**Module V**

**Formative assessment as a strategy supporting learner's development and autonomy in the learning process**

Topic 5.3

Self-assessment and feedback - as the most important elements of formative assessment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ecp5tFwXA_M>

Self-assessment in the learning process

Formative assessment is primarily designed to model the future of students and motivate them, but it should also influence the way the lecturer works. It requires continuous improvement from both lecturers and students. That is why it is so important to prepare appropriately adapted tools and techniques for conducting classes, so that introduced organizational solutions support the conduct of formative assessment. It is important to take care not only of substantive issues, but also the area of inter - and intrapersonal relations. Research shows that people are more engaged in work and study when the involvement also involves intangible matters. Friendly atmosphere, friendly relations with both peers and lecturers increase motivation and commitment to the implementation of assigned tasks. At the same time, it should be noted that it is female students who give the motivator of interpersonal relationships a higher value, while male students feel more engaged and motivated when they receive praise and their work is appreciated. Women appreciate the opportunity to participate in designing work, setting goals and influencing the learning process, regular meetings with the teacher to discuss their results and independence in the tasks performed. On the other hand, men are more focused on the possibility of showing initiative and good organization of work. It is because of these differences that it is so important to take into account differences between students and tailor the curriculum as well as formative assessment to the individuality of students. Creating an environment in which there is a friendly atmosphere, the right to failure, make mistakes, the ability to admit to them or that something has not been understood, or that the student needs the help of the teacher or the group is important, but also impossible in places where there is an atmosphere of competition, concerns against discredit and exposing the shortcomings. It will not be possible to create an environment conducive to the development of the student at all levels, where there is an orientation only on a place in the ranking, obtaining a certificate with honours or an award, or a scholarship. A strongly competitive peer environment will not allow mutual trust to be built under such circumstances. A sense of security is a condition for a good atmosphere and for creating a group work culture. It influences the well-being of students and defines them in the group, which has a significant impact on their self-esteem, which in turn correlates with motivation, the way of approaching problems and coping with failure in the learning process.

The issue of self-assessment is of great interest in the teaching process. Nevertheless, psychologists who study it have a different opinion about the only positive impact of high self-esteem on the way a person functions, as well as the definition of the variable itself. Self-esteem is the third most frequently discussed issue in the field of social psychology, after negative affect and gender, and the interest around it is constantly growing, they considered the issue of self-esteem one of the most important constructs in psychology. Self-esteem is considered to be a subjective construct, based on the way of perceiving oneself, with a relatively constant character in adults, but strongly shaped from an early age, also at all stages of education. Rosenberg, as a specialist in the field of self-esteem, argued that people have a different attitude towards themselves. " *Self-esteem is therefore a positive or negative attitude towards the self, a kind of global self-assessment"*(after: Dzwonkowska , Lachowicz-Tabaczek, Łaguna 2008, p. 7). High self-esteem is self-esteem, which does not have to go hand in hand with self-love or a sense of superiority over others. In turn, low self-esteem, according to Rosenberg, indicates dissatisfaction or even rejection of one's own self. The basic division of self-assessment is global and specific. Global self-esteem is a permanent feature that represents the way you understand yourself. Specific self-esteem relates to various areas of functioning, so one can have a high self-esteem in terms of historical knowledge and low in terms of singing. Global self-esteem differs from self-esteem concerning the person's ability to function in particular areas of his life. Research shows that the assessment of one's own intellectual and social abilities or life resourcefulness clearly correlates with self-esteem, however, it is not its equivalent. That is why for such a long time the self-evaluation period was not related to the teaching process or the performance of tasks. The same level of global self-assessment does not necessarily mean the same detailed characteristics. Thus, it proves the varying degree of generality-specificity of self-assessment. From global self-assessment to assessing your productivity in specific tasks. Thus, self-efficacy is an example of specific self-esteem. The concept of global self-esteem is used as a synonym for self-esteem, while in the cognitive approach, self-esteem is formulated as a kind of judgment about one's worth as a person.

Explicit self-esteem, that is the one we are aware of, should be distinguished from the unconscious - hidden self-esteem. It manifests itself automatically in the form of self-affect, unconscious self-reflection. Hidden self-esteem influences the level of stability of overt self-esteem. This means that overt and implicit self-evaluation does not have to be consistent, they are only a manifestation of different attitudes towards oneself. According to Rosenberg, self-esteem was presented as a trait, a disposition stable over time.

It was assumed that, similarly to personality traits, genetic factors should contribute to shaping self-esteem. The results of the research show, however, that the level of global self-esteem is most influenced by the specific environment - all components describing the environment of a given family, followed by genetic factors. It was assumed that a high level of self-esteem favours good functioning, while a low level directly contributes to numerous problems in functioning. However, not all research results indicate the correctness of the above statement, as they do not indicate the unambiguous relationship between self-esteem and the level of functioning. Self-image is less positive in people with low self-esteem than in those with high self-esteem, but it is not negative. The former describe themselves in a neutral way, they are less aware of the positive aspects of their functioning.

People with high self-esteem have a clear, positive view of themselves, which makes them willing to accept positive feedback about themselves while ignoring most of the negative. This may result in overestimating one's own abilities and the level of acceptance of the environment towards one's views or ideas. On the other hand, in people with low self-esteem, the self-image is not so well defined, their knowledge about themselves is less stable and coherent, and moreover, people are less sure of the accuracy of their opinions. People with low self-esteem are cautious, insecure, and the predominant feeling of wanting success is the fear of failure. Therefore, in new challenging situations, their primary goal is to avoid failure. People with high self-esteem see themselves as competent in most things and want others to see and appreciate their high value. Therefore, they often pursue difficult, unique goals. Both motives - raising and protecting self-esteem - do not have to be contradictory, and some forms of behaviour may result from both of these processes.

Similarly to the widely recognized view on the beneficial effect of high self-esteem on social functioning, the view on the positive impact of a high level of self-esteem on the level of performance and effectiveness of tasks was raised. A review of the research proves that the socioeconomic status of the family is responsible for the relationship between self-esteem and achievement. On the other hand, other studies indicate that self-esteem is not a predictor of success, and that successes lead to high self-esteem. Similar results were obtained for the predictors of low self-esteem, i.e. failures. Undoubtedly, people with high self-esteem consider themselves more capable, popular and intelligent, even though there was no difference in popularity, physical attractiveness or intelligence compared to people with lower self-esteem. Their attitude to success is also different. As shown by the results of research on the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem, people with high self-esteem are more persistent and engage in more activity than people with low self-esteem. In addition, these people set themselves tasks related to achievements, and people with low self-esteem are primarily oriented towards avoiding failure. The comparison presented above leads to the conclusion that people with high self-esteem are more persistent, active and experience more positive emotions. On the other hand, people with low self-esteem show less activity, prefer avoiding difficulties and experience much more negative emotions. Thus, the level of self-esteem allows predicting the level of activity and mental comfort. This only proves how important self-esteem is in the learning process. How it is regulated by the approach to success, understood as the implementation of tasks and achieving good results. Teachers who make the effort to introduce formative assessment into their practice are aware of these processes and equate using this knowledge with effective teaching. They consciously give up evaluation, treated so far as a tool of power over the student. They get rid of the burden of being a judge or a person responsible for catching mistakes. They treat their role as responsible for finding ways to create a good atmosphere, friendly relations in the group, building the authority of a guide in the world of knowledge and a helper and support for learners, hoping that thanks to doing so, students will look at assessment and a different perspective, and maybe even like them.

Formative assessment is nothing more than an interactive assessment of a learner's knowledge and progress to define a learner's learning needs. The next step is to adapt the teaching methods and techniques to them. Formative assessment is one of the most important educational interventions that has ever been studied. It is a source of information about the subject requirements and the experience of lecturers. It is the link between the requirements of education and the student, and for teaching to be as effective as possible, formative assessment must focus on two-way feedback: from student to teacher and vice versa.

# Feedback as part of the formative assessment

In the learning process, questions are asked to formulate them in such a way as to make you think. The lecturer is to prepare key issues and questions for them. Thanks to this, it is possible to recognize whether the student has understood the issues learned, and is able to apply the acquired information and skills in a wider context. Students also have the right to ask questions so that the group can search for answers together. Students' involvement and willingness to find an answer depends on the level of curiosity the question provokes. Following the main tenets of formative assessment, it is extremely important to involve all learners. To achieve this, certain rules apply to how to ask questions. Students do not have to come forward and the question is directed to everyone. This gives a lot of time for reflection or consultation of the answer with a colleague. The lecturer asks a question or conducts a conversation with the indicated students, not with the students. It is a way of arousing and keeping students' attention. The best solution is to ask open-ended questions. This enables students to express themselves freely without fear of embarrassment. They can express their opinions, present ideas and their solutions. Fear does not arise because there is no threat of punishment for wrong answers. An answer that is incomplete, not exhaustive, incorrect or imprecise is the perfect excuse to look for a better solution. The teacher and the group can provide guidance or additional explanations. This is the moment when the teacher, in addition to providing substantive knowledge, can shape students' ability to pay attention to others in an appropriate way. Very often, during the work of students, in the way that the formative assessment model assumes, in addition to building self-assessment, peer assessment is also used. This is the moment when learners themselves verify the results against the goals set at the start of the learning process. Peer review should be clearly defined and should have the characteristics of correct feedback. It must contain information on well-done elements of the work, any shortcomings, and suggestions for solutions, how to supplement them or how to improve the work. Improving the way you give feedback is a very important step in the learning / teaching process. It is also an effective way of increasing learners' motivation and holding them accountable for their own learning process, which is later associated with greater satisfaction and can bring more joy in the learning itself.

## **The components of feedback in formative assessment**

1) Feedback

It is often said that formative assessment is simply giving learners feedback to help them learn. In addition, its aim is, of course, to improve the quality of learners' learning, but effective feedback is the primary tool for formative assessment. Its purpose is to inform the student where he or she is in science at the moment, where he is going and how he can successfully overcome the obstacles standing in the way of this goal. Feedback is crucial for formative assessment, if it is absent or if the teacher neglects feedback, it cannot be said that this type of assessment is being used in the teaching process. Of course, this is an element that is often overlooked in teaching, because lecturers have a lot of difficulties with feedback, and this is because they do not know how to provide it. Properly conducted feedback should help the student improve and to be able to do this it should contain four elements:

* identify good elements in the student's work,
* identify what the student still has to work on,
* provide tips on how to improve it,
* provide instructions in which direction the student should continue working,

Feedback must be closely linked to pre-established success criteria. In addition, feedback also has a supporting and motivating function. It is a rescue element for the teacher, especially in a situation where none of the criteria has been met. It helps the student not to lose motivation to make further attempts to solve the task and supports the student regardless of the internal difficulties he is currently experiencing.

2) Form of feedback

The most common form of feedback is oral. It is the most practical, the teacher does not have to put as much work into its preparation as in the case of written feedback, thus saving time as well. When talking, it is easier to establish individual contact with the student. Despite the obvious pluses, there are a number of concerns about the effectiveness of this form of feedback. The first is that the student will not take advantage of the advice given because he will not be able to remember it. On the other hand, from the teacher's perspective, it may be difficult to formulate the comment itself in such a way that it contains the four points required in the feedback. The effectiveness of feedback depends not only on its form, but also on the circumstances and method of its transmission. These include the level of student's motivation, the teacher's commitment, and the atmosphere between them. It is not without reason that an element of effective teaching is putting emphasis on active listening, in the long run this significantly affects the more accurate assimilation of feedback, which also affects its effectiveness. Factors accompanying the provision of feedback are extremely important, but the most important is the quality of the content provided. After receiving it, it should be clear to the student:

* what areas of material he mastered
* what are the shortcomings
* how to fill in the gaps

Therefore, it is the teacher's duty to ensure that the information is not too poor in content, but also not too long, not simplified, but at the same time written in an intelligible language.

3) Teacher involvement

Great results can be seen from the very first attempts to introduce formative assessment into the lecturer-student relationship. The key to a good start is properly planned work that will be based on feedback. In order for the communication to be effective and efficient, it requires a lot of work and time from the teacher, which will be devoted to preparation and providing feedback. It must be preceded by an analysis of the student's performance. This has an impact on the process of planning further cooperation with the student based on the provided guidelines, which is also time-consuming. The time spent generating feedback from start to finish is the reason why teachers quit. Often they do not even attempt to introduce this element, thus giving up formative assessment.

It is risky because in the process of educating a student there are always moments when he or she faces difficult situations, e.g. resistance, loss of motivation. Without fully focusing on the learner and their needs, as enabled by formative assessment, helping learners become more difficult and sometimes even impossible. It's best to react on a regular basis. When it becomes impossible to provide extensive written (more lasting) feedback, it is possible to deal with the provision of shorter and more concise but still complete verbal information to students in the form of a short commentary. Giving them as often as possible will be an ad hoc solution to the problem of lack of time, while maintaining the use of formative assessment, which is such an effective way to collaborate with the student and monitor his / her learning progress. In such a case, you should be involved by creating extensive written feedback to complement your comments previously. It should be voluminous, but not too long, as this will discourage the student from reading the content. Students need specific information and guidance to evaluate the learning outcomes against the criteria set at the outset.

4) The frequency of providing feedback

As we well know, fixation takes place by the appropriate number of repetitions. Likewise, feedback should be given frequently and regularly so that students can benefit from it. The frequency of providing it is extremely important in the learning process. Feedback given too infrequently, e.g. less than once a month, will not significantly affect the learning process. What is still so rare in schools is teachers' awareness that feedback is most needed during the learning process, not after it has ended.

5) Attitude of students to feedback

Any change, even for the better, is difficult to implement. Especially in a group that previously had different rules. An appropriate way to deal with the introduction of formative assessment so as not to discourage students from doing so initially is to spend a considerable amount of time introducing the group to the newly introduced principles of collaboration. Students quickly adapt to rules that they accept. There is no better way to gain acceptance than translating the new rules before presenting the benefits to them. The moment when students first encounter formative assessment is crucial, so the benefits should emerge from every topic presented. The lecturer's task is to carefully explain why we are abandoning the standard form of assessment and what the purpose is. What, however, cannot be avoided with the best efforts is the fact that they will always have moments when they do not want to work, when they do not want to understand, when they pretend that they do not understand, or try to use the introduced rules of formative assessment to minimize their own efforts. Little interest of students in information is often connected with the waiting time for the assessment they are used to. This makes the student feel that he or she does not have to study. Then you should immediately compare the learning results to the benefits that they bring, e.g. usefulness in later stages of study, at work or in life. The results of introducing formative assessment show that the first learners to engage in the learning process on the basis of the teacher's guidance improve their results. This significantly affects the motivation of the rest of the group. Nevertheless, a teacher who decides to introduce it must, above all, be patient. It is important for them to realize themselves that any change in the way of teaching, and especially of assessment, requires time, consistency, and clearly defined and clearly communicated principles.

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