

## 60 Formative Assessment Strategies

Each of the strategies listed below is described briefly and categorized according to Dylan Wiliam's 5-Key Strategies.

- Clarifying, Sharing and Understanding Learning Intentions (LI)
- Feedback That Moves Learners Forward (F)
- Activating Students as Instructional Resources (AI)
- Engineering Effective Discussions that Elicit Evidence of Learning (EED)
- Activating Students as Owners of Their Own Learning (AO)

The strategies (in no particular order):

1. **Quizzes** (that don't count for marks) (F)  
Let's get this one out of the way. Yes, it's formative. So are lots of other things. Research shows that they should not be graded. Comments make better feedback than a grade.
2. **Thumbs Up** (F)  
The teacher asks students to provide quick feedback about their understanding of lesson in the form of "thumbs up" or "thumbs down".
3. **Individual White Boards For Feedback** (F)  
The students write an answer on a white board and hold it up so the teacher can see. The teacher scans the responses and decides what to do next.
4. **Electronic Response Systems** (F)  
Most of these systems allow students and teachers to receive feedback almost instantly.
5. **Socrative** (F)  
There's an app for that. This app does what the clickers do. Students enter the responses on their mobile devices. [www.socrative.com](http://www.socrative.com)
6. **Poll Everywhere** (F)  
There's a website for that. This site does what the clickers do. Students enter responses on their phones (via text), tablets, or laptops.  
[www.poll.everywhere.com](http://www.poll.everywhere.com)
7. **Communication of Curricular Outcomes** (LI)  
Key curricular outcomes are prominently displayed in the room and the teacher and students refer to them frequently as the material is being learned.
8. **Student Exemplars** (LI)  
Work from previous students is used to illustrate the targets to current students.
9. **Exit Slips for Practice** (F)  
Students are given an exit slip near the end of class with questions based on the day's lesson. Based on student responses, the teacher can tell how the lesson went for the class, and adjust instruction accordingly.

10. **Exit Slips for Reflection (AO)**  
Students reflect on the day's lesson and write down how it went for them. The teacher can use this feedback to adjust instruction.
11. **Exit Slips for Review (AO)**  
Students review a concept and use an exit slip to indicate to their teacher which parts need further study.
12. **Students Create Test Items (LI)**  
Students write questions for a summative assessment, linked to curricular outcomes, and provide the correct answers.
13. **Teacher Feedback - Non Evaluative (F)**  
The teacher provides feedback that does not include a grade. The feedback focuses on what the student should do next.
14. **Plus, Minus, Equals (F)**  
The teacher provides feedback in the form of a + (better than previous work), - (worse than previous work) or an = (the same as previous work).
15. **Peer Feedback (F)**  
Students can give each other feedback. They may need coaching to ensure the feedback they give is useful. The feedback should be linked to specific criteria, which should be linked to the curriculum.
16. **Steal Two (F)**  
Students look at a partner's work. They choose two components of the other student's work that would improve their own.
17. **Highlighters (F)**  
Students use a highlighter to highlight the point at which they begin to be confused.
18. **Traffic Lighting - Real Time (AO)**  
Students have coloured cups on their desks. As a lesson is being taught, they display one of them. Green means they understand. Yellow means they are having some difficulties. Red means they have a question. As soon as a student shows a red cup, the teacher stops and asks a green-cupped student to answer.
19. **Traffic Lighting - Reflection (AO)**  
Near the conclusion of a unit of study, the students self assess. Red means they didn't succeed at learning the material. Yellow means they had some understanding but some work still to do. Green means they completely mastered the material.
20. **Two By Four (AI)**  
Students work in pairs on problems/assignments/lessons. Pairs join another pair and share their solutions. Questions that remain are brought to the whole class.
21. **End of Session Questions (AI)**  
Students work in small groups to check their understanding of a given concept. If no one in the group is able to answer a specific question, they submit it to another group or teacher.

**22. C3B4ME (AI)**

Students must ensure they have sought help from 2 or 3 other classmates before coming to the teacher.

**23. Row Games (EED)**

A practice sheet is prepared with questions in two columns (A and B). The answers to column A are the same as the answers to column B. Half the class does column A, and the other half does column B. Then they pair off and compare.

**24. Speed Dating (EED)**

Each student is given one question, and they are responsible for being able to answer it and explain it. Then they pair off and trade with another student and do each other's questions. If they get stuck, they ask the partner to help. After a set amount of time, they rotate and do another question with another partner.

**25. What did we learn today? (AI)**

Near the end of the lesson, the class is broken into groups and each group is asked to produce a list of things they have learned during the lesson.

**26. Plan Deep Questions (EED)**

Higher-level questions often take time to plan. Teachers could incorporate these questions into their lesson plans.

**27. Make Statements Rather Than Asking a Question (EED)**

Statements can deepen a conversation. Teacher prompts like "convince me" will lead to deeper conversation.

**28. Wait Time (EED)**

Short wait time teaches students that if they wait long enough, they will be let off the hook. Silence can be uncomfortable, but teachers should learn to wait longer after asking a question.

**29. Individual White Boards For Grouping (EED)**

The teacher poses a question. Students hold up responses on their whiteboards, and then are grouped based on their answers.

**30. ABCD Cards (EED)**

The steps to the solution to a problem are mixed up and provided. Extra steps with some common errors could be included. The class works in groups to get the correct steps in the correct order.

**31. Outcome Checklists (AO)**

Students are given a checklist of the outcomes in a unit, and self assess whether they have met those outcomes as the unit progresses.

**32. Talk Partners (Turn and Talk) (AO)**

Students turn and talk briefly with a partner about 3 new things they have learned, or what they found easy and/or difficult.

**33. Learning Logs (AO)**

At the end of the lesson, students complete a learning log of self-reflections about how they did with the day's material.

**34. Learning Portfolios (AO)**

Learning portfolios are organized to show an incremental view of ability, not just the latest and best work. Students can see where they have improved.

35. **Daily Expert (AI)**  
One student is the "expert of the day" on a topic. All students are instructed to ask the expert before coming to the teacher. Some students may need help preparing to be the expert.
36. **Comment Only Marking (F)**  
The teacher returns student work with comments only; no grade.
37. **3-2-1 Chart (AO)**  
Students write down 3 things they learned, 2 things they found interesting, and 1 thing they still have a question about.
38. **KWL Chart (AO)**  
Before beginning the lesson, students write down what they know about a topic (K) and what they want to know (W). At the end, they write down what they learned (L).
39. **Two Stars and a Wish (F)**  
Students give each other peer feedback. They list two things their partner did well, and one area for improvement.
40. **4 Quadrants (or 3, 6, 9, 12 Appointment Clock) (EED)**  
This is a quick way to group students. Students are grouped and re-grouped according to the 4 quadrants on the coordinate plane. The teacher says, "get together with your quadrant III partner, and the students know where to go.
41. **Vertical Surfaces (AI)**  
Students work on vertical surfaces in the classroom (white boards, chalk boards, windows, etc.). When they are stuck, they can step back and look at another group's work to help move forward.
42. **Four Corners (EED)**  
The four corners of the classroom are labeled differently (for example: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The teacher makes a statement or asks a question and the students move to a corner and have a conversation.
43. **Think, Pair, Share (EED)**  
The teacher poses a question. The students think quietly about the question, then discuss with a partner, and finally share with the whole class.
44. **Text, Tweet, Blog (AO)**  
Students are asked to summarize a concept 3 different ways. The text must be short and can include abbreviations. The tweet must be 140 characters or less. The blog can be a paragraph. The different lengths and formats require different attention to detail.
45. **My Favorite No (F)**  
Students all solve a problem on index cards. The teacher sorts them into Yes/No (right and wrong) piles and selects the best wrong answer and the students discuss it and learn from it as a class.  
[www.teachingchannel.org/videos/class-warm-up-routine](http://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/class-warm-up-routine)
46. **Popsicle Sticks (EED)**  
The teacher uses Popsicle sticks or technology (there's an app for that) to randomly select students to respond to questions.

47. **Cartooning (AO)**  
Students reflect on or summarize a concept by creating a comic strip.  
[exponentialcurve.blogspot.ca/2010/02/language-and-retention-of-math-concepts.html](http://exponentialcurve.blogspot.ca/2010/02/language-and-retention-of-math-concepts.html)
48. **Choose-Swap-Choose (EED)**  
Students complete a task, and choose what part of it they think is indicative of their best work. They swap with another student and choose what they think indicates the best work of their partner. Then they compare and discuss.
49. **What Do You See? (I notice, I wonder) (EED)**  
Teachers put a situation, picture, or story on the board and students discuss what they see without solving anything. Students state what they notice, and what they wonder about.  
[mathforum.org/articles/communicator2010.html](http://mathforum.org/articles/communicator2010.html)
50. **Flip the Question (EED)**  
Many discussions can be made richer by flipping a question around. For example, instead of asking students to fold a net to see what 3-dimensional shape is made, show them the shape and ask them to draw the net.
51. **I'll Come Back To You (EED)**  
This teacher response is a useful one for students who try to opt out of answering a question with "I don't know." Let them hear the responses of other students, and then ask them which answer they like best and why.
52. **Muddiest Point (AO)**  
Students write down the thing that they are most confused about after a lesson.
53. **Gallery Walk (F)**  
Students complete a task on chart paper, whiteboards, or other vertical surfaces. They then circulate around the room looking at and commenting on all the other students' work.
54. **Jigsaw (AI)**  
Students learn parts of a topic or read parts of a selection in groups, and then they re-group and teach their new partners what they learned in the first grouping.
55. **Rubrics (LI)**  
Discussing the criteria in a rubric prior to completing a task is important so that students understand what will be measured.
56. **Co-Creating Rubrics (AO)**  
Students and teachers work together to establish the descriptors of success criteria.
57. **Homework Help Board (AI)**  
Instead of the teacher doing homework questions in front of the whole class, a side board is used. Students with questions write them on the side board. Students who can answer those questions come up and write down the solutions.
58. **Three Questions (F)**  
When looking at student work, the teacher puts the numbers 1, 2, and 3 within the work, and corresponding questions at the bottom.

**59. You Find Them. You Fix Them. (F)**

Instead of marking work right or wrong, the teacher only tells the student how many are right. The student must find the wrong ones and fix them.

**60. Phone a Friend (EED)**

When a student doesn't know the answer to a teacher's question, he may ask a friend. The teacher then asks the original student to agree or disagree and explain why.

**61. Error Classification (AO)**

The teacher underlines student errors, and the student must classify those errors.

**62. I Have, Who Has (Loop Games) (F)**

The teacher prepares a set of cards with questions on one side and answers on the other, and distributes one to each student. The teacher starts with, "Who has..." and reads a question. The student with the answer stands up and says, "I have..." and then the answer. That student continues with, "Who has..." and then reads the next question.

Example: [www.pleacher.com/mp/lessons/trig/ihave.html](http://www.pleacher.com/mp/lessons/trig/ihave.html)

**63. Hand In, Pass Out (AI)**

Students answer a question on a recipe card, without putting their name on it. The teacher collects them and re-distributes them randomly. The students must then assess and correct the card they end up with.

**64. TWAS (This Week at School) (AO)**

On Friday, students write a reflection on their week and what they learned. These reflections are taken home to their parents. Parents add comments, sign them, and return them on Monday.

**References/Resources:**

William, Dylan. (2011). *Embedded Formative Assessment*. Solution Tree Press

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/teach21/ExamplesofFormativeAssessment.html>

<http://www.edutopia.org/groups/assessment/250941>

[http://www.trianglehighfive.org/pdf/009\\_Formative\\_Assessment\\_Ideas.pdf](http://www.trianglehighfive.org/pdf/009_Formative_Assessment_Ideas.pdf)