GIVING FEEDBACK

Effective way of giving feedback and praise

Feedback is a two-way flow of communication between teacher and student. It is an essential element in the process of learning. It helps the teacher to know the actual level of the student and makes the student aware of it. For this reason feedback supports students in their learning.

It **should be given regularly** and –to increase motivation- **as soon as possible.** We can make feedback even more effective by asking our students to do something specific after the feedback: in this way we make sure they have read it and we increase awareness.

At various times along the lesson, before moving on, the teacher should **check the level of understanding** among the students. Learning without reviewing is like filling a sink with water without the plug in.

These are three effective ways of giving feedback:

- **Assessment sandwich technique**: something positive to begin and *why*; something to improve and *how* and something positive, to finish, and *why*. The key is being specific.

- **Two stars and a wish**. It's a nice way to give feedback. The person giving feedback, the teacher or a peer, think about two things well done and another one that could have been better. After pointing out the strengths avoid the use of "but"; say "and you could" instead; this will encourage them to improve!

- **WWW** –what went well-**, EBI** –even better if-and **INNT** –I now need to-.

While assessing, the teacher should **differentiate attainment** levels. This will increase a sense of progress in the students and will increase their self-esteem.

Make students share strategies to solve problems. After checking an exam or a simple exercise, invite students to say the others how they did reach that point, how they succeed.

Take advantage of wrong answers. Ask the student to explain why he/she said that, it will help you to understand them. Or ask students to explain why the answer was wrong; let them be the ones who make the concept clear.

When giving praise, **be specific**; take time to reflect on exactly what went well, it will be more meaningful and effective. **Make the student feel that you meant it**: make eye contact, smile and show that you care.

Make an effective, consistent and fair, **use of praise and rewards**. Remember to verbally praise at the end of the class!

Difference between assessment and evaluation
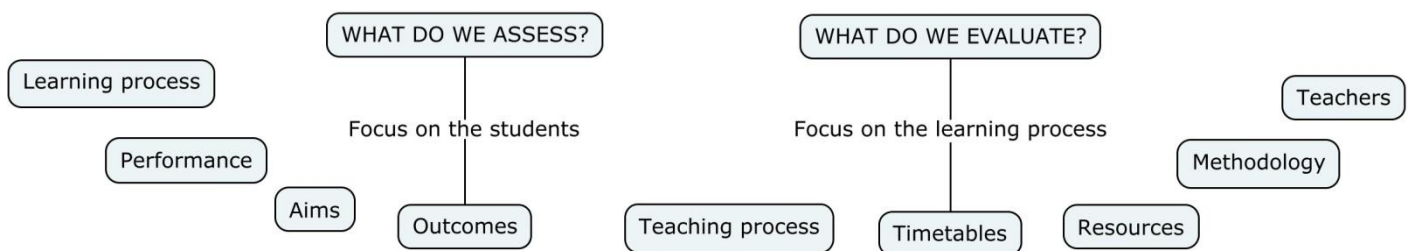
From Angelo, T and Cross, K.P. 1993. Classroom assessment techniques.

Assessment it focuses on learning, teaching and outcomes and it provides information for improving learning and teaching. Assessment is an interactive process between students and teacher. The information should be used to make changes in the methodology. We base our assessment according to a specific standard of indicators.

Evaluation it focuses on grades and may reflect other classroom components than content and level acquisition. These could include discussion, cooperation, attendance, and verbal ability.

Types of assessment

Evaluative assessment: it is more generic like PAU in Spain.

Summative assessment: it consists on the normal tests along the year and shows a learner's success according to the assessment criteria, and it does contribute to the final mark. It is normally used at the end of a unit of teaching. It quantifies achievement and rewards achievement. It can provide information that has formative/diagnostic value.

Diagnostic assessment: it is intended to improve the learner's process and their level of achievement like formative assessment. However, diagnostic assessment looks backwards and search for what the learner already knows and/or the nature of difficulties that the learner might have, which, if undiagnosed, might limit their engagement in new learning. It is often used when a problem arises.

Formative assessment: it does not directly contribute to the final mark but to the learning through providing feedback. It should indicate *what is good* about a piece of work *and why*; it should also provide information about *what is not so good* and *how to improve it*. Information provided helps the teacher to adjust teaching.

Definitions adapted from University of Exter.
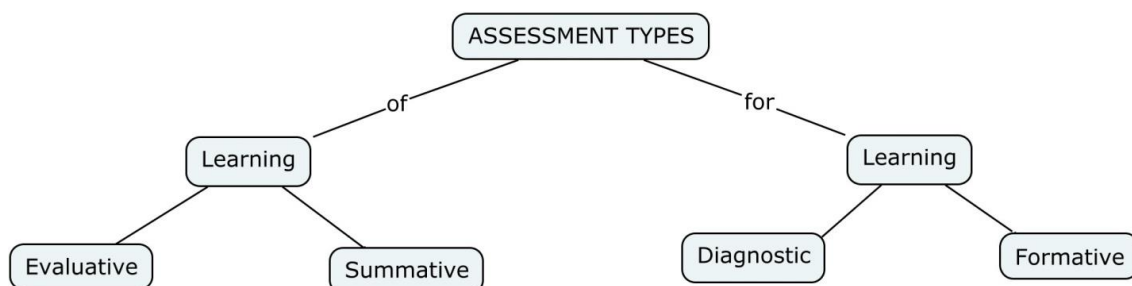
The students can use different **ways to tell the teacher their level of understanding** of a topic in a lesson. Some teachers use red/orange/green cards, meaning: having difficulties/ they feel so so/ they find it easy.   Or using cards with a light bulb and two different messages: I've got it! / I need help! Mini white boards are really useful also or the use of True / False cards students have to answer the teacher's questions. Instead of just two cards, the teacher can provide students with A, B, C, D cards, for multiple choice questions. In this case, reasons for the answers could be followed up, to avoid lucky guesses. These questions could be made by the students, it could be an interesting way of getting them involved with the topic and save teacher's time!

Self-assessment and peer-assessment

Self-assessment. It is very effective as students get involved in their own learning and practice reflective skills. The assessment anyway has to be systematic.

An easy self-assessment method for students consists of drawing a smiling face, a normal or a sad one according to how they feel.

Another interesting way of assessing the learning outcomes for older students, used in Bishop Luffa School, consists of **using bars showing visually the progress** –one for each specific key content- that students fill with two different colours, one at the beginning and another one at the end of the class to show their progress.

In another school they have a visual code for self-assessment; they draw a triangle and add a small dot down, middle or top of it showing where in the way to **climb a mountain** the student is. The teacher may also use this code to save time.

Peer-assessment. Students may swap exercises so that everyone gets corrections by someone else. They could use the marking symbols used by the teacher. In Bishop Luffa School, the teachers gave a list with best, acceptable and not acceptable answers to help students. After marking the students write their comments in WWW –what went well- and EBI –even better if-.

Anonymous correction on the board. The teacher writes on the board common mistakes among the students, so nobody feels bad and everyone learn from them. The teacher could also write on the board the things that the students are currently doing well, to encourage them to keep working.

In British educational System **teachers** get **feedback** not only from students but also from OFSTED and other colleagues. This is something I find very useful and should be completely natural, though it may be a little weird at the beginning. It is always easier to see what is going wrong from outside, and that is not easy to do alone in a class. Besides, it is a great opportunity to observe how others do things, and to learn from each other and share experiences. It should be seen as a teacher's support.

MFL Marking Symbols

Instead of writing long sentences, the teacher uses a few symbols to mark activities, exercises and exams. Instead of giving us the meaning of these symbols, the teacher asks us to guess what they mean, and then checks what we have written. When the teacher gives the notebook back to the students, they will have some corrections and suggestions, and also a feedback sheet, indicating good points, suggestions for further improvement and an overall reflection. This involves self-correction.

Gr	stands for Grammar
C	stands for Capital Letters
Wo	stands for Word order
WW	stands for Wrong Word
V	stands for Vocabulary
T	stands for Tense
Sp	stands for Spelling
St	stands for Style –register, spoken, formal language…-
Sm	stands for Speech marks have not been used or have been used in the wrong place.
P	stands for Punctuation –full stop, comma, question marks…-
Λ	stands for Word omission.
//	stands for a new paragraph should begin.
?	stands for rework this sentence.