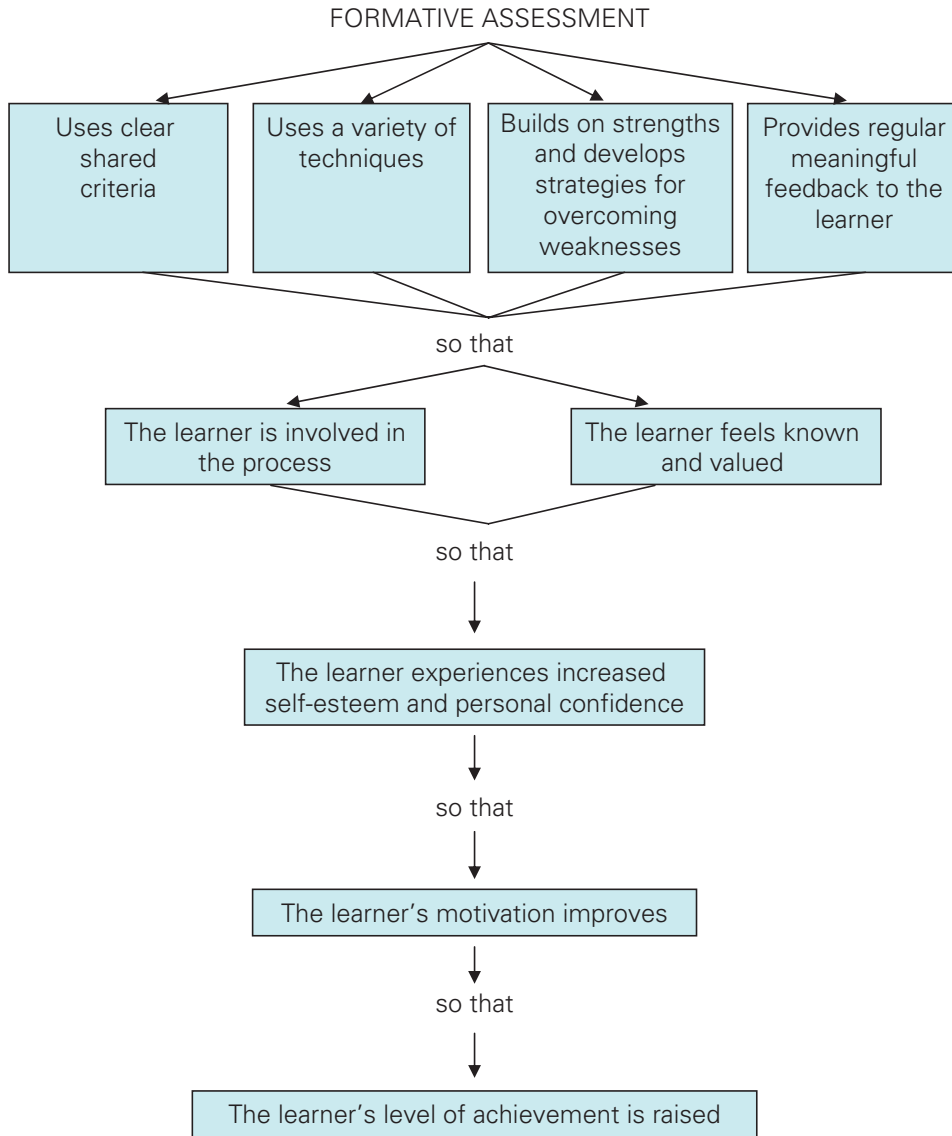## 4.2 Using Formative Assessment to Raise Achievement

A summary of what has been said so far about formative assessment.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

| Uses clear shared criteria | Uses a variety of techniques | Builds on strengths and develops strategies for overcoming weaknesses | Provides regular meaningful feedback to the learner |

so that

| The learner is involved in the process | The learner feels known and valued |

so that

The learner experiences increased self-esteem and personal confidence

so that

The learner's motivation improves

so that

The learner's level of achievement is raised

Assessment makes a difference to learning. Furthermore, it can make a positive difference when learners are *actively* involved with their learning.

The influence of assessment

In English, thinking, learning and assessment can be linked together in a creative and integrated (combined) way. The figure below attempts to show this relationship.
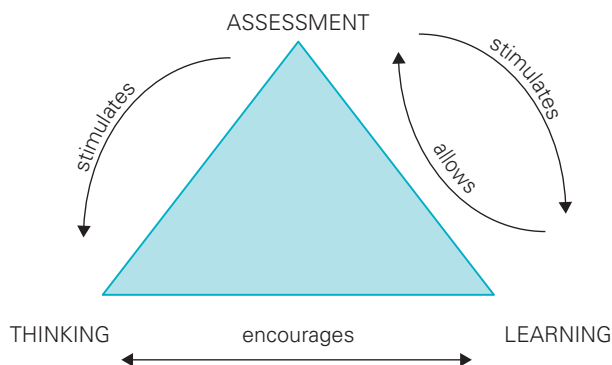
Thinking encourages learning which allows assessment to take place. In turn, assessment motivates both thinking and learning.

Think back to the earlier sections of this guide and consider how some of the things we have talked about, such as involving learners in their own learning, sharing learning outcomes and creating success criteria, making use of student-centred learning etc. can be combined with the general and informal kinds of assessment you use in the classroom.

One of the purposes of assessment is to provide information for a variety of audiences.

Below is a summary of when and how assessment can take place.

- During a lesson: direct questioning

  interaction/discussion

  observation

- End of lesson: quick revision test (yes/no, etc.)

- After lesson: marking work

  homework task

- End of unit: test or focused task (homework)

- End of year: progress tests/achievement tests

Formative assessment is therefore an integral part of teaching and learning and should not be 'bolted on' to activities. It helps to give the curriculum meaning for each learner. Furthermore, it enables each learner's learning to progress at the optimum rate.

Assessment results, whether in the short, medium or long term view, should give direct information about learners' achievements in relation to objectives. Whether you are considering the steps required to reach a single objective or achievement of objectives over time, they should be **criterion referenced**. (An agreed measurement or standard that needs to be reached – such as the 'success criteria' discussed earlier.)