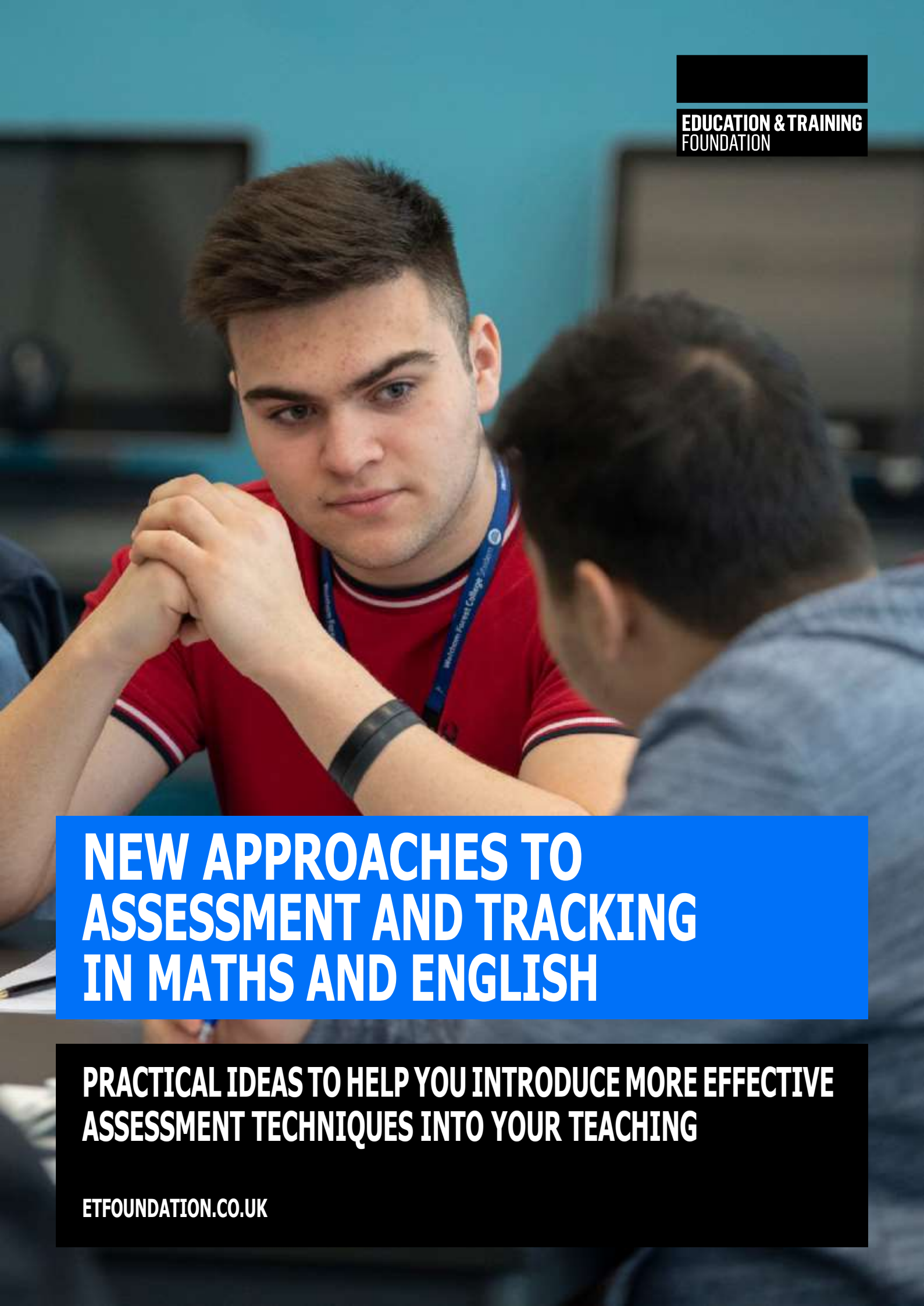


EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

NEW APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT AND TRACKING IN MATHS AND ENGLISH

PRACTICAL IDEAS TO HELP YOU INTRODUCE MORE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES INTO YOUR TEACHING

ETFOUNDATION.CO.UK

Introduction and purpose

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) recognises that Assessment for Learning (AfL) is an intrinsic part of the learning process as detailed in the Assessment for Learning: Effective Practice Guidelines[1] which were co-created with the sector. This guide builds on these guidelines and is primarily written for teaching staff. It can be used as a reflection tool to develop your practice in AfL approaches and contains practical activities to adapt and use with your learners.

Managers and those operating in advanced practitioner-type roles can use this guide to strategically improve maths and English, and to inform CPD sessions or team meetings that focus on sharing and improving practice. It can also be used with individuals and teams to develop specific areas of pedagogy.

Each of the effective practice guidelines is informed by evidence-informed research and contains links for wider reading. This approach is also underpinned by the 2019 **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework**[2]: 'Teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help learners embed and use knowledge fluently or to check understanding and inform teaching'.

A free, online module, **Maths and English Assessment and Tracking**[3] is also available on Foundation Online Learning to deepen your understanding in this area.

1 https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/maths-and-english/effective-practice-guidelines
2 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework
3 https://www.foundationonline.org.uk

01 Promote relevance of maths and English

Everyone should be clear about the impact of maths and English on learners' future economic and social success, and the 'ripple effect' on learners' families and the communities in which they live and work. In practical terms, this means making maths and English visible at every level throughout your organisation from marketing, enrolment, learning and progression through positive images and quotes that reinforce this message.

Maths and English staff can support colleagues across the organisation through briefing sessions, posters, leaflets, formal and informal discussions to promote the importance and relevance of maths and English.

All teaching staff can help learners to see the relevance of maths and English in their vocational area, and their everyday lives so they fully engage with these subjects. **Learning and Work Institute's research**[4] carried out with learners across a range of settings advocates that, 'learning has a personal relevance which is explained to learners and feedback on their performance relates the activities to the qualification they are studying for'.

CONSIDER how you can influence all colleagues to promote the importance of maths and English to raise the profile across your organisation. Think about what you can do to help such as sharing schemes of work so that topics can be linked across the year. Whether the maths and English team is separate or embedded, you can set aside time to work together.

You can work with vocational colleagues to develop speaking and listening. Find out whether learners are required to give presentations and use these as a basis to develop speaking and listening in English classes. Find out the mathematical concepts that learners use frequently in vocational learning and offer to team teach or to gather practical examples to use in maths lessons. If your learners keep records of words, they find difficult to spell, work with vocational colleagues to find out the vocabulary they need.

If you have a marking policy for English, make sure this is shared across your organisation so that learners receive feedback in a consistent format.

You could try promoting opportunities for staff across your organisation to improve their own skills in maths and English. ETF has developed free online **GCSE and Functional Skills modules**[5], self-evaluations, and Level 2 summative tests.

Maths and English teachers can mentor or buddy up with vocational colleagues who express an interest in improving their skills and taking a qualification in maths or English. This experience will help all staff to see the value of these subjects in vocational learning and ensure vocational practitioners are confident to develop their learners' language skills and mathematical thinking.

4 https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Engaging-learners-in-GCSE-maths-and-English.pdf

5 https://www.foundationonline.org.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=13

You could try connecting with previous knowledge when you introduce a new subject in maths or English to build on your learners' prior knowledge. Adopt a framework for each new topic:

- What do you already know about this topic? Use concrete examples.
- When do you use this topic? Examine concrete examples.
- What is easy about this topic? Share examples of what learners can do.
- What do you find difficult? Explore examples of what learners find difficult or in mathematics common misconceptions.

Vary your approach within this framework. You could use quizzes, direct questioning, class discussion, pair or small group discussion and feedback, collaborative writing, online voting, coloured cards to represent like/dislike, easy/moderate/difficult.

The aim is to establish prior knowledge before teaching each topic. Try getting your learners to keep a 24-hour diary showing when they use maths or English skills in their daily lives.

You could try making maths and English more visible throughout your place of work. You can do this by collecting positive quotes, feedback and success stories from your learners. Share these with managers and marketing teams to display around your building and use to reinforce an 'I can do it' message. Browse West Suffolk College's range of **downloadable eye catching posters**[6] promoting the importance of maths and English in everyday lives.

Gather examples of real-life practices from talking to vocational colleagues and learners. Look at how vocational teaching spaces explicitly demonstrate how maths and English are embedded to see if you can enhance this. Ask your awarding body if they have marketing collateral that promotes maths and English for you to use or adapt.

6 https://allaboutme.wsc.ac.uk/tracking-and-monitoring/

02 Engage all relevant professionals

All staff involved in a learner's programme of study, including employers, vocational teachers and support staff, can support assessment for learning in maths and English, but some may need extra support to do so.

When using different systems for maintaining learner progress records make sure that learners can easily take responsibility for and manage their own learning. Feedback and support on maths and English from all staff can help learners understand how these subjects are connected to their overall success. For instance, learning support staff may notice an improvement in building vocational vocabulary or increased confidence in speaking in a group. If this feedback is given to the learner and seen by other teaching staff, it can be reinforced across the curriculum and motivate further progress. Similarly, work-based supervisors may witness many examples of mathematical, written and spoken communications skills and these could be missed opportunities if staff are not aware of their importance in a learner's programme of study.

CONSIDER non-teaching staff, including work-based supervisors, and their knowledge about the levels of maths and English that learners need. For instance, are they aware of the five levels of Functional Skills and the requirements for GCSE? The ETF has produced a **range of technical flyers**[7] that summarise the maths and English skills in different job roles. Sharing these with employers may help them to recognise opportunities to highlight and develop these skills as well as reinforce their importance in the workplace.

You could try giving your learners activities to do in their work placements as well as getting them to bring along examples of work tasks that involve maths or English to develop classroom activities from. For instance, get learners to source copies of newsletters, letters or emails they are expected to read and use them to look at vocabulary, tone and language. How does this reflect the type of organisation they work for and are there differences in the group if your learners work in different industries? Even a napkin from a coffee shop tells you something about the type of organisation it is or aspires to be.

You could try working with staff across your organisation when developing feedback systems to listen to learners' voices and respond to their needs. Learner feedback is vital for continuous improvement so including maths and English through all learner-led activities can help provide feedback on how learners want to learn these subjects, what may be making this difficult for them or what could be improved.

You could try working with staff leading enrichment activities as they can make maths and English fun. Perhaps organise visits by poets or rappers or celebrating **National Numeracy Day**[8] with follow-up sessions in the classroom. The **Reading Agency**[9] has lots of ideas to use Quick Reads - books that are at Entry 3/Level 1 - with learners inside and outside of the classroom. In adult education, visits and activities that promote maths and English can signpost learners on health and well-being courses to improve their skills in these subjects.

7 https://studyprogrammes.excellencegateway.org.uk/technical-route-resources

8 https://www.numeracyday.com

9 https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/quick-reads

03 Engage learners

Requiring learners to actively track and record their learning progress ensures their engagement in learning and helps them understand how they can improve. It is the foundation of metacognition[10] and can save the teacher the burden of recording every individual learner's progress, leaving more time to circulate the group and to facilitate learning.

There is a range of research - including from learners themselves[11] - that suggests learning needs to be practical, active and relevant. Providing context for learning helps learners to apply their skills and knowledge rather than learn in a vacuum. This can motivate learners; help build confidence and safeguard independence.

Purposeful dialogue about the process and content of learning can also help learners to understand what they are learning, why they are learning and how they can improve. Classroom dialogue that is exploratory and genuinely two-way, will help learners to apply their skills and knowledge, evaluate their progress and encourage their deeper thinking. In practical terms, this means encouraging discussions, debate and dialogue in your classroom.

CONSIDER the importance of creating an atmosphere that allows your learners to ask questions, to be willing to work collaboratively, to risk making mistakes and to explain the things they don't understand or want to know more about. Plan frequent opportunities for your learners to explain and verbalise the methods they are using in maths sessions. Allow learners to influence what happens during lessons - rather than sticking to your script. Listen to what your learners are saying and be prepared to speed up, slow down or change tack.

You could try reflecting on your questioning techniques, ensuring every question has a purpose. Have high expectations. For instance, "Yes and how can we build on that answer?" When learners get the answer right, stretch them with harder questions rather than accepting it and moving on. You could try setting yourself a goal of using a minimum of five probing questions per lesson.

You can also provide two possible answers to a question and get learners to explain which one they agree with the most. Or provide one answer and ask them to explain how you got there.

You could try using a range of different activities, ideas or tools based around assessment for learning in your maths or English session. Discuss approaches with a colleague. Browse this section of the Tes website[12]. It has 70 different techniques for you to try out!

You could try co-creating the curriculum to personalise study programmes to help learners with SEND take more control over their lives as they practise making decisions and expressing preferences about their learning. This will help them self-evaluate and monitor their learning. The ETF has a toolkit[13] designed to help you.

10 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/metacognition-and-self-regulated-learning

11 https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Engaging-learners-in-GCSE-maths-and-English.pdf

12 https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/assessment-for-learning-toolkit-6020165

13 https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2942

04 Access specialist expertise

Most learners in post-16 settings will already have experienced 11 years of maths or English education at school and many feel powerless and frustrated. Discussion about what they find challenging and what they enjoy can be useful to establish starting points and reinforce the concept of a fresh start.

Outcomes of these conversations are just as important as establishing skill levels and recording these can help teaching staff connect with their learners from the outset and build ongoing relationships. Prompt and accurate recording also avoids learners having to go over the same information again and again with different members of staff.

CONSIDER how equipped all staff are to build rapport and gain learners' trust at the outset and throughout their programme of study. Some staff may need support to manage difficult discussions when learners are negative, disengaged or nervous about studying maths or English. Do not under-estimate the impact of the affective domain in the learning process. If a learner is feeling anxious about maths for example it can impact their ability to perform tasks.

Reflect on what your assessment activities feel like to learners who are anxious or lack confidence to ask questions. Learning support staff may be able to help other practitioners make their practices more inclusive.

You could try offering fun activities throughout your organisation during the first two weeks of term such as **Action Bound**[14]. Set up different activities around your organisation so learners can choose which order to do them - in groups or teams. Consider giving them a card to collect stamps. The aim is to create a sense of independence, choice and belonging as well as fostering a mindset that 'it's going to be different here'. Activities should have a low threshold and high ceiling, so that everyone can take part but stretch and challenge are embedded.

You could try engaging in a dialogue about the advantages we can offer in post-16 settings. This is a second chance to succeed in a different environment, with different teaching staff and a different peer group. According to "expectancy-value theory" a learner's motivation is determined by how much they value the goal, and whether they expect to succeed. Aligning success in maths and English with a learner's wider goals can help to motivate them to re-engage with these subjects.

You could try encouraging learners to write answers to questions on mini-whiteboards and present these at the same time. This will engage the whole group and can provide important information on levels of understanding if your questions are suitably crafted. For instance, if you want to check knowledge of meta language, you could ask everyone to write the definition of a pun. If they can do this, ask them to write an example of a pun. Work with vocational colleagues to use the same techniques in their lessons with contextualised examples.

14 https://en.actionbound.com

05 Consider all assessment as an AfL process

Assessment for learning relates to learning as it happens in real-time, activating and building on learners' existing knowledge to improve their performance and motivate learning. AfL activities that focus on the process and content of learning can support deeper understanding and provide ongoing feedback that shapes teaching throughout a learner's course of study.

Watch **videos 1 and 2**[15] to find out how AfL is an intrinsic part of the learning process. Reflect on how you build opportunities for learners to take the lead in monitoring and evaluating their own learning with your support, and how you build in time and opportunities to lead on reviewing and goal setting with the learner's support.

Malcolm Swan's research on collaborative practices in the maths classroom provide a rich source of practical advice and **resources**[16]. His work challenged the traditional orthodoxy of the maths classroom, and instead encouraged collaboration, discussion and debate.

CONSIDER how your learners can play an active part in the learning process by monitoring and evaluating their own learning in real time, and what you can do to facilitate this. You could, for example, set up expectations that learners will monitor and evaluate their own learning as part of their learning contract and provide practical opportunities for them to do so in every session. This gives you access to information you can use to review learner progress. Watch **video 3**[17] to identify the critical role the learner plays in the AfL process, supported by you.

You could try inviting learners to design their own way of recording their progress. They could do this as a group activity or individually on paper or online. For instance, a simple self-assessment of 0-5 at the beginning and end of a session can help learners to understand the purpose of activities, what's expected of them and provide a practical way of monitoring and evaluating their own learning against session goals as they can identify what they can do at the end of the session compared to the beginning.

You could try allowing sufficient time and avoid focusing on task completion when setting tasks for small groups or pairs. It may be better to leave a task unfinished than rush to get the answers without allowing time for learning to be consolidated.

You could try using an online tool such as **Padlet**[18] where learners can collaborate by uploading their work and commenting on posts made by others. You can upload documents, links, questions and activities to engage learners in assessment for learning activities. For instance, you could upload a short video on a maths topic and ask learners to come up with their own problems for others to solve. You could repurpose the content for flipped learning activities.

15 https://english.excellencegateway.org.uk/teaching-learning-and-assessment/assessment

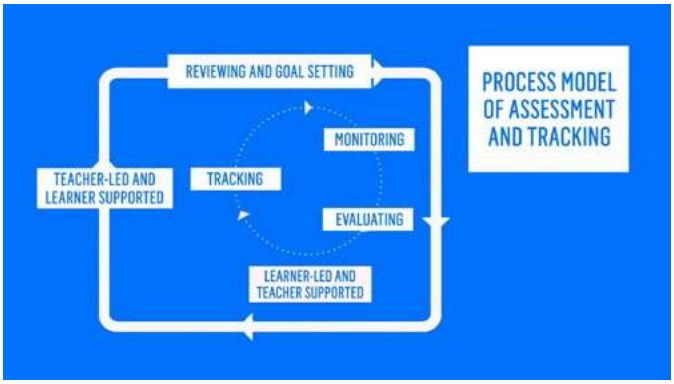
16 https://www.ncetm.org.uk/files/224/improving_learning_in_mathematicsi.pdf

17 https://english.excellencegateway.org.uk/teaching-learning-and-assessment/assessment

18 http://www.padlet.com

06 Limit assessment to what is necessary

An overly long initial assessment process can be off-putting for learners embarking on a new course and may de-motivate them from doing their best. The 2019 Ofsted Education Inspection Framework[19] states that: 'Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners.' Most learners with a grade 3 in maths or English will be placed in GCSE groups so it's unnecessary to test skills in every topic at the beginning of their course.



It's more helpful to both the learner and teacher to check understanding at the point learners will be studying the topic through carefully designed tasks that enable learners to show what they can and cannot do. You will be working with current information demonstrating learners' current abilities rather than results collected at the beginning of a programme. These can feed into review and goal setting. Watch **video 4**[20] to explore the importance of breaking down goals for learners so they are motivating.

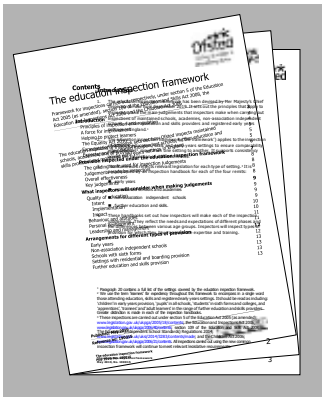
19 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework

20 https://english.excellencegateway.org.uk/teaching-learning-and-assessment/assessment

CONSIDER the overall assessment process learners are required to undertake in the first few weeks of a new programme.

- Are you overloading them?
- If learners have had a six-week summer break is initial assessment on day one going to get the best from them?
- Is there any duplication?

Work with colleagues to ensure that any initial assessment and review processes are joined up across a programme of study.



Reflect on the opportunities you can create for learners to apply their skills in the context of their lives and their vocational aims. The **2019 Ofsted Education Inspection Framework**[21] considers "the way teachers teach and assess to support learners to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills". You can work with vocational colleagues and employers when planning assessment for learning activities throughout the year rather than front loading at the beginning of a programme.

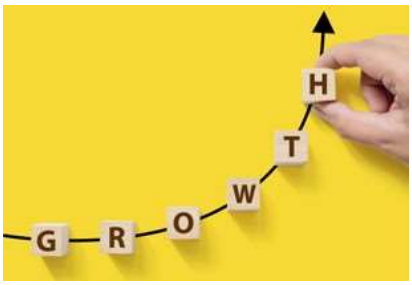
You could try asking learners to describe or imagine their perfect day or their perfect job when you first meet them. This will enable them to focus on something positive, to use their own vocabulary and construct their own sentences and narrative as well as providing an insight into the types of things they enjoy doing. New learners may find this less stressful than answering a series of questions on texts they have little or no interest in. You can use stimuli such as images or real objects and allow for choice. For learners at lower levels, you can introduce a writing frame or prompts to stimulate thinking.

You could try using an appointment book to get learners to apply their knowledge of maths. How can they maximise the number of appointments to be achieved in a day? This example can be used for a variety of vocational contexts and is a good way to combine performing calculations and making real-life decisions where there are unknown factors to consider.

21 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif

07 Assess for self-belief and motivation

Assessing learners' cognitive abilities is important as it enables teachers to review progress and set goals with learners e.g.: 'You write clearly and accurately. Your next goal is widening your vocabulary. Try using an app that gives you a 'word of the day' or use a thesaurus to find synonyms. Equally important though is regularly assessing learners' self-belief about their maths and English abilities as this can impact their motivation, behaviours and attendance.



Carol Dweck's research on 'fixed and growth mindsets[22]' can be useful to engage learners in discussions on attitudes and beliefs about themselves. Learners often have fixed views on their abilities in maths or English that have been reinforced over many years and can be hard to shift.

One way of building learners' self-belief and motivation is to design sequences of learning tasks that maximise opportunities for learners to experience success in the early days of their programme whilst they are still finding their feet. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation[23] suggests that clear feedback on 'the output of the activity, the process of the activity or the student's management of their learning or self-regulation' can have a high effect on learning.

Post-16 settings are an opportunity for learners to start afresh and build their confidence in subjects they may have had little success with at school. Feedback that provides specific guidance on how to improve, and activities that are carefully scaffolded for learners to experience success, can encourage self-belief and motivation.

CONSIDER how you can make knowledge explicit and help learners to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. Reflect on how your feedback encourages self-belief, motivation and resilience. You can use 'live marking' to involve learners in the feedback process. This enables you to use session time to focus on specific areas to work on, providing detailed feedback on how to improve with individuals or small groups.

You could try finishing sessions with short 'take-aways' or 'exit tickets'. Ask learners to name or record one thing they will take away from the session/learnt from the session and one thing they need to work on/is still unclear. Vary how you get learners to do this but focus on their active retrieval of information and individual reflection on what they have learned. This type of activity will also help your planning for the next session and can help you to organise learners in specific configurations.

You could try interleaving topics rather than teaching in blocks. In English, take a holistic approach so that learners speak, listen, read and write in every lesson. In maths, re-visit concepts and connect new and old topics regularly.

22 Dweck, C. S. (2006). Mindset: The new psychology of success. New York: Random House.

23 https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/feedback/

08 Safeguard confidence and independence

Assessment for Learning activities can build confidence and develop autonomy. For learners to evaluate and monitor their own progress, they need to:

- know what's expected of them
- recognise their own strengths and weaknesses
- know which strategies help them to learn
- make active choices to manage and organise their learning
- know what 'good' or 'not so good' looks like in any given task
- receive constructive feedback that helps them to make incremental improvements
- put that feedback into practice by activity engaging with it and reworking the task.

You as the teacher have a key role in establishing the above conditions.

CONSIDER how you check all learners are at the same level of understanding before moving onto the next topic. Use hinge-point questions to help you and your learners monitor progress and evaluate what learning has taken place. You can then decide whether to continue as planned if all learners have responded accurately to the hinge question, or to revisit a certain topic with some or all learners.

You can choose anonymous methods for learners when responding to hinge-point questions safeguarding learners' self-confidence as only they will know whether the response was right or wrong, not their peers. Electronic voting tools can provide teachers with useful tracking data at both individual and whole group level when used regularly. As relationships are established other (low tech and more visible) approaches such as mini white boards or A, B, C, D cards can be used.

Watch this **short video**[24] from Dylan Wiliam explaining the key features of hinge-point questions. Then have a go at answering the two hinge-point questions below to check your own understanding of the topic of AfL and, importantly, to see a hinge-point question in the flesh.

1. **Who should be responsible for monitoring and evaluating learning?**[25]
   a. The teacher
   b. The learner
   c. The teacher supported by the learner
   d. The learner supported by the teacher
2. **Who should be responsible for reviewing learning and goal setting?**[26]
   a. The teacher
   b. The learner
   c. The teacher supported by the learner
   d. The learner supported by the teacher

24 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh5SZZt207k

25 Correct answer is: D: The learner supported by the teacher

26 Correct answer is: C: The teacher supported by the learner

You could try using concrete familiar examples to introduce and bridge to unfamiliar, abstract examples. This helps build learners' self-confidence as they can connect abstract ideas to what they already know, connecting to their existing schematic knowledge of a topic. You will help learners to process new information more readily by building on existing knowledge and experience. Reflect on your response to the following question.

- How useful was it to see actual hinge-point questions in the previous example rather than reading about them in the abstract?

You could also try using a 'good' and 'not so good' example of the item in question (in our case hinge-point questions) so learners can evaluate the features of what makes one example better than another. Breaking down worked examples can help learners when they create their own.

You could try using this framework to ensure you help learners to understand learning objectives:

Introduce the task and provide instructions e.g. We are going to write a social media profile for Shakespeare's Juliet using the template provided.

- Make the learning objectives clear e.g. We will develop our understanding of Juliet's character and practise writing to communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively by adapting our tone to fit the style of social media.
- Either ask learners to make an individual note of the skills they want to develop by completing this task and share with a partner or do this as a group activity. E.g. A group discussion could elicit ideas such as developing vocabulary, thinking about the five senses to portray character, focusing on the succinct, pithy tone required for social media, spelling etc.
- Show examples of several completed social media profiles or alternatively you could model live how you create a social media profile making your thinking and choices explicit as you do so.
- Learners carry out the task.
- Learners self-evaluate their work and share with peers.

You could try exploring ways to help learners to make active choices to organise and manage their own learning by creating their own study diaries or revision schedules that include different learning methods they find works best for them. For instance, draw up a list of ten ways to revise a topic and allow them to choose the method they prefer.

09 Allocate sufficient time

Making time in lessons for assessment activities can consolidate learning as well as provide feedback on progress and understanding for future planning. Barak Rosenshein's 17 Principles of Effective instruction[27] suggests that regular review can help learners embed skills, concepts and procedures so they can be easily retrieved and applied effectively in everyday situations. It can strengthen connections and deepen learners' understanding. He also suggests that effective teachers spend time on reviewing and reflecting on learners' progress, helping learners develop 'well-connected and automatic knowledge'.

CONSIDER how you allocate time for your learners to reflect and record their progress in class in your lesson planning. If your assessment for learning activities are part of your regular teaching, this will be time-efficient for you as feedback will be immediate and you can act upon it.

You could try planning assessment activities that challenge learners to think deeply about a topic by giving a statement to discuss and agree is it true – always, sometimes or never? Another variation is using a diamond nine where groups of 3-4 learners discuss nine carefully crafted statements that are written on cards. Learners set out the cards in a diamond shape, ranking those they agree most strongly with at the top and those they strongly disagree with at the bottom with the middle cards representing gradients of more neutral responses. Such approaches force learners to verbalise their thinking and methods in mathematics and discuss and debate their reasons in English. Tangible assessment activities provide instant feedback which you can respond to by checking learner understanding in real time.

You could try guiding your learners closely at the beginning of a course and gradually reducing this as you encourage them to independently monitor, evaluate and record their own progress.

You could try organising your learners strategically over a term to ring fence 1:1/small group time to review and validate personal progress records. For example, if you work with a learning support assistant you could plan together so that they work with group A, you with group B and group C works independently on a task for part of a session.

27 https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Rosenshine.pdf

10 Use authentic contexts

Using authentic contexts can help learners re-engage with maths and English, increasing their chances of exam success and helping them to see the relevance of these subjects in work and at home. It is widely recognised as effective practice and is encouraged by Ofsted.

If employers recognise the importance and value of maths and English for learners they are supporting, they can play an important role to reinforce these skills and provide opportunities to apply them.

CONSIDER how closely you work with employers to provide a context for learning and if this could be improved. Ofsted (2012) suggests 'developing and sustaining high quality on-the-job training and assessment through excellent links with employers' as one of the features of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. If you have learners in your session from a rich range of vocational areas it can be difficult to contextualise and accommodate them all. You could consider what else your learners have in common and use authentic/realistic contexts. Try gathering examples of maths and English in the workplaces your organisation works with such as real written complaints or invoices. You can use these to plan authentic tasks and you may find common themes such as budgeting, planning, writing emails across several vocational areas.

You could try contextualising assessment activities where you are working with learners from one or two vocational areas. The following **Vocational Maths Guides**[28] can help you make greater use of context in your maths teaching.

- Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy
- Health & Social Care
- Hospitality & Catering
- Construction & the built environment

Another useful resource is the **MEI Contextualisation Toolkit**[29] which provides helpful guidance on how context can help and hinder maths learners, as well as sharing exemplar contextualised resources developed by other teachers.

You could try getting learners to compare their own report to one from their workplace. Discuss the features that make the workplace report strong and invite learners to re-write their own report following this discussion.

28 https://maths.excellencegateway.org.uk/teaching-learning-and-assessment/working-with-employers

29 https://mei.org.uk/contextualisation-toolkit

11 Ensure records are 'living documents'

Learners are more likely to engage with learning plans and progress records if they receive regular feedback that supports them to improve. Dylan Wiliam (2011) suggests that feedback should cause learners to think and not react emotionally. Effective feedback helps learners focus on what comes next rather than on how well or poorly they have performed. So, it's helpful if records of progress and tracking are 'owned' by them but used by teachers to communicate about specific aspects of their work and to adapt their overall schemes of learning.

CONSIDER the nature of your feedback and its impact on learners and learning. Reflect on how you connect with the affective domain (beliefs, attitudes and motivation) and the cognitive domain (memory, knowledge and application).

You could try encouraging dialogue in your comments on learner tracking systems that focuses on both domains.

You could try reducing your use of grades and scores and increasing your use of constructive feedback that helps learners to reach the next stage of their learning. Remember feedback can be verbal as well as written. The key is to ensure learners actively engage with your feedback by redoing a calculation or redrafting a paragraph. By apportioning time for learners to do this in your session you will maximise the likelihood of learners actively engaging with your feedback.

12 Use personal progress records effectively

Learners are more likely to self-regulate and be active agents in their own learning if they see their efforts are acknowledged and their responses make a difference to how they are taught.

If you are speeding up through a topic or slowing down to spend more time on it, make this explicit to your learners to show you are responding to their needs. If a lesson doesn't go well, ask learners what would have worked better for them. Including discussions about the process of learning as well as the learning itself helps learners to evaluate their progress. Embedding personal progress record keeping in your lessons can also be more efficient than expecting learners to do this in their own time.

CONSIDER how you can integrate personal progress record keeping in your teaching. This may be through using more AfL activities but also joining up with colleagues from vocational curriculum areas and learning support.

You could try asking learners to explain or summarise what they have learned either verbally or written to you and to each other.

You could try getting learners to formulate their own questions for each other that would demonstrate understanding of a topic.

We hope this guide has inspired you to trial one or two AfL techniques with your learners.

Do repeat the technique over a term or so, refining it so it becomes a part of your daily practice. It's helpful to work with a colleague to plan, implement and reflect on how you are (both) getting on with the technique and to discuss the impact it is having on your learners. You may even want to ask your learners, and carry out a small-scale action research project.

You can access further professional development opportunities on AfL including **face-to face courses**[30] from the ETF, the online module and an **AfL flyer**[31].

30 https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/maths-and-english/courses/

31 https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2568

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 9SP

020 3740 8280
enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk
ETFOUNDATION.CO.UK

FUNDED BY

Department for Education

Company registration number (England and Wales): 08540597. Charity number: 1153859