

The AFL Toolkit



70 strategies, activities and techniques
to help you develop your practice

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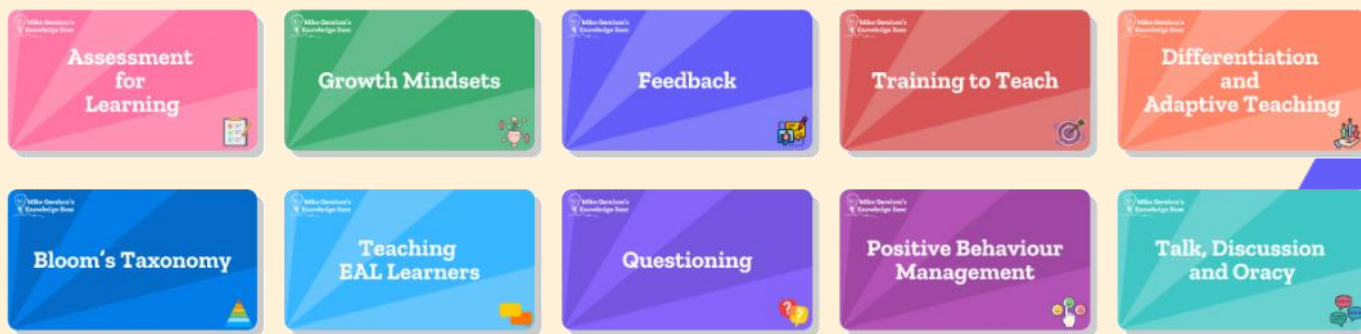


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This toolkit presents seventy strategies, activities and techniques you can use to achieve one or more of these. Embedding the three pillars in you day-to-day teaching will help you to successfully master AFL. Enjoy!

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Learners Write Questions

For example ...

- Questions concerning what they would like to know about a new topic.
- Questions they could ask other learners to assess their learning.
- Questions that demonstrate their learning.
- Questions based around misconceptions connected to the topic.
- Questions focussing on areas they now want to know more about.

This activity is flexible and you can use it in many different ways.

One option is to run it as a plenary. Another is to create a question box into which learners can drop their questions during the lesson or as they leave.



Learners Ask Questions

Create opportunities for learners to ask questions.

This could be of their peers, of the teacher, or as a way to develop discussion.

All these help you to elicit information from learners. The more accurate your understanding of what learners know, understand and are thinking, the easier it is to tailor your teaching and planning.

Allow time for learners to ask questions about pieces of work.

This helps open up assessment and eliminate ambiguity. For example, before starting an extended task, you could give learners thirty seconds in pairs to come up with any questions they want answered before they begin.



Comment-Only Marking

Comment-only marking provides learners with a focus for progression instead of a reward or punishment for their ego (as a grade does).

Comments should make it clear how the learner can improve; what they need to do next to be more successful.

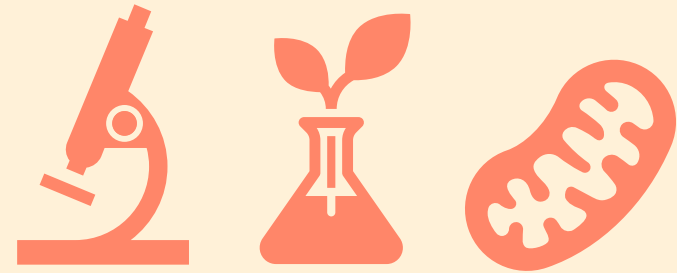
Plan activities and work with feedback in mind – let the design assist the process, both in terms of giving feedback and learners then implementing that feedback.

Comments can be written in books, in a table at the front of books, or in a learning diary. The latter are helpful as they make it easier to find comments, refer back to them and track progress over time.



Mid-Unit Assessment

Having an assessment at the end of a unit may not provide time for you to revisit those areas with which learners have struggled, or around which there remain misconceptions.

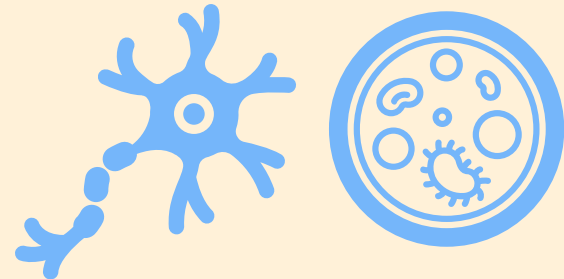


Putting an assessment in the middle of a unit of work (for example, lesson 5 of 7) gives time to review, reflect and revisit.



It also gives the teacher an opportunity to focus explicitly on areas of weak understanding, with this being supported by the evidence of the assessment.

And what's to stop you doing two assessments?
One mid-way through and one at the end?



'Might'

When questioning, try inserting the word 'might' to give learners greater opportunity to think and explore possible answers.

For example:

- What is the meaning of democracy?
- What **might** the meaning of democracy be?

The first infers a single answer known by the teacher whereas the second is inherently more open.

Making questions open through the use of the word 'might' often lets you elicit richer, more detailed information than if you use mostly closed questions.

MIGHT

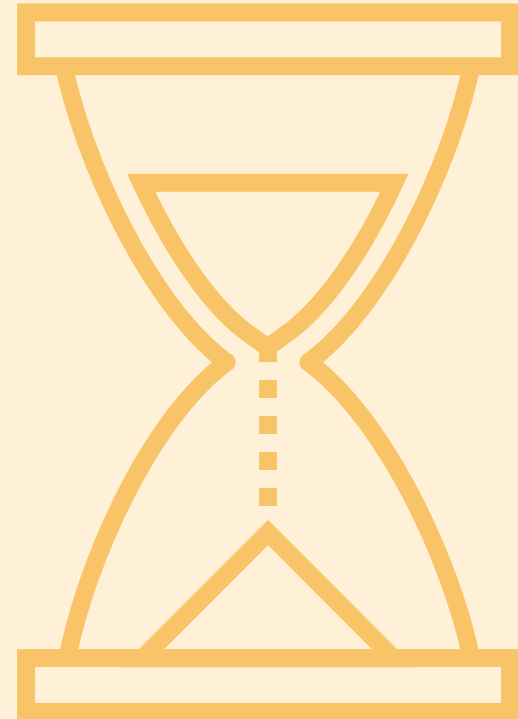
Wait Time

Wait time (or thinking time) gives learners time to think and, therefore, to develop their answers.

Not everyone in the class thinks at the same speed or in the same way. Waiting gives learners time build their thoughts and think about what it is they have been asked.

Two examples of wait time:

- The teacher poses a question, to a group, an individual or the whole class, and then waits before asking for an answer. They might say something like: 'Thirty seconds silent thinking, then I'll come to you.'
- The learner finishes answering the question and then the teacher waits for 5-10 seconds. This gives space for the learner to add, elaborate or further develop their answer, should they wish to.



Open vs Closed

Closed questions are a good way to check understanding.

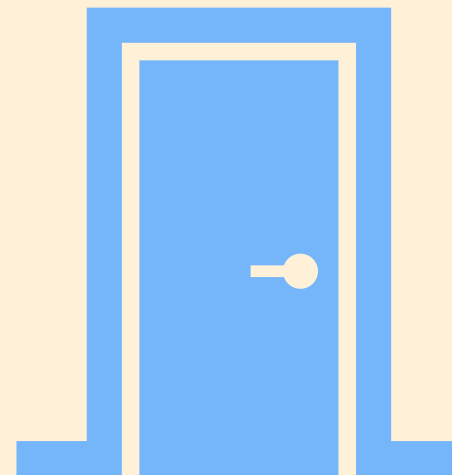
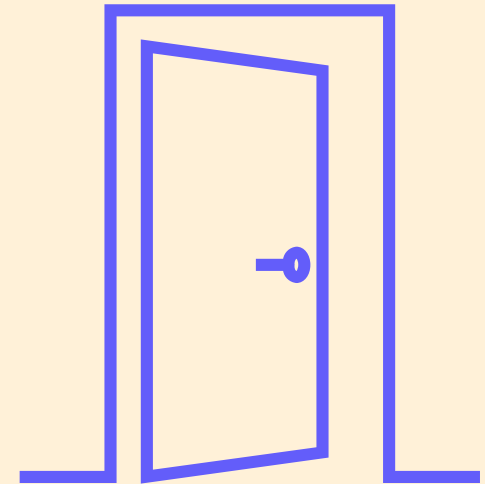
Open questions tend to give access to more information.

Closed questions tend to seek a definitive or correct answer.

Open questions give more space for learners to articulate their thinking and reveal misconceptions.

A judicious use of both, with clear intention on the teacher's part, helps gain access to a wide range of useful information.

- Did you go out last night? (**Closed**)
- What did you after school yesterday? (**Open**)



Exemplar Work

Use exemplar work to illustrate what you want learners to do and how they can successfully meet the assessment criteria.

One option is to have learners mark the exemplar work using the assessment criteria.

This means learners actively engage with the model while also thinking about the link between their own work and the assessment criteria.

Another option is to present three colour-coded success criteria alongside a piece of exemplar work that is similarly colour-coded, therefore demonstrating where and how the success criteria have been met.



Learner Marking

By taking part in the process of assessment, learners gain a deeper understanding of the content you are teaching, how assessment works, and what they need to do to be successful.

This helps learners become more aware of 'what learning is' in your classroom and encourages a metacognitive engagement with their own work.

You can use peer- and self-assessment to achieve this.

Remember that learners will need the assessment/success criteria on hand.

When marking their work, or that of their peer, they must practice applying the criteria to reach judgements about what has gone well and what could be improved.



Making Aims Clear

Share your objective(s) at the beginning of the lesson.

Talk to learners about why they are studying what they are studying.

Contextualise short-term aims through long-term ones.

For example, analysing Shakespeare (short-term aim) contributes to a wider knowledge of the cultural canon, stronger analytical skills, and preparation for exams (long-term aims).

Check with learners that they are clear about the aims of the lesson/unit/subject.

And why not try creating aims/objectives in conjunction with your learners?



Lesson Target Setting

Make a lesson more purposeful for learners by setting targets at the beginning about what you and the class are going to do.

You can then refer to these as the lesson progresses and review them during the plenary.

For example, during the lesson you might ask learners to assess the extent to which they feel they are in line to hit the targets by the end of the session.

During the plenary, you might ask learners to rate themselves on a scale of 1-10, based on how successful they feel they have been with the targets.

Or you and the class could rate yourselves as a whole (how successful have we been with the targets I set at the start of the lesson?).



Teacher Review

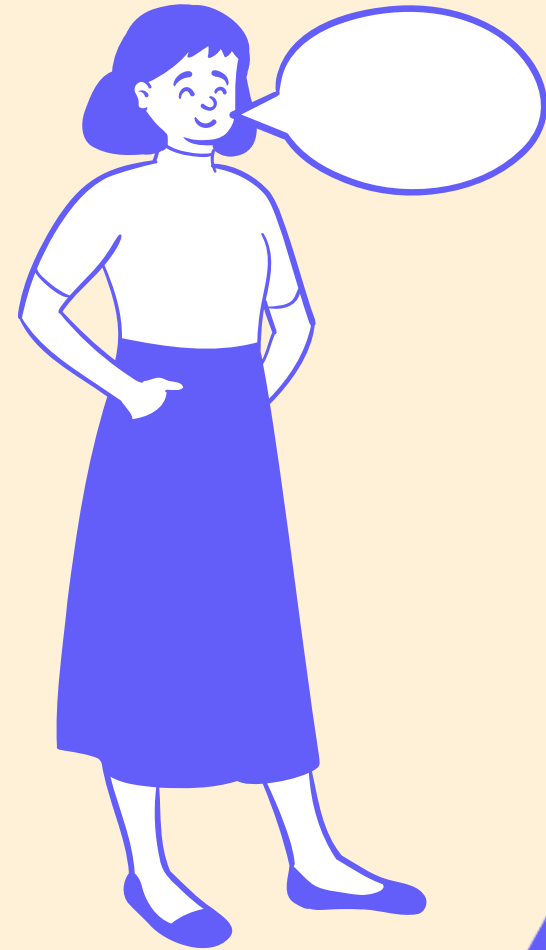
The teacher leads a review of the lesson (or unit of work), using questioning to elicit information from learners about their knowledge and understanding.

The review might also include learners reflecting on the lesson itself.

For example:

- How effective do you feel the lesson was at helping you to better understand the topic?
- What might you change about the lesson?
- Could we have done things differently in the lesson?

You can model how to review the lesson by evaluating it yourself, based on the learning objective and the aims you had when you planned it.



Learner Review

Learners review their own learning, either in groups or individually.

You can do this as a plenary, a mini-plenary, as an activity to help older learners plan for revision, or as a way of gathering information you can then use to replan/modify the remainder of the unit.

Scaffold by:

- Giving learners questions to use as the basis of their reviews.
- Creating a pro-forma on which learners can capture their reviews.
- Having learners work in pairs based on a mixture of abilities (to facilitate peer modelling).

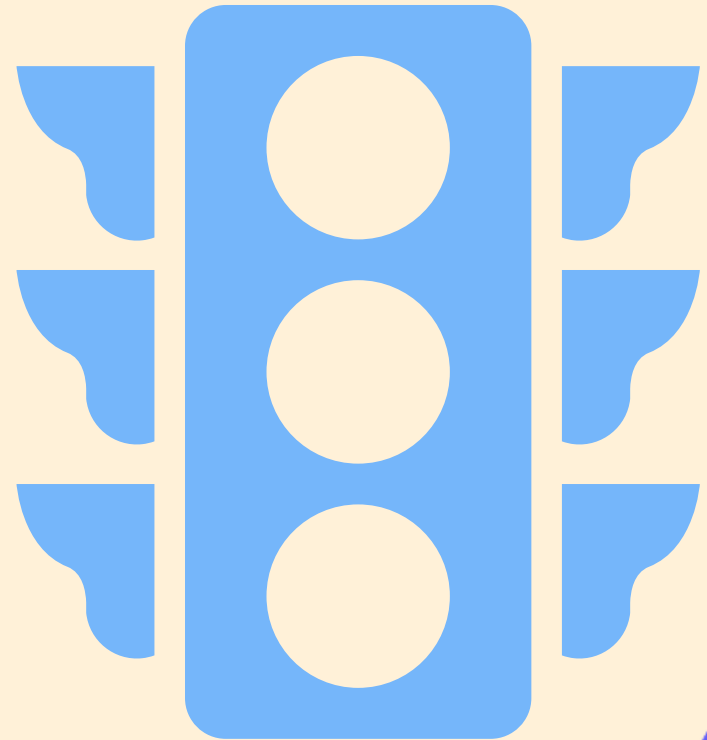


Traffic Lights

Use traffic lights as a visual tool through which learners can indicate understanding (or lack of it).

For example:

- Learners have red, amber and green cards. They display the one on their desks that represents how they are feeling (red = I'm struggling; amber = I think I'm OK; green = I'm fine).
- Learners self-assess their work using traffic lights.
- Learners mark their work using a mark-scheme and highlight sections red, amber or green depending on whether they have successfully achieved what the mark-scheme lays out.



Self-Assessment Targets

Learners give themselves targets based on their self-assessments.

These are recorded in learners' books and then revisited.

One option is to record them on a pro-forma at the front of learners' books. This makes them easy to access for both the learner and the teacher.

Develop by circulating through the room and asking learners to talk you through the targets they have given themselves.



Two Stars and a Wish

For peer-assessment, ask learners to give two stars and a wish.

- Two stars = Two things that are good about the piece of work.
- A wish = Something that could be improved to make the work better.

Scaffold by displaying an exemplar and a non-exemplar.

Use this to emphasise the kind of comments you want learners to write – and the kind they should avoid.



Articulate then Answer

Give learners the opportunity to articulate their thinking before you take responses.

For example:

- Give 30 seconds silent thinking before taking any answers.
- Ask learners to develop ideas in pairs first for 2-3 minutes.
- Invite learners to write down their thoughts before answering.
- Pose a question and then ask learners to discuss it with their neighbour.



Scene-Setting

Set the scene for the lesson by using a big, open question or problem-solving task that requires abstract thinking skills.

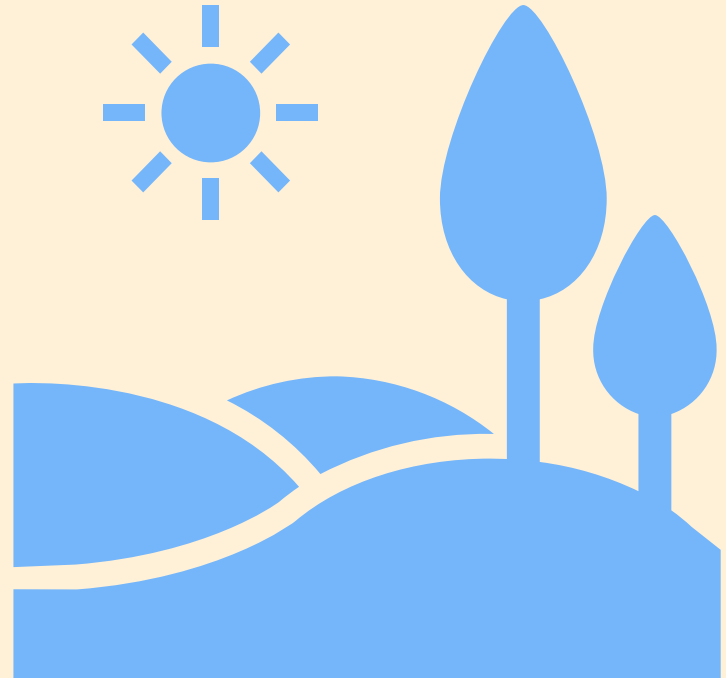
For example, a lesson on the Vietnam War could begin with the question:

- Do Americans think they fight wars, or win them?

The goal here is to target learner effort.

Throughout the lesson you can return to this overarching question/task and ask learners where they now stand on it.

The implicit message is that success involves developing an increasingly high-quality response as the lesson progresses.



Tell Your Neighbour

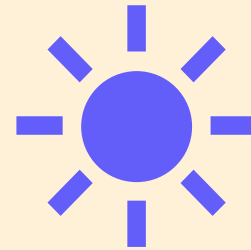
Learners 'tell their neighbour' as a way to articulate their thinking.

Pose a question, give thinking time, then ask learners to tell their neighbour what they are thinking.

As well as helping learners to better express their ideas, this technique also means you are getting access to richer information about learner knowledge and understanding.

To access it, simply walk around the room as learners are discussing and listen in.

Another use is at the start of a lesson. Reveal the topic and then say: '60 seconds, tell your neighbour everything you already know.'



Idea Thoughts

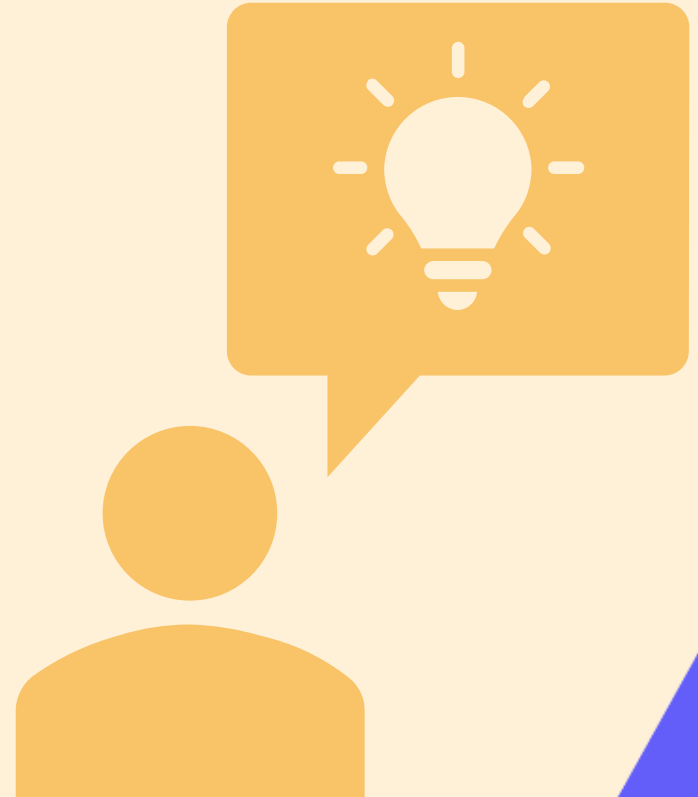
During whole-class discussion, when you receive an answer to a question, open up the thinking behind it by asking what others think about the idea.

For example:

- 'Jade, what do you think about Stephen's idea?'
- 'Ross, do you think Stephen's idea will work?'
- 'Harriet, can you think of any problems with Stephen's idea.'

After which, you can go back to the learner who first put forward the idea:

- 'Stephen, what do you think about what Jade, Ross and Harriet said?'



Bouncing

Bounce answers around the room to build on understanding, elicit further information and probe for misconceptions (which you can then teach away from).

For example:

- 'Jimmy, what do you think of Munira's answer?'
- 'Munira, how could you develop Carl's answer to include more detail?'
- 'Carl, do you think we can combine what Jimmy and Munira have said into a single answer?'



Wait and Recap

When taking responses, either from individuals, groups, or the whole class, wait for learners to use most of the keywords you are looking for and then reframe the question.

Ask for a synthesis that recaps the whole discussion by joining all these keywords together into a single coherent answer (delivered verbally or written down).

For example:

- 'We've had some super answers from across the class. What I'd like you to do now is try answering the question I originally asked, but I want you to include all those keywords we heard in your answer.'

This elicits information around who can do it successfully and opens up success criteria by emphasising the centrality of the keywords.

Incorrect Discussion

Use incorrect answers as a discussion point.

Rather than dismissing something because it is wrong, or saying 'that's interesting', use the misconception as a teaching point.

Lead a discussion in which you and the learner(s) look at why the answer isn't right.

The goal here is twofold.

First, explicitly teach away from the misconceptions and help learners understand why they were getting things wrong.

Second, cultivate an atmosphere in which it's OK to be wrong – one where the benefits of learning from trial and error are clear for all to see.



Devising Questions

Devise questions that:

- Challenge common misconceptions.
- Create conflict that requires discussion (and, therefore, reasoning, clarification and explanation).
- Explore ambiguities.
- Encourage discussion.
- Seek clarification.

All these help elicit rich information from learners, letting you develop a clearer view of how they are thinking.

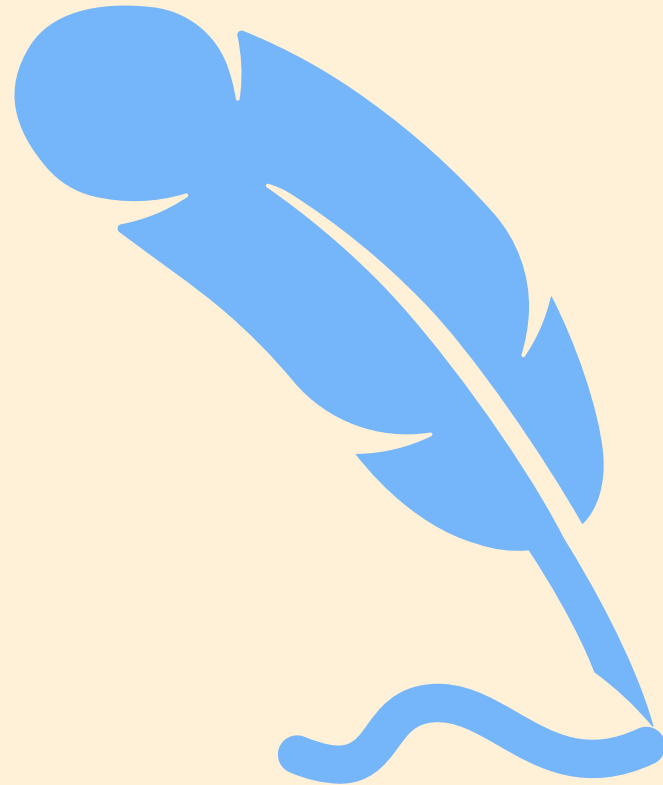


Learning Journal

Create a learning journal in which learners can reflect on and review their learning.

This can include:

- Plenary and/or review activities.
- Self-assessment pro-forma.
- Space for targets.
- Questions for discussion.
- Overarching aims and goals that you and the learners are working towards.



Redrafting

Use lesson time to redraft work.

This allows learners to focus on the formative feedback they have been given.

It also reinforces the value of the feedback and lets them work on it in a supportive environment.

Feedback that isn't implemented – whether verbal or written – loses much of its power.

Setting aside dedicated redrafting time is a way to ensure the feedback you deliver is acted on.

For verbal feedback this is generally simpler (and tends to happen more organically) than for written feedback.



Key Features

Combining discussion and writing is generally useful.

When planning, think about what key features you want to see in learner's written work.

You can then work back from here, planning discussion that gives learners the chance to effectively develop their thinking around these key features, before they start writing.

This is a way of scaffolding written work through discussion, with the intention of producing stronger outcomes.



Improvement Guidance

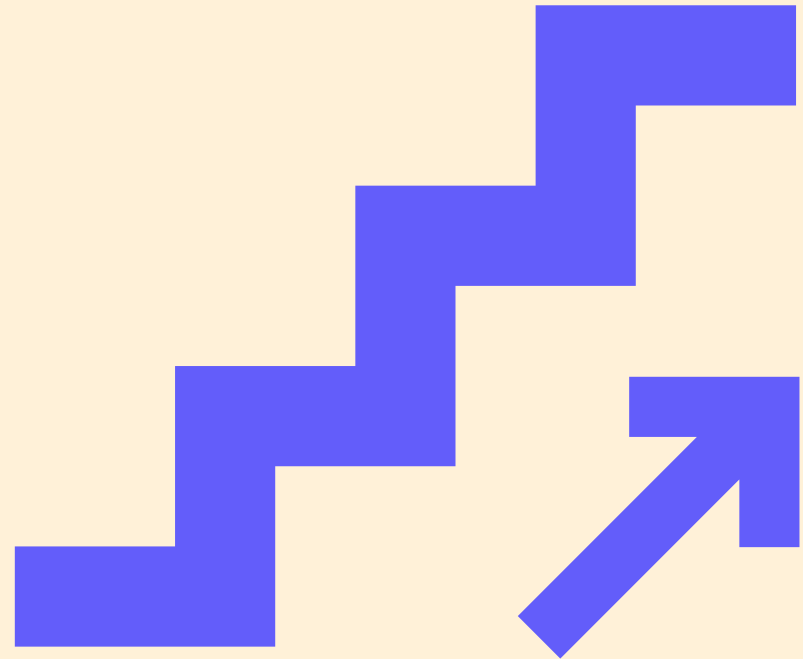
When making comments on learners' work, treat them like guidance showing how the learner can improve.

Develop this by asking learners to write in the same way when doing peer assessment.

Discuss the notion of guidance and how it differs from other types of feedback.

The goal here is to think of the learner-teacher relationship as a coaching one.

When we coach, we guide learners to become better through the feedback we provide; with that feedback rooted in our knowledge, understanding and expertise.



Comment Follow-Up

Give learners opportunities to follow up on the written comments you make in their books.

For example:

- Create time in your lessons where you can talk to individual learners about their feedback.
- Develop a written dialogue in learners' books, where you and they discuss your feedback.
- Use a comment tracker to capture your formative feedback at the front of learners' books. This makes it easier for you to find what you have written and to then discuss it with learners when you are circulating during the lesson.



Group Feedback

Divide the class into groups.

Explain that groups are going to peer-assess each others work and then feed back to you.

Pair up your groups and have them conduct their peer-assessments.

Ensure that learners have clear success criteria they can use to make judgements.

If necessary, model the process for them.

When the task has been completed, ask each group to feed back to you. They should share their main findings, outlining the key strengths and weaknesses they identified during their peer-assessments.



Peer Marking

Learners mark each others' work using assessment criteria that you provide.

This encourages reflection, helps learners develop their familiarity with the assessment criteria, and exposes them to the work of their peers.

You can plan for peer marking when developing schemes of work, and you can also use it ad hoc, identifying suitable opportunities as and when they arise.



Thumbs

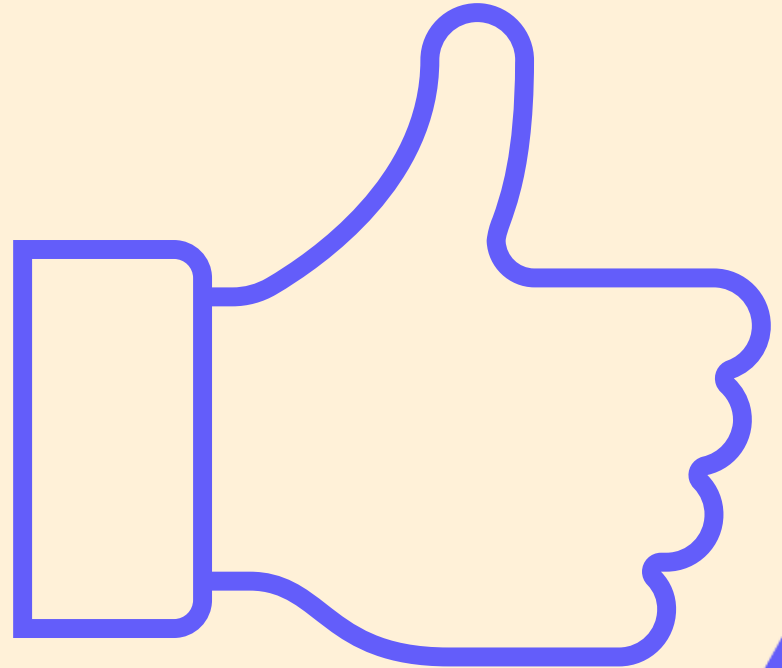
Check your class's understanding of what you are teaching them by asking them to show you their thumbs:

- Thumbs up = I get it
- Thumbs half-way = I sort of get it
- Thumbs down = I don't get it

This is a whole-class feedback technique.

It works most effectively if you adapt the lesson using the feedback you receive.

For example, if every learner shows a 'thumbs up' sign, take it as a signal to up the pace of the lesson or to increase the level of challenge.

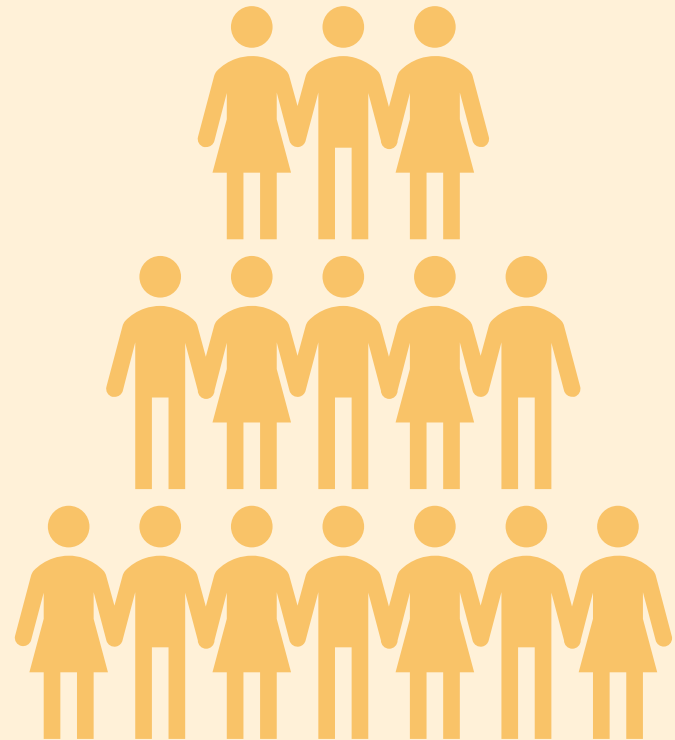


Teach Collaboration

Help learners get more from peer-assessment and group work activities by teaching collaboration as a discrete skill.

This includes spending time thinking about:

- Why we collaborate.
- How we speak and listen to each other when we are collaborating.
- What the differences are between effective and ineffective collaboration.
- How collaboration can help us achieve things that might be difficult to achieve individually.



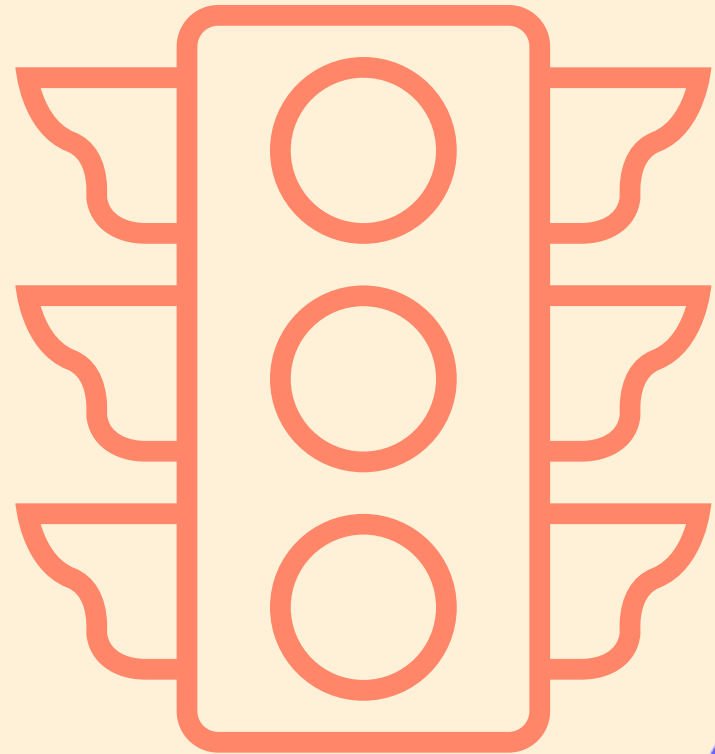
Traffic-Light Revision

When revising, give learners a sheet containing the different elements of the topic or subject area, along with three coloured highlighters: red, orange and green.

Learners should go through the sheet and RAG rate how confident they feel about each aspect of their revision.

This gives them an instant visualisation of where they are currently at.

It helps them think critically about how to structure their revision, which areas to prioritise, and to which areas they should give additional time.



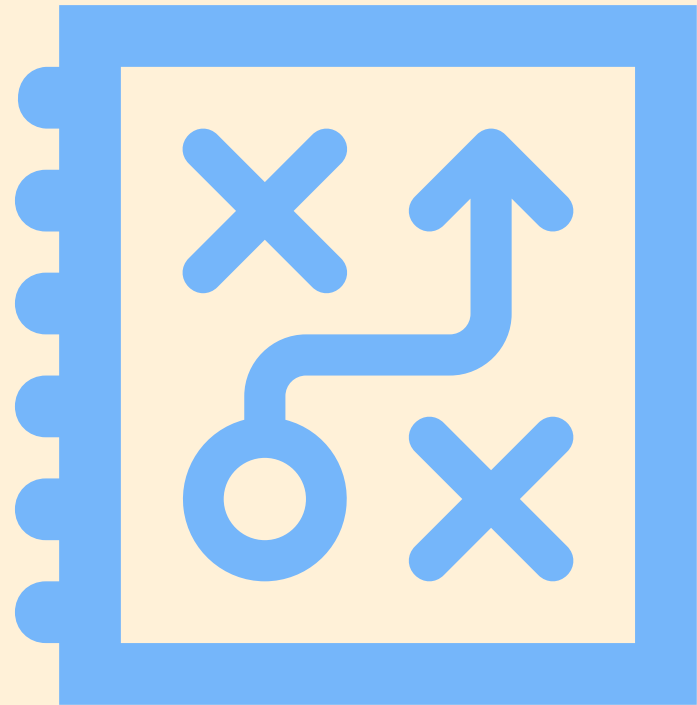
Generate and Answer

When preparing for exams, learners generate their own questions and then practice answering them.

This makes learners think about the underlying structures of the exams they will sit, as well as the content they need to know to be successful in them.

Develop the technique by having learners generate questions for their peers to answer.

Another option is to have learners create mark-schemes to go alongside the questions they come up with.



Learner Mark-Scheme

Ask learners to produce their own mark-schemes, either working individually or in groups.

They can then use these as the basis of self- and peer-assessment.

Scaffold the approach by talking to learners about why we have mark-schemes.

You can touch on things like:

- The process of assessment
- Standardisation
- Communication of information
- To make comparisons
- To facilitate the provision of feedback



Group Answers

Set learners a question they need to answer or provide them with a test they need to complete.

Give learners 2/3 minutes to consider this individually, then divide the class into groups.

Learners must share their thinking and develop a consensus answer in their groups.

The goal here is for learners to articulate their reasoning, share their ideas, and work to reach an agreement as a team.

While this is happening, circulate and listen in.

You will gain access to rich information, including evidence of which groups are struggling.



Think through Talking

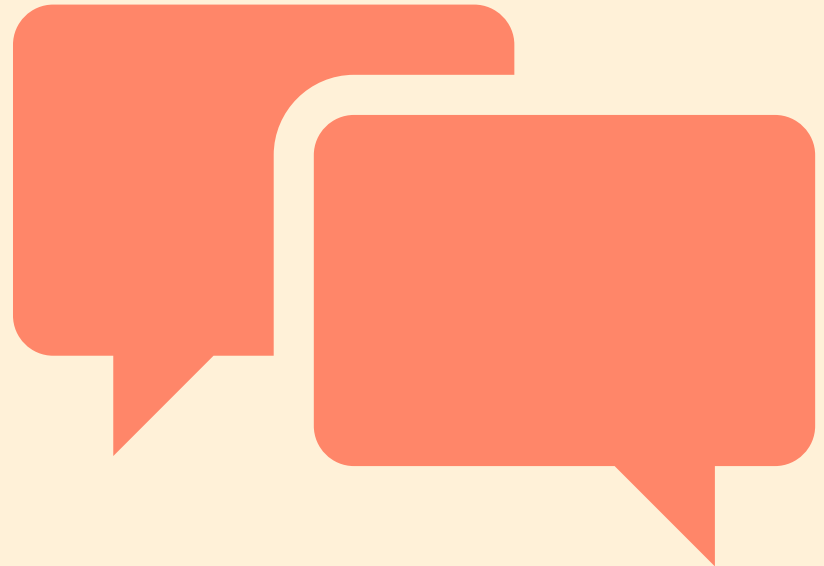
Talking lets learners articulate, refine and edit their thinking.

Through talking, learners can verbalise their ideas, hear how they sound, and also alter their thoughts in response to what other people say.

Encourage thinking through talking with:

- Discussion activities
- Structured group/pair work
- Teacher modelling

Bear in mind that paired discussion and small group work increases the 'surface area' of talk in the classroom as compared to whole class discussion.



Invert the Question

Instead of asking a question that requires factual recall, invert it to request explicit reasoning.

For example:

- 'Is France a democracy?'

Becomes:

- 'What does it mean for a country like France to be a democracy?'

Or:

- 'How do we know that France is a democracy?'



X and Y

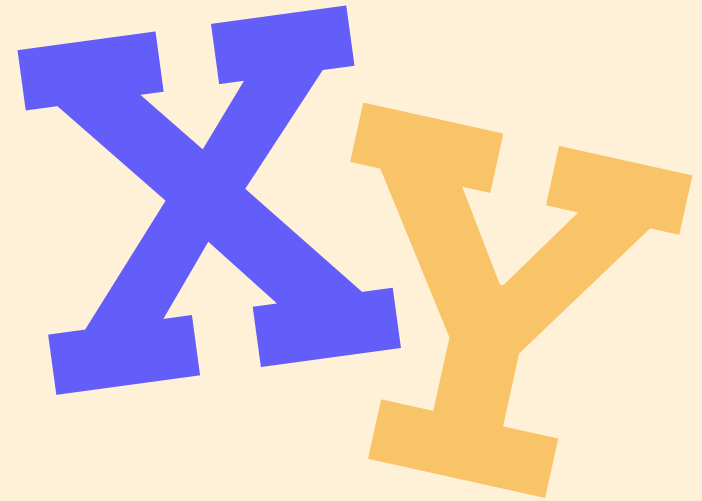
Ask learners why X is an example of Y.

For example:

- Why is an apple an example of a fruit?
- Why is a fox an example of a mammal?
- Why is coal an example of an energy source?

This kind of questioning shifts the onus away from factual recall and towards explicit reasoning.

The teacher accesses more information as a result, gaining a deeper insight into what learners think, why they think it, and whether there are any misconceptions in their reasoning.



All You Know

At the start of a topic (or, maybe, the week before you start it), give learners a sheet of paper and ask them to write down everything they already know about the topic inside sixty seconds.

Collect these sheets in and use them to inform your planning.

This gives you an immediate insight into your class's prior knowledge and understanding.

It doesn't matter if some, or even all, of the sheets are blank. That is still information you can use to assist you in your planning.

Develop by getting learners to repeat the task at the end of the unit, and to compare their two sheets. This is a great way to help learners visualise the progress they've made.

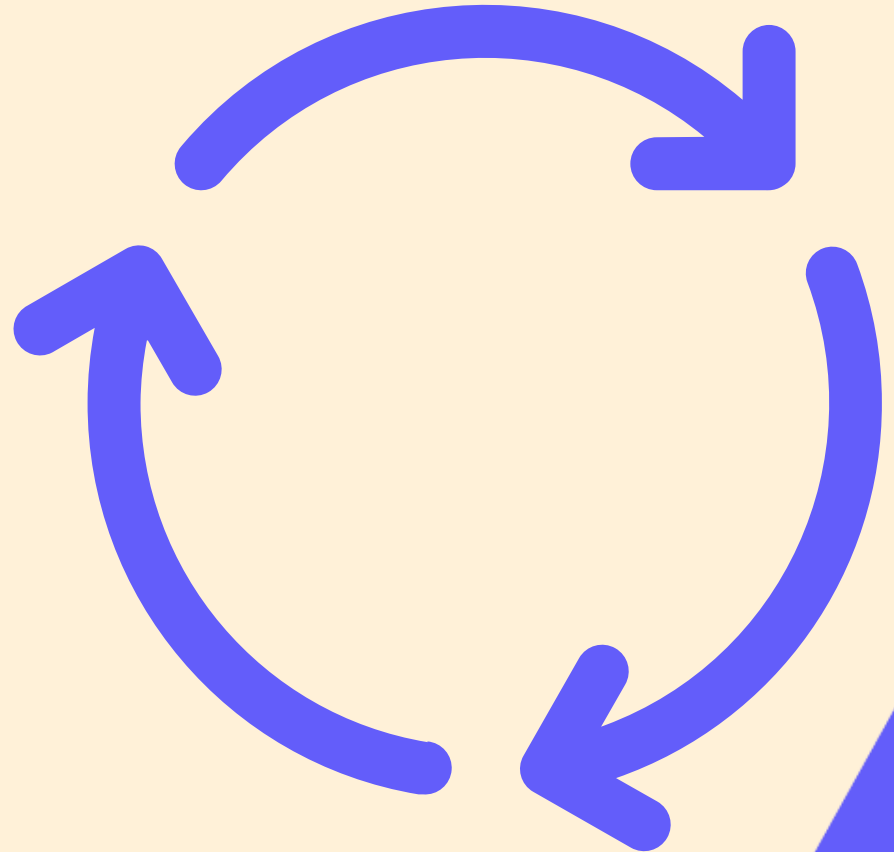


Corrections

Encourage learners to think about how to improve their work, redraft it, and implement the targets you set by asking for evidence of corrections.

Explain that you want to see corrections and that these are a signal to you that learners are improving and developing their work as they go.

Help learners to understand that handing in 'perfect' work isn't what you want, and that corrections/edits/improvements are an important part of the learning process.



Laminated Criteria

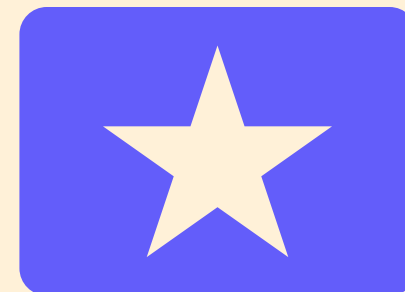
Make laminated, learner-friendly success criteria cards. Focus on success criteria that recur.

For example, a primary teacher might make a set of success criteria cards for a particular genre of writing in English lessons.

Or a secondary science teacher might make a set of laminated cards focussing on success criteria relevant to practical experiments.

The benefits of having laminated cards are that you can reuse them and that learners can pick them up, hold them and move them around.

The cards have a concreteness that some learners find helpful.

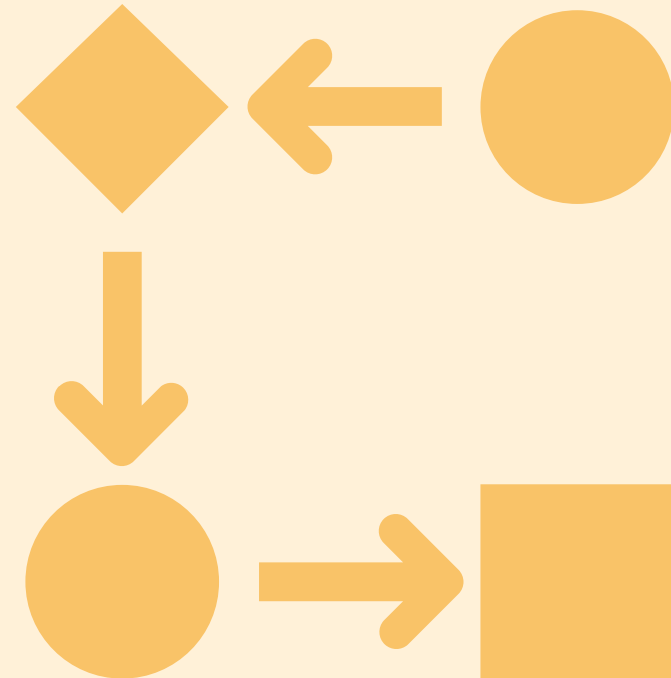


Conveying Progress

Find ways of using assessment to convey progress to learners and thus make what they are doing more meaningful.

For example:

- Link learning between units, showing how the progress learners have previously made will help them access the new learning.
- Refer to past targets and highlight where the learner is now successfully achieving these.
- Put a target tracker in the front of learners' books. Learners can then see clearly and visibly how much progress they have made and how many targets they have successfully implemented.



Discuss Keywords

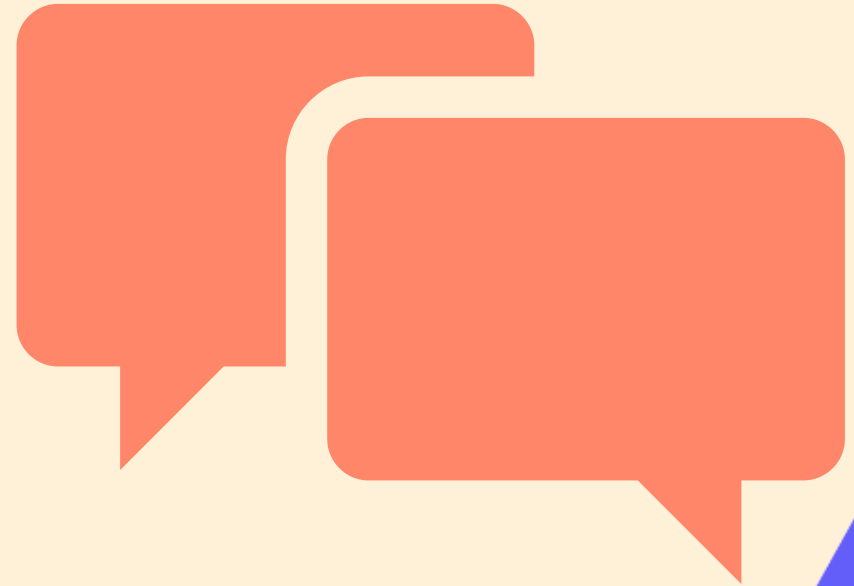
When using discussion, take keywords and look at them specifically.

Discuss how they are being used:

- Is there any ambiguity?
- Is everyone using the word in the same way?
- Does the word have different meanings?

The goal here is to bring uncertainties and misconceptions into the open.

We want to elicit useful information from learners that we can use, early on, to ensure they have an accurate grasp of the keywords we want them to memorise, understand and apply.



Communication

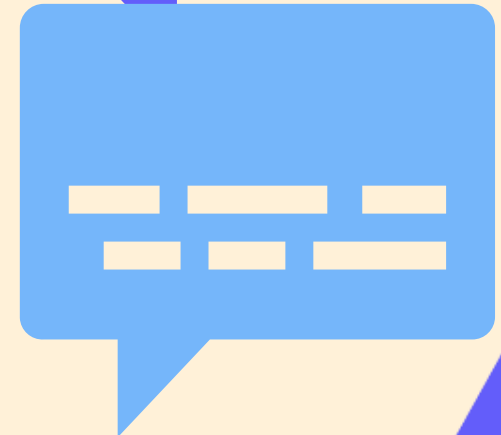
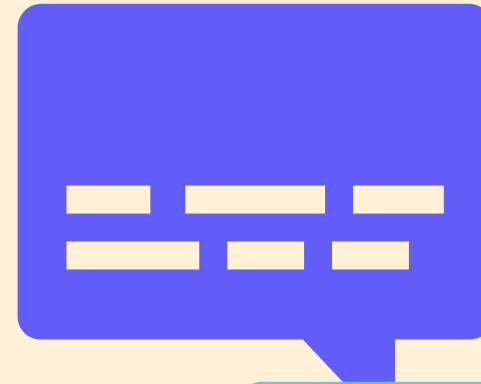
Ask learners to communicate thinking through different mediums.

Not just speaking and writing but also through drawing, drama, maps, sculpture and other means.

The medium is the message and therefore circumscribes to some extent how communication can take place.

Using alternative mediums allows the teacher to 'see' learners' understanding from different angles.

This can help us access different information and is also often challenging and fun for learners.



Thoughtful Dialogue

When speaking with learners, give thought to what you are using the dialogue to achieve.

For example:

- Is there specific information you are trying to elicit?
- Are you helping learners to reflect on their learning and think about what they are doing?
- Do learners have the opportunity to fully articulate and explore their ideas?
- Are you trying to draw misconceptions into the open?
- Are you looking for ways to deliver formative feedback?



Feedback Sandwich

Feedback can be delivered in different ways.

Two feedback 'sandwiches' work as follows:

- Positive comment
- Constructive criticism with explanation of how to improve
- Positive comment

And:

- Contextual statement – I liked ... because ...
- Now/Next time ...
- Interactive statement. For example, a question based on the learner's work.

Both examples seek to make feedback more palatable for learners. Whether this is necessary is for you to decide.

What is good?

Spend time ensuring that there is consensus between yourself and the learners over what makes a piece of work 'good', and how they are expected to achieve it.

Use questions like:

- Can you tell me what makes a piece of work good?
- What do we need to do to produce a good piece of work here?
- What are going to be the main differences between a good piece of work and a bad piece of work?
- How will you know if your work has met the success criteria?
- What can you do to achieve your goal?



Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation involves thinking about how we learn, whereas self-assessment is about what we have learned or done.

To train pupils in self-evaluation, use questions like:

- Think about what happened today. What really made you think? What did you find difficult?
- What do you need more help with?
- What are you pleased about?
- How would you change the learning activity to suit another class?

You can model how to answer these types of questions to help your learners understand what self-evaluation requires.



What is a 'good' question?

Discuss with learners what makes a 'good' question.

The process can explicitly show them the differences between different types of questions.

You can then invite learners to develop their own sets of questions about the topic you are studying, and to decide which of these they think are best.

The goal here is to get learners thinking critically about the success criteria that underpin high-quality questions.

You might even ask them to rank the questions they develop from most to least successful.



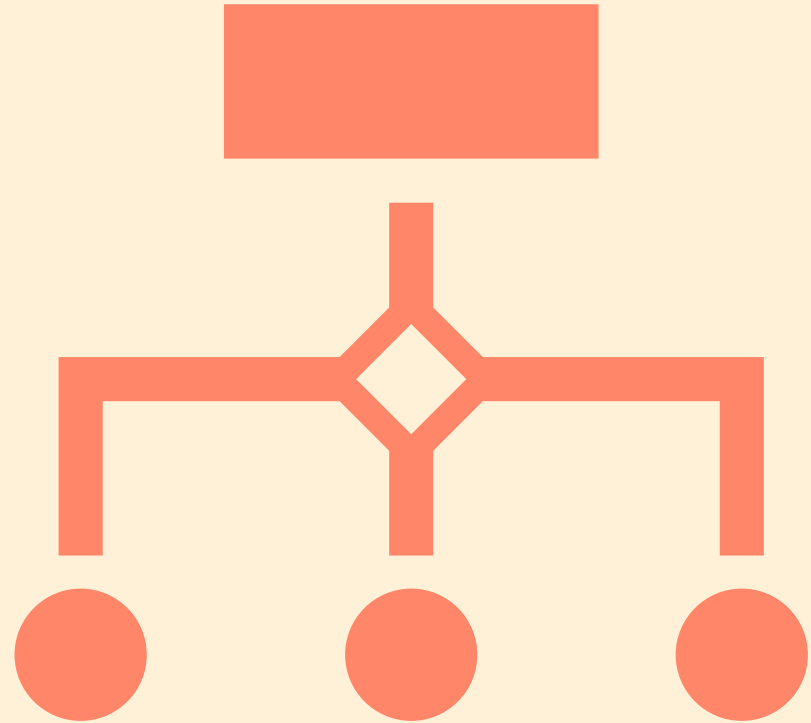
Graphic Organisers

Graphic organisers help learners visually organise information.

They also give the teacher immediate access to what learners know, think and understand.

Share graphic organisers with learners to help them capture and manipulate information.

But also use them to elicit useful information that you can use to adapt teaching in the moment and that can inform future planning.



KWL

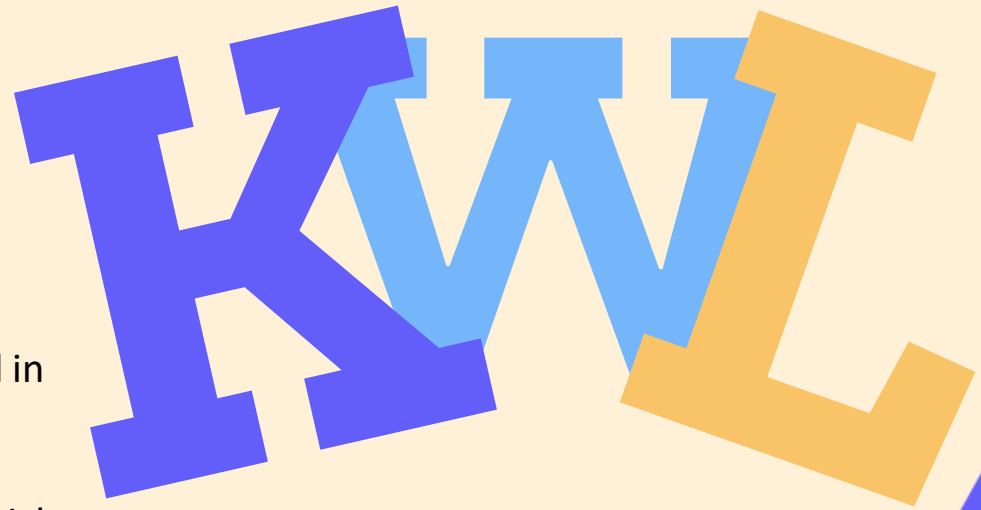
At the beginning of a topic learners create a grid with three columns:

- What They Know (K)
- What They Want To Know (W)
- What They Have Learned (L)

Give learners time in pairs to think about and fill in the first two columns.

You can then lead a whole-class discussion in which various learners share their thoughts.

Through the topic, return to the grid and ask learners to add to the various columns – and to tick off the things in (W) that they have discovered.

A large, stylized graphic of the letters 'KWL' in a 3D, blocky font. The 'K' is blue, the 'W' is light blue, and the 'L' is orange. The letters are slightly overlapping and have a shadow effect.

Talk Partners

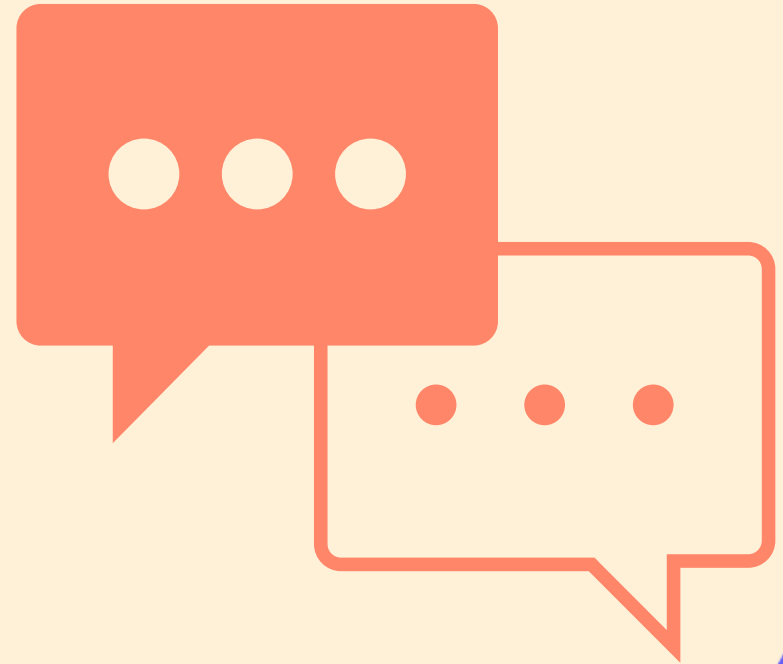
A talk partner is simply a partner who a learner has discussions with.

Having a regular talk partner means learners get to know each other, streamlining the process of discussion.

Changing talk partners can create variety and avoid repetition.

Use talk partners to get learners articulating their ideas, refining their thinking and ordering their thoughts.

One option is to have regular plenaries or starter activities in which talk partners reflect on their most recent learning, including the strategies they have used, what has been easy, and what has been difficult.



Post-It

Use post-it notes to evaluate learning.

Groups, pairs or individuals can answer:

- What have I learned?
- What have I found easy?
- What have I found difficult?
- What do I want to know now?
- What could I do differently next time?

One option is to collate post-its at the front of the room. For example, write three of the above questions on the board, give learners three post-it notes each, and then invite them to stick their completed post-its on the board.

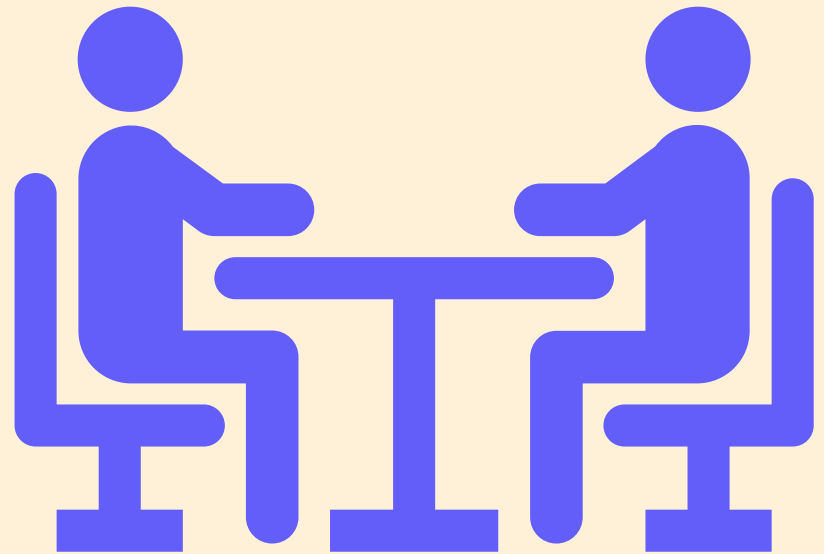
Response Partners

Pupils invite a partner to discuss their work with them and to give comments, advice, or make suggestions.

For it to be effective, learners should be aware of the learning objectives and/or success criteria.

They should also appreciate the role of a response partner – to offer positive and constructive feedback around the learning goals.

Scaffold by providing exemplar questions learners can pose to their partners to find out more about the work they have produced.



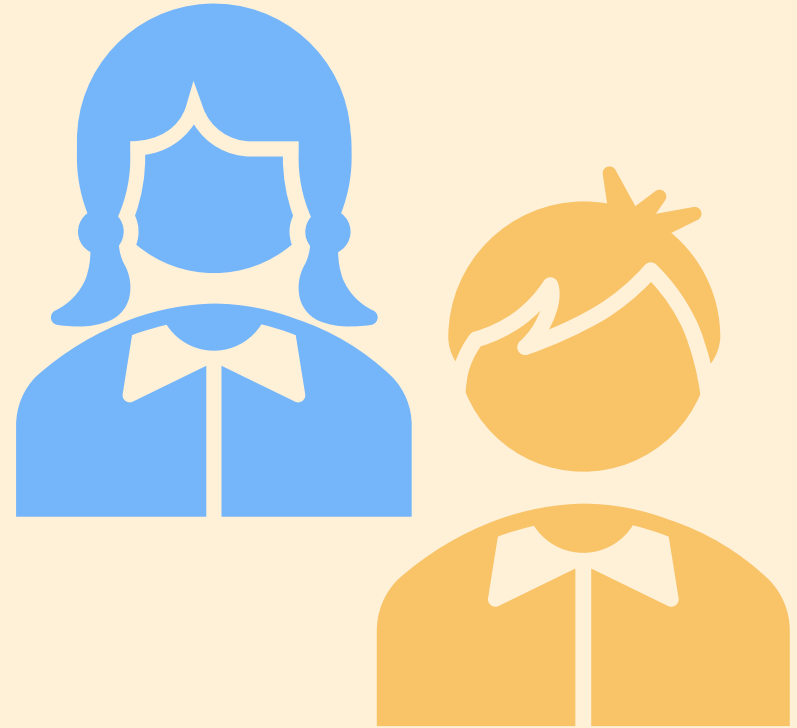
Hands Down

Tell learners they should only raise their hand to ask a question, not to answer one.

The teacher then chooses learners to answer, helping them to access a wide range of information concerning who knows what and how confident learners are with the learning.

Some options for selecting learners to answer at random:

- Write learners' names on lollipop sticks and select at random.
- Give every learner a number. Create a set of class counters, with matching numbers written on them. Put in a bag and pick out at random.



Good Question Stems

Collect good question stems so you have them on hand as prompt for yourself.

The following question stems encourage open questions that give learners scope to talk, reason and explain their thinking. This elicits rich information from them about their learning:

- Why does ... ?
- What if ... ?
- How would you ... ?
- Could you explain ... ?
- What might ... ?



Regulating Learning

Circulating through the room while learners are engaged in an activity means the teacher can collect information on learning, use different strategies to assess how learners are doing, and intervene where appropriate.

This is akin to regulating the learning.

Keeping it focussed, directed and at a pace that works.

One option when circulating is to head out with the express intention of checking in on specific learners.

Those you have identified in advance as potentially needing more help, or an increased level of challenge, compared to their peers.



A B C D

Laminate a set of cards so every member of the class has four, with A,B,C and D written on them.

Ask questions with four answers and learners can show you what they think the answer is, holding up the card that represents their thinking.

You can also set learners ranking activities where they must rank four items labelled 'A, B, C and D'. They can use their cards to physically do this, increasing the concreteness of the activity.

Another option is to present learners with four items, labelled 'A, B, C and D' and to ask them which is the odd one out and why.

All these are examples of whole-class feedback techniques. By looking at the cards, you can instantly access what everyone in the room is thinking.



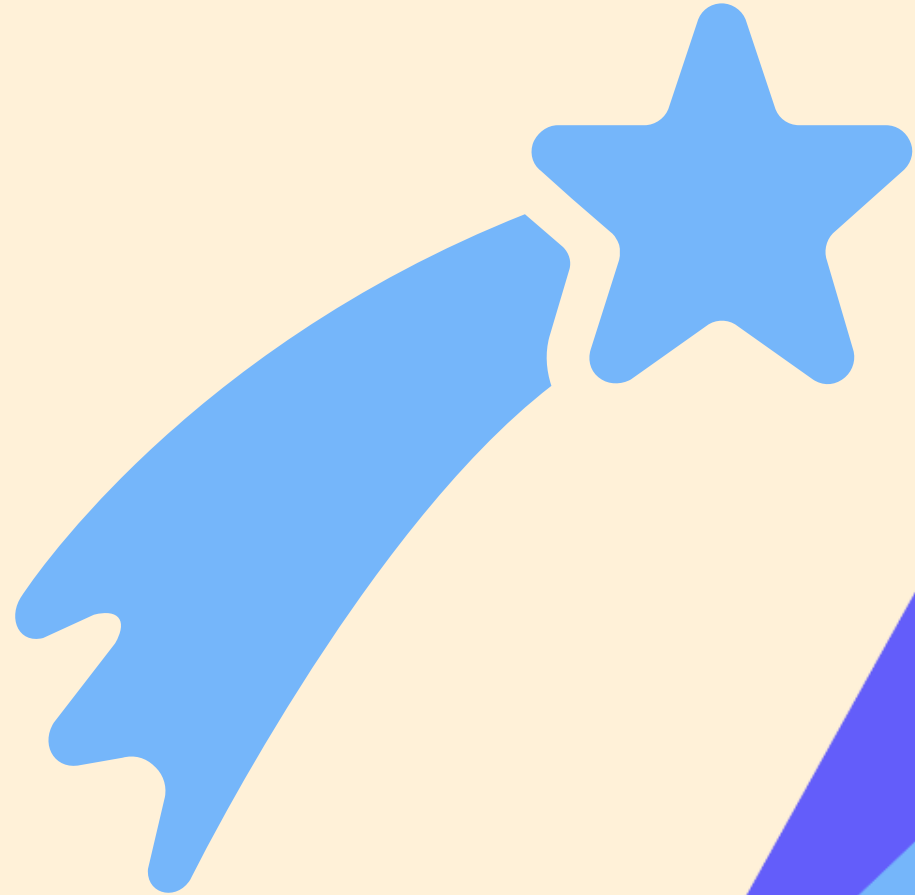
Why is it best?

For homework ask learners to find their best piece of work and to then tell you why it is their best.

Provide guidance on what they might use when writing their justifications.

For example:

- Knowledge of the success criteria.
- Knowledge of how the work demonstrates them implementing a target you've set them.
- References to mark-schemes (for older learners).
- Explanation of how that piece of work shows the progress they have made.



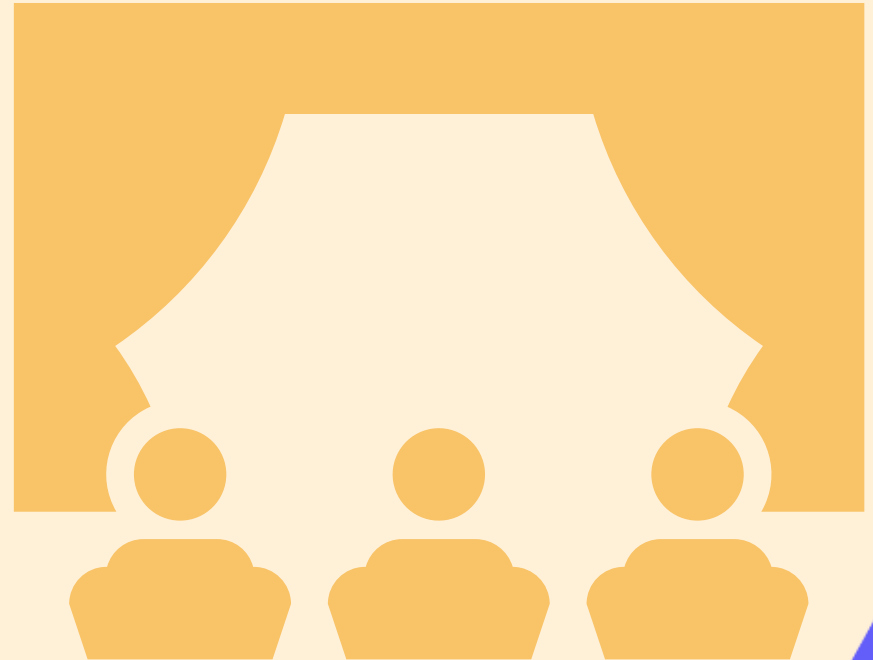
Show and Tell

Use mini-whiteboards so that every learner can write or draw their answer and show it to you (or their peers) immediately.

This is another whole-class feedback technique.

When learners show their answers on their whiteboards, you can instantly gauge where the class are at, whether any misconceptions are floating around, and whether you need to adapt the lesson in the moment.

Learners can also use their mini-whiteboards to note down targets and success criteria, so they are visible and easy to reference while they are working on a task.



Active Learners

Active learning doesn't mean learners are up and moving around.

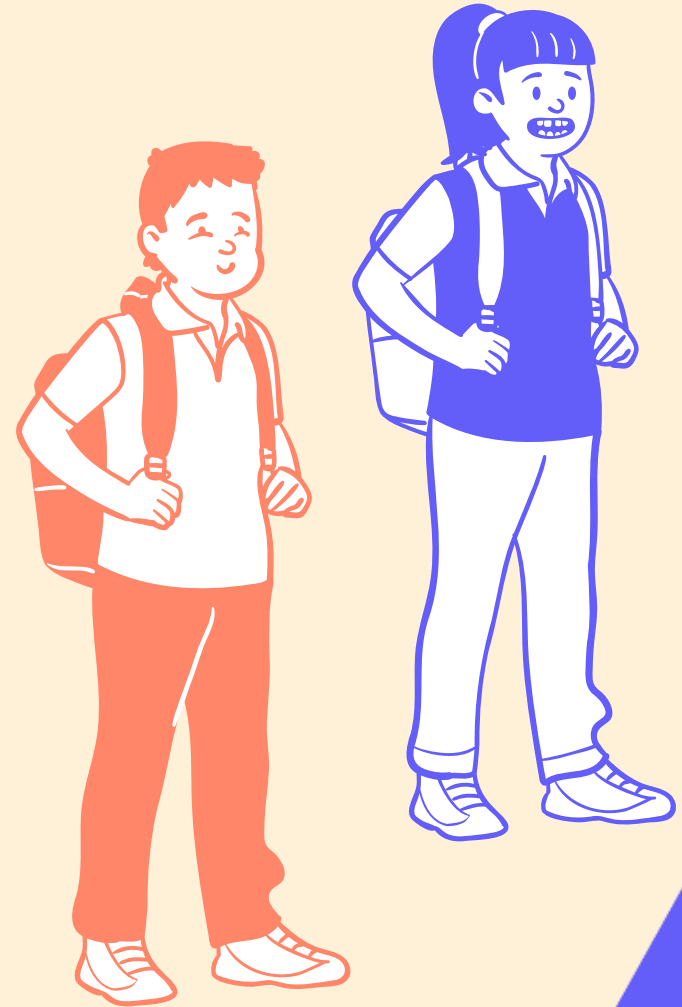
They might be, but they don't have to be.

Active learning means learners are actively engaged in their learning and, ideally, thinking about what they are doing, while they are doing it.

When planning, ask yourself to what extent learners will be active drivers of the learning.

Open up success criteria to help learners channel their efforts more effectively.

This tends to increase motivation and helps learners feel like they have greater ownership of what they are doing.



Long- and Short-Term

When doing target-setting, you might like to set learners a long-term target and a short-term target.

This means the latter is contextualised in light of the former, giving it greater meaning for your learners.

Another option is to do long-term target-setting in collaboration with your learners, and to then frame any subsequent short-term targets you set in the context of this.

Finally, you might consider setting a long-term target for your class as a whole and then reframing your learning objectives as short-term targets that will help them to achieve this.



Minute Paper

Set a timer for one minute.

Learners have sixty seconds to write down everything they have learned during the lesson.

When the time is up, they compare with their partner or walk around the room and compare with multiple peers.

While this is happening, you should circulate and observe what learners are writing – or have them hand in their 'minute papers' before they leave.

In both cases, the aim is to assess the extent to which learners can recall what they have learned, and to see what seems to have had the greatest salience for them.



Enquiry Question

Frame your lesson, or a unit of work, around a high-level enquiry question.

This has a few benefits.

- It gives the learning focus.
- It creates its own success criteria – Can you successfully answer the question?
- You and your learners can use the question as an assessment tool – To what extent am I able to answer the question?
- You can frame your verbal feedback using the enquiry question, helping to maintain effective targeting of learner effort.



Smiley Faces

Learners draw smiley faces to indicate how comfortable they are with the topic.
This could be in their books, or on mini-whiteboards, which they then hold up and show you.



**Ready to
move on**



**Understand some
parts but not all**



**Do not understand
and need to look at
it again**

Squares

When a learner has finished a piece of work, ask them to draw a square directly afterwards.

If they feel like they did not understand what they were trying to do, they colour the square red.

If they feel like they had a reasonable grasp of what they needed to do, they colour the square orange.

If they are confident they knew exactly what they needed to do, they colour the square green.

Using this technique repeatedly over time often reveals patterns and trends around learner understanding.



Muddiest Point

Ask learners what the muddiest point was in the lesson.

They can share this with you by writing their answers:

- In their books
- On exit passes they hand in on their way out
- On mini-whiteboards

However you access the information, you can then use it to address learners' difficulties in the following lesson.



One-Sentence Summary

Set learners the challenge of writing a one-sentence summary of:

- The lesson
- The topic
- The work they have produced during an activity

The goal here is twofold.

First, learners must think carefully about what they have learned and then synthesise this into an accurate, coherent sentence, which is challenging.

Second, the sentences learners produce give you rich information about what they have learned (or think they have learned). Information you can use to inform future planning.

