



situation carefully. Review information about the teaching and learning situation and, in some cases, gather additional information. Situational factors provide the backdrop against which important decisions about the course will be made.

There are a number of potentially important situational factors that affect the design of the course, including:

1. **Specific context of the teaching/learning situation.**  
How



incorporates exercises, questions, and/or problems that create a real-life context for a given issue, problem, or decision. To construct this kind of question or problem, the teacher has to “look forward,” beyond the time when the course is over, and ask: “In what kind of situation do I expect students to need, or be able to use, this knowledge?” Answering this question makes it easier to create a question or problem that replicates a real-life context. The problem should be relatively open-ended, not totally pre-structured. If necessary, certain assumptions or constraints can be given.

An example from a course in world geography in which the students have studied a unit on Southeast Asia illustrates the difference between a backward- and a forward-looking assessment. A backward-looking assessment would ask students about differences in the population and resources of the countries of that region. In a forward-looking assessment, students might be asked to imagine that they are working for a company that wants to establish itself in the region; the company seeks advice on which country has the necessary political stability, purchasing power, prospects for economic growth, etc. Such a question requires that students use what they have learned.

It is important to explain clearly the criteria that will be used to assess student work. Teachers need to determine and share with students: “What are the general traits or characteristics of high quality work in this area?” These are the criteria for evaluation. On each criterion, standards must be established to define work that is acceptable, good, or exceptional.

It is also important for teachers to create opportunities for students to practice self-assessment. Later in life, students will need to assess their own performance; they should start learning how to do that while in the course. Initially, these may be done in groups; after some practice, they should be done individually. In the process, students need to discuss and develop appropriate criteria for evaluating their own work.

As the students seek to learn how to perform well, teachers need to provide feedback that has “FIDeLity” characteristics:

- frequent: Give feedback as frequently as possible; at least weekly, if not daily.
- immediate: Get feedback to students as soon as possible.
- discriminating: Make clear what the difference is between poor, acceptable, and exceptional work.
- loving: Be empathic and sensitive when delivering feedback.

Processes for incorporating the four features of Educative Assessment are described below.

1. **Contextualize**. Formulate one or two ideas by identifying one or more situations in which students are likely to use what they have learned. Then replicate those situations with questions, problems, or issues.

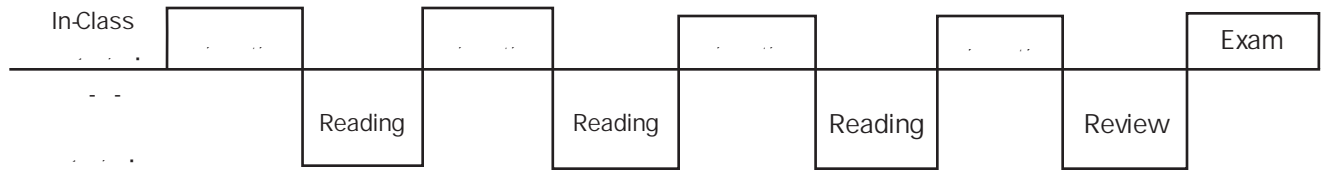
2. **Specify**. For one of your main learning goals, identify at least two criteria that distinguish quality work. Then write two or three levels of standards for each criterion.
3. **Communicate**. Share the criteria and standards with students.
4. **Develop**. Develop procedures that allow you to give feedback that is frequent, immediate, discriminating (based on clear criteria and standards), and lovingly (empathically) delivered.

In the past, the higher education literature focused attention on the instructor and the ways in which the subject matter could best be presented to the student. The emphasis was on “lectures” and “discussions” and the assumption was that learning consisted of a passive activity in which learners

received information. Although foundational knowledge, principles, and theories are essential, research over the past several decades has

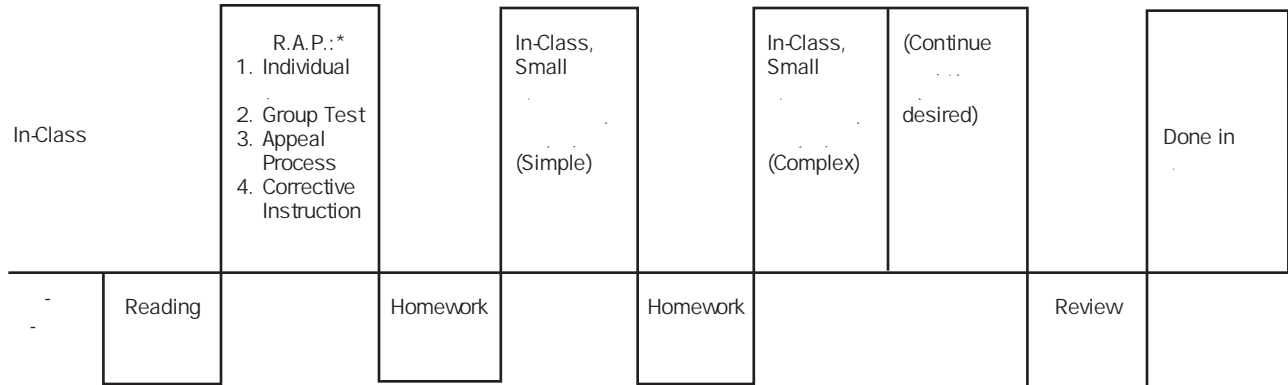
In selecting learning activities, two general principles should be followed. First, they should include some from each of the three categories shown in Figure 4 (Information and Ideas, Experience, and Reflective Dialogue). Second,

insofar as possible, they should rely on *direct* learning activities. The following table illustrates the variety of options available.



The second example (*Team Based Learning*, Michaelsen, Knight, and Fink, 2002) has a much more differentiated set of learning activities. Furthermore each in-class and out-of-class activity is meaningfully linked to what precedes and

what follows it. The plan fully engages students throughout the sequence and each day presents them with a different mode of learning. It also has a culminating activity that is much more engaging than a "Did ya' get it?" exam.



\*R.A.P. refers to

