></p>	<p><b>THE STUDENT MUST HAVE COMPLETED STEP 1 AND MUST HAVE MEMORIZED GRAMMATICAL VOCABULARY AND THEIR RELATED FUNCTION, WHAT A NOUN IS, AN ADJUECTIVE, A VERB, AN ADVERB, A PREPOSITION, ARTICLE, ETC.</b></p> <p><b>MUST NAVE MEMORIZED WHICH WORDS ARE NOUNS, WHICH ARE VERBS. ETC</b></p>
3	<p><b>THE STUDENT WILL USE A DICTIONARY TO FIND MEANING OF WORDS</b></p>	<p><b>A = WHEN THE STUDENT ENCOUNTERS AN KNOWN WORD HE/SHE KNOWS HOW TO USE A DICTIONARY TO FIND MEANING OF WORDS AND CONSISTANTLY USES THE DICTIONARY CORRECTLY 95% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>B = WHEN THE STUDENT ENCOUNTERS AN KNOWN WORD HE/SHE KNOWS HOW TO USE A DICTIONARY TO FIND MEANING OF WORDS AND CONSISTANTLY USES THE DICTIONARY CORRECTLY 85% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>C = WHEN THE STUDENT ENCOUNTERS AN KNOWN WORD HE/SHE REMEMBERS GENERALLY HOW TO USE A DICTIONARY TO FIND MEANING OF WORDS AND USES THE DICTIONARY CORRECTLY 75% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>I = WHEN THE STUDENT ENCOUNTERS AN KNOWN WORD HE/SHE DOES NOT REMEMBER HOW TO USE A DICTIONARY TO FIND MEANING OF WORDS AND/OR RARELY USES THE DISCTIONARY</b></p>	<p><b>THE STUDENT MUST HAVE MEMORIZED THE ORDER OF THE ENGLISH ALPHABET,</b></p> <p><b>MUST HAVE MEMORIZED THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DICTIONARY,</b></p> <p><b>MUST MEMORIZED AND BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE PARTS OF SPEECH AND THEIR USAGE</b></p>
4	<p><b>THE STUDENT WILL IDENTIFY PRONOUNS AND THEIR REFERENCE (NOUN / PRONOUN AND SUBJECT / VERB AGREEMENT)</b></p>	<p><b>A = WHILE READING - ALOUD OR SILENTLY - THE STUDENT CONSISTANTLY IDENTIFIES PRONOUNS AND THEIR REFERENCE (NOUN / PRONOUN AND USES SUBJECT / VERB AGREEMENT CORRECTLT) 95% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>B = THE STUDENT CONSISTANTLY IDENTIFIES PRONOUNS AND THEIR REFERENCE (NOUN / PRONOUN AND USES SUBJECT / VERB AGREEMENT CORRECTLT) 85% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>C = 80% OF THE TIME THE STUDENT IDENTIFIES PRONOUNS AND THEIR REFERENCE (NOUN / PRONOUN) AND USES SUBJECT / VERB AGREEMENT CORRECTLT 75% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>I = THE STUDENT IDENTIFIES PRONOUNS AND THEIR REFERENCE (NOUN / PRONOUN AND USES SUBJECT / VERB AGREEMENT CORRECTLT) LESS THAN 75% OF THE TIME</b></p>	<p><b>THE STUDENT MUST HAVE COMPLETED STEP TWO AND MUST HAVE MEMORIZED NOUNS AND PRONOUNS AND BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THEM WHEN READ</b></p>
5	<p><b>THE STUDENT WILL RECOGNISE TARGET GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE</b></p>	<p><b>A = WHILE READING - ALOUD OR SILENTLY - THE STUDENT CAN CORRECTLY RECOGNISE TARGET GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF A TEXT 95% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>B = THE STUDENT CAN CORRECTLY RECOGNISE TARGET GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF A TEXT 85% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>C = THE STUDENT CAN CORRECTLY RECOGNISE TARGET GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF A TEXT 75% OF THE TIME</b>  <b>I = THE STUDENT CAN CORRECTLY RECOGNISE TARGET GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF A TEXT LESS THAN 75% OF THE TIME</b></p>	<p><b>THE STUDENT MUST HAVE COMPLETED STEPS 2, 4 AND</b></p> <p><b>DEPENDING ON THE LEVEL, MUST APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE TO WRITE SIMPLE, COMPOUND AND COMPLEX SENTENCES IN PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE.</b></p> <p><b>DEPENING ON THE LEVEL APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE TO WRITE SIMPLE, COMPOUND AND COMPLEX QUESTIONS IN PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE.</b></p> <p><b>DEPENDING ON HTHE LEVEL APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE TO WRITE CONDITIONAL SENTENCES</b></p>
6	<p><b>THE STUDENT WILL GUESS THE MEANING OF WORDS FROM CONTEXT</b></p>	<p><b>A = WHILE READING - ALOUD OR SILENTLY - IF THE STUDENT ENCOUNTERS AN UNKNOWN WORD, THE STUDENT IS ABLE TO CORRECTLY GUESS THE MEANING OF WORDS FROM CONTEXT 95% OF THE TIME, WHEN NEEDED</b>  <b>B = THE STUDENT IS ABLE TO CORRECTLY GUESS THE MEANING OF WORDS FROM CONTEXT 85% OF THE TIME, WHEN NEEDED</b>  <b>C = THE STUDENT IS ABLE TO CORRECTLY GUESS THE MEANING OF WORDS FROM CONTEXT 75% OF THE TIME, WHEN NEEDED</b>  <b>I = THE STUDENT IS ABLE TO CORRECTLY GUESS THE MEANING OF WORDS FROM CONTEXT LESS THAN 75% OF THE TIME, WHEN NEEDED</b></p>	<p><b>THE STUDENT NEEDS A SUFFICIENT MEMORIZED AND USABLE VOCABULARY (STEP 1) TO RECOGNISE THE MAJORITY OF THE WORDS IN THE SENTENCE OR PARAGRAPH,</b></p> <p><b>NEEDS THE ABILITY TO RECONISE AND USE CORRECTLY THE VAIIOUS TYPES OF SENTENCES AND QUESTIONS - STEPS 2,4,5</b></p>

As you noted in Table 1, the course has assigned goals, which are normally discussed with the students, all we did is add the Condition and Degree, along with prior knowledge necessary to achieve the stated goals. This is the Pathway.

We helped the student understand, on a higher level and with less chance of misconception, everything which is necessary to arrive at the stated goal. The student now has a map which shows him/her what they need to learn first, second, third, etc. They know that they must master certain skills before they attempt other skills. They know how they will be evaluated and what is considered 'good'.

We have now given the student everything to succeed. They have a qualified instructor, they know where they are going and how to get there, they know what is required to get there and they know the level of excellence they must reach. They know that there is better chance of performing well and they know that they need the course to do well in the university. When a person knows that they will do well and they know that they need something the level of engagement rises (Atkinson 1964; Eccles 1983; Wigfield & Eccles 1992, 2000).

It also serves as a troubleshooting map. If the students have problems with one goal they can look at the pathway, which shows the skills they need to be proficient at prior to learning another skill. They can use that information to test their abilities and fix the problem or seek out help (fill the gap). We have brought the student into the learning process and made him/her responsible for their learning. We have helped form learners who "take charge of their own learning" (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002, p.286), and take responsibility for learning (Davies et al., 2004; Hayward et al., 2004; Kirkwood, 2000; McDonald and Boud, 2003).

### **Example of the usefulness of the Pathway**

For example, a student trying to identify grammatical structure (step 5) in a reading assignment has trouble doing so. Normally what would happen? The student would not participate in the class or wait for the for someone else to ask how to identify the structure correctly or hope the teacher will explain again how to find the correct structure or if you are lucky the student will come to your office and ask you for help, but often not. End result the student usually does poorly on that particular section on the exam.

However, by using the Pathway, we bring the student into the learning process. We are referring to the Pathway constantly. We would be asking the students questions like, "According your handout, what do you need to identify the target structure?", "What part of the Pathway helped you identify the structure?". Now, the student can look at the Pathway and sees that he or she needs to have a firm foundation in the skills listed in steps 2 and 4 (reflective). The student knows where to search to find his or her weakness and hopefully how to correct that weakness.

Giving a person a destination without giving them a route or map is of little help. They may find the destination after much trial and error, but that may take semesters

or years. We need to produce competent students now; therefore we need to map out the complete route.

Imagine again the same student from the example above, he or she only has the goals stated at the beginning of the semester. There is no Learning Pathway. He or she can not identify the grammatical structure of the reading assignment. He or she does not know how or where to start in order to fix the problem, what will happen to the student. Will frustration begin to set in? Could the student become discouraged, doubting their ability to handle the material?

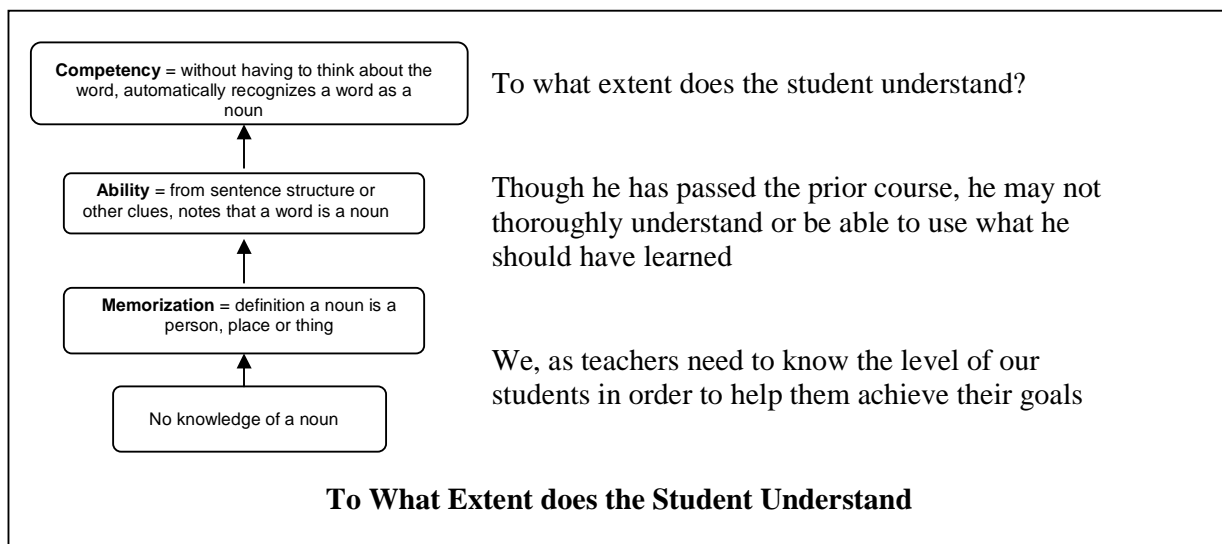
Giving students a clear Pathway to Learning improves their understanding and motivation. It allows them to become active participants in their education. This understanding enables students to reflect on their performance and then self-define and monitor a plan toward mastery (Fontana & Fernandez 1994; Frederickson & White 1997).

However, though we have stated the Pathway we are still assuming that the student is capable of functioning at his/her assigned level. Once you reach the Year 1 or Year 2 students this may or may not be true. The students may or may not have learned all the prior Foundation English skills necessary. Should we just assume they have? The teacher must know what they understand and to what level they understand.

To avoid assuming we can incorporate some preliminary assessments to test the student's readiness to move forward in the course. As educators we are here to ensure successes not reinforce failures.

### Example of ensuring prior learning

The students probably understand, to some extent, the prior information or they would not be in this course. However, we need to assess not just if they understood, but to what extent they understood and can use what was presented to them. Therefore, we assess the students on their prior knowledge and abilities with questions designed to provide the teacher with information on which ability is weak and to what extent. Each question is short and focused on one (1) outcome to avoid partial completion and allow the instructor to determine if the objective has been met.



The teacher will analyze the results to determine what, if any, skills need to be re-taught and how. From that information the teacher designs the lesson plans and begins re-teaching. At every step of the way the teacher is re-evaluating the students to ensure that every student understands and can use the material to the stated degree of competency. We can only call what we are doing “Formative Assessment” if we draw the student into the learning process and our along with their efforts enhance the student’s learning. That is our goal. Let’s look at an example...

Assuming that our course begins with identifying grammatical structure and proceeds forward, we can test the first three steps in one simple quiz, though the quiz will have multiple parts. We design a quiz with vocabulary which the students should know and will have to use, at least at the beginning of the present course. The words are ordered according to levels. We also add some words which most, if not all, will not know. The reason for the words which none will know is to make sure that the student has to use their dictionary, one of the skills we are assessing.

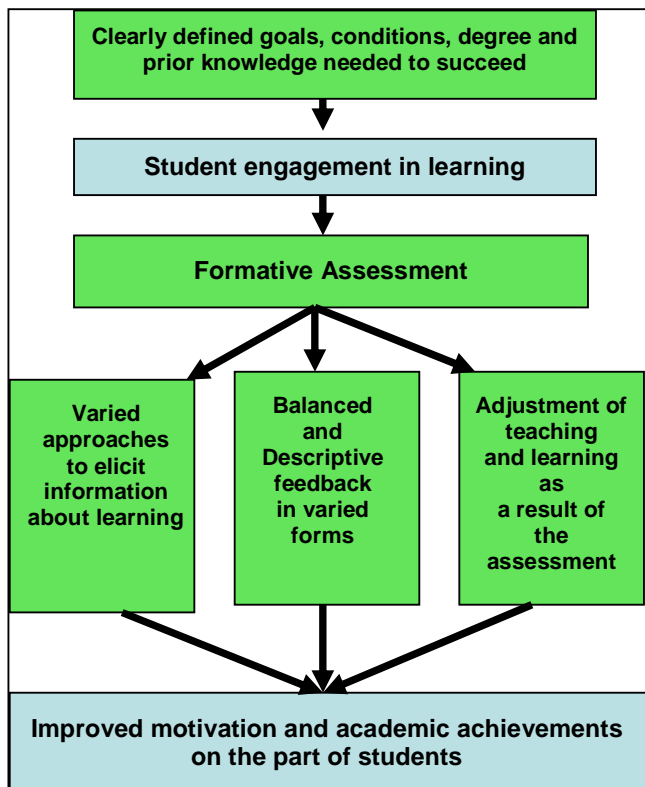
In one part of the quiz, we ask the students to write a definition, in their own words, of the vocabulary (testing basic vocabulary knowledge according to level). In another part we ask them to tell us which part or parts of speech the word represents (testing their ability with parts of speech). We also tell the students that if they do not know the word they should take out their dictionary and look up the word, but should try to answer all the vocabulary without their dictionary (testing dictionary skills).

By observing the number of students who use dictionaries along with when and ‘how’ they use their dictionary we can evaluate their ability to use a dictionary correctly. If we notice that there are difficulties (alphabetically order not known, does not understand the abbreviation for parts of speech, etc), we note what type of difficulty the students have and the number of students who suffer from that difficulty.

### **Statement about Formative Assessment and how to use it**

In Formative Assessment we look for specific skills or knowledge which the student lacks (gaps) and then focus our teaching (using various methods) to correct that problem (fill the gap). We are looking at engaging the students in every step of the learning process. We want to promote self-examination, reflection, critical thinking and **a history of success on the summative evaluation.**

In Formative Assessment we are looking for data not grades and we use the data immediately to dictate what we need to teach or re-teach and to garner ideas on how to teach the material so that the student can understand and use it properly. Therefore, once the quiz, stated above, is done we can address any dictionary problems before class ends. We can review the steps for using a dictionary, use visuals, peer teaching, small groups working together to look up words any number of methods to ensure that our students have learned and can apply the skill. After class we correct the answers to the vocabulary and note the problems, if any.



If no errors are found, we can design quizzes, if we have not already done so, to assess the next set of steps; pronouns, sentence construction, etc. However, if there are problems we note the exact difficulty and analyze the best possible method or methods to re-teach the material.

As stated above Formative Assessment is designed to evaluate specific skills and give the instructor usable information on what the student knows or does not know what the student can do or not do. Formative Assessment is not for grades, but for information.

Having said that we look at the quiz and at the different skills we were assessing. Do the students have a problem identifying many of the vocabulary word? Which level words were difficult? Are there any words which a large portion of the students found troublesome? Do many students have a problem identifying the part(s) of speech which relate to the word? Once we have identified the gaps in the students' understanding and/or abilities, we are ready to design classes to fill those gaps.

Let us assume that many of the students had a problem identifying the part(s) of speech related to the vocabulary. The next class would begin with a review of identifying parts of speech to help them become proficient at that skill. Since they know from the Pathway Chart, that they need that skill, they will be more inclined to be engaged in the review.

The instructor has designed his/her lesson and begins to instruct the students on identifying the parts of speech of various vocabularies. All the while the instructor is verifying that the students understand and can use the skill which is being taught. Verification comes through a multitude of channels; body language, direct questioning, group work, peer teaching and reflection to name a few. Until the students are successful at the present skill, the next skill is not taught.

Formative Assessment means evaluate the students frequently on specific points or skills which they are learning or have just learned. When utilizing a quiz format, design evaluations which will clearly identify specific skills or knowledge. The evaluation are not just paper and pencil quizzes, they are the multitude of forms for verifying a students understanding and ability to perform and should be done during the instruction and after to ensure quality of learning and retention. At every stage of

the assessment, note the skills which are low and address that problem or problems immediately or in the next class.

This is where Formative and Summative differ. If the instructor waits until the Mid-Term or the Final Exam and looks at the test he/she may not be able to tell which skill was lacking to perform well and there is no time to go back and fix the gaps in the students' learning. Plus the instructor normally does not have access to the test to sit down and tear apart the tests to discover which skills are lacking and where along the learning process the student stumbled. For this reason Formative Assessment is frequent assessment; daily, after each new skill or information is taught, at the end of the lesson to ensure that the student can combine the different skills to produce a higher order of knowledge or a higher degree of competence.

In a relatively short time we have ensured that the students are at the correct level and that all prior knowledge and skills are functioning properly. Though we spent some time evaluating them, that investment in time will pay huge dividends during the course when you can move quicker through the new material without having to repeat information which should have been learned in prior levels.

As you noted we incorporated Formative Assessment in the evaluation process, in fact the evaluation process is Formative Assessment. Formative Assessment is evaluating people to note the exact skill which they lack (gap) and help them to learn that skill and become competent at that skill (filling the gap).

Most teachers give homework and quizzes, but usually only place a grade on the assignment. We are missing a wealth of information which could change a failing student into a passing student. Every homework is an opportunity to evaluate our students and learn their weak points and design the next class to repeat information if needed. Every quiz is an evaluation which can be used to assess the strengths and weakness of the student and for redesigning our lessons. Often, we miss valuable opportunities to improve our students.

It is time to turn all of our homework assignments into true learning assignments. Design the homework to assess a particular skill(s). Be very clear about the skill(s) you are evaluating. As soon as you receive the work evaluate it for errors. Note the errors and prepare the information for your next class.

This in itself will change your students. All of the students know that the college requires the teachers to assign 2 hours of homework per week. They have heard that it is used for practice to make them better. However, many of the students look at this homework as duty while others look at it as a burden and some will not do it. The homework has no meaning to them.

If the instructor is assigning meaningful homework and clearly stating the reasoning for each assignment, the students' perception will start to change. As the students see that the homework was used for a valid reason, in their opinion, they will become engaged in the process. Now the homework is not only for practice, it is to find problem areas in their learning and correct those areas. Now it has meaning.

The same is true for all the quizzes that we present to the students. Each question must be specifically designed to assess a certain skill which has been taught. It must also be designed to assess a certain level of understanding (memorization, application, etc.). You may design a quiz which will test the skill, but at every level of understanding. Again, as soon as the quiz is complete, evaluate the quiz and note the problem areas and design your next class based on the data you received.

We will continue this same process throughout the entire course. At each step of the Learning Pathway we will perform evaluations, not for a grade (though at times it is used to assign a mark or grade), but to evaluate the student's ability to apply what they have learned. If there are any gaps in the student's learning we fill that gap before proceeding to the next step.

### **Advantages of using Formative Assessment**

Now I know that some may say that this process is too time consuming, however I wish to prove that in the long run it will prove faster and more efficient. Some will say that the teacher will not be able to cover all the material by the Mid-Term and Final Exams. Assuming that it is true that they can not cover all the material, which from experience I have found that it is not true, but assuming that it is true. The information which the student's did learn, they learned completely 100%. If we only covered 80% of the assigned material prior to the exam, the students will be 100% competent at 80% of the material and their score will be at least 80%.

Teachers in other classes, who do not use Formative Assessment, may cover all the assigned material, but the students do not know 100% and can not apply 100%. Therefore, students in other classes which covered all the assigned material in the stated time will understand or be competent in anywhere from 50% to 90% of each skill. Hence, what will their score be? The other students will have scores from 50% to 90% with a class average of 70%, whereas the group taught under Formative Assessment will have a class average of 80%. Which is better? Which will produce truly competent students?

There is another advantage, which will increase the speed of learning. Many of you have studied student motivation. You know from your studies that what a student believes about his/her abilities affects their engagement and effort to study (Bandura (1993, 1997); Schunk (1990, 1991); Wolters & Pintrich, 1998; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). Through Formative Assessment we increase the student's belief that he/she can perform the tasks, that he/she can learn the material and most importantly that he/she can get good grades in the material. This change in the student's belief system will cause the student to put more effort into learning the material which will ultimately increase the speed of the classes.

What really slows down a class? You know the frustration when students do not seem to be able to comprehend the material you are teaching. This slowness in the learning process is caused by lack of thorough understanding of prior concepts or inability to see where the material is connected to something else they know or both. The Learning Pathway provides the students with a visual map showing how one piece of knowledge is connected to another and how it is important to learn the whole picture

and Formative Assessment ensures that all the students thoroughly understand all concept before moving on to the next concept. Therefore the time you lost trying to get the students to understand would not be lost by the teacher using Formative Assessment. In the course of one semester how many times have you had to slow down? The teacher using Formative Assessment would not experience those slow downs, would not experience the students fear of answering, would not experience the disengagement by students because of poor results and a multitude of other setbacks. Therefore, the teacher using Formative Assessment would not be behind the rest of the course, in fact, once in place, the Formative Assessment teacher would cover the same amount of material in one semester.

Formative Assessment provides additional benefits for the teachers and the institution. Utilizing Formative Assessment, and the data it provides, allows teachers to monitor the effectiveness of their instruction and make changes to their strategies and/or methods if necessary. Additionally, it provides both the teacher and the institute ways to improve curriculum design, goal assignment and educational standards.

## **Conclusion**

The Learning Pathway is a valuable tool for the student, the teacher and the institute. It provides a learning tool for the student, which will aid not only their understanding but their confidence as well. It is also an excellent teaching tool, which will give instructors the opportunity to think deeper about the subject(s) they are teaching. When combined with Formative Assessment the end product will be happier, more content students who develop a history of success, teachers who are happier with the progress of their students and an institute happier with its true success rate.

In the 60's, 70's and 80's Formative Assessment was consider a theory. The 90's saw it come to application stage and over the last 10 years it has become common place to implement this learning process in the schools. In my years of experience using these two tools, I have found that the tools improved the students, the teachers and the institutes in which they were implemented. My hope is that Sur College will attempt to use these tools on a wide scale basis to validate their usefulness to the school.

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