



Getting Started with AFL in English Transcription: Video 3

Interviewees

Evelyn Boey

Cambridge trainer and English teacher

Laura Kahwati

Former English, Media and Drama teacher

Anna Satchell

Former primary school teacher

Tanya Valecha

Cambridge principle, trainer and English teacher

Dika Kadek

Cambridge trainer and English teacher

What are some of the challenges faced by English teachers?

Evelyn Boey

English language teachers, we have the tendency to assess everything under the roof of language. Think about a time when you were marking an essay, from punctuation, spacing, spelling, the use of tenses, vocabulary and sometimes you feel like, well, it's easier for me to rewrite the essay for them because it's really very demoralising having all those great corrections being made to the student's work. This is where success criteria will help both the teachers and the learners to focus on the intended learning.

Laura Kahwati

Gosh, yeah, I think as English teachers, we all empathise with each other that there is a lot of marking involved but assessment for learning has to be considered alongside teacher wellbeing and teacher workload and it should also be remembered that assessment for learning doesn't just mean marking or marking work or marking books.

Anna Satchell

Time is always a challenge in a busy classroom environment. It can be really easy to miss out on a plenary at the end of a lesson, due to running out of time because you had to spend longer than expected addressing misconceptions or working on the main task. In a primary school setting, you can always come back to your plenary after playtime or lunchtime. This may even be more effective, as it will encourage children to think about their learning after a short break.

Tanya Valecha

You know, in a utopian world, assessment for learning sounds like such a, like a wonderful thing to happen for students and teachers but we forget that a teacher today is multitasking, right. She's teaching English, she's grading papers, she's handling an event. She's doing so much more.

Laura Kahwati

A lot of the things that I used to do involved having groups work together on a paragraph. Then I would mark that paragraph, perhaps it would even be marked by themselves or their peers as well, and then I would photocopy it smaller and then give all of that back to each member of the group and each of them could then even use that as further self assessment, where they could rewrite and correct things and refine them.

Dika Kadek

Writing may sound daunting for students because they might not have enough ideas to write or they might not have sufficient vocabulary to express themselves. Effective AFL strategies will not only inform students about their learning but will also keep them engaged with the task.

Tanya Valecha

We have a series of challenges when we look at the English learner. In a country like India, we have most of the students as first-generation English speakers and a lot of them are not really, really comfortable with the language. Even if they can speak it well, it does not translate the same into the writing task. So from that point of view, assessment for learning becomes a very, very important tool. It allows students to get feedback on time. It focuses on helping a child improve, as opposed to just judging a child, which is what we see in the summative exam.

Evelyn Boey

Learners cannot act on the feedback that they do not understand. We need to evaluate and reflect on the kind of language used when we are providing feedback. Yes, it may be something that we can understand, but you have learners with different language proficiency. Would they understand what is being written? Can they translate that to something that, 'Ah, I can do'?

Dika Kadek

When using mark schemes as success criteria, it is important that the wording is translated into student-friendly language. We need to remember that mark schemes are not written for students. Teachers need to translate this, need to reword this so that students can understand it easily.

Laura Kahwati

And these things are really important because not only do they save time, but they are also ways in which we can empower our learners to take ownership over assessment for learning in the classroom, rather than always relying on the teacher.