GUIDELINES ON THE HYBRID FLEXIBLE (HyFlex) LEARNING MODALITIES AT BULACAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The two (2) years through the pandemic has seen the Bulacan State University (BulSU) responding to the challenging situations by offering flexible learning modalities. Initially, BulSU implemented the synchronous (SL), asynchronous (AOL) and remote printed (RPL) learning modalities but later on was reduced to the first two (2) due to students' preferences. This allows the University to provide continuity of learning to her beloved students.

After two (2) years, most of the areas of the country are now categorized as Alert Level 1 or low-risk status which include the province of Bulacan. This downgrading of alert status prompted the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to issue CMO No. 1, series of 2022 which discusses supplemental guidelines to CHED-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2021-004 on the additional guidelines for the operations of limited face-to-face (f2f) classes in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) located in areas under Alert Level 1. The memorandum highlighted that HEIs under Alert Level 1 can implement a 100% maximum capacity as long as the minimum health protocols are still to be implemented. However, part of the provisions states that the selection of the learning modalities to be operationalized is at the discretion of the concerned HEI.

With this directive, it is deemed necessary to update the guidelines on the flexible learning to ensure that they are relevant to the changing needs of the BulSU community. The updated guidelines will accordingly consider the learning experiences from pre-pandemic and during the pandemic as well as the preparations for the post pandemic. Provisions of the new guidelines will cater to the needs of the faculty to continuously provide quality education, and to those of the students to assist them in adapting to the change in the educational environment. The guidelines will also enable the administrators to deliver with renewed commitment the mandate of the University.

In this regard, the Educational Development Office (EDO), under the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (OVPAA) is proposing this new set of guidelines in implementing flexible learning to be known as the Guidelines on the Hybrid Flexible (Hyflex) Learning Modalities at Bulacan State University which includes Blended Learning (BLearn), Asynchronous Online Learning (AOL), Small Private Online Courses (SPOC), and Traditional Learning Approach (TLA) as modes of learning.

I. The Composition of Hybrid Flexible (Hyflex) Learning at Bulacan State University

Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex) Learning is a teaching method that combines elements of hybrid and blended learning into a flexible course framework that allows students to attend classroom sessions, participate online, or do both (National Education Association, 2021). The modes of learning evolve on the application of the practices in the pre-pandemic and pandemic period.

1. The Blended Learning (BLearn) -Required to Laboratory Courses

Blended learning brings together the best of both worlds: traditional face-to-face classroom training and online learning (ELM Learning, 2022). BLearn in the University allows the students to attend on-campus classes once a week while for their Laboratory classes and asynchronous online learning (AOL) for their lecture units. Interaction of students with the learning materials will be in flipped learning approach.

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Flipped Learning is a pedagogical strategy in which direct instruction changes from a group to an individual learning environment (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). Flipped learning is an approach of blended learning wherein all the materials are given to the students ahead to prepare themselves for the on-campus classroom activities.

In BLearn, the lecture part of the course will be in a flipped learning approach wherein students will have an advanced reading of the materials as preparation for their laboratory classes.

BLearn could be offered to courses with laboratory and other activities that require the physical presence of the students. The College will decide which courses will be under the BLearn modality.

2. *The Asynchronous Online Learning (AOL) –* *Required to purely lecture/theory subjects*

Asynchronous learning allows students to learn on their own time and in a set amount of time (Scheiderer, 2020). This modality which is being implemented during the pandemic will continue to be retained but with a modification. The practice of AOL is to provide learning materials for the students to study in advance. Online meetings are scheduled twice a month where attendance is required for them to get some additional information, clarification, and feedback from their instructors. The major assessment of the course but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm and final written examinations will be done during on-campus meetings.

3. *The Hyflex-SPOC (Small Private Online Courses) –* *Option to the students with special cases*

The Hyflex-SPOC are digital learning platforms that offer unique and easy-to-access educational possibilities (Ramakrishnan, 2021). These are online lessons that are only available to officially enrolled students at the University with special cases. In Hylex-SPOC, the students are not required to meet their instructor online but have to be diligent in accessing learning materials and submitting tasks online.

4. *Traditional Learning Approach 2 (TLA 2) -* *Option to the students who experienced difficulties during online distance learning*

Traditional learning approach is an option that caters to those students who encountered difficulties during online distance learning. This modality will allow the students to go to the University on their official scheduled time of classes.

Since students experienced challenges in online distance learning the use of MS Teams as the official education platform of the University will not be required to the students.

II.   **Safety Seal Certification of BulSU**
Acquiring safety seal certification for the University is recommended by the CHED and other agencies in a Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC). Thus, the University shall create a committee to prepare and submit all the requirements to be awarded this safety seal

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certification by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) where the University is located.

III. The Role of the College/Campus Administrators

The College/Campus administrators must:

1. conduct orientation for the faculty and students on the Hyflex learning modalities to be implemented by the University before the start of the semester.
2. identify courses and students which will be under each mode of learning.
3. prepare a schedule that will maximize the students' stay in the University for f2f classes.
4. ensure that faculty who will be teaching in AOL modality will have a work from home set-up as much as possible.
5. prepare a schedule for assessment to be conducted in the University.
6. strictly implement the guidelines on Hyflex learning.

IV. Blended Learning (BLearn)

Blended Learning (BLearn) enables both faculty and students to communicate and coordinate classwork, lessons, and activities online and on-campus. On-campus activities will be focused on laboratory classes, while reading and studying of materials are to be done in asynchronous mode. BLearnig will apply the flipped learning approach in the design of the lesson.

BLearning could be offered to courses with laboratory activities and other activities that require the physical presence of the students. The College/Campus will decide on which courses will be under the BLearn modality.

1. Role of the Instructor

In the BLearning, the instructors should:

1.1 maximize the use of Microsoft 365 (as the basic online educational platform of the university) in posting learning materials.
1.2 provide pre-recorded lessons and classwork that have been carefully planned and delivered remotely to the students via Microsoft Teams.
1.3 follow the official schedule for meeting the students online and on-campus.
1.4 schedule a meeting online if there are some disruptions of classes of on-campus due to the following but not limited to local/national holidays, natural calamities, disasters and University-wide or College/Campus-wide activities. Internal arrangement between the instructors and their students for scheduling the meeting may be allowed provided that no other class schedules will be affected, and possible activities are to be taken online. This provision may only be possible if both students and instructor agree. The students should not be required to attend.
1.5 establish an agreement with their students on the additional and modified guidelines for classroom policies based on the requirements of the subject.
1.6 submit an accomplishment report of activities and engagement with the students at the end of the midterm and final examinations. Requirements should be based on the updated guidelines on monitoring the instructional activity of the faculty in the new normal.

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1.7 ensure that his/her class follows the health protocols when attending on-campus classes.

2. Asynchronous Learning

2.1 The asynchronous learning will be the official schedule of the students for them to access, read, study based on the posted activities and perform other tasks on the course.

2.2 The use of Microsoft Teams as a platform for posting/online discussions/lectures should be maximized. At least a week before the start of the semester, the instructor should have set up the Microsoft Teams account for each of his/her assigned section and provide the students afterwards with the appropriate passcode or link for access.

2.3 Asynchronous learning should be used by the students to study the posted learning materials.

2.4 Asynchronous learning may also be used by the instructor to entertain questions and clarifications from the students about the posted materials, check and give feedback to the submitted tasks of the students online.

2.5 Consideration and sensitivity must be exercised with respect to the needs of individual students especially those who may be affected by certain topics or issues during the online sessions. Also, utterance of bad or foul words should be avoided.

2.6 If an online meeting is conducted, the students are encouraged to open their cameras and unmute their microphones as deemed necessary during the meeting.

3. Learning Materials and Classwork

3.1 Learning materials and pre-recorded video lessons should be accessible to the students via Microsoft Teams. The students should engage in the learning materials and pre-recorded sessions during the asynchronous learning.

3.2 Uploading and posting of learning materials should be on a regular schedule (According to the schedule of the lessons in the course syllabus). These learning materials should have a step-by-step guide along with the questions for discussions and videos for support.

3.3 Learning materials are in the form of documents, presentations, or prerecorded videos which can be downloaded for offline reading.

3.4 The instructions and grading for the activities/projects (including rubrics) must be posted. Laboratory activities and assessments such as but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm and final examinations should all be done on-campus.

3.5 Feedback regarding the students' work during the laboratory schedule delivered on-campus must be provided by the instructors.

4. Assessment

4.1 Laboratory activities and major assessments but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm, and final examinations should be done on campus.

4.2 Assignments, activities, and/or projects should be graded/returned through the Microsoft Teams. Students will deliver the development of such assessments on-campus, but grading the assessment will be online. A specific schedule must be

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set to entertain students' concerns. As much as possible, avoid questions and answers outside of the scheduled time.

4.3 The major assessment of the course, but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm and final examination should be done on-campus based on the scheduled time. There should be an assurance that all students can take the assessment and that any form of academic dishonesty should not be tolerated.

4.4 In case of students missing the major examinations, permission to take such examinations will be granted provided that the students can present excuse letters signed by their parents/guardians together with valid IDs and other proofs of the reasons for the absence.

4.5 Schedule for special assessment due failure of the students to take the exam or instructor to conduct assessment on the scheduled time for his/her class will be requested by the instructor to the Dean of the College to ensure allotment of classroom/area for this activity.

4.6 Additional activities for enhancement or remediation of the lessons online may be provided to students.

5. Attendance / Promptness

5.1 Monitoring and recording of students' attendance during online session/consultation and during the delivery of on-campus classes will be done by the instructors.

5.2 Promptness in the submission of required activities can be part of the rubrics for grading such activities.

5.3 If the students missed attending on-campus classes which may lead to reaching the maximum allotted absences, calling the attention of the concerned students must be done from time to time. This case must be brought to the attention of the Adviser.

6. Role of the Students

The students:

6.1 are required to attend on-campus classes and perform given activities to the best of their ability.

6.2 are not required to attend online meetings, but they may request consultation with the instructor to be done during the asynchronous learning schedule.

6.3 shall always comply to the minimum health protocols.

6.4 should ensure attendance to the scheduled on-campus classes.

6.5 should access the Microsoft Teams using the correct format of e-mail address and make sure to use their real names and valid pictures for their Microsoft Account.

6.6 should submit assignments and other deliverables on time.

6.7 may open their cameras and unmute their microphones as maybe deemed necessary during the online meeting.

6.8 must access the learning materials and classwork posted in the MS Teams. Read, study the lesson, and perform online activities during asynchronous learning.

6.9 must not make learning materials, whether documents or prerecorded videos, available to the public.

6.10 may ask any clarifications or questions regarding the classwork/learning materials posted in Microsoft Teams. Clarifications may be raised during the scheduled online sessions.

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6.11 should take the major assessment of the course but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm and final examinations f2f in the campus based on the schedule provided by their instructor. In case the student missed the assessment, he/she needs to present an excuse letter signed by his/her parent/guardian together with a valid ID with proofs of the reason for the absence.

6.12 may perform additional tasks for enhancement or remediation of the lesson.

V.   Asynchronous Online Learning (AOL)

AOL is a key component of flexible e-learning. It provides flexibility for all students and accommodates a variety of learning styles. The students may access various learning materials online.

Courses that can be offered in AOL do not require hands-on or laboratory activities. These courses are considered theoretical and purely utilize the discussion method. The College/Campus should decide the courses that will be offered under AOL.

1. Role of the Instructor

In AOL, the instructor:

1.1 should maximize the use of Microsoft 365 as the basic online educational platform of the University.

1.2 should provide pre-recorded lessons and activities that have been carefully planned and delivered remotely to the students via Microsoft Teams.

1.3 should follow the class schedule for meeting the students online. Internal arrangement between the instructor and students is possible provided other class schedules will not be affected.

1.4 must establish an agreement with his/her students on the additional and modified guidelines for classroom policies based on the requirements of the subject.

1.5 be available on the official scheduled time to meet the students online weekly to check their progress or provide consultation. Students are not required to join the session weekly, but they are required to join the scheduled sessions at least twice a month.

1.5 should request for a schedule of classroom to the Dean's Office once a face-to-face activity is necessary. This will only be done if the face-to-face activity is not the schedule midterm or final exam.

1.6 should submit an accomplishment report of the activities and engagements with the students at the end of the midterm and final examinations based on the updated Guidelines on the Monitoring of the Instructional Activities in the New Normal.

2. Online Sessions

2.1 Use of Microsoft Teams as a platform for asynchronous online learning should be maximized. At least a week before the start of the semester, the instructor should have set up the Microsoft Teams account for each of his/her section and provide the students afterwards with the appropriate passcode or link for access.

2.2 The online sessions should be used as a reinforcement to the lessons of the week and to check the students' progress and make clarifications.

2.3 Assignments and other deliverables should be marked/returned through the Microsoft Teams. The instructor should set a specific schedule to entertain

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students' concerns. As much as possible, avoid questions and answers outside of the scheduled time.

2.4 The class should follow appropriate behavior during sessions. Sanction policies are to be implemented in cases of misbehavior.

2.5 Students with habitual absenteeism must be reported to their respective class advisers.

2.6 Consideration and sensitivity must be exercised with respect to the needs of individual students especially those who may be affected by certain topics or issues during the online sessions. Also, utterance of bad or foul words should be avoided.

2.7 During online sessions, the students may be required to open their cameras and unmute their microphones as may be deemed necessary.

3. Learning Materials and Classwork

3.1 Learning materials, prerecorded video lessons and classwork should be accessible to the students via Microsoft Teams. It is the decision of the students as to when is the most purposeful and feasible time for them to engage in the pre-recorded sessions.

3.2 Uploading and posting of learning materials should be on a regular schedule (According to the schedule of the lessons in the course syllabus). These learning materials should have a step-by-step guide along with the questions for discussions, worksheets, videos for support and assignments to be completed online.

3.3 Learning materials are in the form of documents, presentations, or prerecorded videos which can be downloaded for offline reading.

3.4 The instructions and grading for the activities/projects (including rubrics) must be posted.

3.5 Timely feedback regarding the students' work must be provided by the instructors.

4. Assessment

1. The major assessment of the course, but not limited to summative assessment, hands-on activities, midterm, and final examination should be done face to face on the campus based on the scheduled time. The instructor should make sure that all students can take the assessment and that any form of academic dishonesty should not be tolerated.

2. Classes under AOL are required to have an on-campus schedule twice every semester allotted only but not limited to summative assessment, hands-on activities, midterm, and final examination.

3. Formative assessments and other subjective activities will be done online.

4. In case the students missed the major examinations, the student should present an excuse letter signed by his/her guardian with valid ID with proof of the reason of absence.

5. In times, the students failed to take the major examinations scheduled on-campus, the student will be given special exam the next schedule of on-campus assessment or special date if he/she missed the final examination. This is only possible if the students can provide documents stated in no. 3 (excuse letter signed by his/her guardian with valid ID with proof of the reason of absence.)

6. The faculty may provide students with additional activities for enhancement or remediation of the lesson online.

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5. Attendance / Promptness

5.1 The attendance of the students during online sessions/consultations must be monitored and recorded and reported as provided by Microsoft Teams.

5.2 Promptness of the students' submission may be included in the rubrics for checking the activity.

5.3 The attention of students with habitual absenteeism must be called for from time to time.

6. Role of the Students

The students:

6.1 are only required to attend online sessions twice a month, however, there is a weekly online session scheduled by their instructors for them to ask questions or clarifications about the posted learning modules / lessons or activities. The students must notify the instructor if attending to an online session cannot be done.

6.2 should access the Microsoft Teams using the correct format of their e-mail addresses. The students should make sure to use their real names and valid pictures for their Microsoft Account.

6.3 should submit on time the assignments and other deliverables.

6.4 may open their cameras and unmute their microphones as may be deemed necessary during the sessions.

6.5 may access before the start of online sessions classworks and other deliverables sent through Microsoft Teams. These will be ready for the students to access before the online session starts.

6.6 must not make learning materials, whether documents or prerecorded videos, available to the public.

6.7 may ask for any clarifications or questions regarding the classwork / learning materials posted in Microsoft Teams. Clarifications may be raised during the scheduled online sessions.

6.8 The students should take the major assessment of the course but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm and final examinations on-campus based on the official schedule of the class. In case the student missed the assessment, he/she needs to present an excuse letter signed by the guardian with a valid ID and proof of the reason of absence.

6.9 may be given additional activities for enhancement or remediation of the lessons online.

VI. **Hyflex-SPOC (Small Private Online Courses)**

Small Private Online Courses are implemented to select courses especially General Education (GenEd) courses of concerned Colleges/Campuses. Offering SPOC as one of the modalities will only be available to certain students who qualified according to the given criteria. Hyflex-SPOC differs from the AOL-SPOC in terms of the required meeting twice a month. Students who are enrolled in Hyflex-SPOC will not be required to attend the online meeting in a month but expected to attend the f2f scheduled of assessment during midterm and final examinations. Having SPOC as a mode of learning will pave the way for the University to start the Open University gradually.

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1. General Guidelines for SPOC

1.1 No regular online meetings are required in Hyflex-SPOC. Students may request a meeting with the instructor if necessary.

1.2 Students must take the midterm and final examinations f2f on the campus.

1.3 Guidelines in Hyflex-SPOC should be strictly followed since this option is preferred by the students and it is expected that they must be responsible for their own learning.

2. Qualifications of Students / Required Documents

The following will be the qualifications of students who can enroll under Hyflex-SPOC;

2.1 The student must be in any of the following situations:

2.1.1 working and considered as the bread winner of the family/supports the family/supports his/her own study;

2.1.2 assisting in the daily living of their family, and his/her presence is necessary most of the time; and

2.1.3 undergoing a sensitive challenging situation in life or health conditions, staying at home most of the time is crucial; and

2.1.4 coming from distant places, thus commuting to and from the University takes too much of their time.

2.2 The student should submit the following for them to be allowed to enroll in Hyflex-SPOC modality:

2.2.1 Employment Certificate (if working)

2.2.2 A signed consent of the student and his/her parent/guardian that they are amenable with the terms and conditions of the learning modality.

2.3 The student should be of good moral character and not involved in any cases or violations as stated in the Student Handbook.

3. Role of the Students

The students:

3.1 should enroll in the MS Teams created by the instructor.

3.2 should access all the materials posted on the platform.

3.3 are required to have an on-campus schedule twice a semester allotted only but not limited to summative assessment, hands-on activities, midterm and final examination.

3.4 may request meetings with the instructor, if necessary, but not exceeding more than two meetings a month.

3.5 take responsibility of their own learning.

3.6 ensure that SPOC materials will not be shared to others since they are copyrighted by the University.

4. Role of the Instructor

The instructor must:

4.1 secure the list of students from the record of the College/Campus who are enrolled in Hyflex-SPOC.

4.2 create MS Teams for Hyflex-SPOC students.

4.3 upload the learning materials according to the schedule in the syllabus.

4.4 set reasonable deadlines for the students to submit their tasks.

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4.5 have an open line communication with the students through the MS Teams. Meet the students online if the student requested it but not exceeding more than two meetings in a month.

4.6 schedule f2f midterm and final examinations on the campus.

4.7 ensure that SPOC materials will not be shared to others since they are copyrighted by the University.

5. Learning Materials

SPOC materials for the whole semester are available for the students through their instructors.

5.1 The learning materials are ensured to be available for all the courses under HyFlex-SPOC.

5.2 These materials should be posted regularly in advance for the students to have enough time to read and study.

5.3 The learning materials are property of the University and subject to copyright laws and sharing them is prohibited.

5.4 All materials should be closed for viewing after each term.

6. Feedback and Assessment

6.1 It is expected from the instructor to provide feedback in every activity submitted by the students online.

6.2 Formative assessments and other subjective activities will be done online.

6.3 Additional activities/assessment may be given to the students for review or enhancement of learning.

6.4 Major assessments but not limited to summative assessment, hands-on activities, midterm and final examinations are scheduled f2f.

VII. Traditional Learning Approach (TLA)

Traditional learning approach is an option that caters to those students who encountered difficulties during online distance learning. This modality will allow the students to go to the University on their official scheduled time of classes.

Since students experienced challenges in online distance learning the use of MS Teams as the official education platform of the University will not be required to the students.

1. Role of the Instructor

In TLA, the instructors should:

1.1 make the learning materials available in a printed form.

1.2 prepare lecture and activities for on-campus learning.

1.3 assign readings and other tasks suitable for on-campus learning.

1.4 meet their students on the scheduled time of on campus classes.

1.5 establish an agreement with their students on the additional and modified guidelines for classroom policies based on the requirements of the subject.

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1.6 submit an accomplishment report of activities and engagements with the students at the end of the midterm and final examinations.

1.7 provide feedback regarding his/her students' classwork during on-campus classes.

1.8 ensure that his/her class follows the standard health and sanitary protocols when attending on-campus classes.

2. Learning Materials and Classwork

Learning materials must:

2.1 be printed and accessible to the students during the on-campus classes as advanced lessons in preparation for the next schedule of on-campus classes.

2.2 be given to the students as additional sources of learning when they are from online resources such as websites, online videos, and online readings.

3. Assessment

3.1 All activities and assessments but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm, and final examinations should be done on campus.

3.2 There should be an assurance that all students can take the assessment and that any form of academic dishonesty should not be tolerated.

3.3 In case of students missing the major examinations, permission to take such examinations will be granted provided that the students can present excuse letters signed by their parents/guardians together with valid IDs and other proofs of the reasons for the absence.

3.4 In cases when the instructor failed to conduct the assessment on the scheduled time for valid reasons, he/she can request for another schedule from the Dean of the concerned academic unit so that a venue is allotted for the said activity.

3.5 Additional activities for enhancement or remediation of the lessons may be provided to students.

3.6 Assignments, assessment activities, and/or projects should be given feedback / graded and returned to the students in reasonable time.

4. Attendance / Promptness

4.1 Monitoring and recording of students' attendance during on-campus classes will be done by the instructors.

4.2 Promptness in the submission of required activities can be part of the rubrics for grading such activities.

4.3 If the students missed attending on-campus classes which may lead to reaching the maximum allotted absences, calling the attention of the concerned students must be done from time to time. This case must be brought to the attention of the Adviser.

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5. Role of the Students

The students:

5.1 are required to attend on-campus classes as scheduled and should ensure that they obliged to this requirement.

5.2 shall always comply to the minimum health protocols.

5.3 should perform all given class activities to the best of their abilities.

5.4 should submit assignments and other deliverables on time.

5.5 must have a copy of the learning materials and classwork given during on-campus classes.

5.6 may ask any clarifications or questions regarding the classwork/learning materials which are given ahead. Clarifications may be raised during the scheduled on-campus classes.

5.7 should take all the activities and assessments of the course but not limited to summative assessments, hands-on activities, midterm, and final examinations face-to-face in the campus. In case the student missed the assessment, he/she needs to present an excuse letter signed by his/her parent/guardian together with a valid ID with proofs of the reason for the absence in order to be allowed to submit/take the missed activity.

5.8 may perform additional tasks for enhancement or remediation of the lessons.

Definition of Terms

1. **Formative Assessment** is a planned, ongoing process that is given to the students during class sessions to help the learners improve their understanding and performance on the course. Examples of activities are in-class discussions, 1-minute reflection writing assignments, surveys, open-ended response, and others. (CCSSO, 2022)

2. **Summative Assessment** examines student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or accomplishment at the end of a unit, course, or program. Summative assessments are always graded in a formal manner and are frequently significantly weighted. Examples of activities are quizzes, hands-on activities, performance tasks/projects, midterm, and final exams. (The Wing Institute, 2018)

3. **Subjective Assessment** evaluates complicated and qualitative aspects of students' performance through questioning that may have more than one correct answer or multiple ways to convey it. Examples of activities are responding with short answers; answers in the form of an essay: defining a term, concept, or significant event; responses with a critically thought-out or factually supported opinion; and responses to a theoretical scenario. (Jackson, 2022)

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