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Vietnamese English Teachers' Views on Formative Assessment Management and Suggestions to Improve Student Motivation

Nguyen Van Hai

Vinh University, Vietnam

Abstract---Student performance assessments play an important role in the training process. They reflect how well students performed their learning activities. The goals of assessment are multiple according to their functions. Among assessment forms currently applied at higher education institutions, the formative assessment shows its strength over others by offering great contributions to the innovation of teaching and learning activities. Appropriate use of this form of assessment leads to a successful teaching and learning process, and a much better result and quality of training. This paper focuses on the view of formative assessment management from teachers' lenses in order to help adjust teaching/learning methods and curriculums. To learn more about the reality of formative assessment for English majors and how it is managed by various stakeholders, a questionnaire and interviews were used. The investigation's findings reveal a substantial lack of teacher knowledge of the nature and strengths of formative assessment. These findings also point to new ways to increase student motivation through the use of formative assessment.

Keywords---English teachers, formative assessment, student motivation, suggestions, teaching learning.

Introduction

Together with a variety of activities, formative assessment contributes to improving the quality of training even though it is considered as an informal assessment of student's performance. Formative assessment activities help in the adaptation of teaching/learning approaches and the enhancement of instruction in response to anticipated learning outcomes. The goal of formative assessment is not to grade students' work, otherwise, it evaluates students' achievement at a certain stage of training and provides relevant proof for teachers and students to adjust their teaching/learning process and methods (Filisetti & Wentzel, 2006;

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Corresponding author: Hai, N. V.; Email: nguyenhaidhv@gmail.com

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[Montalbetti, 2018](#)). Due to its importance, the management of formative assessment should be carefully implemented by different stakeholders including teachers, educational managers, and students themselves. To investigate the reality of formative assessment through English teachers' perspectives and suggest solutions to improve student motivation in learning, we conducted a survey of English teachers on their awareness of formative assessment and related factors. The findings serve as concrete proof of formative assessment's use in Vietnam, as well as the steps that should be taken to maximize the benefits of formative assessment in teaching English to Vietnamese teacher students.

Literature review

Formative assessment

The construct of formative assessment was first formed in the 1960s and has been defined by many researchers with a focus on its nature and purposes. Many authors such as [Black & Wiliam \(2010\)](#); [Earl & Katz \(2006\)](#); [Brookhart \(2007\)](#); [Ahmed & Teviotdale \(2008\)](#); [Aranda & Yates \(2009\)](#); [Cauley & McMillan\(2010\)](#); [Eccleston \(2010\)](#); [Laight et al. \(2010\)](#); [Clark \(2010\)](#), etc. believed that formative assessment is not just about recording the results achieved by students after a learning process but also aids in improving learning outcomes. Formative assessment is conducted throughout the teaching process. Kathleen M. Cauley and James H. McMillan from Virginia Commonwealth University recognized formative assessment as a process through which assessment-elicited evidence of student learning is gathered, and instruction is modified in response to feedback. [Khanh \(2018\)](#), in his book "Syllabus on competency-based assessment and testing in education" defined formative assessment as a tool that aims to find mistakes, provide feedback, promote the learning process, orient/instruct students to study as well as orient/instruct teachers to teach. Formative assessment also helps monitor and improve education quality.

The definitions of formative assessment are diverse, however, researchers agree that formative assessment, like other assessments, happens in the training process and is recognized as an informal assessment to measure the performance of students at a certain period of the training process. The goals of formative assessment are to improve teaching and learning activities, to help students and other stakeholders adjust their activities to meet the learning outcomes of training programs, and ameliorate training quality ([Bratel et al., 2021](#); [Absatova et al., 2021](#)).

Management of formative assessment

The management plays an essential role in dealing with the implementation of formative assessment during a predetermined period of the training process. [Bloxham & Boyd \(2007\)](#), stated that assessment is a complex enterprise involving students, tutors, managers, administrators, and employers, each with a role to play in developing an effective assessment system. Many Vietnamese researchers recognize that academic staff, students, and educational managers are important factors in the assessment. The role of each is to collect feedback from the assessment to improve the quality of teaching and learning ([Nguyen et al., 2020](#)).

The management of formative assessment is conducted through five main modes known as the goal of assessment, learning objectives, assessment time, evidence collection method, and assessors (Nguyen et al., 2020). The main objects of formative assessment consist of teachers, students, and educational managers, however, teachers and students play an essential role. The latter collect feedback and adjust teaching/learning activities daily during the teaching and learning process. Yorke (1998), raised three requirements of an effective formative assessment at higher education institutions: a clear definition of the purpose(s) to be served, a strategy designed to lead to the fulfillment of the purpose(s), and an operationalization that “works”.

In short, the management of formative assessment is an intended impaction of managing subjects (school directorate, training department, relevant administrative department, section, lecturer, and student) on managing objects (student, curriculum) through regulatory documents which instruct assessment procedures and dispose of assessing resources (human, financial and material resources) in order to support, lead and guide assessment managers to implement the assessment and achieve expected learning outcomes.

Motivation

Motivation is the set of needs that makes an individual act so as to satisfy his or her previously made goals. The individual has to mobilize internal and external forces to accomplish his or her goals. Alain Lieury and Fabien Fenouillet in “Motivation and school success” recognized motivation as the whole of biological and psychological mechanisms which allow launching of orientation action (toward a goal or contrarily to avoid it) and finally that of intensity and persistence: more we are motivated, more the activity is great and persistent (Lieury & Fenouillet, 2013). According to Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, motivation concerns energy, persistence, and equifinality – all aspects of activation and intention (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Motivation is produced by the interaction between an individual and his or her environment. It greatly affects people’s mental state and their working results. Motivation is regulated by cognitive engagement and perseverance as a result of the source of motivation; including the perception of the value of the activity, competence, and controllability, (figure 1). These indicators of motivation were also offered by Viau as contributors to the improvement of motivation at work in general and at university in particular.

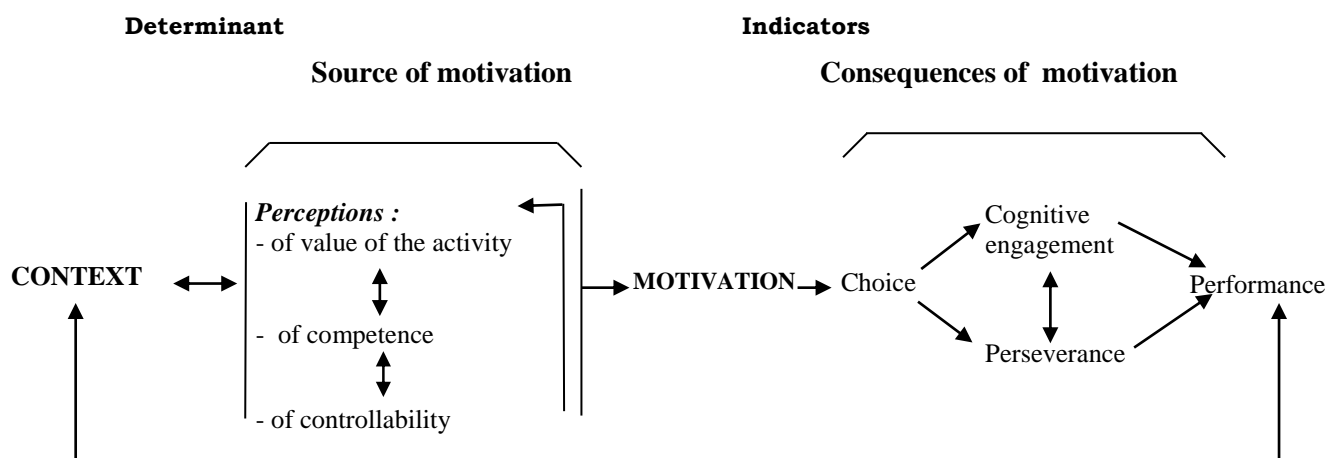


Figure 1. The indicators of motivation

Researchers identified two types of motivation that affect student engagement in different ways, that are intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Ryan & Deci (2000), defined intrinsic motivation as a construct describ[ing] this natural inclination toward assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration that is so essential to cognitive and social development and that represents a principal source of enjoyment and vitality throughout life” and extrinsic motivation as “the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome, [which] contrasts with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself. Extrinsically motivated behaviours are the ones that the individual performs to receive some extrinsic reward or to avoid punishment, with intrinsically motivated behaviours, the rewards are internal (e.g. the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one’s curiosity) (Dörnyei, 1994).

Research methodology

Survey population

The survey was conducted at Ha Noi National Education University, Vinh University, and Ho Chi Minh-City Pedagogical University in 2020. There are 127 teachers, to determine the survey population, the author used Yamane Taro’s simplified formula. The Yamane sample size states that:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$$

where n is the minimum sample size of lecturers, N is the underlying population size and e is the acceptable sampling error that was 0.1 (10%) with a confidence level of 95% and $p = 0.5$.

So the determination of the minimum sample size of teachers surveyed was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{127}{1 + 127.0.1^2} = 55.94$$

The minimum sample size of teachers must be 56 people to assure the confidence level. As result, we decided to select randomly 116 teachers from three universities from three areas of Vietnam (North, Centre, and South).

Interpretation of survey and analysis methods

We used a questionnaire to investigate the reality of formative evaluation and management knowledge among English teachers in this study. The questionnaire consists of five questions covering 34 topics that look at formative assessment's knowledge, features, objectives, content execution, assessment processes, and impacts on teaching English at pedagogical universities. The questionnaire is given to 116 teachers from three pedagogical universities known as Vinh University, Ha Noi National Education University, and Ho Chi Minh-City Pedagogical University. The data is analyzed using SPSS software to determine how formative assessment management is implemented in Vietnam, how different it is from what is done globally, and what can be changed to maximize the benefits of formative assessment during the teaching/learning process. Both questionnaire responses are accompanied by interviews with randomly selected teachers in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the issues in question ([Gikandi et al., 2011](#); [Guasch et al., 2010](#); [Suryasa et al., 2019](#)).

Findings and Discussion

The study investigated the awareness of teachers about formative assessment and formative assessment application management at Vinh University, Ha Noi National Education University, and Ho Chi Minh-City Pedagogical University (in Vietnam). Five issues were raised and feedback from teachers showed interesting views on formative assessment and formative assessment management.

The characteristics of formative assessment

Five items related to the awareness of teachers about formative assessment characteristics were successively asked. These five items represent five essential features of formative assessment: feedback to students, feedback to teachers, mutual impact, adjustment of teaching and learning, and informal assessment. It is clearly seen that teachers recognised nearly all characteristics of formative assessment with a very significant percentage of agreement from 91.38% to 95.69% except for the last characteristic of which nearly half of answers present the disagreement or confusion ([Timmers et al., 2013](#); [Tapingkae et al., 2020](#)). As stated in the literature, the primary goal of formative assessment is to get feedback from students and teachers to make appropriate adjustments, the two first items, feedback to students and feedback to teachers, were ranked first and second for the level of agreement at 95.69% and 92.24% respectively. Furthermore, the mean evaluation scores accounted for 2.96/3 and 2.92/3, which is asymptotic to the maximum level. However, looking at the last item, informal assessment, indicates a disparity of choices. The percentage of those who agreed with the informality of formative assessment is only 56.90% compared

to above 90% of all remaining items. The standard deviation demonstrates that this item was sorted out of the group due to its unusual high index at .665, which means a significant number of surveyed teachers are not in the response standard.

Table 1
Awareness of formative assessment characteristics

Characteristics of FA	Agree (3)		Confuse (2)		Do not agree (1)		SD	\bar{X}	Order
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Feedback to students	111	95.69	5	4.31	0	0.00	.204	2.96	1
Feedback to teachers	107	92.24	9	7.76	0	0.00	.269	2.92	2
Mutual impact	106	91.38	10	8.62	0	0.00	.282	2.91	3
Adjustment of teaching and learning	106	91.38	10	8.62	0	0.00	.282	2.91	3
Informal assessment	66	56.90	29	25.00	21	18.10	.665	2.39	4

The result of the interview shows that teachers are knowledgeable of formative assessment characteristics except for informality. Referring to regulatory documents by the Vietnamese authorities, formative assessment is considered formal because students' performances are graded. Many seminars and workshops were held to provide teachers with fundamental insights into formative assessment, however, decision-makers have decided to grade students' performance during formative assessment. Thus the nature of formative assessment changes when it is applied in the context of Vietnam. That is why several teachers are confused to decide whether the formative assessment is formal or informal (Faber et al., 2017; Wilson & Czik, 2016; Cobeña et al., 2021).

Formative assessment goals

The next five items questioned students about their evaluation of the importance of formative assessment goals (Table 2). It is commonly seen that the majority of teachers recognized the main goals of formative assessment at 97.41% to 100% (important and very important scales). The standard deviation is acceptable (at .552 and less), which illustrates an overall teachers' consent to what they choose (mostly very important scale). Among these goals, improvement of student performance and reduction of student gaps was rated the lowest at 51.72% for the very important scale with an average point of 2.49/3 and the percentage of negative answers accounted for 2.59%. Among goals, encouragement of student responsibility for their educational development by making them understand their real need, strength and motivation, and provision of accurate detailed information to students are ranked first.

Table 2
Teacher's evaluation of formative assessment goals

Formative assessment goals	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important (1)		SD	\bar{X}	Order
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Focus on the student learning process and internal values instead of score and rewards	64	55.17	52	44.83	0	0.00	.495	2.55	3
Encouragement of student strengths in place of highlighting their weaknesses	56	48.28	60	51.72	0	0.00	.502	2.48	5
Encouragement of student responsibility for their educational development by making them understand their real need, strength, and motivation	72	62.07	44	37.93	0	0.00	.487	2.62	1
Provision of accurate detailed information to students	72	62.07	43	37.07	1	0.86	.507	2.61	2
Improvement of student performance and reduction of student gaps	60	51.72	53	45.69	3	2.59	.552	2.49	4

The interview provided more detailed information about why some goals were ranked lower than others. Formative assessment theoretically focuses on encouraging students' strengths but in reality, it helps teachers find students' weaknesses and both teachers and students try to minimize the weaknesses. Thus, students' performance may be individually improved but the gaps between students cannot be boldly solved. From the perspective of gathering feedback from students to make necessary modifications in teaching and learning activities, teacher interviewees made other goals secondary; the importance of goals 2 and 5 was accordingly neglected.

Content of the formative assessment

The content of formative assessment includes three main factors Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude about which the questions were asked to investigate comprehensively the evaluation by teachers.

Knowledge Assessment

At higher education institutions, formative assessment has been used on a regular basis and has helped students enhance their outcomes. Teachers were asked four questions, and the findings reflected the extent to which this type of assessment was used during the training phase. The findings reveal that the majority of teachers admitted to using constantly formative assessment in English classes, ranging from 62.07% to 84.48% (Table 3). Among contents raised, the first one known as the criteria of knowledge assessment was built based on learning outcome was highly appreciated in terms of regular implementation at 84.48% with an average evaluation score of 2.84/3. Above all, there is a similarity

in standard deviation for all contents accounted for .394 to .492, no content is sorted out of the range. However, the two first contents witnessed a slight percentage of negative answers (0.86%), which indicates an occasional disparity of implementation within higher education institutions.

Table 3
Implementation levels of knowledge assessment

Knowledge assessment (FA)	Level of implementation						SD	\bar{X}	Order
	Regularly (3)		Sometimes (2)		Never (1)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Criteria of knowledge assessment were built based on learning outcomes	98	84.48	17	14.66	1	0.86	.394	2.84	1
The content of FA was updated along with the training process	78	67.24	37	31.90	1	0.86	.492	2.66	3
The content of FA covered all knowledge taught	72	62.07	44	37.93	0	0.00	.487	2.62	4
The content of FA successfully measured student's achievement at the time of assessment	78	67.24	38	32.76	0	0.00	.471	2.67	2

The interview result confirms that the assessment is based on learning outcomes and reflects students' achievements at the time of assessment. Interviewees stated that they always took learning outcomes and students' achievements as primary contents to create the formative assessment because they would significantly help them get pertinent feedback from students. They added that the knowledge tested should not be all of what they taught students in the whole past period but a certain teaching load at a certain duration of the teaching process. The reason formative assessment is updated on an occasional basis is that it refers to the content tested which is just adjusted after a cycle of PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act).

Skills assessment

The construction of skills for students through formative assessment was appreciated by teachers. As can be seen from the table (Table 4), four contents were focused on in the survey and the results collected are positive with a significant percentage of surveyed teachers who recognized a regular implementation of skills assessment contents. Among all skill assessment techniques, teamwork has been the most frequently implemented at 75%% and less so for the skills of answer construction in the assessment at only 44.83%. Furthermore, the average evaluation point of implementation for teamwork skills is 2.73/3, very high compared to that of other skill assessment contents. Otherwise, the percentages of the answers "regular" and "sometimes" for problem-solving and answer construction are nearly equal at 51.72% - 48.28% and 44.83 - 54.31% respectively. This demonstrates that these two skills have not been comprehensively implemented among universities.

Table 4
Implementation of skills assessment

Skills assessment content	Level of implementation						SD	\bar{X}	Order
	Regularly (3)		Sometimes (2)		Never (1)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Skills of knowledge application to the reality	69	59.48	47	40.52	0	0.00	.493	2.59	2
Team work skills	87	75.00	27	23.28	2	1.72	.482	2.73	1
Problem-solving skills	60	51.72	56	48.28	0	0.00	.502	2.52	3
Answer construction skills in the assessment	52	44.83	63	54.31	1	0.86	.516	2.44	4

Through the interview, there is a slight difference between choices. Accordingly, the interviewees chose teamwork and problem-solving skills as the two first skills with a more regular implementation during their teaching process. To them, these skills are essential to develop students' competencies and performance. They also claimed that more time is needed to properly train students' professional integration skills, as the latter demonstrated a lack of skills in this field (van der Kleij, 2019; Xie & Cui, 2021; Berryter, 2019).

Attitude assessment

The responses from teachers on the survey are mixed. The standard deviation of two content sections relating to teacher perception and behaviour shows a small discrepancy between them and the remaining content section of emotion, ranging from .501 to .531, which is slightly higher than .500 (acceptable scale) compared to .575 (acceptable scale) (emotion). The percentages of answers which favoured a regular implementation of the first and the third attitude assessments surveyed are 52.59% and 58.62% respectively, which is much higher than the remaining test content at only 44.83%. Student emotion about subjects is less assessed and among 116 teachers questioned, five teachers never carried out this assessment (4.31%). In short, teachers prioritised the assessment of students' behaviour represented through his aspirations, enthusiasm about their learning, emotion was put last.

Table 5
Implementation of attitude assessment

Attitude assessment	Level of implementation						SD	\bar{X}	Order
	Regularly (3)		Sometimes (2)		Never (1)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Learning perception represented through students' attitude toward content, value, benefits, v.v. of learning	61	52.59	55	47.41	0	0.00	.501	2.53	2
Student emotion about subjects	52	44.83	59	50.86	5	4.31	.575	2.41	3
Students' behaviour represented through his/her	68	58.62	46	39.66	2	1.72	.531	2.57	1

Interviewees emphasised the importance of students' behaviour toward learning activity which represents student's motivation and perseverance to achieve their goals. Once students conduct themselves seriously and enthusiastically toward subjects, they are intrinsically motivated to work better and to get better performance.

Methods and tools for formative assessment

For an accurate and appropriate collection of formative assessment data, assessment methods and tools are essential. According to the findings in tables 6 and 7, teachers used methods and tools of assessment on a daily basis at a rate of more than 50%. However, for some content, a percentage of teachers are confused if they should use the methods on a regular basis or only once in a while.

Methods of formative assessment

Four methods of assessment are commonly used during the training process including questions and answers (Q&A), teacher's feedback, peer assessment, and self-assessment. The results show that Q&A and teacher feedback were regularly carried out at 84.48% and 68.97% respectively. The rates of responses showing an occasional implementation were relatively low, at 15.52% and 31.03%. The average evaluation point also indicates that teachers had a highly common consent in their response for the two first methods at 2.84/3 and 2.69/3. Peer assessment and self-assessment, however, witness some adverse responses, which reveals a lack of implementation in some cases. The percentages accordingly account for 2.59% and 1.72% respectively.

Table 6
Implementation of assessment methods

Methods of assessment	Level of implementation						SD	\bar{X}	Order
	Regularly (3)		Sometimes (2)		Never (1)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
1. Questions and answers (Q&A)	98	84.48	18	15.52	0	0.00	.364	2.84	1
2. Teacher's feedback	80	68.97	36	31.03	0	0.00	.465	2.69	2
3. Peer assessment	62	53.45	51	43.97	3	2.59	.552	2.51	3
4. Self-assessment	58	50.00	56	48.28	2	1.72	.535	2.48	4

The results of the interview represent the willingness of teachers to use Q&A and give feedback to students during their teaching. There is a lot of reason to believe that these assessment methods have been more often conducted, feedbacks should be communicated to students very quickly and punctually. The interviewees admitted that they also use peer assessment and self-assessment to develop students' autonomy and

self-esteem during their learning (Crooks, 2001; Qu & Zhang, 2013; Xiao & Yang, 2019).

Tools of formative assessment

The assessment tools together with the assessment methods effectively support the assessment in order to bring out the most effective and accurate results. In the survey, four typical tools used in teaching English were raised to investigate their implementation. The results show that the implementation of assessment tools was regular with a high percentage of agreement ranging from 47.41% to 83.62%. It is clearly seen from the table that the tool Class observations, assignments, student projects, discussions, student profile, and quizzes & tests is the most frequently used, accounted for 83.62%, with a very high evaluation point at 2.84/3. The following tool, Open questions based on criterion and standards of formative assessment, witness 55.17% of positive responses and an evaluation point average of 2.55/3, which indicates a fairly regular use in the training process. The two remaining tools with lower percentages of appreciation at 49.14% and 47.41% for regular use described the student's self-assessment. Similar to students' work in the previous question, the involvement of students in assessment experienced a rather weak point. In addition, the fourth is the only tool that was sometimes not used, accounted for 5.17%. The standard deviation is relatively low showing that the responses are similar and concentrated. The reliability of responses is identified.

Table 7
Implementation of assessment tools

Tools of assessment	Level of implementation						SD	X̄	Order
	Regularly (3)		Sometimes (2)		Never (1)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Open questions based on criterion and standards of formative assessment.	64	55.17	52	44.83	0	0.00	.499	2.55	2
Class observations, assignments, student projects, discussions, student profile, and quizzes & tests.	97	83.62	19	16.38	0	0.00	.372	2.84	1
Mutual assessment of student productions and comments	57	49.14	59	50.86	0	0.00	.496	2.49	3
Self-comparison of student production with published criteria and standards.	55	47.41	55	47.41	6	5.17	.592	2.42	4

Through the interview, teachers said that they frequently used open questions to measure students' ability of knowledge, skill, and attitude acquirement as well as evaluate students' initiative and constructive capacity in their responses during the training process. They also acknowledged that students' self-assessment capacity was limited, thus the assessment results did not reflect the reality of their performance and it was sometimes formalistic.

Impacts of formative assessment on student's achievement

To investigate the impacts of formative assessment on students' achievement, five questions were asked for teachers' evaluation (table 8). The investigation shows that most teachers recognised formative assessment's impacts on student achievement. Among those mentioned, the second and third impacts were mostly valued with a super high percentage of agreement, accounted for 91.38% and 94.83% respectively, and an average evaluation point close to the maximum level at 2.91/3 and 2.95/3. The remaining issues also got a high level of agreement ranging from 69.83% to 74.14%. The figures indicate that teachers fully recognized the impacts of formative assessment on students' performance. The table shows a very limited number of responses for the disagreement at only 0.86%. Among those investigated, the third impact was rated first.

Table 8
Impacts of formative assessment on student's achievement

Impacts of formative assessment on student's achievement	Agree (3)		Confuse (2)		Do not agree (1)		SD	\bar{X}	Order
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Helps students understand their inner values.	81	69.83	34	29.31	1	0.86	.483	2.69	5
Assists students in promoting their strengths and controlling their weaknesses.	106	91.38	10	8.62	0	0.00	.282	2.91	2
Helps students be more responsible for their educational advancement.	110	94.83	6	5.17	0	0.00	.222	2.95	1
Supports students adjusting their learning activities with accurate, detailed, and useful feedback.	83	71.55	33	28.45	0	0.00	.453	2.72	4
Facilitates student improvement of study achievements and shortening the gaps between real results and expected outcomes.	86	74.14	30	25.86	0	0.00	.440	2.74	3

Looking at the standard deviation (figure 2) reveals information about a high level of reliability, mostly that of the third impact at only 0.222. This figure demonstrates that a great number of responses are similar, they focus mostly on a certain answer.

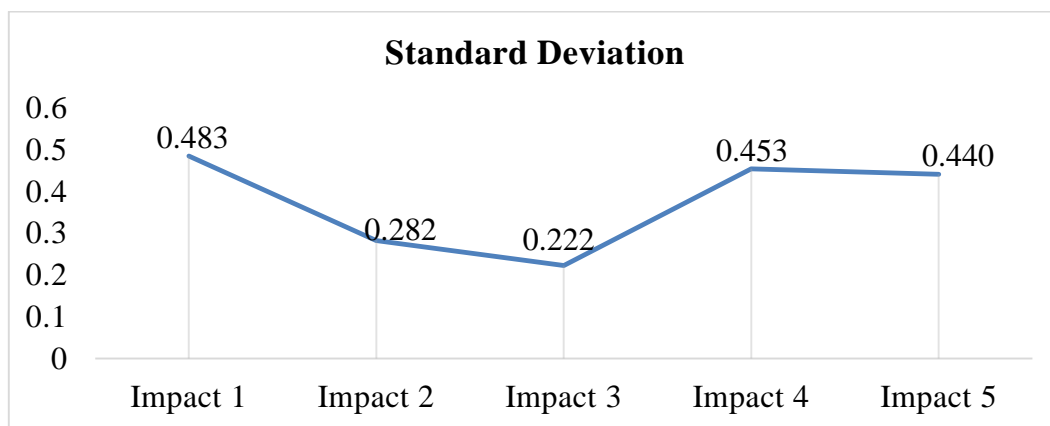


Figure 2. Standard deviation of the impacts of formative assessment on students' achievement

The interview results show great similarities in the responses with those through the questionnaire. The second and third impacts were appreciated by respondents. The reasons they chose these impacts most consist in the promotion of students' strengths and responsibility for their educational development. Formative assessment helps discover students' strengths and teachers may find ways to encourage students to make efforts and enhance their strengths. At the same time, students recognise their weaknesses and try to minimise those weaknesses during their learning process. However, the interviewees put the fourth impact third after the promotion of students' strengths because they emphasised the feedback brought from formative assessment.

Suggestions to improve student motivation

The motivation of students to learn and the improvement in their accomplishments (knowledge, skills, and attitude) are critical in a competency-based curriculum to ensure the quality and completion of the training process. The proposed solutions are based on research into the realities of formative assessment implementation in Vietnamese higher education institutions. Teachers should be aware of the importance of formative assessment, its nature and take advantage of its strengths to motivate students to study, promote students' performance, and adjust their teaching activity as required.

Understand the nature of formative assessment and apply it adequately in teaching

Although teachers recognise all characteristics of formative assessment, they have to understand that formative assessment is informal and no grade is recorded. Testers and performers need to get feedback from the formative assessment for multiple purposes. Formative assessment does not aim at grading students, which is covered by the summative assessment. Education managers should be aware of taking advantage of the formative assessment strengths that primarily favour learning/teaching adjustment activity and student motivation. Grading would change the nature of formative assessment which would become summative assessment for the final results or diagnostic assessment for the next

training process. Furthermore, grading will not help reflect correctly student actual outcomes and demotivate students to work (Arter, 2009; Perrenoud, 1998; Hang et al., 2018).

Build clear goals with a feasible route

Goals of formative assessment should be pertinently built based on different factors to assure their feasibility. Factors should be human resources, technical assets, time schemes, facilities, performer's knowledge, skills, and attitude, etc. The goals must be clear and publicly communicated at the beginning of the training process, especially the goals which help students develop autonomous skills, improve their internal values and encourage students to work effectively. In fact, teachers focus mostly on getting feedbacks and adjusting curriculums. Other goals are secondary. To optimise the effectiveness of formative assessment, teachers and other stakeholders should develop all goals equally.

Focus more on the assessment of students' skills and attitudes

The contents of formative assessment should cover three sub-contents including knowledge, skills, and attitude (KSA). The case study in Vietnam demonstrates an imbalance of assessment implementation between KSA (see the survey results mentioned above), which leads to incomplete development of training for graduates. By intensifying the role of skills and attitude in formative assessment, teachers and their counterparts can complement and adjust the curriculum, teaching/learning methods, workload, etc. in response to the requirements of expected learning outcomes. The emphasis on the equality of these three contents will help teachers and other stakeholders enhance the speed of continuous PDCA cycle operation (Plan-Do-Check-Act by Deming) and improve the quality of education.

Promote peer assessment and self-assessment

Autonomy is important not only for learners to master their academic advancement but also for other stakeholders to build an advanced training programme which focuses on developing students' intrinsic values and providing qualified human resources for the world of work. Peer assessment and self-assessment contribute to improving students' autonomy, self-determination, and self-value. These assessments will provide additional information about the student's learning outcomes at a certain time through students' lenses, which may give teachers and education managers a remedy for the student's slow progression, amotivation, demotivation, laziness, indifference, etc. The suggestion to the improvement of peer assessment and self-assessment is globally valuable based on previous national and international study results of these assessments.

Help students discover their inner values and improve them

Formative assessment impacts students' performance in different ways. It helps students recognise their inner values by giving them proof of interpreting how important they are. Teachers should manage to enable the formative assessment to stimulate students' discovery of their internal strengths and use these

strengths to advance their learning achievements. Together with other impacts, the recognition of these strengths makes students more confident and motivates them to study better. Thus the goals of training will be successfully achieved.

Conclusion

Formative assessment is not the only effective assessment tool, but one of the most important assessment tools to promote student learning engagement and motivation. Through analysis of the survey results and theoretical study, we found that there exist some shortcomings in formative assessment application at Vietnamese higher education institutions, notably in the field of teacher education. Despite the use of any training approach, educators should focus on periodical progress evaluation to discover students' deviation, tardiness, or errors to promptly adjust these inaccuracies and get them in the right way and speed. Formative assessment can cover this mission. In conclusion, the use of formative assessment requires teachers to analyze the reality of the training process, learning schemes, and learning outcomes and apply assessment flexibly, effectively, and in a timely manner. Studies have shown that students are more motivated, resilient, and advanced when they are formatively assessed and given enough feedback about their study results.

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